

VRI Gender Equality Plan 2022–2026
Veterinary Research Institute

GEP 2025 Assessment



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

GEP 2025 Final Implementation Report

1. Key milestones related to the GEP

The Gender Equality Plan of the Veterinary Research Institute (VRI) (GEP) was approved on 20 June 2022 and published on the Institute's website in the section https://www.vri.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/VRI_Gender-Equality_Plan_GEP_2022_2026.pdf

As a holder of the HR Award, the Veterinary Research Institute declares its commitment to implementing the HRS4R strategy. HR processes are planned and managed in line with the requirements for quality human resources management in research, as set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Our aim is for human resources management to function as well and as efficiently as possible. Therefore, we focus on providing high-quality support to our employees—whether it is assistance with administrative matters, problem solving, or support for professional development. At the same time, we follow the international [HRS4R strategy](#), which aims to improve working conditions and procedures in the area of human resources. One of the main objectives of the GEP is to ensure equal opportunities for our employees regardless of their gender, age, origin, or anything else. We strive to help create an environment in which every employee has the chance to fully realize their potential.

Key points explained:

- **"Ongoing commitment":** Emphasizes that this is not a one-off action but a continuous effort to improve.
- **"Effective human resources management practices":** Means that the Institute strives for the HR department to work as effectively as possible and to provide employees with high-quality services.
- **"HR support":** Means that the Institute takes care of its employees and provides them with help and support in various areas (e.g., administrative matters, problem solving, professional development).
- **"HRS4R":** A specific project aimed at improving working conditions and procedures in HR (it can be explained as a practical "guide" on how to improve HR processes).
- **"Action plan":** A plan that is followed and on the basis of which progress in meeting objectives is verified.
- **"Equal opportunities":** Means that all employees have the same chance of success regardless of their personal characteristics (age, gender, origin, etc.).

2. Activities implemented and support for fulfilling the GEP

Areas of support and GEP implementation – activities carried out in 2025

a) Work-life balance

- Support for flexible forms of work (clear rules on the availability of flexible regimes, taking into account the needs of parents with small children when scheduling, formalized rules for remote work)
- Development of technical infrastructure (VPN, other IT support tools)
- Development of the early career stage (onboarding in the workplace, adaptation plan, mentoring development, grant proposal writing seminars, support in the role of principal investigators, support in acquiring managerial skills)

b) Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

- Increasing women's motivation and interest in being represented in leadership positions,
- Review of the election rules of the Institutional Council with regard to shortcomings that could be a cause of insufficient active support and participation of voters; the number of nominations of female and male candidates received from proposers; and, where relevant, a review of options for voting by absent employees (fathers and mothers on parental leave).

c) Gender-sensitive language in the public space

- Adjusting gender-sensitive language (website, job advertisements, communication with applicants in recruitment procedures)
- Open advertising of positions; gender-correct wording of advertisements

d) Equality of women and men in recruitment and career opportunities

- Information support and broader promotion of the possibility to take part in selection procedures for filling leadership positions (campaign to support women into leadership positions)
- Targeted effort to ensure representation of both genders among applicants.

e) Education and development to support equal opportunities

- Measures against gender-based violence, mobbing, bossing, etc.
- Ensuring training and supporting the exchange of information in the area of equal opportunities

Approval of project implementation under the OP JAK call entitled: Support for return after career break and development of sustainable careers at VÚVeL: Returns to VÚVeL (05/2025)

Ongoing from 06/2025 to 06/2029

First round of the Call for Return Grants (June 3, 2025)

Result of the proceedings and decision of the internal grant committee on the evaluation of the public competition for the support of grant projects (November 25, 2025)

VÚVeL supports returns to science and research

<https://www.vri.cz/vuvel-podporuje-navraty-do-vedy-a-vyzkumu/> (December 16, 2025)

Approval of a project under the OP JAK call entitled: Development of a sustainable environment for veterinary research at VÚVeL (06/2025)

Ongoing from 09/2025 to 06/2029

<https://www.vri.cz/o-nas/hr-award/aktualne/> (September 8, 2025)

<https://www.vri.cz/vuvel-spousti-program-pro-rozvoj-udrzitelneho-prostredi-pro-veterinarni-vyzkum/> (December 17, 2025)

a) Work-life balance

Support for flexible forms of work (clear rules on the availability of flexible regimes, taking into account the needs of parents with small children when scheduling, formalized rules for remote work)

planned on an ongoing basis 2026 - 2029

Strategic documents will be reviewed and internal regulations subsequently amended in key areas (equal opportunities, work flexibility and diversity in the research organization). These changes are intended to contribute to better reconciliation of work and personal life, greater work flexibility and more consistent support for equal opportunities at the Institute in line with the GEP. Suggestions for updating the documents will be based on planned meetings within key activity KA 3.2 "Implementation of training activities on equal opportunities, flexibility and diversity in the research organization". At the same time, within key activity KA 3.6, a series of development activities is planned, focused on strengthening important competencies and employee development areas. These activities build on the implementation of HRS4R and the objectives of the GEP at the Institute, especially in the areas of personal development, introducing procedures supporting work-life balance, developing mental hygiene, and systematic support of employee wellbeing at the Institute.

Development of technical infrastructure (VPN, other IT support tools)

Completed 12/2025

Institute-wide transition to the new Microsoft 365 platform. We have started using cloud services and further plan to implement additional tools such as MS SharePoint (intranet), Teams (communication) and OneDrive (storage). Rules for work and safe behavior in the M365 environment were created with regard to our internal security requirements and policies.

planned 1Q/2026

As a follow-up, key activity 3.10 "Support for effective use of internal cloud tools" will be carried out, aiming to strengthen the use of information technologies through cloud storage and collaboration in the cloud. It will also include a clear introduction to individual tools such as MS SharePoint (intranet), Teams (communication) and OneDrive (storage) and an

explanation of practical ways to use them so that M365 becomes a truly effective solution across the whole Institute.

planned on an ongoing basis 2026 – 2028

We will prepare and implement a Strategy for the use of artificial intelligence in the research organization—with an emphasis on new tools for research, development and innovation. This will include a series of development activities to expand employees' knowledge in IT and AI, increase productivity, and support the use of AI as a means that can contribute to accelerating scientific discovery. These steps will be carried out within key activity 3.5 "Strategy for the use of AI tools in the research organization and for further development".

At the same time, comprehensive introduction of internal training through the LMS Moodle platform will take place. A new internal training system will be created, including the necessary background for its administration and management, course creation and study across the organization. Implementation falls under key activity 3.9 "Introduction of internal training at the Institute and implementation of the Moodle platform".

Development of the early career stage (onboarding in the workplace, adaptation plan, mentoring development, grant proposal writing seminars, support in the role of principal investigators, support in acquiring managerial skills)

Ongoing from 09/2025

The submitted Institute project for financing so-called Return Grants within the OP JAK project entitled "Support for return after a career break and development of a sustainable career at the Institute: Institute Returns" was selected for funding with a budget of CZK 50 million.

11/2025

The internal grant committee completed the procedure and made a decision on the evaluation of the public call to support grant projects entitled "Support for return after a career break and development of a sustainable career at the Institute: INSTITUTE RETURNS". At the committee meeting and after evaluating the submitted Return Grant applications, all 6 return grants were selected for funding from 1 January 2026.

b) Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Increasing women's motivation and interest in being represented in leadership positions

planned for implementation 2026-2029

A review of strategic documents and related amendments to internal regulations will be carried out in key areas (equal opportunities, work flexibility and diversity in the research organization). The aim is to strengthen work-life balance, expand options for flexible work and systematically support equal opportunities at the Institute in line with the GEP. Suggestions for updating the documents will be based on meetings held within KA 3.2.

Activities will also include discussion groups and thematic meetings that create space for sharing life experiences and inspiring examples from practice. An important role will be played by successful women in managerial and leadership positions, who can strengthen others' motivation through their stories. The purpose is to build self-confidence, clarify the importance of women's representation, and encourage their advancement towards leadership roles as well as participation in the Institute's governing and decision-making bodies.

Composition of the Institute's leadership and decision-making bodies

Status as of 31 Dec 2025

Heads of departments and units: 7 men, 3 women

Heads of research groups: 8 men and 6 women

Members of the Institutional Council: 11 men and 4 women (the Chair of the Institutional Council is a woman)

Members of the Supervisory Board: 8 men

Director: man

Deputy Director: woman

c) Gender-sensitive language in the public space

Adjustment of gender-sensitive language (website, job advertisements, communication with applicants in recruitment procedures)

09/2025 - ongoing

Ongoing preparation of internal processes for implementing the EU Pay Transparency Directive (EU 2023/970)

Review and harmonization of wage structures

Preparation of an evaluation framework for gender-neutral assessment of job positions

Preparation for payroll and HR systems

Ongoing

News section on the VRI website – announcements, news and statements are prepared in the context of the required content and level of detail. Each item is reviewed and its content checked before publication, including editing and harmonization of the visual style.

d) Equality of women and men in recruitment and career opportunities

Information support and broader presentation of the possibility to participate in selection procedures for filling leadership positions (campaign to support women into leadership positions) and targeted efforts to ensure representation of both genders among applicants.

Ongoing preparation of internal processes for implementing the EU Pay Transparency Directive (EU 2023/970)

Implementation of recruitment transparency before the employment relationship is established.

- Information obligation:
- Prohibition of questions about pay history:
- Gender-neutral recruitment:

Transparency during the employment relationship

planned 2026-2029

Discussion groups and meetings will be held to provide space for sharing life experiences and inspiring practical examples. Successful women from managerial and leadership positions will also join the program; their stories and recommendations will help strengthen others' motivation.

The aim is to support women's ambitions and self-confidence, highlight their contribution, and clearly show why it is important for them to actively pursue leadership roles and engage in the Institute's governing and decision-making bodies.

e) Education and development to support equal opportunities

Ensuring activities to support the exchange of information in the area of equal opportunities, including activities supporting the reconciliation of personal and working life.

Offering leisure-time activities for the children of our employees

completed 07/2025

From 7 July to 11 July 2025, we were pleased to organize the fourth year of the day camp for the children of our female and male employees. Press release published at <https://www.vri.cz/primestsky-tabor-vuvel-objevujeme-prirodu/>

In-person meeting and return to the workplace

completed 06/2025

The Internal Grant Committee (IGK) announced on 03 June 2025 the 1st round of the Call for submission of Return Grants within the project: "Support for return after a career break and development of a sustainable career at the Institute: Institute Returns".

with registration number: CZ.02.01.01/00/24_037/0013867_Veterinary Research Institute, public research institution, funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports under the OP JAK Returns program. In line with program requirements, the target group for implementation under this Call are employees of research organizations—female researchers returning after a career interruption due to maternity or parental leave.

Charitable activities of our employees

10/2025 – joint tree planting at the Institute

In October 2025, a team-oriented event took place with the aim of helping to make our Institute's premises more attractive and to take part in tree planting. Employees and their families met to help create a new green barrier in the rear part of the campus. Under professional supervision, approximately 100 young trees and shrubs were planted, including several fruit species.

<https://www.vri.cz/spolecna-vysadba-stromu-ve-vuvel-sobotni-dopoledne-ktere-melo-smysl/>

completed 11/2025

A collection for the Diocesan Charity Brno took place as part of the charitable initiative "Socks without a home". Towards the end of the year, we organized our annual charitable event for Institute employees in the form of a Christmas gathering, which concluded with a charity collection. The purpose was also to enable a joint meeting in an informal atmosphere before the end of 2025. Director's Council 12/2025.

3. Integration of the gender dimension into the content of research and education

Given our main focus, which is primarily scientific research activity in agriculture, specifically in veterinary medicine with a focus on supporting the health of farmed animals and the quality of food—it is not possible to globally include this dimension within R&D activities. Nevertheless, support for activities and the scope of integrating the gender dimension into the content of research and education is taken into account and applied to varying degrees within the approved Return Grants under the OP JAK project entitled "Support for return after a career break and development of a sustainable career at the Institute: Institute Returns", which will be implemented from 01/2026.

4. Dedicated resources (finance)

Dedicated resources for implementing activities in the period 2026–2029 and for supporting the Return Grants project under the OP JAK project entitled “Support for return after a career break and development of a sustainable career at the Institute: Institute Returns”, with a budget of 50,000,000 CZK

Dedicated resources for implementing activities supporting the OP JAK “Research Environment” call. A project application for support was submitted under the project title “Developing a sustainable environment for veterinary research at the Institute for the period 2026–2029”.

Key activity	Activity No.	Title of GEP training and development activities	Number of planned courses	Number of supported persons	Dedicated resources CZK excl. VAT
KA3	3.1.	Constructive communication and a positive working environment	3	36	146 000
KA3	3.2.	Implementation of meetings on equal opportunities, flexibility and diversity	4	80	140 000
KA3	3.3.	Meetings with personalities on the topic “Successful women in leadership”	4	160	140 000
*) total direct costs for implementing the planned activities within the GEP in the project.					426 000 CZK *)

5. Conclusion

This evaluation concludes the overview of activities that we carried out in 2025. These were not random steps, but a well-considered set of measures building on experience from previous years as well as on suggestions and feedback from our employees. We consider it key to emphasize that successful implementation was made possible primarily thanks to their active involvement, openness and support. Equally important was the support of the management, which created space for meaningful meetings, the development of initiatives and the establishment of new cooperation in areas where we need it most.

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Date: 18.12.2025

Signature: 

Acknowledged by: doc. MVDr. Martin Faldyna, Ph.D., Director

Date: 19.12.2025

Signature: 



Gender Equality Plan of the Institute 2022–2026 (GEP)
builds on the implementation of planned activities according to the HRS4R Action Plan.