



Gender Equality Plan

The aim of the Gender Equality Plan of the M. Aitkhozhin Institute of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry (hereinafter *IMBB*) is to ensure equal opportunities for all men and women researchers. We proceed from the principles of gender equality in all our activities without compromising on competence and quality. We wish to support all researchers in Kazakhstan, irrespective of gender (as well as sexual orientation, nationality, age, religion and other individual characteristics), and believe that research will benefit the society the most if the background of the researchers involved in conducting research is as diverse as possible, and if the aspects of gender have also been taken into account in the research being carried out.

The current state of gender equality in Kazakhstan, including in research sphere, has not reached the equality of men and women in terms of their position and opportunities. There exists a great gender imbalance across academic positions, the proportion of women in the decision-making bodies regarding research policy is modest, and considerably more men apply for and receive research grants than women. In order to improve the indicators of gender equality, it is imperative to tackle these issues systematically. The one of the goals of the IMBB is to pay more attention to the aspects of gender in all its activities, and thus contribute to promoting gender equality in the Kazakhstan research landscape.

All of the departments of the IMBB share the responsibility of promoting gender equality. The Plan is based on interviews with the Director of the Institute and the Heads of Departments, a data analysis of the activities of the Council, and on the written recommendations as well as discussions between the employees. Specific activities for achieving the set objectives and the employees responsible for them shall be stipulated in the annual action plans of the Institute. Meeting the set objectives will be covered in the annual reports. The Plan has been approved by the management of the IMBB on 26 of July 2024 and it will be revised at least once a year.

Subsequently, the objectives and underlying principles of the Gender Equality Plan, as well as the measures which will be proposed and adopted by the Institute in order to meet the set objectives, have been listed. Proceeding from the activities and possibilities of the Institute for improving the state of gender equality, the five main objectives for the time period 2024-2029 are as follows:



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M. Aitkhozhin Institute of Molecular Biology
and Biochemistry

1. Raising gender awareness among the employees of the Institute;
2. Adhering to the principles of equal treatment;
3. Improving gender balance among the employees of the Institute;
4. Improving gender balance among the applicants and recipients of research grants, awards, and funding;
5. Implementing a gender-sensitive communication strategy.

1. Raising gender awareness among the employees of the Institute

In order to make fair and inclusive decisions, gender awareness, including awareness of possible problems caused by unconscious bias, is of utmost importance for the researchers, the management and other employees of the Institute. Increased awareness helps to prevent discrimination and ensures making fairer decisions. Gender awareness also contributes to achieving all of the other objectives of the Institute's Gender Equality Plan.

For ensuring a better understanding of gender equality among the employees as well as among the members of the departments of the Institute, we will:

- • Improve our competences regarding gender equality, including by participating in training courses.
- • Integrate the aspects of gender into the training courses we organise, if applicable.
- • Assemble existing and compile new need-based information materials on gender equality, including materials on the importance of considering unconscious bias and on integrating the gender dimension in research.
- • Share our experiences, good practices, and developments regarding gender equality within our organization, including in in-house seminars, workshops, etc.

2. Adhering to the principles of equal treatment

The IMBB supports equal treatment of all people, refraining from any form of discrimination based on gender (also from indirect discrimination, which occurs when seemingly neutral rules give an advantage to some researchers or target groups). Among other things, we pay particular attention to the impact that being on parental leave has on one's research career.

In order to ensure equal treatment, we will:



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M. Aitkhozhin Institute of Molecular Biology
and Biochemistry

- • Examine our rules and regulations to make sure that they ensure equal opportunities for everyone.
- • Take into consideration a justified leave of absence from research, such as a parental leave or military service, in the preparatory materials relating to making decisions.
- • Adhere to the principles of equal treatment and proceed only from established criteria when making decisions.
- • Collect feedback on the adherence to the principles of equal treatment in the decision-making processes.

3. Improving gender balance among the employees of the Institute

The aim of the M. Aitkhozhin Institute of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry is to reach the greatest possible gender balance among all employees of the organization, both scientific, administrative and technical, without compromising the competence of experts.

Among the members of the groups and departments, we consider the representation of the underrepresented gender of at least 40% to be a good gender balance. When convening field-specific panels, the gender proportions of various research fields is a further factor to be taken into account: in case of research fields dominated by one gender, the underrepresented gender has to be, if at all possible, represented in the decision-making body in the same proportion as it is in the general population of that particular research field. We will keep this principle in mind when convening any of our subdivision.

In order to achieve a greater gender balance among the members of the decision-making bodies, administration as well as among the members of Academic Council, we will:

- • Consciously pay more attention to gender when searching for the candidates.
- • Prefer a candidate of underrepresented gender if the candidates are of equal standing.
- • Compile statistical overviews and guidelines highlighting the aspects of gender in the process of searching for the members of the panels as well as the reviewers in order to acknowledge the issue more widely.



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M. Aitkhozhin Institute of Molecular Biology
and Biochemistry

4 Improving gender balance among the applicants and recipients of research grants, awards, and funding.

In order to achieve a greater gender balance among the applicants and recipients of research grants, funding, and awards, we will:

- Present the information regarding research funding calls and contests in an inclusive and gender-neutral manner.
- Monitor the gender distribution among the applicants and recipients of research grants, awards, and funding.
- Present gender-disaggregated data of the applicants and recipients of research grants, awards, and funding on the website of the Institute.
- Monitor the success rates of men and women applicants.
- Draw the attention of the decision-makers to possible unconscious bias and to the importance of considering the aspects of gender.
- Emphasize the issue of gender imbalance among the applicants and recipients of research grants, awards, and funding during information days and other meetings with the target groups and their representatives in order to raise the awareness of gender imbalance among potential applicants and their institutions.

5. Implementing a gender-sensitive communication strategy.

Gender equality will also be promoted through communication activities. We will remain gender-aware in all our channels of communication and will:

- Monitor our use of language and refrain from reproducing gender stereotypes.
 - Monitor the representation of men and women in illustrative materials.
 - Proceed from the principles of gender diversity when writing press releases, news, profile articles, etc.
 - Try to ensure gender balance among the speakers at public events, if at all possible.
- As is the case with decision-making bodies, we consider the representation of the underrepresented gender of at least 40% to be a good gender balance.
- Emphasize the need to underline the aspects of gender in various materials and statistics: the data, wherever possible, will be disaggregated by gender.
 - Regularly publish the core indicators of gender equality in research on our website.