



**Gender Equality Plan 2022–2025 for
the National Veterinary Research Institute
in Puławy (the NVRI)**

Puławy, January 2022

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1. Introduction

The gender equality plan for the NVRI was developed with all the institute's staff in mind. Its main premise is to ensure that the NVRI is an institution with high standards in research and innovation but above all, one which provides safe and comfortable conditions for work and study, regardless of gender.

The aim of the NVRI development strategy is a course of action enabling the organisation to be a modern research institute capable of meeting the challenges of emerging new threats in the areas of animal health and food and feed safety, as well as consumer health. To achieve this aim, highly qualified staff are essential who are free from discrimination and operate with respect for the principles of equality and diversity.

Equality and diversity are values that contribute to the development of science. Equal treatment and diversity management policies bring tangible benefits and influence the development and innovation of organisations. Having regard to respect for a diverse multicultural society and with particular emphasis on the prevention of discrimination on grounds of sex, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, trade union membership, ethnic origin, religion, psychosexual orientation, gender identity, or whether employment is for a fixed or indefinite term or is full-time or part-time, the NVRI is committed to implementing the principles of equal treatment.

Discrimination means unequal treatment, without basis in law or justification by objective reasons. Any discriminative action constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Discrimination is prohibited by law. According to the constitution of the Republic of Poland, everyone is equal before the law. Everyone has the right to equal treatment by public authorities. No one shall be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason whatsoever. Women and men in the Republic of Poland have equal rights in family, political, social and economic life. In particular, women and men have an equal right to education, employment and promotion, equal remuneration for work of equal value, and social security, and to be admitted to any position, to hold any office and to have honours and decorations bestowed upon them. Maintaining any inequality is prohibited by European Union directives transposed into the body of Polish law.

In 2020 the National Veterinary Research Institute received the “HR excellence in research” distinction. The award is part of the European Commission’s pursuit of its “Human Resources Strategy for Researchers”, which aims to increase the attractiveness of working conditions and careers for scientific researchers in Europe. The distinction is awarded to European institutions that provide researchers with the best possible working conditions and transparent recruitment processes, in accordance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. It is also a commitment to the continuous improvement of human resources and recruitment policies and, above all, to the implementation of egalitarian solutions. The gender equality plan builds on the premises set out in the “Human Resources Strategy for NVRI Research and Scientific Staff” as part of the “Internal Analysis and Corrective Action Plan 2020–2021” incorporated in “HR Excellence in Research”.

Gender equality is one of the fundamental principles of the European Union. The gender equality strategy for 2020–2025 sets out a vision, policy objectives and actions to advance gender equality in Europe and bring it closer to achieving sustainable development goals. The activities of the NVRI cohere with the strategy of the European Union.

The gender equality policy was planned as a system of long-term actions aimed at strengthening the equality of women and men in the NVRI community.

2. Diagnosis

Composition of the Institute by gender.

The starting point for the development of the NVRI gender equality plan was an analysis of the gender distribution of workers.

Position	31/12/2018					31/07/2021				
	Both sexes	F	M	% F	% M	Both sexes	F	M	% F	% M
Professors	8	1	7	12.50	87.50	11	0	11	0.00	100.00
Associate Professors	27	11	16	40.74	59.26	25	12	13	48.00	52.00
Assistant Professors	56	36	20	64.29	35.71	61	39	22	63.93	36.07
Assistants	21	16	5	76.19	23.81	18	13	5	72.22	27.78
Research and technical staff	21	14	7	66.67	33.33	30	27	3	90.00	10.00
Engineering and technical staff	220	196	24	89.09	10.91	192	175	17	91.15	8.85
Librarians	2	2	0	100.00	0.00	2	2	0	100.00	0.00
Administrative staff	136	100	36	73.53	26.47	135	101	34	74.81	25.19
Other staff	97	44	53	45.36	54.64	94	48	46	51.06	48.94
Total	588	420	168	71.43	28.57	568	417	151	73.42	26.58

On the basis of the above analysis, it can be concluded that there are equal gender proportions in the scientific staff and research and technical staff, with the predominance of women growing. Only in the case of staff holding the position of professor is male dominance noticeable. Currently, the institute does not have any women on its payroll in the professor position.

This situation may have been determined by history because in the past the veterinary departments mainly recruited men. In addition, in many cases, women's careers are put on hold while they are pregnant and new mothers, so that their academic advancement often occurs later than men's. In recent years, women have made up 80% of graduates of veterinary medicine faculties in Poland. Therefore, in the coming years, we can expect a reversal of the current trend of gender distribution in the scientific staff of the Institute. Certain statistics of recent years confirm this, where the ratio of women to men in particular positions has been changing in favour of women. In 2018, less than 41% of associate professorships were held by women, while now 48% are. This trend will continue to grow, as the great majority of assistant professor, assistant and research and technical staff posts are already held by women.

The vast majority of engineering and technical personnel have always been women, and this trend shows a continuous increase. Biological and analytical sciences are more popular among women. Very rarely do men apply for the post of laboratory assistant, hence the large predominance of women in this employment.

Analysing the administrative staff, we can also note a large predominance of women, since the accountancy and administrative roles, etc. have almost always been their domain.

The rest of the personnel are technical, security, and support staff. Comparable proportions of women and men are employed here. However, if we analyse the positions by their holders in more detail, it becomes clear that there are positions where 100% of the staff are men (e.g. security staff and drivers) and in other positions (e.g. laboratory assistants and cleaners) 100% are women.

Analysing the situation among the management personnel of organisational units, the proportions of women and men in managerial positions are equal, with a slight upward trend evident in women's employment. These proportions are as follows:

Hierarchical level in the NVRI	31/12/2018					31/07/2021				
	Total	F	M	% F	% M	Total	F	M	% F	% M
heads of all organisational units and executive positions outside units	40	18	22	45.00	55.00	41	20	21	48.78	51.22

A large gender gap can be seen in the people in the roles of heads of research units. A decisive majority are men. Although there has been a recent increase in the number of women who have taken up head roles in scientific departments, the far greater part of them are still men.

Hierarchical level in the NVRI	31/12/2018					31/07/2021				
	Total	F	M	% F	% M	Total	F	M	% F	% M
heads of research units	19	3	16	15.79	84.21	19	4	15	21.05	78.95

3. Results of the equality test

An "Equality of opportunities for women and men in the NVRI" survey was carried out in 2021. Its aim was to diagnose the needs and problems associated with the experiences of discrimination and of combining work and family life.

Based on the low participation level (11%) in the survey, it can be concluded that the issue of equal opportunities for women and men is not a priority issue for personnel. The respondents see this issue as an existing social problem limiting career development, but at the same time, the overwhelming majority have not personally encountered it.

It is worth noting that the respondents were mainly women, from whose statements it emerges that they reconcile family life with professional life. It can be assumed that to a large extent they pointed to the strongly entrenched stereotype of the woman as mother and homemaker. It may therefore be very confidently presupposed that women are more burdened with family responsibilities. Importantly, more than half of the respondents believe that women and men in the NVRI have equal conditions provided for their personal and professional development. However, given the assumed low level of involvement of men in domestic duties, solutions to facilitate the execution of work might be worth considering, especially for young women and men starting families.

A 90% proportion of survey participants can define the concept of discrimination, mobbing and harassment. This is undoubtedly the result of regular workshops on the subject of labour law. Along these lines, well designed gender equality training seems to be the best course of future action, especially as a large proportion of respondents answered “no opinion” to numerous questions in the survey.

The overwhelming majority of respondents believe that there is no specific person in the NVRI to whom one can turn for help in a case of discrimination and that such a person should be appointed. Employees believing the contrary indicate only the Director, a human resources officer or their supervisor as the appropriate person. It would be necessary to examine whether the disproportion between the two employee groups' sizes is the result of insufficient awareness of staff of how to report such problems, or whether it is an expression of a lack of trust in those who receive and acknowledge such reports as their Labour Code-mandated responsibility.

In view of these considerations, broadening the knowledge of NVRI staff of approaches to combating sex discrimination is the most appropriate proposal.

4. Objectives of the Gender Equality Plan

The objectives of the Gender Equality Plan were defined on the basis of the diagnosis. They are intended to contribute to the introduction and observance of the principles of equality and diversity.

Regardless of gender, every worker at the NVRI should be evaluated and treated equally, and should have equal opportunities for development. In view of the prevailing stereotypes of the roles of women and men as they function in society, it is necessary to take measures to raise public awareness of equal treatment.

The Gender Equality Plan for the NVRI is based on five objectives. Each objective has been designed by defining actions, indicators that monitor actions and the organisational units responsible for its attainment.

Objective 1. Increasing awareness of the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity.

Objective 2. Enhancing gender balance in committees, expert teams, and management.

Objective 3. Supporting the development of women's scientific careers.

Objective 4. Facilitating the integration of work and family life.

Objective 5. Prevention of discrimination.

The objectives are primarily to raise awareness and promote equal treatment of all employees in such a way as to show that the NVRI values the diversity of its employees and that the policy is in line with recognised international standards.

Each objective is closely linked to the planned action for its achievement and an indicator that will help determine the effectiveness of the action. A person or organisational unit has been appointed to carry out each action. In addition, an "Equality Team" will be appointed, primarily tasked with monitoring equality activities in the NVRI, as well as promoting equality and diversity and counteracting discrimination. The Equality Team will also support workers who have experienced sex discrimination.

Objective	Action	Indicator	Organisational unit or individual
<p>Increasing awareness of the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity.</p>	<p>Appointment of the Equality Team, the tasks of which will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collecting and updating data on the representation of women and men in the NVRI structure, - updating the documents in force in the NVRI in terms of equality and diversity in the institute's community, - publishing analyses, reports, information, etc concerning equality on the institute's info.intranet portal, - working with the Dissemination and Analysis Department on the preparation of training courses for the Institute's staff. 	<p>Quarterly meetings.</p> <p>Distributing annual reports on the activities of the Team.</p> <p>Promoting knowledge of gender equality through the organisation of training courses and the provision of related information to all workers by e-mail.</p>	<p>Director of the NVRI</p>
	<p>Introducing anti-discrimination training for all employees, in particular for managers of organisational units and persons supervising research.</p>	<p>Training at least 100 personnel in 2022.</p>	<p>The Department of Dissemination and Analysis in partnership with the Team</p>
	<p>Creating the "Gender equality" tab in the info.intranet portal in which are to be:</p>	<p>Monitoring the number of page hits.</p>	<p>The Equality Team in partnership with the Information</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic facts about the Equality Team and its tasks and contact details, - training and educational materials, publications and information on topics related to equality, diversity and countering discrimination, - periodic information for all staff of the institute communicated by e-mail, informing them about the actions taken. 		Systems Department
Enhancing gender balance in committees, expert teams, and management	Formulating and implementing guidelines on the percentage representation of men and women in committees, expert groups, and competition committees. Amendments to the relevant regulations and internal rules.	Reaching at least 45% women in appointments by 2024.	Director of the NVRI
	Formulating and implementing guidelines for the nomination of both men and women to the role of chairperson of committees and expert panels.	Reaching at least 35% women in appointments by 2024.	Director of the NVRI
	Encouraging women to apply for positions and functions of their choosing.	Reaching 35% executive committee position appointments	The Equality Team

		to women in the institute where the choice of candidate involves an open vote.	
Supporting the development of women's scientific careers	Collecting data on the participation of women and men in national and EU grant competitions and in-house projects.	Periodically publishing data on the info.intranet portal on the percentage participation of women and men in grant competitions.	The Equality Team in partnership with the Department for Research Planning and Funding
	Collecting data by gender on the number of open conferral procedures for doctorates and dissertation defences.	Periodically publishing data on the info.intranet portal on the percentages of men and women in this category.	The Equality Team in partnership with the Office of the Scientific Council
	Researching the needs of young workers for support in the development of scientific careers.	Conducting a survey. Including results in the next edition of the Gender Equality Policy.	The Equality Team in partnership with the Human Resources Department
Facilitating the integration of work and family life	Identifying the needs of persons returning to work after maternity/parental leave in terms of support from the Institute.	Carrying out consultations and studies. Publishing results in the next edition of the Gender Equality Policy.	The Equality Team, in partnership with the Human Resources Department
	Collecting and publishing legislation facilitating new parents' return to work	Disseminating knowledge on the provisions in law related to	The Equality Team in partnership with the Human Resources and Information

	and provision of childcare. Preparing standard forms and applications for parents applying for childcare benefits.	maternity. Monitoring website access.	Systems Departments
Preventing discrimination	Raising the level of knowledge and awareness of workers about the need to prevent all forms of discrimination.	Training, disseminating information to employees online, launching poster campaigns and other events intended for employees at least twice a year.	The Equality Team in partnership with the Human Resources and Dissemination and Analysis Departments

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2022-02-21