Czech Agrifood Research Center

Ref. No.: SŘ/26/381

English translation
of the original Czech document

Equal Opportunities Plan of the Czech Agrifood Research Center

for the period 2026–2027

Introduction

Equal opportunities and gender equality have long been regarded by the Czech Agrifood Research Center as an integral part of the Centre's institutional policy; however, a comprehensive framework in this area was previously lacking. Since 2022, this framework has formed part of the Equal Opportunities Plan and, since 2023, of the Long-term Development Strategy of the Research Organisation 2023–2027 and the Strategic Development of Human Resources for Research and Development.

At the same time, a number of specific measures have been implemented, including a formal commitment to the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunities and the rejection of discrimination (Code of Ethics); consideration of maternity and parental leave in the appraisal of research staff (Career Regulations); employee induction and adaptation (Methodological Guideline No. 2/2022); a support programme for researchers returning from maternity or parental leave (Methodological Guideline No. 3/2022); recruitment and commencement of employment (Methodological Guideline No. 4/2022); remote working (Director's Order No. 3/2024); and, in particular, the establishment of procedures for the prevention and resolution of sexual harassment through an internal directive issued in November 2021. An amendment to the Organisational Rules established the position of Ombudsperson in March 2022; in December 2023, responsibilities for the gender equality agenda were added and dedicated personnel costs were subsequently allocated to this activity.

The institution also monitors and publishes gender statistics, which have formed part of its Annual Reports since 2018 and are available on the institution's website.

Since November 2021, the institution has held the prestigious HR Excellence in Research Award granted by the European Commission. In November 2023, a mid-term assessment of the implementation of the Action Plan was prepared and submitted to the European Commission. Progress was reviewed and the activities contained in the plan were revised. The revised Action Plan includes ten new activities, the implementation of which will further strengthen alignment with the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

As part of the preparation of the Equal Opportunities Plan, a gender audit was carried out at the institution in 2021. The audit was conducted in accordance with the Gender Audit Standard of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. It assessed the organisation's equality objectives and institutional arrangements, human resources policies, recruitment and termination of employment, organisational structure from the perspective of gender equality, staff training, appraisal and remuneration, work–life balance, and the internal culture of the institution. The proposed measures form the basis of the Equal Opportunities Plan.

Pursuant to Section 15(d), in conjunction with Section 11(2), of Act No. 341/2005 Coll., on Public Research Institutions, as amended, and Section 174 of Act No. 89/2012 Coll., the Civil Code, as amended, and following consultation with the Boards and Supervisory Boards of all three research institutions, the Ministry of Agriculture, as the founder, decided that the Food Research Institute Prague and the Research Institute of Agricultural Engineering would cease to exist through merger with the Crop Research Institute with effect from 1 January 2025. The Ministry of Agriculture also approved an amendment to the Foundation Charter, Ref. No. MZE-82967/2024-13131, including the change of name of the successor institution to the Czech Agrifood Research Center.

New employees from the merged institutions received training on the Equal Opportunities Plan during induction training on internal regulations shortly before the merger, on 12 December 2024, and again during training on projects, research outputs, the HR Award and the Equal Opportunities Plan on 12 May 2026.

Action Plan

Area	Objective	Output	Indicator	Deadline
Revision of recruitment procedures	Formalisation of the recruitment process, including defined recruitment stages, mandatory content of job advertisements, assessment criteria, and gender balance on selection panels	Advertising vacancies without the use of the generic masculine form	Gender-inclusive job advertisements	Ongoing
		Annual review of recruitment procedures (quality of advertisements and composition of selection panels)	Report produced	Annually
Implementation of equal opportunities principles in the Centre through training and awareness-raising	Raising awareness of equal opportunities through the presentation of the Centre's activities and results	Annual report on the Centre's equal opportunities activities, serving as both an information and methodological resource for all employees	Report produced	Annually
	Increasing awareness of gender equality issues	Training activities on equal opportunities, particularly the promotion of equal opportunities, effective communication across genders, prevention of sexual harassment, etc.	Number of training activities	Ongoing
Gender dimension in internal regulations	Formulation and declaration of the fundamental principles of equal opportunities in the Centre's strategic documents	Review of all publicly available and internal strategic documents, including HR documents, in light of the gender audit findings, including correction of gender-biased language	Number of documents reviewed	Ongoing

Area	Objective	Output	Indicator	Deadline
Support for a successful work–life balance	Expansion of opportunities to work away from the office and reduction of excessive related administration	Update of the internal regulation on remote working	Regulation produced	Q1 2024
	Support for employees on maternity and parental leave, communication, and provision of appropriate conditions following their return	Implementation of the internal Support Programme for Researchers Returning from Maternity/Parental Leave	Methodology produced	Q4 2024
	Standardisation of the induction process, including the appointment of a person responsible for implementing and facilitating the adaptation process	Implementation of the internal document Employee Induction and Adaptation	Methodology produced	Q4 2024
		Employee Adaptation Plan form	Number of completed processes (completed forms)	Q4 2024
Prevention and resolution of sexual harassment	Implementation of the Director's Directive on the Prevention and Resolution of Sexual Harassment	Annual review of complaint handling, compliance with procedures, proposed corrective measures and their effectiveness, and assessment of further proposals and suggestions concerning this issue	Report produced	Annually
Gender dimension in research content	Consideration of the gender dimension in research content when preparing projects	Overview of projects incorporating the gender dimension in research content	Report produced	Annually

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