



**Výzkumný ústav Silva Taroucy  
pro krajinu a okrasné zahradnictví, v.v.i.**

## **Gender Equality Plan**

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**2023–2027**

## **Introduction**

The European Union's shared values include democracy, human rights, gender equality, and richness of diversity. Equal opportunity and non-discrimination principles should be a natural and intrinsic part of the functioning of public organizations, especially when Europe needs to increase trust in democratic governance and cope with radicalization, migration, widening inequalities, and a host of other challenges. In the field of research, human resources are key; highly qualified and creative individuals should not have to become demotivated because of unequal pay, different conditions for career advancement, or the impossibility of reconciling personal and professional life. In practice, however, women's involvement in research activities and management is often insufficient. As a result, providing equal opportunities for women and men and promoting gender equality is now a priority value of the European Union and its policies on science and education.

## **Strategic documents**

The primary documents governing the values and personnel policy of Výzkumný ústav Silva Taroucy pro krajinu a okrasné zahradnictví, v. v. i. (Silva Tarouca Research Institute for Landscape and Ornamental Gardening, public research institution, herein after VÚKOZ or the Institute), include the following:

- The European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025
- The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers
- The Czech Republic's Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030
- National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic 2021+

VÚKOZ is committed to promoting gender equality as implemented in the research and innovation program Horizon Europe. VÚKOZ will finance the Gender Equality Plan (herein after GEP) from its own resources or from project funds where possible.

## **About the Institute**

VÚKOZ was established under Act No. 341/2005 Coll., on public research institutions by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic according to Measure No. 13/06 of 12 December 2006 under No. 7083/M/06 and entered into the Register of Public Research Institutions maintained by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic on 1 January 2007. The current version of the founding charter was issued by the founder under Measure No. 4/10, No.: 3096/M/10, 57952/ENV/10 on 7 July 2010.

According to VUKOZ's founding charter, the Institute was established to conduct research on all types of landscapes, biological diversity, and related environmental risks and provide independent expert research activities to support decision-making by the founders and other relevant state authorities.

VÚKOZ is a stable public research institution successfully involved in basic and applied research projects. It publicly disseminates the results of its activities through publications and knowledge transfer, thus fulfilling the definition of a research organization. The overall objective of the Institute is to maintain and develop research activities in all defined research areas, to strengthen further the competitiveness of the Institute at national and international levels, and to contribute significantly through its research results to fulfilling the Czech Republic's priority objectives for the environment.

VÚKOZ's main activities include researching open and urbanized landscapes, as well as ornamental gardening, which contributes to shaping a significant part of the human environment. The Institute's charter defines the primary directions of research activities and includes landscape issues from the individual level to those of populations and entire ecosystems. The Institute not only focuses on a wide range of research topics (see above and in the following section) but also serves in an advisory and consulting capacity for public authorities, evaluates policies on nature and landscape protection, and prepares expert studies and viewpoints on the topics of our main activities. Additional activities are described in the following pages, including in the section on the Institute's management. These activities are in addition to our main ones, and the economic results of these are a key source used for co-financing research.

The Institute has two facilities, one in Průhonice and the other in Brno. The organizational structure of VÚKOZ is divided as follows:

- Statutory representative of the organization – the Director
- Office of the Director
- Research Section:
  - Department of Cultural Landscape and Sites
  - Department of Biomonitoring
  - Department of Breeding and Plant Cultivation Technologies
  - Department of Phytoenergy
  - Department of Spatial Ecology
  - Department of Biological Risks
  - Department of Plant Biotechnology
  - Department of Landscape Ecology
  - Department of Forest Ecology
  - Scientific Secretary
  - Library
- Independent department – the Dendrological Garden
- Operational and Economic Section:
  - Operations Department
  - Economic Department
  - Floriculture Department
  - Floret Education and Information Centre
  - Operations Department Brno

Research projects with teams led by research team leaders extend across the organizational structure. The research team leader reports to the head of the relevant department.

### **Statistical data on the human resources of VÚKOZ**

In recent years, the number of VÚKOZ employees has been around 200 (see table below for details), reflecting the organization's stability. The ratio of men and women has been balanced over the long term, e.g., in 2021, out of 199 employees, 102 were men and 97 were women.

Number of VÚKOZ employees by education (all employees- physical count regardless of employment arrangement- always as of 31 December)

Education Level		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
University degree with scientific distinction	men	20	22	25	25	29
	women	14	17	20	20	19
Master's degree	men	30	34	34	37	39
	women	18	31	29	30	28
Bachelor's degree	men	2	3	2	2	3
	women	1	6	5	5	3
Complete secondary vocational education with secondary school diploma	men	20	16	15	15	16
	women	34	37	37	37	36
Secondary vocational education without matriculation	men	11	18	17	17	14
	women	13	11	10	10	11
Elementary education years 1-9	men	1	1	1	1	1
	women	0	0	0	0	0
Total by gender	men	84	94	94	97	102
	women	80	102	101	102	97
Total		164	196	195	199	199

Roughly 60% of all employees had a university degree in 2021; of the employees engaged in research (including technicians) it is up to 73%. However, most of those who have a university degree are men.

Number of VÚKOZ employees by job classification (as of 31 December 2021)

	Number of employees – physical count regardless of employment arrangement	Number of employees in %	Average calculated number of employees	Average calculated number of employees in %
Male research workers	50	25.13%	33.42	20.61 %
Female research workers	45	22.61%	30.86	19.03 %
Other male workers	48	24.12%	46.15	28.45 %
Other female workers	56	28.14%	51.75	31.91 %
Total	199		162.18	

**Note:** According to the terminology of the Internal Wage Regulations of VÚKOZ, the 'Other' category includes professional staff and research technicians, gardeners, THP workers, salespeople, construction workers, and hospitality and catering workers from both genders.

### Gender composition of the governing bodies of the public research institution

The Institute has a statutory representative, the Director, appointed by the Minister of the Environment on the recommendation of the Institute's Board.

The Institute's Board sets the guidelines for the public research institution's activities and decides on the approach to its development. A chairperson and a vice-chairperson head the 11-member Board is headed by. As of 31 December 2021, six men (including the Chairperson) and five women (including the Vice-Chairperson) were on the Institute's Board. In early 2022, a new Board was elected with eight men and three women (including the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson).

The Supervisory Board oversees the activities and management of the public research institution. Its members are appointed by the founder, i.e., the Ministry of the Environment. The Supervisory Board of VÚKOZ has five members, including the chairperson and vice-chairperson. As of 31 December 2021, five men and no women were on the Supervisory Board of VÚKOZ. At the beginning of 2022, the term of office of several members expired, resulting in several replacements. The current Supervisory Board consists of three men and two women.

Regarding organizational structure, as of 31 December 2021, 10 of the 17 managers were men and 7 were women, and within the research section, 6 of the 11 departments are managed by men and five by women.

From the point of view of the leadership of the individual areas of research that fulfill the Long-term concept of development of the research organization (DKRVO), the situation in VÚKOZ has been gender-balanced for a long time. In the case of DKRVO 2018–2022, exactly half of the eight research areas were led by women and half by men. As part of the newly drafted DKRVO 2023-2027, the number of research areas has been reduced to five, three led by women and two by men.

## **HR policy of VÚKOZ**

VÚKOZ creates job opportunities for all generations of employees, from early career researchers to experienced researchers and scientists. At the same time, the organization provides a diverse range of jobs across educational, social, and national backgrounds.

The Institute's HR policy is based on meeting the qualifications necessary to complete research project objectives successfully. A key goal is to stabilize research teams and provide continuous replenishment with young researchers. Therefore, VÚKOZ tries to support the improvement of professional qualifications (especially doctoral studies) during employment. It also supports supplementing and maintaining professional qualifications through specialized courses or training organized by external educational institutions or professional organizations, and, last but not least, it encourages cooperation with public universities to educate future researchers. VÚKOZ creates job opportunities for all generations of employees, from early career researchers to experienced researchers and scientists. At the same time, the organization provides a diverse range of jobs across educational, social, and national backgrounds.

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VÚKOZ promotes positive, gender-balanced employee relations and ensures that the principles of equality for male and female employees of all ages are respected. It actively seeks to create a friendly working environment by using flexible working hours and allowing part-time work. Part-time work (specifically in the form of individually negotiated working arrangements) is used in particular when returning from maternity or parental

leave and increasingly also when employing young workers (early-career researchers, mostly PhD students) or, conversely, senior workers. These conditions make an essential contribution to work-life balance. Among the benefits given to employees are five weeks' holiday, three days of sick leave, employer's contribution to meals, pension or life insurance, boarding in the company's accommodation, provision of benefit vouchers, financial assistance to a suburban camp organized for children on the premises of the Dendrological Garden.

The principle of equal opportunities is also applied to the remuneration of employees in accordance with the internal wage regulations. In the case of researchers, the regulations govern their classification in grade based on regular attestations. The internal regulation uses incentives such as personal bonuses to motivate researchers to produce high-quality research and development results and to participate in or lead research projects.

## **Basic requirements for a gender equality plan**

The Gender Equality Plan of VÚKOZ is an instrument for systematically addressing and promoting gender equality in the organization. The VÚKOZ GEP meets the following basic requirements mandated for GEP validity:

- **Disclosure**  
The GEP, signed by the statutory representative, is publicly available on the Institute's website.
- **Allocation of funds and people to address the issue**  
In-house resources and expertise in gender equality will be allocated to GEP implementation.
- **Data collection and monitoring of changes**  
Statistical data on employees classified by gender will be collected and evaluated regularly.
- **Raising awareness of gender equality issues**  
Educational and awareness activities (e.g., training) will be provided for staff and employees (including decision-makers) to raise awareness of gender equality issues and unconscious gender bias.

## **Recommended phases of the GEP**

The GEP will include the following phases:

- **Audit of the current situation** (collection of qualitative and quantitative data – in-depth statistics)
- **Analysis of procedures and internal regulations and documents** from the standpoint of gender equality, and where necessary, supplementation of missing internal documents/regulations
- **Identification of areas where discrimination or systematic favoring/disfavoring of a group of employees may be taking place**
- **Establishing accountability for meeting the GEP's basic requirements and objectives**, including deadlines and financial resources
- **GEP implementation - regular monitoring and evaluation of the GEP implementation and possible redefinition of the objectives based on the results of the evaluation**
- **Evaluation of the impact of the gender equality plan and preparation of a new plan in a five-year cycle**

## **Key areas for gender equality**

### **1. Work-life balance and the culture of the organization**

At VÚKOZ, an extra week of holiday, three days of sick leave, flexible working hours, and working from a different location (home office) regularly or irregularly are currently standard, as set out in the collective agreement and relevant internal regulations. In addition, part-time work is a common and widely used practice for both genders, especially for researchers, students (mainly PhD students), parents on maternity/parental leave, or senior staff. In particular, part-time work and home offices are excellent tools for reconciling

personal and professional life. Maintaining a work-life balance, as well as maintaining gender equality, is beneficial for both male and female employees and employers and is part of the organizational culture of VÚKOZ.

An integral part of VÚKOZ's work culture is the promotion of a friendly and collegial working environment and a non-discriminatory approach to all employees in terms of gender, age, nationality, job title, etc.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Determine the structure of individual organizational units and how well instruments to improve work-life balance are being used	Conduct an in-depth analysis of the employee structure and gender-sensitive data by organizational unit (by gender, age, and type of employment), determine whether the internal economic software can provide gender-structured data	VI/2023
Determine the status of internal regulations in terms of equal opportunities	Analyze internal regulations from a gender equality perspective	XI/2023
Ascertain the state of awareness and gather any suggestions for improving work-life balance and company culture	Survey opinions on work-life balance and ways to improve company culture (in the form of a questionnaire)	XI/2024
Increase awareness of gender issues (in terms of company culture)	To better inform employees about gender issues in general and about specific measures to promote work-life balance, to encourage discussion on this topic	XI/2025

## 2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

VÚKOZ management is relatively gender-balanced (see above); in terms of organizational structure, 11 out of 17 managers are currently men and 6 women, and within the research section, 7 out of 11 departments are managed by men and four by women. However, there is an imbalance (in terms of gender) in the elected and appointed bodies. In the case of the VÚKOZ Board, this is due to the lower willingness of women to run for these positions. Another reason is that fewer women are among senior scientists (most experienced female scientists are more or less involved in management and decision-making). Therefore, there is a need to identify potential barriers in this area and to increase the motivation for women to participate in leadership and decision-making so that the gender imbalance is not further compounded in the future due to generational change.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Determine the representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions	Regularly monitor and evaluate the representation of women in decision-making positions, encouraging women to run for leadership and decision-making positions	VI/2023 and every year thereafter
Find out employees' views on gender balance in management and decision-making processes	Develop a questionnaire on women's involvement in leadership and decision-making (reasons for lower levels of involvement, get insight into what would increase motivation, etc.)	XI/2024



### 3. Equal opportunities for women and men in the recruitment of new employees and career advancement

It is common practice at VÚKOZ to hire new employees solely based on their qualifications and expertise, regardless of age, gender, nationality, or skin color. Equal opportunities for women and men in the recruitment process are ensured by publishing vacancies on the VÚKOZ website and other specialized portals. However, the principles of openness and transparency, applied in practice when hiring new employees, are not codified in any document.

In principle, career advancement can only be implemented in the case of researchers, as the nature of the positions of other employees does not usually allow for career advancement. A positive trend in this respect is the early return (and therefore shorter career breaks) from maternity and parental leave, which is linked to the support already implemented to achieve work-life balance.

Conditions in the Internal Wage Regulation ensure equal pay for men and women.

Objective	Activity	Deadline
Determine the state of pay equity	Develop a more in-depth analysis of equal compensation (from a general and gender perspective) and subsequently monitor the identified indicators, explore the possibility of using the Logib tool (MPSV)	XI/2023
Determine the status of returns from maternity and parental leave	Analyze returns from maternity and parental leave with regard to career breaks, identify potential barriers to returning to work	VI/2024
Determine the gender structure of those who propose projects, or those responsible for research projects	Prepare an analysis of the structure of those who propose projects or those responsible for research projects	VI/2024
Find out the employees' views on equal opportunities for women and men in career advancement	Conduct a survey to gain insight into whether there is equal treatment in terms of career advancement (whether gender affects career opportunities, what steps to take to advance female scientists, etc.) and evaluations of employees	XI/2024
Codify the principles of openness and transparency in the recruitment of new male and female staff	Develop a procedure for recruiting new staff with an emphasis on compliance with the principles of equal opportunities, strive for a gender-balanced composition of selection committees	VI/2024
Facilitate the integration of new employees into the team	Develop a document to facilitate the adaptation process of newly recruited employees	VI/2025
Raise awareness of individual learning opportunities	Track individual learning and provide information on self-learning opportunities in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities	XI/2025

### 4. Incorporating gender issues into research

Research at VÚKOZ focuses on the environment, with an emphasis on studying all types of landscapes, biodiversity, and related environmental risks. People as individuals are not the subject of research; some research topics at VÚKOZ marginally concern society as a whole (e.g., anthropogenic influences on landscape or biodiversity). In the same way, the VÚKOZ research results have an impact on society as a whole, regardless of gender.

The aspect of gender is therefore reflected in the research at VÚKOZ, mainly in the composition of the research teams, the members of which are chosen solely on the criteria of expertise and capabilities of the individual employees. For this reason, this area has not been further developed in the GEP.

## 5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Given the culture of relationships and the way the Institute is managed, it is to be expected that the human dignity of the employees of the Institute will not be compromised in any way. There have been no documented cases of gender-based violence at the workplace to date. Currently, there is no system in place at VÚKOZ to report and address possible sexual violence, harassment, gender-based degradation of dignity, or other similarly inappropriate behavior. This system will need to be set up, and consideration may need to be given to assigning an appropriate person in an independent capacity to whom such cases could be referred.

Objective	Activity	Deadline
Determine the occurrence of inappropriate behavior with an emphasis on gender-based violence	Develop a questionnaire on harassment or inappropriate behavior in the workplace	XI/2024
Institutionalize a redress procedure for any form of violation of human dignity	Develop a procedure for dealing with cases of inappropriate behavior or degradation of human dignity; consider introducing the position of ombudsman at VÚKOZ	XI/2025

Responsibility for the implementation of the GEP rests with the Director of the Institute, the heads of the individual departments, and the Human Resources Officer. Monitoring of the attainment of the objectives will be carried out annually and form part of the research activity report submitted to the provider.

This plan has been approved by the Director of the Institute.

In Průhonice 16 December 2022

Mr. Libor Hort  
Director