

**GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**  
**INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**  
**BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

**Introduction**

The Gender Equality Plan of the Institute of Information and Communication Technologies (IICT) to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) is a fundamental strategic document, whose purpose is to systematize and set the goals, objectives and specific measures that the Institute's management body is going to implement concurrently with the other independent scientific units of BAS in order to ensure the achievement of de facto gender equality in the Academy.

The plan is based on one of BAS's main principles, namely - the principle of ensuring equal opportunities for academic and career development of all employees and scientists in the Academy, devoid of discrimination of any kind. In that sense, the Plan is a natural continuation of the inherent striving for BAS to institutionalize gender equality and builds on it through measures to promote equality in five priority areas:

- Balance between women and men in management and decision-making,
- Gender equality in the human resources recruitment and in providing opportunities for career development of employees,
- Work-life balance and organizational culture,
- Integration of gender-related research in scientific studies and in educational content for PhD students
- Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

## Methodology

The current Plan is based on the **Plan for Promoting Equality of Women and Men in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences**<sup>1</sup>. The developed by BAS is the result of strategic planning based on critical analysis of normative and strategic documents at international, European, national and institutional level, statistical analysis of existing relevant gender aggregated and disaggregated data, analysis of strengths and weaknesses in established practices and existing mechanisms, critical analysis of good practices and contextual experience. It is in line with the key strategic documents of the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) pertaining to gender equality in research and academic institutions, taking into account the latest changes in the policies of the European Commission (EC) in the field, as well as with the framework directives and national strategic and normative documents concerning gender equality

In its activity as an independent scientific unit of BAS, IICT works towards ensuring equal treatment to guarantee a favorable working environment, free from gender stereotypes and prejudices, for all employees of the Institute. In each aspect of its activity IICT's management monitors compliance with the legal framework ensuring the application of the gender equality principles.

In 2021 56% of the total number of employees at BAS were women, and 44% were men<sup>2</sup>. In IICT this ratio as of January 1, 2022 is 44% women, 56% men, and 43% women, 57% men when taking into account only the staff working in scientific departments. 33% of the heads of departments are women as well as 39% of the professors and 36% of the associate professors. 40% of IICT's members of the managing body (Director, Deputy Directors, Scientific Secretary) are women. It is clear that IICT has achieved a good gender balance and comes close to the targeted 50:50 ratio, although IICT's main field of activity falls in technical areas where men traditionally predominate. There is a higher number of women with lower scientific degrees and a concomitant delay in women's career development.

The Institute creates opportunities for employees to take care of their families when needed. Taking into account the peculiarities of ICT activities, that suggest finding alternatives to teleworking, IICT has long practiced floating working hours and teleworking for parents with young children. Numerous projects enable the participation of young scientists in refresher trainings after returning from long parental leave. Overall, the governing and administrative structures of IICT support and welcome gender equality, but no targeted efforts have been made so far. The implementation of this plan will create conditions for strict observance of the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of gender, promoting non-discrimination awareness and designing a work and social environment free of all stereotypes and biases.

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<sup>1</sup> Developed in December 2021: [https://www.bas.bg/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd\\_category\\_id=691&wpfd\\_file\\_id=39177](https://www.bas.bg/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=691&wpfd_file_id=39177)

<sup>2</sup> Plan for Promoting the Equality of Women and Men at BAS, data valid as of December 2021

## **Scope of the Plan**

The plan spans a period of seven years - 2022 to 2027, and covers all major activities arising from the responsibilities of IICT as an employer, in accordance with regulatory and strategic documents at the European and national level that contain regulations to ensure the equality of women and men in science.

## **Objectives and priorities/Areas of intervention**

The Plan for Promoting the Equality of Women and Men at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences identifies the opportunities for upgrading what has already been achieved in order to ensure balance. Based on this the main strategic objective was formulated and adopted in the Gender Equality Plan of IICT:

**Strategic goal: Maintaining the positive trend for balance between women and men and introducing good practices for achieving de facto gender equality in IICT.**

The Plan identifies priority areas and sets objectives as follows:

1. Gender balance in the management body and decision-making.

Objective 1.1: Institutionalizing the strive for gender equality

Objective 1.2: Evaluating the existing environment and identifying strengths and weaknesses in relation to the balance between women and men in the management body

Objective 1.3: Achieving and maintaining gender balance in the management structures of IICT

2. Equality between women and men in human resource recruitment and in providing career development opportunities for employees.

Objective 2.1: Evaluating the existing environment and identifying strengths and weaknesses in relation to recruitment and career development

Objective 2.2: Achieving and maintaining gender equality in human resource recruitment

Objective 2.3: Achieving and maintaining equality and equal treatment in providing career development opportunities

3. Balance between professional and personal life as part of the organizational culture.

Objective 3.1: Identifying the needs of employees in relation to work-life balance

Objective 3.2: Ensuring a balance between the professional and personal lives of employees

Objective 3.3: Promoting a culture of equality in caring for family members

4. Integrating gender-related research in scientific studies and PhD educational content.

Objective 4.1: Integrating gender research, issues and aspects into scientific research

Objective 4.2: Integrating the gender topic into the educational content for PhD students

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

Objective 5.1: Evaluating the existing environment and identifying needs

Objective 5.2: Optimization of control mechanisms

Objective 5.3: Increasing the institutional culture

## ACTION PLAN BY PRIORITY AXES/AREAS OF INTERVENTION

### 1. Gender balance in the management body and decision-making.

Objective	Measure/Activity	Term / target values	Resources and means	Responsible person/body
<b>Institutionalizing the strive for gender equality</b>	Establishing a Gender Equality Committee to monitor the implementation of this plan and its objectives	June 2022	IICT Budget	Management Body of IICT
	Adopting Internal Rules of Procedure governing the activity of the Committee responsible for monitoring and implementing the Gender Equality Plan at IICT, incl. establishing procedures for data collection and implementation of the intended activities	December 2022	IICT budget	IICT Scientific Council
	Drawing up and accepting annual programs and reports on implementing the plan	2023-2027 / annually	IICT budget	Gender Equality Committee
<b>Evaluating the environment and identifying strengths</b>	Systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data and monitoring of the ratio between men and women in all management structures of IICT and	continuously	IICT budget	Gender Equality Committee, Human

<b>and weaknesses in relation to the balance between women and men in the management body</b>	their committees, as well as in all competitions for management positions			Resources Department
	Analysis of the normative documents sent by the management structures of BAS for the presence of conditions, expressions or language that contradict gender equality	continuously	IICT budget	IICT Management Body and representatives of IICT in the BAS General Assembly

<b>Achieving and maintaining gender balance in the management structures of IICT</b>	Encouraging members of the under-represented sex in the relevant management structure or body to apply for the position if possible	continuously	IICT budget	IICT Management Body Heads of Departments
	All other conditions and applicants' qualities being equal, appoint the candidate of the underrepresented gender in the respective management structure	continuously	IICT budget	Director of IICT
	Encouraging equal number of men and women as representatives of IICT in the General Assembly of BAS	continuously	IICT budget	Gender Equality Committee
	Participation in leadership trainings organised by BAS	2023, 2025, 2027  3 trainings	IICT budget, related projects	IICT Management Body
	Participation in trainings and workshops organised by BAS to promote the strive for gender balance and create an institutional culture for recognizing gender-based biases	2023-2027  4 trainings	IICT budget related projects	IICT Management Body

**2. Gender equality in human resource recruitment and in providing career development opportunities for employees**

Objective	Measure/Activity	Term/ Target Values	Resources and means	Responsible person/body
<p><b>Evaluating the existing environment and identifying strengths and weaknesses in relation to recruitment and career development</b></p>	<p>Systematically collecting gender-disaggregated data and monitoring of the ratio of men to women in administrative and scientific positions</p>	<p>continuously</p>	<p>IICT Budget</p>	<p>Gender Equality Committee  Human Resources Department</p>
	<p>Conducting research to identify weaknesses in relation to the recruitment process and existing career development opportunities and procedures</p>	<p>2023, 2025, 2027  3 studies</p>	<p>IICT Budget</p>	<p>Gender Equality Committee  Human Resources Department</p>
	<p>Monitoring of the normative documents, procedures and criteria for appointment and career development of the employees and the scientific staff from the point of view of equality</p>	<p>continuously</p>	<p>IICT Budget</p>	<p>IICT Director Gender Equality Committee</p>

<b>Achieving and maintaining gender equality in human resource recruitment</b>	Participating in gender-based bias recognition trainings for all employees on management positions related to human resources selection and recruitment	continuously >3 trainings	BAS or IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
	Encourage scientists to apply for positions that match their qualifications	continuously	IICT Budget	IICT Director
<b>Achieving and maintaining equality and equal treatment in providing career development opportunities</b>	Informing about the analyzes conducted at BAS about the reasons for the delay in the career development of women scientists and the introduction of IICT-specific appropriate measures to overcome it	2023	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
	Information on ways to facilitate filing gender-based discrimination complaints (online form, e-mail address of the IICT Commission, etc.)	2023	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
	Disseminate BAS information materials and manuals on counteracting gender-based discrimination (including excerpts from laws, normative documents and regulations)	2023	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee

### 3. Balance between professional and personal life as part of the organizational culture

Objective	Measure/Activity	Term/ target values	Resources and Means	Responsible Person/Body
<b>Identifying the needs of employees in relation to work-life balance</b>	Systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data and monitoring of the ratio of men to women on parental leave	continuously	IICT Budget	Human Resources Department
	Participation in a survey conducted by BAS to identify weaknesses and needs of employees in connection with the work-life balance	2023, 2025  2 surveys	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
<b>Ensuring a balance between the professional and personal lives of employees</b>	Dissemination of information on the opportunities for IICT staff and scientists to move to floating working hours and / or teleworking for a fixed period of time or permanently	continuously	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee  Director of IICT

<b>Promoting a culture of equality in caring for family members</b>	Informing and encouraging men at IICT to take parental leave or, if necessary, to take care of their family members	continuously	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee Director of IICT
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**4. Integrating gender-related research in scientific studies and PhD educational content.**

Objective	Measure/Activity	Term / target values	Resources and Means	Responsible Person/Body
<b>Integrating gender research, issues and aspects into scientific research</b>	Informing the IICT staff about the results of the research conducted at BAS as well as the documents adopted concerning gender equality	continuously	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
	Informing the IICT staff about the interdisciplinary courses and trainings on gender equality organised by BAS, intended for (1) researchers and (2) administrative and support staff..	2023-2024  2 trainings	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
<b>Integrating the gender topic into the educational content for PhD students</b>	Informing PhD students in IICT about interdisciplinary courses and trainings on gender equality, organized by BAS's Training Center	2023, 2025, 2027	IICT Budget	BAS  Gender Equality Committee

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

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Measure/Activity</b>	<b>Term / target values</b>	<b>Resources and Means</b>	<b>Responsible Person/Body</b>
<b>Evaluating the existing environment and identifying needs</b>	Participation of IICT representatives in the planned anonymous survey among employees and scientists at BAS intended to diagnose and identify problems and risks	2023  1 survey	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
<b>Optimization of control mechanisms</b>	Expanding the activity of IICT's Academic Ethics Committee to review and rule on gender-based discrimination signals and complaints and if necessary - submitting the signals to the BAS Academic Ethics Committee	2022	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
	Informing the IICT staff about the online mechanism designed by BAS to report cases of gender-based discrimination and violence, as well as about the activities of the Academic Ethics Committees of IICT and BAS.	2023	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee

	Informing IICT staff about amendments to BAS's Code of Ethics	2023	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
<b>Increasing the institutional culture</b>	Participation in BAS trainings and workshops on building institutional culture for recognizing and preventing gender-based violence	2023, 2025, 2027 3 trainings	BAS and IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee
	Informing the IICT staff about the Manual on gender-based violence recognition and prevention published by BAS	2023	IICT Budget	Gender Equality Committee

The Gender Equality Plan of IICT-BAS was approved by the Governing Body of IICT by decision of the Council of Directors, Protocol № 9 / 21.04.2022 and adopted by decision of the General Assembly of IICT employees, Protocol № 1/13.06.2022.

