A4L_BRIDGE

Alliance4Life

Alliance4Life Bridging the Research and Innovation Gap in Life Sciences

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03 - 10113653

D1.1 Research Culture Assessments

Work Package:	WP1
Task:	T1.1, T1.2, T1.3
Deliverable due date:	31/05/2025
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Deliverable number:	D1.1
Deliverable type:	R
Dissemination level:	PU
Version:	1.0

1. INTRODUCTION

This deliverable compiles the outcomes of three interrelated tasks implemented within Work Package 1 of the Alliance4Life_Bridge project, aimed at enhancing institutional practices and promoting excellence in research management across Central and Eastern Europe. The joint report reflects the collaborative efforts of Alliance4Life partners over the first 15 months of the project, focusing on the topics of research evaluation, human resources management, and sustainable laboratory practices.

The Open Peer-Evaluation Pilot (Task 1.1) explored new methods for transparent institutional assessment by developing a harmonised checklist and evaluating readiness for implementation across member institutions. In parallel, the task on Best Practices in HR Management (Task 1.2) mapped the adoption and perception of advanced HR policies, such as career development frameworks and gender equality measures, to identify impactful approaches and foster mutual learning. Finally, the Green Lab Audit (Task 1.3) assessed the progress of sustainability practices in research environments, showcasing actionable examples and stimulating further improvement in environmentally responsible research operations.

Together, these three activities serve as a foundation for shared learning and institutional development within the Alliance, supporting the overarching goal of narrowing the innovation gap in the European Research Area.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2. OPEN PEER-EVALUATION CHECKLIST

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Task:	T1.1 Open Peer Evaluation Pilot
Responsible:	BMC SAV

2.1   Introduction – Open Peer Evaluation Checklist

Open peer-evaluation plays an essential role in promoting a culture of research excellence, transparency, and fairness in academic institutions. By engaging a panel of external experts, institutions can objectively assess the quality, impact, and integrity of research practices, ensuring that assessments go beyond internal biases or traditional metrics. This process not only enhances the credibility of research outcomes but also fosters a climate of trust, ongoing learning, and continual improvement across all organizational levels.

Within the Alliance4Life consortium, open peer-evaluation has been adopted as a catalyst for positive change.

Three institutions (CEITEC MU, ICRC, and BMC SAV) have already successfully integrated open peer evaluation into their research assessment system. Their experiences and good practices identified during preceding Alliance4Life projects, together with recognition of CoARA principles, can guide other A4L consortium members to carry out open peer evaluation of research at their institutions. In the frame of the A4L_BRIDGE project, three more partners, namely UT, VU, and UL committed to this endeavour. They will set the rules tailored to their needs (e.g. evaluation of research groups, faculties, or the entire institution), recruit external evaluators, and accomplish on-site visits of panel members who will then provide reports concluding their views on the status quo and suggestions for improvements.

In order to contribute towards harmonisation of preparation and accomplishment of the evaluation, we designed an Open Peer-evaluation Checklist. This structured checklist, included in this Deliverable 1.1, can serve for navigating the process of open peer-evaluation, providing a practical and systematic approach for coordinators, reviewers, and institutional leaders. Its institution- and purpose-specific elaboration guarantees that every step is thoughtfully planned and executed, minimizing oversights and promoting a shared understanding of expectations from all participants.

Our Open Peer-Evaluation Checklist outlines the key phases of the evaluation process:

- **Preparation of the Evaluation Concept**
  Setting clear objectives, criteria, and scope tailor-fit to institutional priorities, identifying the research units or activities to be assessed, nominating and appointing panel members.

- **Creation of a Comprehensive Background Documentation**
  Creating concise, structured reports to provide evaluation panel with essential background on the institution's or research unit's structure, achievements, ongoing projects, and strategic priorities. This document ensures reviewers are well-informed before the on-site assessment begins.

- **Coordinating the On-Site Visit**
  Organizing an on-site visit to present research units and enable dialogue between evaluators and institutional members. Panelists can directly observe practices, gather diverse perspectives, and form a well-rounded understanding of the strengths and challenges of the evaluated research units.

- **Drafting the Evaluation Panel's Report**
  After thorough observation and analysis, the panel members synthesize their findings in a clear, structured report. This document highlights commendable practices while offering constructive recommendations for further improvements.

- **Internal Analysis of Recommendations**
  Institutions reflect on external feedback, engaging relevant stakeholders in discussions to understand and prioritize proposed changes. This internal analysis phase is crucial for transforming recommendations into actionable strategies.

- **Feedback and Implementation**
  An effective evaluation does not end with the report. Institutions are encouraged to provide feedback on the process and panel findings, tracking progress on implemented changes and maintaining a continuous improvement cycle.

Having a standardized checklist not only enhances transparency and consistency but also encourages accountability. It enables institutions to benchmark their processes against international best practices and supports progress towards a research culture marked by excellence and integrity. For Alliance4Life, the checklist supports harmonization across diverse organizational cultures, as evidenced by shared learning and adaptability among consortium partners.

As a real-life example, we include the checklist accomplished by the A4L partner institution BMC SAV that recently moved beyond overall institutional assessment towards targeted evaluations of individual research teams. This refined approach was taken to enable deeper, more nuanced analysis

of performance, foster tailored feedback, and cultivate engagement at the team level. This shift also demonstrates that evaluation approaches can evolve alongside the strategic development of research organizations.

In the Annex, BMC SAV shares a more detailed description of the evaluation process, panel composition, evaluation criteria, and includes templates used for the preparation of the background documents to be completed by the evaluated research teams and the template for the evaluators' assessment, comments, and recommendations. These templates were created taking inspiration from CEITEC MU and ICRC, and can help other institutions design templates according to their specific requirements.

2.2   Alliance4Life Checklist Template

Phase 1 – Creation of evaluation concept						
Task	Related document (if relevant)	Person(s) responsible for execution	Planned costs	Date due	Completed	Note and/or suggestions for good practice
Specification: **Purpose** **Target group** – *who is being assessed (indivi-duals, teams, institutions, core facilities)* **Scope** – *what is being assessed, what outcomes and activities are involved?* **Expert panel** – *what will be the composition and size of the EP.* **Schedule** **Resources**	e.g. Evaluation rules, or Measure of the director/dean				✓	See the A4L_ACTIONS Deliverable D3.1

Phase 2 – preparation of the evaluation						
Task	**Related document (if relevant)**	**Person(s) responsible for execution**	**Planned costs**	**Date due**	**Completed**	**Note and/or suggestions for good practice**
Nomination of the panel members *(According to their research expertise. Respect fair and inclusive approach, avoid conflict of interest)*	Nomination list approved by the relevant institutional bodies					
Invitation and formal appointment of the panel members	Invitation letter Appointment letter Agreement / Contract					Consider whether to appoint panel members just for a single evaluation or for a long-term advisory body (ISAB).
Phase 3 – preparation of the background documents						
Task	**Related document (if relevant)**	**Person(s) responsible for execution**	**Planned costs**	**Date due**	**Completed**	**Note and/or suggestions for good practice**
Design of the templates for: • **Self-assessment report** *(to be filled in by the evaluated unit)* • **Assessment report** *(to give feedback from the panel to the evaluated unit)*	Template for Self-assessment report – document should define space for some of the following information: CVs of key researchers, summary of research outputs in evaluation period: publications, grants, thesis supervised, mobility, invited conferences, societal, scientific, and economic impact, HR data, research plans...					Evaluation can be multi-stage, i.e. the evaluation can be of a research team (group), a research programme (department) and/or the whole institution. Different templates must then be prepared to match the specific objectives at each level.

10

Completion of the self-assessment report by the evaluated unit.						
Collection and consolidation of all self-assessment reports						
Submission of the background documents to the panel members						

Phase 4 – preparation of the on-site visit						
Task	Related document (if relevant)	Person(s) responsible for execution	Planned costs	Date due	Completed	Note and/or suggestions for good practice
Arrangements of travel, accommodation, and stays for the panel members						
Proposal of the detailed program of the on-site visit of the panel members	Schedule of the evaluation					
Rehearsal of oral presentations	Template for the presentation					
Preparation of the venue and arrangement of catering						

Phase 5 – on-site visit						
Task	Related document (if relevant)	Person / body responsible for execution	Planned costs	Date due	Completed	Note and/or suggestions for good practice
Transfer of panel members to the site of evaluation						
Accomplishment of the on-site visit, mini-conference including presentation, face-to-	Preliminary Evaluation report					

face hearings, and **meeting for sharing initial opinions** of the panel with the management and/or scientific boards					
Organization of the **departure** of the panel members					

Phase 6 – panel report and internal analysis of the comments and recommendations

Task	Related document (if relevant)	Person / body responsible for execution	Planned costs	Date due	Completed	Note and/or suggestions for good practice
Preparation of the **assessment report(s)** by the panel members and its consolidation by the panel chair	Final assessment report(s)					Opinion on the current status quo Recommendations for improvements with practical advises on implementation
Submission of the report to the legal representative of the institution						
Implementation of a procedure for possible appeals against evaluation results						
Internal **analysis of the panel recommendations**						
Elaboration of the strategy and action plan for the implementation of the most relevant advice						

Phase 7 – feedback and implementation						
Task	Related document (if relevant)	Person / body responsible for execution	Planned costs	Date due	Completed	Note and/or suggestions for good practice
First feedback to panel members	Management response to the panel report					
Implementation of the recommendations based on the resulting strategic decisions	Document: Action Plan(s)					
Interim feedback to panel members	Annual Action Plan reports					
Follow-up meetings with the panel members						

2.3   BMC SAV Peer-Evaluation of Research Teams

After completing an institution-wide peer-evaluation in 2022, the Biomedical Research Centre SAV recognized the value of a more focused assessment approach. Building on the insights gained, the Centre chose to implement peer-evaluations at the level of individual research teams, drawing on the expertise of its distinguished International Advisory Board. This shift allowed for a more nuanced appraisal of each team's strengths and challenges, and fostered targeted recommendations for further development. The evaluation included both the submission of written reports and an on-site visit by the International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) members that took place on November 12-13, 2024. This combination ensured that the assessment was both rigorous and comprehensive, offering direct interactions and valuable feedback alongside thorough documentation. The checklist below provides detailed information on each individual step taken to engage evaluators and effectively organize the entire process.

2.3.1 BMC SAV Checklist

Phase 1 – creation of evaluation concept						
Task	**Related document (if relevant)**	**Person(s) responsible for execution**	**Planned costs**	**Date due**	**Completed**	**Note and/or suggestions for good practice**
Specification: Evaluation of research teams (quality, outputs, HR and vision), 4 main research areas, Period 01/2019-06/2024 Expert panel of 9 members (Chair and 2 members for each research area) On-site visit	Evaluation rules & Director's measure approved by the Managing & Scientific boards	Director General, Head of Legal Department	N.A.	01/ 2024	✔	Inspired by A4L_ACTIONS Deliverable D3.1

Phase 2 – preparation of the evaluation						
Task	**Related document (if relevant)**	**Person(s) responsible for execution**	**Planned costs**	**Date due**	**Completed**	**Note and/or suggestions for good practice**
Nomination of the panel members	Nomination list approved by the Managing & Scientific boards	Director General	N.A.	03/ 2024	✔	
Invitation and formal appointment of the panel members for a long-term advisory body (ISAB)	Invitation letter Appointment letter Agreement / Contract	Director General, Head of Legal & Organisational Unit	N.A.	05/ 2024	✔	

Phase 3 – preparation of the background documents						
Task	**Related document (if relevant)**	**Person(s) responsible for execution**	**Planned costs**	**Date due**	**Completed**	**Note and/or suggestions for good practice**
Design of the templates for: **Self-assessment report** *(to be filled in by the research team leaders-RTL)* **Assessment report** *(to give feedback from the panel to the evaluated unit)*	Self-assessment report template for research report and plan, CVs of RTL, list of outputs and projects, HR overview Assessment report template	DG & Directors of institutes Scientific secretary	N.A.	06/ 2024	✓	Inspired by A4L_ACTIONS Deliverable D3.1 Determine structure, format and max volume of texts for each part of the documents
Completion of the self-assessment report	Drafts of self-assessment reports	Research team leaders	N.A.	08/ 2024	✓	
Collection and **consolidation** of all self-assessment reports	Final versions of self-assessment reports	Directors	N.A.	08/ 2024	✓	
Submission of the background documents to the panel chair and members	Assembly of reports	Director General	N.A.	09/ 2024	✓	

Phase 4 – preparation of the on-site visit						
Task	**Related document (if relevant)**	**Person(s) responsible for execution**	**Planned costs**	**Date due**	**Completed**	**Note and/or suggestions for good practice**
Arrangements of travel, accommodation, and stays for the panel members		DG's secretariat	xxx	09/ 2024	✓	
Proposal of the detailed program of the on-site visit of the panel members	Schedule of the evaluation	DG & Directors	N.A.	09/ 2024	✓	Inform RT leaders and researchers
Rehearsal of oral presentations	Template for the presentation	Research team leaders	N.A.	09/ 2024	✓	
Preparation of the venue and arrangement of catering		Legal & Organisational Unit	N.A.	10/ 2024	✓	

Phase 5 – on-site visit

Task	Related document (if relevant)	Person / body responsible for execution	Planned costs	Date due	Completed	Note and/or suggestions for good practice
Transfer of panel members to the site of evaluation		Technical unit	N.A.	11/ 2024	✓	
Accomplishment of the on-site visit, **mini-conference** including presentation, **face-to-face hearings**, and **meeting for sharing initial opinions** of the panel with the management and/or scientific boards	Detailed time schedule Preliminary evaluation report	Scientific secretary, Panel members, ISAB chair Directors	N.A.	11/ 2024	✓	All researchers present in auditorium of mini-conference Hearings only for RT leaders
Organization of the **departure** of the panel members		Technical unit	N.A.	11/ 2024	✓	

Phase 6 – panel report and internal analysis of the comments and recommendations

Task	Related document (if relevant)	Person / body responsible for execution	Planned costs	Date due	Completed	Note and/or suggestions for good practice
Preparation of the **assessment report(s)** by the panel members and its consolidation by the panel chair	Assessment reports of RTs	Panel members ISAB Chair	N.A.	12/ 2024	✓	Opinion on the current status quo Recommendations for improvements with practical advises on implementation
Submission of the report to the legal representative of the institution	Final assessment reports	ISAB Chair		01/ 2025	✓	Sharing RT reports with respective RT leaders Asking for feedbacks
Implementation of a procedure for possible appeals	Not included			N.A.	N.A.	
Internal analysis of the panel recommendations	Internal report	DG & Directors		03/ 2025		Based on feedbacks from RT leaders & directors
Elaboration of the strategy and action plan	Draft of Strategic & Action Plan	DG, Managing & Scientific Boards		05/ 2025		

Phase 7 – feedback and implementation						
Task	Related document (if relevant)	Person / body responsible for execution	Planned costs	Date due	Completed	Note and/or suggestions for good practice
First feedback to panel members	Management response to the panel report	DG & Directors		05/ 2025		
Implementation of the recommenda-tions based on the resulting strategic decisions	Strategic & Action Plan	DG, Managing & Scientific Boards, RT Leaders		Con-tinu-ously		
Interim feedback to panel members	Annual Action Plan reports			12/ 2026		Annually, by the end of year
Follow-up meetings with the panel members				11/ 2026		Bi-annually with Boards Every 4 years with RTLs and researchers

2.4   ANNEX 1: BMC SAV Peer Evaluation Overview

2.4.1 International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB)

ISAB is an external advisory body of internationally renowned experts invited to assess the scientific quality and research prospects of individual research teams of the BMC SAV and provide strategic recommendations for the future development of the teams as well as the entire institution. Based on the current research scope of the BMC SAV, the assessment proceeded in four broader research areas, namely: (1) virology-microbiology-immunology, (2) cancer research-nanobiology, (3) endocrinology-metabolism-genetics-physiology, and (4) neurosciences. Assessment of research teams in each of these research areas was be governed by two ISAB members, and the board of eight evaluators was be coordinated by the ISAB chair. The ISAB members were nominated by the internal Scientific board and the Management board of the BMC SAV in accordance to their scientific expertise, taking into account absence of direct conflict of interests (no employment/personal relationship, less than five common research outputs).

ISAB CHAIR:

Prof. Toivo MAIMETS, University of Tartu, Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology Chair of Cell Biology, Estonia

ISAB MEMBERS:
Virology-Microbiology-Immunology
Prof. Christian DROSTEN, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Institute of Virology, Germany

Prof. Jan KONVALINKA, Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic

Cancer research-Nanobiology

Prof. Bruno SAINZ, Instituto de Investigaciones Biomedicas, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain
Prof. Ondrej SLABÝ, Masaryk University, CEITEC, Brno, Czech Republic

Endocrinology-Metabolism-Genetics-Physiology

Prof. Alexander PFEIFER, Institute of Pharmacology and Toxicology, University Hospital, University of Bonn, Germany

Prof. Milan MACEK Jr, Charles University, 2nd Faculty of Medicine, Department of Biology and Medical genetics, Prague, Czech Republic

Neurosciences

PD Dr. Mathias V. SCHMIDT, Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry, Munich, Germany

Prof. Jan MOTLIK, Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic

SCOPE AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

The evaluation covered research activities and outputs of research units during the period 01/2019-06/2024 and their vision of future research direction for the next 5 years
The ISAB was asked to prepare short reports of research units and their assignment to one of four categories:
A – Excellent (strong international level), B – Good (strong national level with international visibility);
C – Satisfactory (satisfactory national level); D – Unsatisfactory (weak/insufficient level).
In addition, the ISAB is expected to provide concise overall assessment of the BMC SAS with recommendations for its progressive development.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

1.   BACKGROUND INFORMATION. Research team leaders prepared written reports containing information on research focus, team composition, most important research outputs with impact on knowledge and society, selected publications and projects, main collaborations, plans for future research. The reports were assembled according to research areas and sent to ISAB members together with the information about the BMC SAV institutional strategy and activities.
2.   MINI-CONFERENCE. The on-site visit started with will mini-conference to introduce the BMC SAV research scope to the ISAB members. All research teams' leaders gave a short 10 min presentation in the presence of the entire BMC SAV academic community. After the accomplishment of the research team (RT) presentations at the mini-conference, the ISAB members discussed about their immediate impressions.
3.   INTERVIEWS OF RESEARCH TEAMS' LEADERS. Research teams' leaders met face-to-face with the ISAB members. The meetings took part during the second on-site day in four parallel Q&A panel sessions divided according to research areas. Each hearing session took about 30 min.

4.   CLOSED ISAB MEETING. The ISAB attributed and consolidated grading and sum up findings and recommendations (second day evening, or the third day morning – timing will be specified before the on-site visit).

5.   ISAB FEEDBACK TO THE BMC SAS MANAGEMENT. The ISAB members will meet with the BMC SAS management and provide their immediate overall impressions from the evaluation exercise (third day morning).

6.   FINAL ISAB REPORT. The summary report containing evaluations and grading of research units, opinions on most prospective research directions and recommendations for future improvements will be elaborated by the ISAB chair and delivered to the BMC SAS Director General (two months after the on-site visit at the latest), who will share it with the Directors of the BMC SAS institutes and the Director General of the BMC SAS.

7.   DISCLOSURE OF RESULTS. Each evaluated research unit leader will receive only the final evaluation results of its research group. The results related to individual research units will not be announced publicly, only anonymized distribution of grades and major findings and recommendations will be shared with the BMC SAS academic community.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Once the evaluation process was be complete, the research team leaders was asked to prepare an implementation plan for the recommendations from the evaluation. In addition, the BMC SAV management and scientific boards will update the BMC SAS strategic plan including research directions and governance. Implementation of the recommendations will be part of the follow up and next meeting with ISAB.

2.4.2 Guidelines for Evaluation

The following description serves as a rough guide of the level the evaluated research team is expected to reach for a given grade. It is absolutely not necessary to meet simultaneously all the listed conditions to be awarded by the given grade and the interpretation does not need to be literal. Award of the grade should be based on an overall evaluation, considering the competitiveness of the research and knowledge of the research field. The term "international comparison" used on the scale usually means the ERA environment or a comparable environment an evaluator might be more familiar with.

A – Excellent (strong international level)

Scientific performance: The evaluated RT is at a high international level. The research environment and performance in terms of originality of research outputs are internationally competitive, reaching excellence. The team is involved in international scientific research networks and is a recognized community member at European and national levels. The RT has a clear and ambitious vision about its future research development.

Societal relevance and community outreach: Research in the RT has a high potential for societal impact. The results bring or have strong potential to bring economic impact or significant impact on

society both nationally and internationally (realistic expectation of application in areas of public interest). The RT is active in science communication, organizes meetings, shares the results of their research at multiple internationally and nationally visible fora and/or generates shared research resources of high impact.

Resources for research: The RT is successful in competing for international grants, and is consistently successful in obtaining competitive national grant funding. The RT has a vital HR structure (attracting and supporting researchers at all levels), clear and ambitious vision about its future HR development and mentoring track record (several alumni moved on from the group to continue a successful career in research or industry).

B – Good (strong national level with international visibility)

Scientific performance: The evaluated RT is exceeding the national level. In terms of originality of research outputs and competitiveness in international comparison, the research environment and performance of the RT is of a good standard. The RT is involved in competitive national projects and is a recognized member of a community involving national leaders in the field. It has substantive collaboration at the national level and moderate involvement in international scientific research networks. The RT has a clear vision about its future research development.

Societal relevance and community outreach: Research in the RT has good potential for societal impact. The results have potential to bring economic impact or an impact on society at the national level (realistic expectation of application in areas of public interest). The RT shares results of their research occasionally at international fora, teaches and communicates science to local and national stakeholders.

Resources for research: The RT regularly competes for international grants, but mostly receives national grant funding. There is sporadic evidence that graduates of the group continue in a research career. The RT has a clear vision about its future HR development.

C – Satisfactory (good national level)

Scientific performance: The evaluated RT is average at the national level. The research environment and performance lag behind the international environment standards. In terms of originality of research outputs and competitiveness, the RT is at a good national level. The RT participates in national projects in the field and is involved in the national collaborations. It is sporadically involved in international scientific research networks. The RT has a vision about its research sustainability.

Societal relevance and community outreach: The evaluated RT has a low potential for societal impact. The RT presents research results to national audiences. Public communication of science and teaching activities are limited.

Resources for research: The evaluated RT is not successful in obtaining international grants and is only moderately successful in obtaining national grant funding. There are no significant graduates of the group continuing in research yet. The RT has a vision about its future HR sustainability.

D – Unsatisfactory (weak or insufficient level)

Scientific performance: The evaluated RT is below-average at the national level. The research environment lags far behind in both international and national comparison. The RT's performance is unsatisfactory in terms of research output and competitiveness. The RT has an unclear vision about its research sustainability.

Societal relevance and community outreach*:* Research in the evaluated RT has little to no potential for societal impact. There is no significant evidence of any community building or outreach activity.

Resources for research: The evaluated RT has only limited success in obtaining national grant funding. The RT does not ensure its members further development of their careers and potential and has unclear vision of its HR sustainability.

The primary objective of the ISAB evaluation is to provide recommendations to each RT for its future improvement as well as overall recommendations to the BMC SAS for its progressive institutional development.

2.4.3 Templates for Background Documents

General information

- All data in the background documents should relate to the period of 01/2019-06/2024.
- The evaluation reports elaborated by the ISAB will be communicated only to the respective research team leaders and directors.
- The evaluation grades of the research teams with main ISAB conclusions will be made available internally to the members of the managing and scientific boards and will serve as a background for elaboration of the BMC SAS research strategy.
- Overall figures (i.e. how many teams were assigned to each grade) will be made available to external authorities only in reasonable cases.

Documents prepared by the research team leaders

A.   RESEARCH TEAM REPORT AND FUTURE PLAN

6 pages maximum
REPORT
1. Name of the team and research groups (RG) within the team – if applicable
2. Name of the team leader and names of RG leaders – if applicable
3. Short abstract – main topic (max 100 words)
4. Description of the team - team structure (total current FTE/headcounts of the team, FTE allocated according to position type including PhD students, research technicians and laboratory technicians, FTE of research groups within the team (if applicable), gender composition
5. Description of the research infrastructure – directly available to the team and accessible within BMC SAS (max 200 words)
6. Description of research - research focus and area(s), main research goals and visions, other relevant information (max 300 words)
7. Overview and form of collaborations – short description of key collaborations within and outside BMC SAS, national/international, academic/non-academic, specification of the form of collaboration

8. List of max. 5 most significant research results – selected research publications

9. List of max. 5 most significant outputs/activities other than publications – organization of a conference, participation in the expert committees, clinical guidelines, contribution to BMC SAS development/governance/public awareness etc.

10. List of max. 5 most significant grants awarded during the evaluation period – project type, PI and funding

11. Other relevant information - Scientific recognition of the team members, participation in popularization of science, contract research, patents, other activities, etc.

SWOT ANALYSIS:

12. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats – (in 2x2 table form, very brief outline)

FUTURE PLAN:

13. Research focus and area - research plans for next 3 years - main research goals and visions, planned results – intended publications (not numbers, but topics, including submitted manuscripts under review), applications, activities, other relevant information

14. HR – Planned/needed structure of the team (FTE, structure of positions, planned /needed expertise – realistic outlook)

15. Finances and grants - Financial plan for the next period to achieve the proposed research plan and to assure sustainability of the team, planned grant proposals – national/international, other sources

B. CV OF THE TEAM LEADER

2 pages maximum

1. Name, surname, titles
2. e-mail
3. Researcher ID/ORCID
4. Current affiliations
5. Professional experience
6. Education and academic qualifications
7. Trainings, professional licenses, certifications
8. Membership in professional societies
9. Teaching and/or supervising activities
10. Other relevant information – prestigious awards and distinctions, invited lectures, activities etc.
11. Selected scientific results – max 5 most significant publications, max 5 most significant grants, applied results, etc.

C. HR OVERVIEW

List of current and former team members provided by the team leader – name, age, position, FTE, main expertise such as field, technical and methodological skills, soft skills (writing, experimentation, coordination, supervision of students, technical support, administration), main role in the team (leader, member, principal investigator of main projects etc.) and/or BMC SAV.

Documents prepared by the administration

BIBLIOMETRIC PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH TEAM

- List of publications registered in the Web of Science and Scopus databases in the period of 01/2019-06/2024 (research articles with IF and/or SJR indicator and monographs or monograph chapters)
- At least one author with BMC SAS affiliation (including depiction of the first and/or corresponding authors from BMC SAS)
- Number of citations and average number of citations per year
- Journal name, JCR/SJR quartiles and deciles/percentiles equal or above 0.90

GRANTS AND FINANCES OF THE RESEARCH TEAM

- Number of submitted and obtained grants per year (national/international)
- Past grants – list of grants finished during the evaluated period (including those started before the evaluation period), title, type, start-end dates, PI/partner, FTE allocated by the team, funding (in EUR)
- Current grants – list of grants awarded during the evaluation period that are still active – title, type, start-end dates, PI/partner, FTE allocated by the team, funding
- Participation in large institutional grants – cooperation in grants awarded to BMC SAV institution that include more BMC SAV teams – title, type, start-end dates, PI/partner, FTE allocated by the team

2.5   Template for the Research Team Evaluation

Research Team Leader: *name*	
Research Team: *title*	
GRADE: A – Excellent, B – Good, C – Satisfactory, D – Unsatisfactory	
General comments on quality of research and main recommendations to RT for improvement:	
Specific comments with emphasis on recommendations for advance in RT performance regarding:	
➢ relevance and significance of research topic	
➢ publication strategy, level of publications	

➢ grant strategy (writing, submission, alignment with needs of research program)
➢ cooperation with the focus on interdisciplinarity (joint projects with other RTs / inside / outside BMC SAS)
➢ research potential + vision and strategy of the RT
➢ RT structure (quality and coherence of individual research groups, if applicable), HR composition
➢ translation to practice, collaboration with application sphere (robustness /impact of the collaboration both intellectually, scientifically and financially), societal impact
➢ other (e.g. invited speakers, awards, membership in boards, teaching, supervising, engagement in supporting activities of the BMC SAS or other services for the academic community etc.)

3. Best Practices of HR Management

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	Tomáš Doseděl, Faculty of Social Sciences, Masaryk University; DK Media Net s.r.o.
Task:	T1.1 Open Peer Evaluation Pilot
Responsible:	CEITEC MU
Working group (Focus Group 3: HR and Mobility):	HR and Mobility): A. Dvořáková (CEITEC MU), B. Wahlová (FNUSA), M. Grman (BMC SAV), A. Komorowska-Michałek (MUL), A. Wiśniewska (MUL), N. Čikeš (UZSM), M. Radmilović (UZSM), G. Šimić (UZSM), Ž. Krsnik (UZSM), K. Kuningas (UT), K. Ažukaitis (VU), E. Zeltkalne-Ratniece (LIOS), J. Veliks (LIOS), T. Marš (UL), A. Pém-Urbán (SU), R. Papp (SU), V. Pencheva (MUS), S. Stefanopulos (UMFCD), C. Petcu (UMFCD)

3.1   Context and Purpose of the Report

From Policy to Practice: Perceptions of HR Transformation in CEE Research Institutions

Over the past five years, the Alliance4Life (also: A4L) has systematically addressed the structural deficits in HR management across research institutions in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Earlier projects of the A4L[1] provided a strategic and institutional perspective: first mapping the baseline and best practices in career systems[2] (2021), and later assessing tangible improvements in key HR areas[3] (2024) such as recruitment, leadership, diversity, and career development.

These efforts laid the groundwork for systemic change, often facilitated through implementation of the **HR Excellence in Research Award (HRS4R)** action plans and/or **Gender Equality Plans** (also: GEP). However, as many of these reforms enter implementation or consolidation phases, a crucial question arises: **How are these changes perceived by those living them—employees and managers (group leaders, heads of departments)?**

This report shifts the focus from strategy and institutional policies and actions to experience. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach combining **a broad survey (681 respondents)** and **institutional interviews or questionnaires (12 institutions)**, it explores whether the policy changes

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introduced under Alliance4Life have translated into meaningful improvements in day-to-day HR practice. We focus on three core areas:

1. **Recruitment**
2. **Gender Equality and Diversity**
3. **Leadership**

By comparing institutional and individual perspectives, this study enriches the Alliance4Life's HR knowledge base with a ground-level view of implementation. It highlights areas where positive change is acknowledged and where further support, communication, or cultural work is needed. Ultimately, the goal is to close the perception gap, ensuring that HR strategies not only exist on paper but truly shape institutional culture and career pathways in meaningful, inclusive, and sustainable ways.

Report Structure Overview

The report is structured to guide the reader from strategic background and research design to a detailed analysis of findings and their interpretation.

- **Chapter 1** sets the context and explains the rationale behind the study, focusing on the shift from institutional strategies to the lived experience of employees and leaders.
- **Chapter 2** provides an executive summary of the main findings across the three thematic areas.
- **Chapter 3** outlines the methodology, including the target groups, data collection tools (survey and interviews), and analytical approach.
- **Chapter 4** presents results from the employee survey, divided into three thematic parts: Recruitment, Gender Equality and Diversity, and Leadership. For each theme, results are further segmented by the type of respondent.
- **Chapter 5** complements the survey findings with institutional perspectives gathered through interviews and questionnaires.
- **Chapter 6** compares survey and interview data to identify areas of alignment and divergence between individual and institutional perspectives.
- **Chapter 7** includes annexes with supporting materials, such as the survey design, interview template, and a list of interviewed institutions' representatives.

3.2   Executive Summary

This report examines how employees and institutional leaders in 12 Central and Eastern European research institutions perceive recent changes in human resource (HR) management. It builds on previous strategic initiatives within the Alliance4Life network—particularly the formulation of shared best practices[4] (2021), development of institutional HR strategies and implementation of HR action plans[5] (2024). While earlier reports from 2021 and 2024 focused on policy design and formal progress, this study explores whether these efforts have translated into meaningful improvements in everyday HR practices and employees' experience.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines:

- a **quantitative survey** completed by 681 employees (research, administrative, and technical staff),
- and **interviews or written responses** from institutional HR leadership and management representatives.

The analysis focuses on three key domains:

1. **Recruitment**
2. **Gender Equality and Diversity (GEDI)**
3. **Leadership**

Key findings:

- The results reveal both **convergence and divergence between institutional narratives and lived realities**. While institutions highlight progress and strategic alignment, employees frequently point out the "last mile" challenges—gaps between declared policies and actual practice.

- **Institutional representatives and employees often "see" similar problems**—particularly in the need for structured processes, importance of professional HR support, transparent and well-organised recruitment and enhanced leadership.

- **Recruitment processes have improved** in terms of structure and transparency, particularly in institutions with stronger HR support and OTM-R policy of the HR Excellence in Research Award (also "HRS4R"). However, **differences remain across institutions**, and some employees report unclear communication or misaligned expectations.

- **Gender and diversity initiatives are in place**, but their **visibility and perceived impact vary**. While institutional representatives emphasize the adoption of Gender Equality Plans and

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[4]

https://alliance4life.com/media/3802438/d31_best_practices_in_career_systems_in_life_science_research_964997.pdf

[5] https://alliance4life.com/media/3803129/a4l_actions_d33_advances_in_career_system_upgrades_964997.pdf

view diversity as a strategic goal, many employees—especially early-career researchers— report limited awareness of these initiatives, question their real impact, and point to the persistence of gender stereotypes and unequal career progression opportunities.

- **Leadership development is emerging** as an area of institutional focus. While leadership training is frequently mentioned by institutions as a key area of investment, employees assess leadership primarily based on everyday interactions with their supervisors. They report varying leadership quality and lack of feedback culture.

- Many institutions observed a **significant positive synergic effect of leadership development programmes** on other areas of institutional development. As leaders are exposed to new perspectives and reflect on their roles, they become more attentive to structural issues and more inclined to support and enact change — both within their teams and across the institution. This increased reflexivity creates fertile ground for advancing HR practices in a more coherent and responsive way.

This report highlights the need to not only introduce HR reforms, but also ensure their **effective communication, institutional anchoring, and cultural integration**. Closing the perception gap between strategy and experience is essential for building sustainable, inclusive, and attractive research environments in the region.

3.3   Methodology

This analysis was conducted using a combination of an **all-employee survey** (also "Survey"[6]) and **interviews** (or written questionnaires) **with institutional leadership and HR department heads** across the Alliance4Life (A4L) institutions. The methodology was designed to assess the implementation and perception of advanced HR management policies and actions, focusing on three key areas: **1) Recruitment, 2) Gender Equality and Diversity, 3) Leadership**.

3.3.1 Target Groups

To understand the state of HR in research institutions and how it's developing, we selected three target groups to gather input from:

1. **Employees** can share how HR policies and practices affect them day to day, including what's working well and where improvements are needed.

2. **Group leaders** (heads of departments) offer insight into how these policies are implemented in teams and what kind of support they need as managers.

3. **Institutional leadership** brings a strategic perspective, helping us understand priorities, constraints, and plans for the future.

Looking at all these viewpoints together gives complex and realistic picture – and can also reveal blind spots or gaps between **what leadership believes is happening and what employees actually experience**. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, the study targeted three target groups, using the two above-described data collection tools (see tab. 1).

Tab. 1: Data collection tools and target groups specification

Interviews with Institutional Representative (or Institutional Questionnaires)	Employees Survey
Institutional representatives, including either a member of the leadership team or the head of the HR department[7]	**Leaders**, such as group leaders, department heads, and team managers
	General employees, including researchers, technicians and administrative staff

The survey was designed to reflect the differing experiences of leaders and general employees. Therefore, it included separate sets of questions for leaders and general employees, ensuring that responses captured the specific challenges and perspectives relevant to each group across all three thematic areas. Respondents were

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[6] The detailed design of the survey is available in Annex 2.
[7] The list of institutional representatives is available in Annex 4.

further categorized based on gender, position, age group, length of employment and home institution to allow for more detailed analysis.

Box 1: Topics, respondents and data collection tools
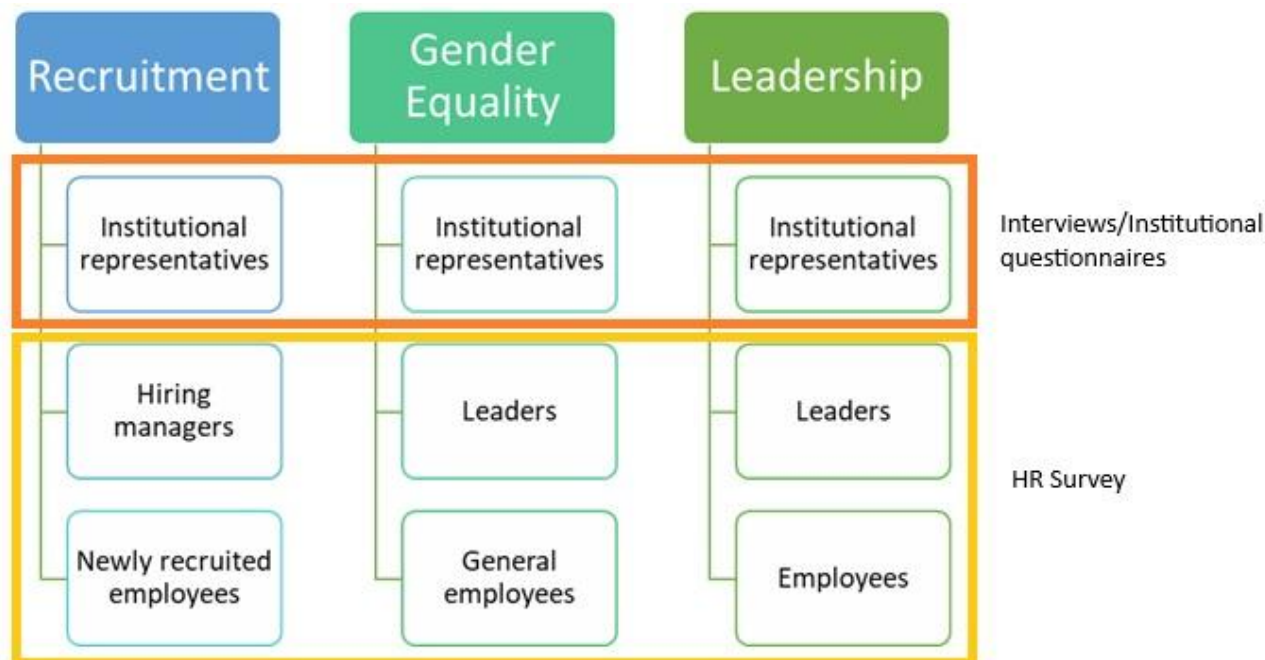
3.3.2 Survey Administration

The survey was distributed by each participating institution to its employees and remained open for two weeks, with a one-week extension to maximize response rates. Data collection took place electronically via a professional online tool between November and December 2024.

After closing the survey, the primary data were analysed using SW Stata (version 16 IC).

All data collected through the online survey were processed in accordance with applicable data protection regulations. Access to raw, identifiable data was restricted solely to the authors of the analysis. During data processing and interpretation, careful attention was paid to ensuring the anonymity of respondents. Any citations or aggregated data presented in this report were handled in a way that prevents the identification of individual participants.

3.3.3 Interviews and Institutional Questionnaires

In addition to the survey, Eliška Handlířová, task leader, conducted interviews with institutional leaders and HR department heads to complement the quantitative data during a period of November 2024-March 2025. Institutions were given the option to participate in either live interviews or submit written responses via a specialized questionnaire covering the same three

thematic areas from a leadership perspective. A total of four interviews were conducted, while the remaining institutions opted for written responses. List of institutional representatives providing the institutional perspective is specified in Annex 4.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

The collected quantitative data (survey responses) were analysed alongside qualitative data (open ended survey responses and institutional interviews) to provide a holistic overview. A sociologist with expertise in survey evaluation collaborated on processing and interpreting the results, ensuring methodological rigor and validity in the analysis.

To gain deeper insights, we then compared the results from both data sources (survey and interviews) to examine whether the experiences and perceptions of employees and managers aligned with the perspectives of institutional leadership. This comparative analysis allowed us to assess potential discrepancies in how the impact of HR policies and management practices is perceived at different organizational levels.

3.4   HR Survey Analysis

The research is divided into three parts: **1) Recruitment, 2) Gender Equality and Diversity, 3) Leadership.** Each part is answered by a different group of respondents depending on whether they are managers or employees without supervisory role, whether they have been through a selection procedure or were members of a recruitment committee in the past period, etc. Responses to all questions are shown according to gender, position, age group, length of experience and home institution.

Note on interpretation:

In some cases, we have found differences between institutions that could be interpreted as differences in national or institutional context (or the influence of national or organisational culture on respondents' behaviour). However, this could also be due to differences in sample structure and size. For example, if somewhere women with administrative positions are more likely to respond, the difference in responses may be due precisely to a higher representation of women or a higher representation of administrative staff. The different influences (national culture, company culture, non-representative sample composition) cannot be distinguished from each other with sufficient precision. For this reason, we do not comment on differences between institutions and have prepared a set of sub-reports containing information specifically on each institution.

The open-ended responses reflect a wide range of personal experiences and perspectives, shaped by the specific institutional contexts in which respondents are employed. Since participants come from multiple institutions across different countries, their feedback may vary significantly depending on local procedures, HR capacity, leadership culture, and national regulations. These qualitative insights should therefore be interpreted with an understanding that some comments may reflect isolated practices, while others may highlight systemic issues.

3.4.1 Respondents Profile

- **681 respondents** from 12 institutions participated in the survey.
- Administrative staff are the most represented (25.2 %), followed by principal investigators (24.2 %).
- If all researchers are counted, this group makes up the largest proportion of respondents (68.7 %).
- The responses are about twice as dominated by women over men.

Gender

	Freq.	Percent
Female	454	66.67
Male	191	28.05
Other	36	5.29
Total	681	100.00

Position

	Freq.	Percent
Researcher - PI	164	24.19
Researcher - Staff Scientist	118	17.40
Researcher - Postdoc	75	11.06
Researcher - PhD Candidate	80	11.80
Academic	29	4.28
Technical position	41	6.05
Administrative	171	25.22
Total	678	100.00

Age

	Freq.	Percent
0-25	11	1.62
25-39	264	38.77
40-54	283	41.56
55 and above	92	13.51
Prefer not to say	31	4.55
Total	681	100.00

Experiences

	Freq.	Percent
0-2 years	127	18.65
3 and more years	516	75.77
Prefer not to say	38	5.58
Total	681	100.00

Institution

	Freq.	Percent
Biomedical Research Center SAS	77	11.31
CEITEC Masaryk University	122	17.91
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	35	5.14
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	40	5.87
Medical University Sofia	52	7.64
Medical University of Lodz	39	5.73
Semmelweis University	27	3.96
University of Ljubljana	52	7.64
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	57	8.37
University of Tartu	49	7.20
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	58	8.52
Vilnius University	73	10.72
Total	681	100.00

3.4.2 Part 1: Recruitment

The first chapter of the report focuses on the recruitment process. The questions were first answered by those who have been part of the selection committees in the last three years. The second section was then answered by respondents who had been through the selection process in the last three years.

3.4.2.1   Members of Selection Committee

Approximately 27 % of respondents had been members or chairs of a selection committee for recruitment in the past period (see Table 1). Men were significantly more likely to be members of selection panels than women (see Table 2). In terms of position held, PIs predominate (see Table 3), which is to be expected. Similarly, a higher proportion of people of higher age (see Table 5) and with longer experience in the institution (see Table 6) is expected.

Table 1: Have you participated as a hiring manager or a member of a selection committee in the recruitment process at your institution within the past three years?

Hiring committee	Freq.	Percent
No	498	73.13
Yes	183	26.87
Total	681	100.00

Table 2: Gender × Hiring committee

Gender	Hiring committee		
	No	Yes	Total
Female	77.53	22.47	100.00
Male	61.78	38.22	100.00
Other	77.78	22.22	100.00
Total	73.13	26.87	100.00

Table 3: Position × Hiring committee

Position	Hiring committee		
	No	Yes	Total
Researcher - PI	48.78	51.22	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	86.44	13.56	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	89.33	10.67	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	92.50	7.50	100.00
Academic	75.86	24.14	100.00
Technical position	82.93	17.07	100.00
Administrative Position	69.01	30.99	100.00
Total	73.30	26.70	100.00

Table 4: Institution × Hiring committee

Institution	Hiring committee		
	No	Yes	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	84.42	15.58	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	69.67	30.33	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	74.29	25.71	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	82.50	17.50	100.00
Medical University Sofia	82.69	17.31	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	71.79	28.21	100.00
Semmelweis University	48.15	51.85	100.00
University of Ljubljana	67.31	32.69	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	66.67	33.33	100.00
University of Tartu	71.43	28.57	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	53.45	46.55	100.00
Vilnius University	90.41	9.59	100.00
Total	73.13	26.87	100.00

Table 5: Age × Hiring committee

Age	Hiring committee		
	No	Yes	Total
0-25	90.91	9.09	100.00
25-39	84.85	15.15	100.00
40-54	67.14	32.86	100.00
55 and above	57.61	42.39	100.00
Prefer not to say	67.74	32.26	100.00
Total	73.13	26.87	100.00

Table 6: Work experience × Hiring committee

Work experience	Hiring committee		
	No	Yes	Total
0-2 years	85.04	14.96	100.00
3 and more years	68.99	31.01	100.00
Prefer not to say	89.47	10.53	100.00
Total	73.13	26.87	100.00

3.4.2.1.1   Improvements in Recruitment

An above average majority of those who were members of the selection committee observe a slight improvement in the recruitment process (see Table 7). Men are more positive than women in this regard (see Table 8). Younger people (see Table 11) and those with shorter experience (see Table 12) in institutions also show a more positive perception of change.

Table 7: Have you noticed any improvements in the recruitment process in the last three years? (5 is most)

Improvements in recruitment	Freq.	Percent
1	35	19.55
2	14	7.82
3	48	26.82
4	53	29.61
5	29	16.20
Total	179	100.00

Table 8: Gender × Improvements in recruitment

Gender	Improvements in recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	14.85	8.91	30.69	25.74	19.80	100.00
Male	25.35	7.04	18.31	36.62	12.68	100.00
Other	28.57	0.00	57.14	14.29	0.00	100.00
Total	19.55	7.82	26.82	29.61	16.20	100.00

Table 9: Position × Improvements in recruitment

Position	Improvements in recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	22.89	14.46	20.48	28.92	13.25	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	18.75	0.00	56.25	12.50	12.50	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	25.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	0.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	33.33	0.00	33.33	16.67	16.67	100.00
Academic	28.57	0.00	28.57	14.29	28.57	100.00
Technical position	33.33	16.67	16.67	16.67	16.67	100.00
Administrative Position	7.69	1.92	28.85	38.46	23.08	100.00
Total	19.10	7.87	26.97	29.78	16.29	100.00

Table 10: Institution × Improvements in recruitment

Institution	Improvements in recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	8.33	16.67	33.33	33.33	8.33	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	8.57	8.57	20.00	31.43	31.43	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	11.11	0.00	33.33	55.56	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	28.57	14.29	14.29	28.57	14.29	100.00
Medical University Sofia	11.11	0.00	33.33	11.11	44.44	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	27.27	0.00	27.27	27.27	18.18	100.00
Semmelweis University	7.14	7.14	14.29	50.00	21.43	100.00
University of Ljubljana	41.18	0.00	52.94	5.88	0.00	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	15.79	0.00	31.58	26.32	26.32	100.00
University of Tartu	15.38	23.08	23.08	30.77	7.69	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	38.46	15.38	15.38	26.92	3.85	100.00
Vilnius University	14.29	0.00	42.86	42.86	0.00	100.00
Total	19.55	7.82	26.82	29.61	16.20	100.00

Table 11: Age × Improvements in recruitment

Age	Improvements in recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	15.79	2.63	18.42	36.84	26.32	100.00
40-54	20.65	8.70	30.43	23.91	16.30	100.00
55 and above	20.51	7.69	20.51	41.03	10.26	100.00
Prefer not to say	22.22	22.22	44.44	11.11	0.00	100.00
Total	19.55	7.82	26.82	29.61	16.20	100.00

Table 12: Work experience × Improvements in recruitment

Work experience	Improvements in recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	5.56	0.00	33.33	33.33	27.78	100.00
3 and more years	20.89	8.23	26.58	29.11	15.19	100.00
Prefer not to say	33.33	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	100.00
Total	19.55	7.82	26.82	29.61	16.20	100.00

3.4.2.1.2   Satisfaction with Recruitment

Similarly, there is a rather moderate level of satisfaction with the admissions process (highest for scores 3 and 4 on the five-point scale, see Table 13). Women are more satisfied than men (see Table 14), and people of younger age (see Table 17) and with less experience (see Table 18) are more satisfied than their older and more experienced counterparts.

Table 13: How satisfied are you with the overall recruitment process in your institution over the past three years? (5 is most)

Satisfaction with recruitment	Freq.	Percent
1	15	8.29
2	19	10.50
3	61	33.70
4	55	30.39
5	31	17.13
Total	181	100.00

Table 14: Gender × Satisfaction with recruitment

Gender	Satisfaction with recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	9.90	4.95	35.64	29.70	19.80	100.00
Male	5.56	18.06	29.17	33.33	13.89	100.00
Other	12.50	12.50	50.00	12.50	12.50	100.00
Total	8.29	10.50	33.70	30.39	17.13	100.00

Table 15: Position × Satisfaction with recruitment

Position	Satisfaction with recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	8.43	14.46	36.14	25.30	15.66	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	6.25	6.25	50.00	25.00	12.50	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	0.00	12.50	37.50	37.50	12.50	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	16.67	33.33	16.67	16.67	16.67	100.00
Academic	0.00	14.29	14.29	42.86	28.57	100.00
Technical position	14.29	14.29	42.86	0.00	28.57	100.00
Administrative Position	7.69	1.92	28.85	44.23	17.31	100.00
Total	7.82	10.61	34.08	30.73	16.76	100.00

Table 16: Institution × Satisfaction with recruitment

Institution	Satisfaction with recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	0.00	0.00	41.67	41.67	16.67	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	2.78	8.33	33.33	38.89	16.67	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	11.11	22.22	22.22	44.44	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	14.29	0.00	57.14	0.00	28.57	100.00
Medical University Sofia	11.11	11.11	22.22	22.22	33.33	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	18.18	9.09	0.00	54.55	18.18	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	14.29	14.29	42.86	28.57	100.00
University of Ljubljana	5.88	23.53	35.29	29.41	5.88	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	10.53	10.53	26.32	26.32	26.32	100.00
University of Tartu	7.14	7.14	57.14	14.29	14.29	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	23.08	11.54	46.15	19.23	0.00	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	14.29	42.86	42.86	0.00	100.00
Total	8.29	10.50	33.70	30.39	17.13	100.00

Table 17: Age × Satisfaction with recruitment

Age	Satisfaction with recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	10.26	7.69	25.64	25.64	30.77	100.00
40-54	7.61	10.87	33.70	34.78	13.04	100.00
55 and above	7.69	10.26	38.46	30.77	12.82	100.00
Prefer not to say	10.00	20.00	40.00	10.00	20.00	100.00
Total	8.29	10.50	33.70	30.39	17.13	100.00

Table 18: Work experience × Satisfaction with recruitment

Work experience	Satisfaction with recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	11.11	27.78	38.89	22.22	100.00
3 and more years	8.81	10.69	34.59	29.56	16.35	100.00
Prefer not to say	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	100.00
Total	8.29	10.50	33.70	30.39	17.13	100.00

3.4.2.1.3   Recruitment Meets Expectations

Almost half of the respondents who were members of the recruitment committee think that the recruitment process meets their requirements and needs (see Table 19). Also in this case, women, people of lower age and people with shorter experience in the institution report higher satisfaction.

Table 19: To what extent do you feel that the recruitment processes at your institution over the past three years have met your expectations and needs? (5 is most)

Recruitment meets expectations	Freq.	Percent
1	15	8.29
2	19	10.50
3	61	33.70
4	54	29.83
5	32	17.68
Total	181	100.00

Table 20: Gender × Recruitment meets expectations

Gender	Recruitment meets expectations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	7.84	6.86	35.29	28.43	21.57	100.00
Male	8.33	15.28	30.56	31.94	13.89	100.00
Other	14.29	14.29	42.86	28.57	0.00	100.00
Total	8.29	10.50	33.70	29.83	17.68	100.00

Table 21: Position × Recruitment meets expectations

Position	Recruitment meets expectations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	10.84	12.05	33.73	25.30	18.07	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	12.50	43.75	31.25	12.50	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	12.50	0.00	50.00	25.00	12.50	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	33.33	16.67	50.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	14.29	14.29	28.57	42.86	100.00
Technical position	0.00	14.29	57.14	14.29	14.29	100.00
Administrative Position	3.77	7.55	26.42	43.40	18.87	100.00
Total	7.78	10.56	33.89	30.00	17.78	100.00

Table 22: Institution × Recruitment meets expectations

Institution	Recruitment meets expectations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	0.00	0.00	25.00	66.67	8.33	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	13.51	35.14	27.03	24.32	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	11.11	11.11	11.11	44.44	22.22	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	14.29	42.86	14.29	28.57	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	22.22	44.44	11.11	22.22	100.00

Medical University of Lodz	9.09	9.09	27.27	45.45	9.09	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	14.29	14.29	35.71	35.71	100.00
University of Ljubljana	17.65	11.76	35.29	23.53	11.76	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	10.53	10.53	26.32	15.79	36.84	100.00
University of Tartu	7.69	15.38	38.46	38.46	0.00	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	26.92	3.85	46.15	23.08	0.00	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	0.00	57.14	28.57	14.29	100.00
Total	8.29	10.50	33.70	29.83	17.68	100.00

Table 23: Age × Recruitment meets expectations

Age	Recruitment meets expectations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	10.00	10.00	22.50	30.00	27.50	100.00
40-54	7.61	10.87	36.96	30.43	14.13	100.00
55 and above	7.69	10.26	33.33	28.21	20.51	100.00
Prefer not to say	11.11	11.11	44.44	33.33	0.00	100.00
Total	8.29	10.50	33.70	29.83	17.68	100.00

Table 24: Work experience × Recruitment meets expectations

	Recruitment meets expectations					
Work experience	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	5.26	10.53	21.05	26.32	36.84	100.00
3 and more years	8.18	10.69	35.22	30.19	15.72	100.00
Prefer not to say	33.33	0.00	33.33	33.33	0.00	100.00
Total	8.29	10.50	33.70	29.83	17.68	100.00

3.4.2.1.4   Transparency of Recruitment

Respondents are generally satisfied with the transparency of the recruitment process (see Table 25). Technical employees and junior researchers are more dissatisfied (see table 27).

Table 25: How clear and transparent was the information provided to you during the recruitment process? (5 is most)

Transparency of recruitment	Freq.	Percent
1	12	6.59
2	18	9.89
3	39	21.43
4	54	29.67
5	59	32.42
Total	182	100.00

Table 26: Gender × Transparency of recruitment

Gender	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	7.84	5.88	20.59	28.43	37.25	100.00
Male	4.17	15.28	23.61	31.94	25.00	100.00
Other	12.50	12.50	12.50	25.00	37.50	100.00
Total	6.59	9.89	21.43	29.67	32.42	100.00

Table 27: Position × Transparency of recruitment

Position	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	8.43	12.05	18.07	30.12	31.33	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	12.50	31.25	31.25	25.00	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	12.50	12.50	37.50	12.50	25.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	16.67	16.67	33.33	33.33	0.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	14.29	14.29	71.43	100.00
Technical position	14.29	28.57	28.57	0.00	28.57	100.00
Administrative Position	1.89	3.77	20.75	37.74	35.85	100.00
Total	6.11	10.00	21.67	30.00	32.22	100.00

Table 28: Institution × Transparency of recruitment

Institution	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	0.00	0.00	8.33	25.00	66.67	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	5.41	2.70	10.81	45.95	35.14	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	11.11	11.11	0.00	33.33	44.44	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	14.29	14.29	28.57	0.00	42.86	100.00
Medical University Sofia	11.11	0.00	33.33	33.33	22.22	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	9.09	18.18	45.45	27.27	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	7.14	21.43	42.86	28.57	100.00
University of Ljubljana	5.88	23.53	29.41	11.76	29.41	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	0.00	15.79	5.26	15.79	63.16	100.00
University of Tartu	7.14	7.14	21.43	42.86	21.43	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	19.23	19.23	42.31	15.38	3.85	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	0.00	57.14	28.57	14.29	100.00
Total	6.59	9.89	21.43	29.67	32.42	100.00

Table 29: Age × Transparency of recruitment

Age	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	7.50	15.00	17.50	25.00	35.00	100.00
40-54	5.43	8.70	25.00	30.43	30.43	100.00
55 and above	7.69	7.69	20.51	33.33	30.77	100.00

Prefer not to say	10.00	10.00	10.00	20.00	50.00	100.00
Total	6.59	9.89	21.43	29.67	32.42	100.00

Table 30: Work experience × Transparency of recruitment

	Transparency of recruitment					
Work experience	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	10.53	10.53	31.58	47.37	100.00
3 and more years	6.92	9.43	23.27	29.56	30.82	100.00
Prefer not to say	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	100.00
Total	6.59	9.89	21.43	29.67	32.42	100.00

3.4.2.1.5   Attractiveness of Recruitment

While there is a general belief that the recruitment process attracts high quality candidates, an unusually large proportion of respondents disagree with this statement (see Table 31). The disagreement is stronger among men than women (see Table 32), and in terms of position held, it is pronounced among all but Academics, administration staff and rank-and-file scientists (see Table 33).

Table 31: Do you believe the recruitment process at your institution helps to attract high-quality candidates? (5 is most)

Attractiveness of recruitment	Freq.	Percent
1	25	13.74
2	36	19.78
3	44	24.18
4	47	25.82
5	30	16.48
Total	182	100.00

Table 32: Gender × Attractiveness of recruitment

Gender	Attractiveness of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	8.82	21.57	23.53	25.49	20.59	100.00
Male	16.67	18.06	27.78	26.39	11.11	100.00
Other	50.00	12.50	0.00	25.00	12.50	100.00
Total	13.74	19.78	24.18	25.82	16.48	100.00

42

Table 33: Position × Attractiveness of recruitment

	Attractiveness of recruitment					
Position	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	20.48	20.48	26.51	21.69	10.84	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	6.25	18.75	37.50	18.75	18.75	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	25.00	25.00	12.50	12.50	25.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	16.67	33.33	16.67	16.67	16.67	100.00
Academic	0.00	28.57	28.57	14.29	28.57	100.00
Technical position	14.29	28.57	0.00	28.57	28.57	100.00
Administrative Position	3.77	15.09	22.64	39.62	18.87	100.00
Total	13.33	20.00	24.44	26.11	16.11	100.00

Table 34: Institution × Attractiveness of recruitment

	Attractiveness of recruitment					
Institution	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	16.67	16.67	25.00	25.00	16.67	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	16.22	18.92	18.92	27.03	18.92	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	22.22	0.00	11.11	55.56	11.11	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	28.57	0.00	28.57	42.86	0.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	22.22	22.22	22.22	33.33	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	9.09	27.27	36.36	18.18	9.09	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	7.14	28.57	21.43	42.86	100.00
University of Ljubljana	17.65	23.53	41.18	17.65	0.00	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	5.26	21.05	10.53	15.79	47.37	100.00
University of Tartu	14.29	7.14	28.57	42.86	7.14	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	23.08	34.62	23.08	19.23	0.00	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	42.86	28.57	28.57	0.00	100.00
Total	13.74	19.78	24.18	25.82	16.48	100.00

Table 35: Age × Attractiveness of recruitment

	Attractiveness of recruitment					
Age	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	12.50	25.00	15.00	25.00	22.50	100.00
40-54	11.96	23.91	23.91	26.09	14.13	100.00
55 and above	15.38	7.69	33.33	25.64	17.95	100.00
Prefer not to say	30.00	10.00	30.00	20.00	10.00	100.00
Total	13.74	19.78	24.18	25.82	16.48	100.00

Table 36: Work experience × Attractiveness of recruitment

	Attractiveness of recruitment					
Work experience	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	5.26	5.26	5.26	57.89	26.32	100.00
3 and more years	14.47	21.38	27.04	22.64	14.47	100.00
Prefer not to say	25.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	100.00
Total	13.74	19.78	24.18	25.82	16.48	100.00

3.4.2.1.6   Diversity of Candidates

There is general satisfaction with the diversity of the candidates (see Table 37). Only principal investigators show a slight dissatisfaction compared to other groups (see Table 39).

Table 37: How do you perceive the diversity of candidates recruited at your institution? (5 is most)

Diversity of candidates	Freq.	Percent
1	16	8.84
2	21	11.60
3	55	30.39
4	54	29.83
5	35	19.34
Total	181	100.00

Table 38: Gender × Diversity of candidates

Gender	Diversity of candidates					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	7.92	8.91	34.65	30.69	17.82	100.00
Male	8.33	16.67	25.00	30.56	19.44	100.00
Other	25.00	0.00	25.00	12.50	37.50	100.00
Total	8.84	11.60	30.39	29.83	19.34	100.00

Table 39: Position × Diversity of candidates

Position	Diversity of candidates					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	15.66	12.05	24.10	30.12	18.07	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	0.00	33.33	40.00	26.67	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	12.50	0.00	25.00	50.00	12.50	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	0.00	0.00	33.33	50.00	16.67	100.00
Academic	0.00	28.57	42.86	14.29	14.29	100.00
Technical position	0.00	28.57	28.57	0.00	42.86	100.00
Administrative Position	1.89	13.21	39.62	28.30	16.98	100.00
Total	8.38	11.73	30.73	30.17	18.99	100.00

Table 40: Institution × Diversity of candidates

Institution	Diversity of candidates					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	16.67	8.33	8.33	50.00	16.67	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	2.70	10.81	43.24	24.32	18.92	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	11.11	0.00	33.33	44.44	11.11	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	14.29	0.00	28.57	57.14	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	0.00	33.33	44.44	22.22	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	9.09	36.36	27.27	27.27	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	0.00	35.71	35.71	28.57	100.00

University of Ljubljana	11.76	17.65	35.29	23.53	11.76	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	5.26	10.53	26.32	31.58	26.32	100.00
University of Tartu	7.14	35.71	21.43	21.43	14.29	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	28.00	16.00	28.00	20.00	8.00	100.00
Vilnius University	14.29	0.00	28.57	42.86	14.29	100.00
Total	8.84	11.60	30.39	29.83	19.34	100.00

Table 41: Age × Diversity of candidates

	Diversity of candidates					
Age	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	5.00	10.00	27.50	32.50	25.00	100.00
40-54	6.52	14.13	34.78	27.17	17.39	100.00
55 and above	13.16	7.89	23.68	36.84	18.42	100.00
Prefer not to say	30.00	10.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Total	8.84	11.60	30.39	29.83	19.34	100.00

Table 42: Work experience × Diversity of candidates

	Diversity of candidates					
Work experience	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	5.26	42.11	31.58	21.05	100.00
3 and more years	9.49	12.66	29.11	30.38	18.35	100.00
Prefer not to say	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	100.00
Total	8.84	11.60	30.39	29.83	19.34	100.00

3.4.2.1.7   Satisfaction with HR Managers

Respondents tend to appreciate communication with HR managers, with just under 8% being outright dissatisfied (see Table 43). Higher levels of dissatisfaction are reported by men compared to women (see Table 44) and by more junior scientists compared to PIs (see Table 45). This is matched by the higher proportion of dissatisfied responses in the younger age group (see Table 47).

Table 43: How satisfied are you with the level of communication and cooperation with HR managers during the recruitment process? (5 is most)

Satisfaction with HR managers	Freq.	Percent
1	14	7.82
2	18	10.06
3	34	18.99
4	47	26.26
5	66	36.87
Total	179	100.00

Table 44: Gender × Satisfaction with HR managers

Gender	Satisfaction with HR managers					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total

Female	5.00	8.00	17.00	26.00	44.00	100.00
Male	11.27	14.08	21.13	25.35	28.17	100.00
Other	12.50	0.00	25.00	37.50	25.00	100.00
Total	7.82	10.06	18.99	26.26	36.87	100.00

Table 45: Position × Satisfaction with HR managers

	Satisfaction with HR managers					
Position	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	8.54	12.20	21.95	21.95	35.37	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	12.50	0.00	25.00	43.75	18.75	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	12.50	25.00	25.00	25.00	12.50	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	33.33	33.33	0.00	16.67	16.67	100.00
Academic	0.00	16.67	33.33	16.67	33.33	100.00
Technical position	0.00	14.29	28.57	28.57	28.57	100.00
Administrative Position	1.92	3.85	11.54	30.77	51.92	100.00
Total	7.34	10.17	19.21	26.55	36.72	100.00

Table 46: Institution × Satisfaction with HR managers

	Satisfaction with HR managers					
Institution	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	0.00	8.33	41.67	25.00	25.00	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	2.70	16.22	29.73	51.35	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	12.50	0.00	25.00	62.50	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	14.29	14.29	28.57	14.29	28.57	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	37.50	25.00	25.00	12.50	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	20.00	0.00	20.00	40.00	20.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	14.29	7.14	35.71	42.86	100.00
University of Ljubljana	23.53	0.00	35.29	17.65	23.53	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	0.00	10.53	15.79	26.32	47.37	100.00
University of Tartu	14.29	14.29	7.14	21.43	42.86	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	15.38	19.23	15.38	23.08	26.92	100.00
Vilnius University	14.29	0.00	28.57	28.57	28.57	100.00
Total	7.82	10.06	18.99	26.26	36.87	100.00

Table 47: Age × Satisfaction with HR managers

	Satisfaction with HR managers					
Age	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	15.38	7.69	7.69	28.21	41.03	100.00
40-54	6.67	8.89	22.22	24.44	37.78	100.00
55 and above	5.13	10.26	20.51	28.21	35.90	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	30.00	30.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Total	7.82	10.06	18.99	26.26	36.87	100.00

Table 48: Work experience × Satisfaction with HR managers

Work experience	Satisfaction with HR managers					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	5.26	0.00	10.53	36.84	47.37	100.00
3 and more years	8.33	11.54	20.51	25.00	34.62	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	100.00
Total	7.82	10.06	18.99	26.26	36.87	100.00

3.4.2.1.8   Quality of newly recruited team members?

When asked to evaluate the quality of new hires, respondents tend to be more satisfied (see Table 49). A greater degree of dissatisfaction, but also a greater degree of satisfaction, is shown by principal investigators (see Table 51).

Table 49: What is your overall satisfaction with the quality of newly recruited team members? (5 is most)

Quality of newly recruited	Freq.	Percent
1	8	4.42
2	12	6.63
3	54	29.83
4	65	35.91
5	42	23.20
Total	181	100.00

Table 50: Gender × Quality of newly recruited

Gender	Quality of newly recruited					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	4.95	5.94	25.74	34.65	28.71	100.00
Male	2.78	8.33	34.72	38.89	15.28	100.00
Other	12.50	0.00	37.50	25.00	25.00	100.00
Total	4.42	6.63	29.83	35.91	23.20	100.00

Table 51: Position × Quality of newly recruited

	Quality of newly recruited					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	8.43	9.64	28.92	34.94	18.07	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	0.00	31.25	37.50	31.25	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	0.00	0.00	62.50	25.00	12.50	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	0.00	0.00	66.67	16.67	16.67	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	100.00
Technical position	0.00	0.00	28.57	42.86	28.57	100.00
Administrative Position	0.00	7.55	22.64	41.51	28.30	100.00
Total	3.91	6.70	30.17	36.31	22.91	100.00

Table 52: Institution × Quality of newly recruited

Institution	Quality of newly recruited					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	8.33	8.33	33.33	33.33	16.67	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	5.41	0.00	29.73	45.95	18.92	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	0.00	44.44	33.33	22.22	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	0.00	57.14	14.29	28.57	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	12.50	25.00	25.00	37.50	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	9.09	9.09	27.27	9.09	45.45	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	7.14	0.00	50.00	42.86	100.00
University of Ljubljana	5.88	0.00	23.53	64.71	5.88	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	0.00	10.53	36.84	10.53	42.11	100.00
University of Tartu	0.00	14.29	42.86	21.43	21.43	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	11.54	15.38	26.92	34.62	11.54	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	0.00	28.57	71.43	0.00	100.00
Total	4.42	6.63	29.83	35.91	23.20	100.00

Table 53: Age × Quality of newly recruited

Age	Quality of newly recruited					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	2.50	2.50	22.50	40.00	32.50	100.00
40-54	5.49	6.59	35.16	30.77	21.98	100.00
55 and above	5.13	7.69	28.21	38.46	20.51	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	20.00	20.00	50.00	10.00	100.00
Total	4.42	6.63	29.83	35.91	23.20	100.00

Table 54: Work experience × Quality of newly recruited

Work experience	Quality of newly recruited					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	0.00	26.32	42.11	31.58	100.00
3 and more years	5.06	6.96	31.01	34.81	22.15	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	25.00	100.00
Total	4.42	6.63	29.83	35.91	23.20	100.00

3.4.2.1.9   Comments: Most Valuable Service of the Recruitment Process According to Selection Committee Members

What do you consider the most valuable service or aspect of the recruitment process at your institution, and why?

Selection committee members across institutions highlighted a range of elements they consider the most valuable in the recruitment process.

- Many appreciated the **overall management of the process** — from the preparation and publication of job advertisements to the collection of applications, organisation, and documentation. The active participation of HR professionals during interviews was also viewed positively, especially when it supported both procedural clarity and candidate evaluation.
- **Clear communication**, both with hiring managers and applicants, was frequently mentioned, alongside the presence of **well-defined rules** and a **streamlined workflow**.
- **Transparency** was another key strength, with several respondents noting that it helped build trust in the process.
- Other valued aspects included the **use of social media and job portals** to promote vacancies, **onboarding support for newcomers, flexibility in the process, and training opportunities** for selection committee members.
- Institutions that introduced **digital tools** — such as electronic submission systems or candidate overview platforms — were praised for making the process more efficient.
- In some cases, the use of preselection techniques, candidate scanning, and even psychological assessment tools were highlighted as helpful in ensuring quality and fit.
- **While most comments were positive, a few respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the recruitment process at their institutions.** These critical voices described recruitment as purely procedural, overly bureaucratic, or lacking in added value. Some noted the complete absence of structured HR services to support hiring, which placed the burden entirely on individual departments. These views suggest that the quality of recruitment support varies significantly across institutions.

3.4.2.1.10   Suggestions for Improving the Recruitment Process According to Selection Committee Members

Do you have any suggestions or feedback on how the recruitment process at your institution could be further improved?

Respondents provided a wide range of suggestions for improving the recruitment process at their institutions.

- One of the most frequently mentioned areas was the **need for better outreach and visibility of job postings**—especially through social media platforms and international academic networks. Many called for more strategic and targeted promotion of open positions, clearer job descriptions, and inclusion of the hiring mentor or lab information in advertisements.
- Another recurring theme was the **desire to streamline and speed up the recruitment process**. Respondents suggested reducing bureaucracy, improving communication during the hiring stages, and ensuring that procedures are fair, transparent, and free of conflicts of interest or favouritism. Several noted that the current process is too slow and overly administrative, with some positions taking weeks or months to finalize.

- Many comments also emphasized the **need for stronger support from HR departments**. Suggestions included increasing the number of HR staff, providing training for both HR personnel and selection committee members, and offering better tools for managing applications and candidate profiles.
- Others called for **clearer salary ranges**, more consistent **onboarding procedures**, and professional development opportunities for new hires.
- Some respondents proposed introducing more structured evaluation tools—such as psychological or skills-based testing, scoring tables, and more objective interview techniques—to improve candidate assessment.
- A few highlighted issues with internal-only hiring practices, nepotism, or lack of oversight and suggested external review or university-level validation of hiring decisions.

Overall, the comments reflect a shared desire for a recruitment process that is more transparent, efficient, well-resourced, and internationally competitive.

3.4.2.2   Recently Recruited Employees

This section contains information only from those who have themselves been through the selection process in the last three years. Statistics show that approximately one third of respondents have this experience (see Table 55). Women were slightly more likely to be recruited than men (see Table 56). In terms of type of work, technicians, administrative positions and PhD students are most likely to have this experience (see Table 57). This is matched by the higher representation of this experience in the young age group (see Table 59) and the group with short work experience (see Table 60).

Table 55: Did you go through the recruitment process for your current position within the last three years?

Undergone recruitment	Freq.	Percent
No	443	65.05
Yes	238	34.95
Total	681	100.00

Table 56: Gender × Undergone recruitment

Gender	Undergone recruitment		
	No	Yes	Total
Female	63.22	36.78	100.00
Male	69.63	30.37	100.00
Other	63.89	36.11	100.00
Total	65.05	34.95	100.00

Table 57: Position × Undergone recruitment

Position	Undergone recruitment		
	No	Yes	Total
Researcher - PI	75.61	24.39	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	75.42	24.58	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	68.00	32.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	56.25	43.75	100.00
Academic	68.97	31.03	100.00
Technical position	43.90	56.10	100.00
Administrative Position	55.56	44.44	100.00
Total	65.19	34.81	100.00

Table 58: Institution × Undergone recruitment

Institution	Undergone recruitment		
	No	Yes	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	70.13	29.87	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	63.11	36.89	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	60.00	40.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	70.00	30.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	67.31	32.69	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	71.79	28.21	100.00
Semmelweis University	59.26	40.74	100.00
University of Ljubljana	55.77	44.23	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	77.19	22.81	100.00
University of Tartu	69.39	30.61	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	68.97	31.03	100.00
Vilnius University	50.68	49.32	100.00
Total	65.05	34.95	100.00

Table 59: Age × Undergone recruitment

Age	Undergone recruitment		
	No	Yes	Total
0-25	9.09	90.91	100.00
25-39	50.38	49.62	100.00
40-54	74.56	25.44	100.00
55 and above	79.35	20.65	100.00
Prefer not to say	80.65	19.35	100.00
Total	65.05	34.95	100.00

Table 60: Work experience × Undergone recruitment

Work experience	Undergone recruitment		
	No	Yes	Total
0-2 years	11.81	88.19	100.00
3 and more years	80.62	19.38	100.00
Prefer not to say	31.58	68.42	100.00
Total	65.05	34.95	100.00

3.4.2.2.1   Transparency of Recruitment

Most respondents found the information about the recruitment process clear and transparent (see Table 61). Women (see Table 62), Academics and senior researchers (see Table 63) are slightly more likely to agree with this statement.

Table 61: How clear and transparent was the information provided to you during the recruitment process? (5 is most)

Transparency of recruitment	Freq.	Percent
1	11	4.62
2	18	7.56
3	41	17.23
4	62	26.05
5	106	44.54
Total	238	100.00

Table 62: Gender × Transparency of recruitment

Gender	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	4.79	4.79	17.37	24.55	48.50	100.00
Male	1.72	12.07	15.52	34.48	36.21	100.00
Other	15.38	23.08	23.08	7.69	30.77	100.00
Total	4.62	7.56	17.23	26.05	44.54	100.00

Table 63: Position × Transparency of recruitment

Position	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	5.00	2.50	22.50	20.00	50.00	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	13.79	17.24	17.24	51.72	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	8.33	8.33	16.67	29.17	37.50	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	5.71	17.14	22.86	14.29	40.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	0.00	33.33	66.67	100.00
Technical position	8.70	13.04	13.04	34.78	30.43	100.00
Administrative Position	2.63	2.63	15.79	34.21	44.74	100.00
Total	4.24	7.63	17.37	26.27	44.49	100.00

Table 64: Institution × Transparency of recruitment

Institution	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	8.70	8.70	21.74	26.09	34.78	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	2.22	0.00	8.89	37.78	51.11	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	0.00	14.29	35.71	50.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	0.00	50.00	16.67	33.33	100.00
Medical University Sofia	5.88	17.65	11.76	17.65	47.06	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	18.18	27.27	27.27	27.27	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	18.18	9.09	9.09	63.64	100.00
University of Ljubljana	8.70	8.70	8.70	39.13	34.78	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	7.69	0.00	15.38	15.38	61.54	100.00
University of Tartu	0.00	20.00	26.67	40.00	13.33	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	22.22	5.56	22.22	0.00	50.00	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	8.33	16.67	22.22	52.78	100.00
Total	4.62	7.56	17.23	26.05	44.54	100.00

Table 65: Age × Transparency of recruitment

Age	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	10.00	30.00	20.00	40.00	100.00
25-39	4.58	10.69	12.98	27.48	44.27	100.00
40-54	4.17	2.78	20.83	29.17	43.06	100.00
55 and above	5.26	5.26	21.05	15.79	52.63	100.00
Prefer not to say	16.67	0.00	33.33	0.00	50.00	100.00
Total	4.62	7.56	17.23	26.05	44.54	100.00

Table 66: Work experience × Transparency of recruitment

Work experience	Transparency of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.89	8.04	16.96	29.46	44.64	100.00
3 and more years	5.00	6.00	16.00	22.00	51.00	100.00
Prefer not to say	19.23	11.54	23.08	26.92	19.23	100.00
Total	4.62	7.56	17.23	26.05	44.54	100.00

3.4.2.2.2   Satisfaction with Communication

The vast majority of respondents also report satisfaction with communication during the process (see Table 67). Slightly higher satisfaction is expressed by women (see Table 68). In terms of professions, Academics are the most satisfied (see Table 69).

Table 67: How satisfied were you with the communication you received from the institution throughout the recruitment process? (5 is most)

Satisfaction with communication	Freq.	Percent
1	9	3.78
2	19	7.98
3	40	16.81
4	60	25.21
5	110	46.22
Total	238	100.00

Table 68: Gender × Satisfaction with communication

Gender	Satisfaction with communication					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	2.99	7.78	14.37	24.55	50.30	100.00
Male	3.45	6.90	20.69	31.03	37.93	100.00
Other	15.38	15.38	30.77	7.69	30.77	100.00
Total	3.78	7.98	16.81	25.21	46.22	100.00

Table 69: Position × Satisfaction with communication

Position	Satisfaction with communication					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	2.50	5.00	25.00	25.00	42.50	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	3.45	6.90	20.69	24.14	44.83	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	8.33	8.33	16.67	25.00	41.67	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	5.71	20.00	17.14	25.71	31.43	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.22	77.78	100.00
Technical position	4.35	8.70	21.74	17.39	47.83	100.00
Administrative Position	1.32	5.26	11.84	28.95	52.63	100.00
Total	3.39	8.05	16.95	25.42	46.19	100.00

Table 70: Institution × Satisfaction with communication

Institution	Satisfaction with communication					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	13.04	8.70	13.04	30.43	34.78	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	2.22	4.44	28.89	64.44	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	7.14	14.29	14.29	64.29	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	0.00	50.00	16.67	33.33	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	17.65	17.65	23.53	41.18	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	9.09	18.18	36.36	36.36	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	9.09	18.18	9.09	63.64	100.00
University of Ljubljana	4.35	4.35	43.48	21.74	26.09	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	7.69	0.00	0.00	30.77	61.54	100.00
University of Tartu	6.67	20.00	20.00	26.67	26.67	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	11.11	16.67	11.11	27.78	33.33	100.00
Vilnius University	2.78	8.33	13.89	25.00	50.00	100.00
Total	3.78	7.98	16.81	25.21	46.22	100.00

Table 71: Age × Satisfaction with communication

	Satisfaction with communication					
		2	3	4	5	Total
Age	1					
0-25	0.00	10.00	40.00	20.00	30.00	100.00
25-39	3.82	11.45	13.74	20.61	50.38	100.00
40-54	1.39	4.17	19.44	34.72	40.28	100.00
55 and above	10.53	0.00	15.79	26.32	47.37	100.00
Prefer not to say	16.67	0.00	16.67	16.67	50.00	100.00
Total	3.78	7.98	16.81	25.21	46.22	100.00

Table 72: Work experience × Satisfaction with communication

Work experience	Satisfaction with communication					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	1.79	8.93	15.18	26.79	47.32	100.00
3 and more years	4.00	6.00	14.00	26.00	50.00	100.00
Prefer not to say	11.54	11.54	34.62	15.38	26.92	100.00
Total	3.78	7.98	16.81	25.21	46.22	100.00

3.4.2.2.3   Matching of Information

When asked about the consistency between the information provided during the recruitment process and the actual position, everyone tends to agree (see Table 73). Men are slightly more satisfied than women in this respect (see Table 74).

55

Table 73: To what extent did the reality of the job match the information provided during the recruitment process? (5 is most)

Matching of information	Freq.	Percent
1	7	2.95
2	15	6.33
3	44	18.57
4	56	23.63
5	115	48.52
Total	237	100.00

Table 74: Gender × Matching of information

Gender	Matching of information					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	2.41	5.42	19.88	21.08	51.20	100.00
Male	1.72	6.90	8.62	36.21	46.55	100.00
Other	15.38	15.38	46.15	0.00	23.08	100.00
Total	2.95	6.33	18.57	23.63	48.52	100.00

Table 75: Position × Matching of information

Position	Matching of information					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	2.50	5.00	15.00	15.00	62.50	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	0.00	20.69	20.69	58.62	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	4.17	16.67	8.33	16.67	54.17	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	5.71	2.86	22.86	25.71	42.86	100.00
Academic	0.00	11.11	11.11	22.22	55.56	100.00
Technical position	4.35	13.04	30.43	26.09	26.09	100.00
Administrative Position	1.33	5.33	18.67	30.67	44.00	100.00
Total	2.55	6.38	18.72	23.83	48.51	100.00

Table 76: Institution × Matching of information

Institution	Matching of information					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	8.70	8.70	26.09	21.74	34.78	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	4.44	8.89	33.33	53.33	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	7.14	14.29	28.57	50.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	0.00	16.67	25.00	58.33	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	0.00	11.76	23.53	64.71	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	9.09	54.55	9.09	27.27	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	9.09	18.18	9.09	63.64	100.00
University of Ljubljana	4.35	8.70	21.74	26.09	39.13	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	8.33	8.33	0.00	8.33	75.00	100.00
University of Tartu	0.00	6.67	46.67	26.67	20.00	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	11.11	16.67	22.22	11.11	38.89	100.00
Vilnius University	2.78	2.78	11.11	27.78	55.56	100.00
Total	2.95	6.33	18.57	23.63	48.52	100.00

Table 77: Age × Matching of information

Age	Matching of information					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	10.00	20.00	30.00	40.00	100.00
25-39	3.05	6.11	18.32	22.14	50.38	100.00
40-54	1.39	6.94	20.83	27.78	43.06	100.00
55 and above	5.56	0.00	16.67	16.67	61.11	100.00
Prefer not to say	16.67	16.67	0.00	16.67	50.00	100.00
Total	2.95	6.33	18.57	23.63	48.52	100.00

Table 78: Work experience × Matching of information

Work experience	Matching of information					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.90	1.80	24.32	25.23	47.75	100.00
3 and more years	3.00	7.00	13.00	20.00	57.00	100.00
Prefer not to say	11.54	23.08	15.38	30.77	19.23	100.00
Total	2.95	6.33	18.57	23.63	48.52	100.00

3.4.2.2.4   Fairness of Recruitment

The selection procedure was fair and unbiased to its participants (see Table 79). People recruited for administrative positions and Academics are significantly more likely to agree with this statement (see Table 81).

Table 79: To what extent did you feel the recruitment process was fair and unbiased? (5 is most)

Fairness of recruitment	Freq.	Percent
1	14	5.91
2	11	4.64
3	27	11.39
4	49	20.68
5	136	57.38
Total	237	100.00

Table 80: Gender × Fairness of recruitment

Gender	Fairness of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	5.42	2.41	12.65	19.88	59.64	100.00
Male	3.45	12.07	8.62	24.14	51.72	100.00
Other	23.08	0.00	7.69	15.38	53.85	100.00
Total	5.91	4.64	11.39	20.68	57.38	100.00

Table 81: Position × Fairness of recruitment

Position	Fairness of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	7.50	10.00	10.00	22.50	50.00	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	6.90	3.45	13.79	27.59	48.28	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	12.50	4.17	12.50	25.00	45.83	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	5.88	5.88	14.71	29.41	44.12	100.00
Academic	0.00	11.11	11.11	11.11	66.67	100.00
Technical position	8.70	8.70	13.04	21.74	47.83	100.00
Administrative Position	1.32	0.00	9.21	13.16	76.32	100.00
Total	5.53	4.68	11.49	20.85	57.45	100.00

Table 82: Institution × Fairness of recruitment

Institution	Fairness of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	4.55	0.00	18.18	40.91	36.36	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	0.00	6.67	24.44	68.89	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	0.00	0.00	14.29	85.71	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	0.00	8.33	25.00	66.67	100.00
Medical University Sofia	11.76	23.53	5.88	17.65	41.18	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	0.00	27.27	27.27	45.45	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	18.18	0.00	0.00	81.82	100.00
University of Ljubljana	8.70	8.70	26.09	13.04	43.48	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	7.69	7.69	0.00	7.69	76.92	100.00
University of Tartu	6.67	0.00	20.00	13.33	60.00	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	33.33	5.56	16.67	11.11	33.33	100.00
Vilnius University	2.78	2.78	8.33	27.78	58.33	100.00
Total	5.91	4.64	11.39	20.68	57.38	100.00

Table 83: Age × Fairness of recruitment

Age	Fairness of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	10.00	0.00	10.00	40.00	40.00	100.00
25-39	6.15	3.85	12.31	19.23	58.46	100.00
40-54	2.78	6.94	9.72	25.00	55.56	100.00
55 and above	10.53	0.00	15.79	10.53	63.16	100.00
Prefer not to say	16.67	16.67	0.00	0.00	66.67	100.00
Total	5.91	4.64	11.39	20.68	57.38	100.00

Table 84: Work experience × Fairness of recruitment

Work experience	Fairness of recruitment					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.89	0.89	12.50	22.32	63.39	100.00
3 and more years	10.00	7.00	11.00	19.00	53.00	100.00
Prefer not to say	12.00	12.00	8.00	20.00	48.00	100.00
Total	5.91	4.64	11.39	20.68	57.38	100.00

3.4.2.2.5   Onboarding Quality

Approximately half of new hires were very satisfied with their onboarding process (see Table 85). Women are significantly more satisfied in this regard (see Table 86). Satisfaction with onboarding is higher among younger employees, decreasing as age increases (see Table 89).

Table 85: How well were you supported in your transition from candidate to employee by your direct superior? (5 is most)

Onboarding quality	Freq.	Percent
1	14	5.96
2	18	7.66
3	31	13.19
4	45	19.15
5	127	54.04
Total	235	100.00

Table 86: Gender × Onboarding quality

Gender	Onboarding quality					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	4.85	9.09	10.91	15.76	59.39	100.00
Male	5.26	3.51	17.54	26.32	47.37	100.00
Other	23.08	7.69	23.08	30.77	15.38	100.00
Total	5.96	7.66	13.19	19.15	54.04	100.00

Table 87: Position × Onboarding quality

Position	Onboarding quality					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	5.13	10.26	17.95	23.08	43.59	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	3.57	21.43	21.43	53.57	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	8.33	8.33	16.67	12.50	54.17	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	14.29	5.71	8.57	14.29	57.14	100.00
Academic	11.11	0.00	11.11	11.11	66.67	100.00
Technical position	9.09	13.64	13.64	18.18	45.45	100.00
Administrative Position	1.32	7.89	9.21	21.05	60.53	100.00
Total	5.58	7.73	13.30	18.88	54.51	100.00

Table 88: Institution × Onboarding quality

Institution	Onboarding quality					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	9.09	13.64	4.55	22.73	50.00	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	0.00	15.56	24.44	60.00	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	7.69	7.69	7.69	7.69	69.23	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	16.67	16.67	25.00	41.67	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	6.25	18.75	6.25	68.75	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	27.27	9.09	36.36	27.27	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	0.00	9.09	27.27	63.64	100.00
University of Ljubljana	8.70	0.00	17.39	13.04	60.87	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	15.38	0.00	0.00	15.38	69.23	100.00
University of Tartu	13.33	6.67	26.67	13.33	40.00	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	11.11	27.78	16.67	5.56	38.89	100.00
Vilnius University	8.33	5.56	11.11	25.00	50.00	100.00
Total	5.96	7.66	13.19	19.15	54.04	100.00

Table 89: Age × Onboarding quality

Age	Onboarding quality					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	11.11	11.11	11.11	66.67	100.00
25-39	6.92	7.69	10.00	15.38	60.00	100.00
40-54	4.23	2.82	19.72	28.17	45.07	100.00
55 and above	5.26	15.79	15.79	15.79	47.37	100.00
Prefer not to say	16.67	33.33	0.00	16.67	33.33	100.00
Total	5.96	7.66	13.19	19.15	54.04	100.00

Table 90: Work experience × Onboarding quality

Work experience	Onboarding quality					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	4.50	7.21	10.81	17.12	60.36	100.00
3 and more years	6.12	6.12	16.33	16.33	55.10	100.00
Prefer not to say	11.54	15.38	11.54	38.46	23.08	100.00
Total	5.96	7.66	13.19	19.15	54.04	100.00

3.4.2.2.6   Onboarding Quality by HR

The HR department's support in onboarding is generally rated well (see Table 91). Women rate it better than men (see Table 92). Among job roles, it is rated the lowest by PhD students, and it is worth noting the relatively low rating of PIs (see Table 93).

Table 91: How well were you supported in your transition from candidate to employee by HR department? (5 is most)

Onboarding quality by HR	Freq.	Percent
1	27	11.39
2	21	8.86
3	37	15.61
4	45	18.99
5	107	45.15
Total	237	100.00

Table 92: Gender × Onboarding quality by HR

Gender	Onboarding quality by HR					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	8.38	10.18	16.17	16.17	49.10	100.00
Male	15.79	7.02	14.04	24.56	38.60	100.00
Other	30.77	0.00	15.38	30.77	23.08	100.00
Total	11.39	8.86	15.61	18.99	45.15	100.00

Table 93: Position × Onboarding quality by HR

Position	Onboarding quality by HR					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	5.00	17.50	15.00	25.00	37.50	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	3.45	13.79	24.14	6.90	51.72	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	8.33	4.17	25.00	12.50	50.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	35.29	2.94	8.82	26.47	26.47	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	22.22	22.22	55.56	100.00
Technical position	21.74	13.04	8.70	8.70	47.83	100.00
Administrative Position	5.26	6.58	14.47	22.37	51.32	100.00
Total	11.06	8.94	15.74	19.15	45.11	100.00

Table 94: Institution × Onboarding quality by HR

Institution	Onboarding quality by HR					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	13.04	4.35	4.35	30.43	47.83	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	0.00	15.56	24.44	60.00	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	7.14	7.14	14.29	7.14	64.29	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	16.67	25.00	16.67	41.67	100.00
Medical University Sofia	29.41	0.00	11.76	17.65	41.18	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	9.09	0.00	18.18	36.36	36.36	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	18.18	18.18	18.18	45.45	100.00
University of Ljubljana	21.74	13.04	30.43	8.70	26.09	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	7.69	0.00	7.69	23.08	61.54	100.00
University of Tartu	42.86	14.29	7.14	21.43	14.29	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	11.11	27.78	22.22	5.56	33.33	100.00
Vilnius University	8.33	13.89	13.89	16.67	47.22	100.00
Total	11.39	8.86	15.61	18.99	45.15	100.00

Table 95: Age × Onboarding quality by HR

Age	Onboarding quality by HR					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	11.11	22.22	22.22	0.00	44.44	100.00
25-39	14.50	6.11	15.27	17.56	46.56	100.00
40-54	6.94	9.72	18.06	22.22	43.06	100.00
55 and above	5.26	10.53	10.53	31.58	42.11	100.00
Prefer not to say	16.67	33.33	0.00	0.00	50.00	100.00
Total	11.39	8.86	15.61	18.99	45.15	100.00

Table 96: Work experience × Onboarding quality by HR

Work experience	Onboarding quality by HR					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	11.71	9.01	12.61	18.92	47.75	100.00
3 and more years	9.00	8.00	16.00	21.00	46.00	100.00
Prefer not to say	19.23	11.54	26.92	11.54	30.77	100.00
Total	11.39	8.86	15.61	18.99	45.15	100.00

3.4.2.2.7   Comments: Most Positive Aspect of Recruitment According to Newly Recruited Employees

What was the most positive aspect of the recruitment process, and what do you think could be improved?

Respondents shared a wide variety of experiences with the recruitment process, identifying both positive aspects and areas for improvement.

- Many participants highlighted the **professionalism and friendliness of HR staff and hiring managers** as the most positive aspect.
- **Transparent communication, clarity of expectations, fair evaluation, and a respectful atmosphere** during interviews were also frequently praised. Candidates appreciated when they received structured information, timely feedback, and when the process was smooth and efficient. The flexibility shown by institutions—such as adapting to individual health situations or personal needs—was also seen as a strong point.
- At the same time, **several recurring issues emerged in the suggestions for improvement**. A commonly mentioned concern was the **lack of clarity and structure in the process**: unclear job responsibilities, missing information about salaries, timelines, or decision-making stages. In some cases, recruitment seemed informal or chaotic, particularly during holiday periods or when responsibilities were divided among multiple actors.
- Many respondents emphasized the need for a more consistent **onboarding process**, including guidance on practical matters (e.g. internal systems, teams, documentation) and better communication after the hiring decision.

- Others called for **improved visibility and transparency of selection criteria, standardization of procedures, and clearer communication of job expectations**.
- **Technical systems** (like internal recruitment platforms) and coordination between HR and supervisors were also identified as areas where institutions could do more.
- A few comments expressed serious concerns about fairness and trust, pointing to perceptions of nepotism, biased selection, or lack of transparency in how decisions were made.

Overall, the responses suggest that while many candidates had positive experiences with communication, professionalism, and atmosphere, there is still room for institutions to improve structure, consistency, onboarding, and trust in the recruitment process.

3.4.3 Part 2: Gender Equality and Diversity

3.4.3.1   Leaders

While almost three-quarters perceive improvements in promoting diversity and equal opportunities, there are strong groups of respondents who disagree (see Table 97). Women are slightly less likely to notice positive changes than men (see Table 98), with staff scientists perceiving them most strongly (see Table 99). Perceptions across age groups are roughly balanced, with a slight increase among those 55+ (see Table 101), but stronger perceptions of positive change are reported by those with less experience in institutions (see Table 102).

Table 97: To what extent have you noticed improvements in the way your organization supports equal opportunities and diversity in the workplace over the past three years? (5 is most)

Improvements in equal opportunity	Freq.	Percent
1	28	13.21
2	28	13.21
3	57	26.89
4	53	25.00
5	46	21.70
Total	212	100.00

Table 98: Gender × Improvements in equal opportunity

Gender	Improvements in equal opportunity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	13.22	12.40	29.75	20.66	23.97	100.00
Male	13.25	15.66	21.69	31.33	18.07	100.00
Other	12.50	0.00	37.50	25.00	25.00	100.00
Total	13.21	13.21	26.89	25.00	21.70	100.00

Table 99: Position × Improvements in equal opportunity

Position	Improvements in equal opportunity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	13.39	13.39	29.13	24.41	19.69	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	15.79	10.53	31.58	42.11	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	28.57	14.29	28.57	28.57	0.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	20.00	20.00	40.00	0.00	20.00	100.00
Academic	25.00	0.00	12.50	37.50	25.00	100.00
Technical position	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00	20.00	100.00
Administrative Position	7.50	15.00	27.50	27.50	22.50	100.00
Total	12.80	13.27	27.01	25.12	21.80	100.00

Table 100: Institution × Improvements in equal opportunity

Institution	Improvements in equal opportunity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	7.41	3.70	22.22	33.33	33.33	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	3.33	10.00	40.00	36.67	10.00	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	6.67	13.33	26.67	33.33	20.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	17.65	41.18	11.76	29.41	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	7.14	21.43	21.43	21.43	28.57	100.00
Semmelweis University	25.00	0.00	37.50	25.00	12.50	100.00
University of Ljubljana	46.15	7.69	23.08	15.38	7.69	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	17.39	4.35	4.35	21.74	52.17	100.00
University of Tartu	15.38	46.15	38.46	0.00	0.00	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	25.00	18.75	21.88	28.13	6.25	100.00
Vilnius University	5.88	11.76	35.29	11.76	35.29	100.00
Total	13.21	13.21	26.89	25.00	21.70	100.00

Table 101: Age × Improvements in equal opportunity

Age	Improvements in equal opportunity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
25-39	10.81	13.51	27.03	24.32	24.32	100.00
40-54	15.38	15.38	27.88	20.19	21.15	100.00
55 and above	10.34	12.07	20.69	34.48	22.41	100.00
Prefer not to say	15.38	0.00	46.15	23.08	15.38	100.00
Total	13.21	13.21	26.89	25.00	21.70	100.00

Table 102: Work experience × Improvements in equal opportunity

Work experience	Improvements in equal opportunity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	6.67	20.00	33.33	40.00	100.00
3 and more years	13.02	14.06	27.08	25.00	20.83	100.00
Prefer not to say	60.00	0.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	13.21	13.21	26.89	25.00	21.70	100.00

3.4.3.1.1   Feels Supported by Institution

Similarly scattered is the assessment of how people feel supported by the institution in creating a diverse and equal environment. About a third of people feel fully supported, but there are also 20% who feel almost no support (see Table 103). Men feel slightly more supported (see Table 104). The strongest support is perceived by Academics (see Table 105). The positive atmosphere is strongly perceived by new employees with short experience (see Table 108).

Table 103: To what extent do you feel supported by your institution in creating an open, fair, and inclusive work environment that promotes diversity and equal opportunities within your team? (5 is most)

Feels supported by institution	Freq.	Percent
1	22	10.43
2	25	11.85
3	49	23.22
4	51	24.17
5	64	30.33
Total	211	100.00

Table 104: Gender × Feels supported by institution

Gender	Feels supported by institution					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	13.33	10.00	23.33	25.00	28.33	100.00
Male	6.10	15.85	19.51	23.17	35.37	100.00
Other	11.11	0.00	55.56	22.22	11.11	100.00
Total	10.43	11.85	23.22	24.17	30.33	100.00

Table 105: Position × Feels supported by institution

Position	Feels supported by institution					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	12.80	12.00	19.20	23.20	32.80	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	10.53	31.58	36.84	21.05	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	14.29	28.57	28.57	14.29	14.29	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	20.00	0.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	0.00	37.50	62.50	100.00
Technical position	0.00	40.00	20.00	0.00	40.00	100.00
Administrative Position	7.50	10.00	32.50	25.00	25.00	100.00
Total	10.05	11.96	22.97	24.40	30.62	100.00

Table 106: Institution × Feels supported by institution

Institution	Feels supported by institution					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	7.41	7.41	14.81	18.52	51.85	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	3.45	3.45	10.34	44.83	37.93	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	0.00	33.33	66.67	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	6.67	20.00	26.67	6.67	40.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	5.88	5.88	29.41	35.29	23.53	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	14.29	21.43	21.43	28.57	14.29	100.00
Semmelweis University	12.50	0.00	25.00	37.50	25.00	100.00
University of Ljubljana	23.08	15.38	15.38	7.69	38.46	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	13.04	4.35	8.70	17.39	56.52	100.00
University of Tartu	7.14	35.71	42.86	7.14	7.14	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	21.88	18.75	28.13	25.00	6.25	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	6.25	50.00	18.75	25.00	100.00
Total	10.43	11.85	23.22	24.17	30.33	100.00

Table 107: Age × Feels supported by institution

Age	Feels supported by institution					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
25-39	10.81	8.11	24.32	24.32	32.43	100.00
40-54	10.68	14.56	23.30	21.36	30.10	100.00
55 and above	10.53	10.53	21.05	28.07	29.82	100.00
Prefer not to say	7.14	7.14	28.57	28.57	28.57	100.00
Total	10.43	11.85	23.22	24.17	30.33	100.00

Table 108: Work experience × Feels supported by institution

Work experience	Feels supported by institution					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	0.00	13.33	13.33	73.33	100.00
3 and more years	10.53	12.63	23.68	25.26	27.89	100.00
Prefer not to say	33.33	16.67	33.33	16.67	0.00	100.00
Total	10.43	11.85	23.22	24.17	30.33	100.00

3.4.3.1.2   Initiatives Addressed the Needs

When assessing whether the measures taken to strengthen diversity and equal opportunities have had a real impact on the needs of the team, 20% still remain rather negative (see Table 109). Men are more satisfied than women (see Table 110). Of the job roles, Academics and post-docs are significantly more satisfied (see Table 111). In terms of age, the oldest age groups are more likely to agree with this statement (see Table 113), but conversely, those with the shortest experience also agree (see Table 114).

Table 109: Do you feel that the gender equality and diversity initiatives implemented at your institution over the past three years have adequately addressed the needs of your team and yourself? (5 is most)

Initiatives addressed the needs	Freq.	Percent
1	28	13.33
2	14	6.67
3	56	26.67
4	44	20.95
5	68	32.38
Total	210	100.00

Table 110: Gender × Initiatives addressed the needs

Gender	Initiatives addressed the needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	12.50	9.17	29.17	19.17	30.00	100.00
Male	13.41	3.66	19.51	25.61	37.80	100.00
Other	25.00	0.00	62.50	0.00	12.50	100.00
Total	13.33	6.67	26.67	20.95	32.38	100.00

Table 111: Position × Initiatives addressed the needs

Position	Initiatives addressed the needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	13.60	9.60	27.20	17.60	32.00	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	15.79	5.26	10.53	31.58	36.84	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	0.00	14.29	14.29	14.29	57.14	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	20.00	0.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	12.50	37.50	50.00	100.00
Technical position	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00	20.00	100.00
Administrative Position	10.00	0.00	35.00	27.50	27.50	100.00
Total	12.92	6.70	26.79	21.05	32.54	100.00

Table 112: Institution × Initiatives addressed the needs

Institution	Initiatives addressed the needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	3.70	7.41	11.11	33.33	44.44	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	10.34	0.00	24.14	37.93	27.59	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	0.00	33.33	66.67	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	6.67	6.67	33.33	13.33	40.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	5.88	29.41	29.41	35.29	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	21.43	7.14	28.57	28.57	14.29	100.00
Semmelweis University	25.00	0.00	12.50	37.50	25.00	100.00
University of Ljubljana	30.77	7.69	15.38	7.69	38.46	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	8.70	0.00	4.35	13.04	73.91	100.00
University of Tartu	15.38	7.69	61.54	0.00	15.38	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	25.00	15.63	37.50	12.50	9.38	100.00
Vilnius University	12.50	12.50	43.75	0.00	31.25	100.00

| Total | | 13.33 | 6.67 | 26.67 | 20.95 | 32.38 | 100.00 |

Table 113: Age × Initiatives addressed the needs

Age	Initiatives addressed the needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
25-39	13.51	5.41	21.62	32.43	27.03	100.00
40-54	14.56	4.85	33.98	19.42	27.18	100.00
55 and above	12.28	12.28	14.04	15.79	45.61	100.00
Prefer not to say	7.69	0.00	38.46	23.08	30.77	100.00
Total	13.33	6.67	26.67	20.95	32.38	100.00

Table 114: Work experience × Initiatives addressed the needs

Work experience	Initiatives addressed the needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	0.00	13.33	20.00	66.67	100.00
3 and more years	13.68	6.84	27.37	21.58	30.53	100.00
Prefer not to say	40.00	20.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	13.33	6.67	26.67	20.95	32.38	100.00

3.4.3.1.3 Incorporating the Gender and Diversity Considerations

The majority is positive about the application of appropriate measures within their own team (see Table 115). Women are more positive than men (see Table 116). Of the job roles, Academics and post-docs are significantly more satisfied (see Table 117). In terms of age, the oldest age groups are more likely to agree with this statement (see Table 119), but conversely, those with the shortest experience also agree (see Table 120).

Table 115: How do you incorporate gender equality and diversity considerations in your recruitment and team management decisions? (5 is most)

Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations	Freq.	Percent
1	23	10.95
2	9	4.29
3	41	19.52
4	51	24.29
5	86	40.95
Total	210	100.00

Table 116: Gender × Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations

Gender	Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	10.00	2.50	20.00	23.33	44.17	100.00
Male	9.76	7.32	20.73	26.83	35.37	100.00
Other	37.50	0.00	0.00	12.50	50.00	100.00
Total	10.95	4.29	19.52	24.29	40.95	100.00

68

Table 117: Position × Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations

Position	Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Academic	0.00	0.00	12.50	25.00	62.50	100.00
Administrative Position	7.50	7.50	17.50	27.50	40.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	20.00	0.00	60.00	0.00	20.00	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	0.00	0.00	28.57	14.29	57.14	100.00
Researcher - PI	11.29	4.84	19.35	23.39	41.13	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	10.53	0.00	15.79	36.84	36.84	100.00
Technical position	40.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Total	10.58	4.33	19.71	24.52	40.87	100.00

Table 118: Institution × Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations

Institution	Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	7.41	3.70	11.11	25.93	51.85	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	13.79	0.00	13.79	34.48	37.93	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	33.33	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	6.67	26.67	20.00	46.67	100.00
Medical University Sofia	5.88	0.00	23.53	29.41	41.18	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	7.14	7.14	35.71	28.57	21.43	100.00
Semmelweis University	12.50	12.50	12.50	25.00	37.50	100.00
University of Ljubljana	30.77	0.00	15.38	15.38	38.46	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	0.00	4.35	8.70	8.70	78.26	100.00
University of Tartu	21.43	14.29	14.29	21.43	28.57	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	12.50	6.25	31.25	21.88	28.13	100.00
Vilnius University	20.00	0.00	13.33	40.00	26.67	100.00
Total	10.95	4.29	19.52	24.29	40.95	100.00

Table 119: Age × Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations

Age	Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
25-39	13.51	2.70	18.92	24.32	40.54	100.00
40-54	10.68	4.85	20.39	26.21	37.86	100.00
55 and above	8.77	3.51	17.54	24.56	45.61	100.00
Prefer not to say	15.38	7.69	23.08	7.69	46.15	100.00
Total	10.95	4.29	19.52	24.29	40.95	100.00

Table 120: Work experience × Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations

Work experience	Incorporating the gender and diversity considerations					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	0.00	0.00	33.33	66.67	100.00
3 and more years	11.11	4.76	21.69	23.28	39.15	100.00
Prefer not to say	33.33	0.00	0.00	33.33	33.33	100.00
Total	10.95	4.29	19.52	24.29	40.95	100.00

3.4.3.1.4   Comments: Main Challenges in Gender Equality and Diversity According to Leaders

What are the main challenges you face in ensuring open, fair and inclusive work environment in your team/department?

Respondents reported a wide range of challenges, shaped by both interpersonal dynamics and institutional structures.

- A common concern was the **persistence of hierarchical cultures and unequal access to decision-making**, particularly for junior researchers and women. Some noted that leadership roles are often dominated by men, with limited space for others to influence decisions or advance.
- **Communication difficulties** were frequently mentioned — including tensions within teams, lack of trust, and resistance to change. Several responses pointed to limited psychological safety and the absence of anonymous feedback channels.
- **Gender imbalance** was a recurring issue, with some teams struggling to attract male candidates, while others noted the dominance of male leadership. Work-life balance challenges, especially for teaching staff and women, were also highlighted.
- **Structural barriers** included low salaries, unclear expectations, lack of onboarding, and poor interdepartmental communication.
- A few respondents expressed **skepticism toward diversity efforts**, viewing them as either irrelevant or purely symbolic.

Overall, while some described their teams as inclusive, many pointed to persistent obstacles that limit fairness and openness in the workplace.

3.4.3.1.5   Comments: Additional Support Needed in Gender Equality and Diversity According to Leaders

What additional support or resources could your organisation provide to help you, as a head of workplace, promote open, fair and inclusive work environment in your team/department?

- Respondents suggested a variety of additional supports and resources that their institutions could provide to help promote open, fair, and inclusive work environments.

- A recurring recommendation was the provision of **training**—particularly on unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, cultural sensitivity, and conflict resolution. Many also asked for regular workshops, seminars, and team-building activities to support team cohesion, communication, and a respectful workplace culture.
- Several respondents emphasized the importance of **structural and policy-level changes**. These included clearer promotion criteria, more transparency in how hiring and evaluation committees are formed, and standardized processes that include non-local staff. Others called for platforms for anonymous feedback, formal mechanisms for addressing inequality or misconduct, and more consistent respect for work-life balance across different roles.
- Better **financial conditions** were another common theme: respondents noted that low salaries, lack of bonuses or advancement opportunities, and uneven workloads discouraged inclusivity and motivation. Some leaders requested more autonomy in managing recruitment, decision-making, and recognition of excellence.
- Some highlighted the need for more supportive HR practices, such as onboarding processes, technical assistance with project management, clearer guidelines, and improved internal communication.
- A few also stressed the value of informal peer exchanges—such as internal discussion groups or mentorship networks—where experiences and solutions could be shared.

Finally, while several respondents felt their institutions already provided a fair and open environment, many others saw clear room for improvement—especially in making inclusive practices more consistent, visible, and embedded in institutional culture.

3.4.3.2   Employees

3.4.3.2.1   Feel Supported from Supervisor

In day-to-day operations, Academics (see Table 123) and junior staff in particular (see Table 126) feel most supported in the matter of diversity and gender equality. There is a difference between men and women in the choice of maximum support (men are more likely than women to vote), but when looking at scores 4 and 5 on the five-point scale, the ratings are similar (see Table 122).

Table 121 How supported do you feel in terms of gender equality and diversity in your daily work environment? (5 is most)

Feel supported from supervisor	Freq.	Percent
1	20	4.30
2	26	5.59
3	101	21.72
4	131	28.17
5	187	40.22
Total	465	100.00

Table 122: Gender × Feel supported from supervisor

Gender	Feel supported from supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	3.93	4.83	21.15	31.12	38.97	100.00
Male	4.67	7.48	20.56	18.69	48.60	100.00
Other	7.41	7.41	33.33	29.63	22.22	100.00
Total	4.30	5.59	21.72	28.17	40.22	100.00

Table 123: Position × Feel supported from supervisor

Position	Feel supported from supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	2.78	11.11	16.67	25.00	44.44	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	4.08	3.06	25.51	22.45	44.90	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	4.41	7.35	25.00	29.41	33.82	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	8.00	5.33	18.67	33.33	34.67	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	23.81	14.29	61.90	100.00
Technical position	5.56	8.33	30.56	27.78	27.78	100.00
Administrative Position	3.08	5.38	17.69	32.31	41.54	100.00
Total	4.31	5.60	21.77	28.23	40.09	100.00

Table 124: Institution × Feel supported from supervisor

Institution	Feel supported from supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	6.00	6.00	20.00	30.00	38.00	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	2.17	3.26	21.74	31.52	41.30	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	6.45	3.23	19.35	22.58	48.39	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	4.00	16.00	48.00	32.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	2.94	5.88	17.65	20.59	52.94	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	12.00	12.00	16.00	36.00	24.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	5.26	5.26	10.53	26.32	52.63	100.00
University of Ljubljana	5.13	5.13	30.77	25.64	33.33	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	2.94	2.94	20.59	20.59	52.94	100.00
University of Tartu	8.57	8.57	20.00	31.43	31.43	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	8.00	16.00	32.00	16.00	28.00	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	3.57	26.79	26.79	42.86	100.00
Total	4.30	5.59	21.72	28.17	40.22	100.00

Table 125: Age × Feel supported from supervisor

Age	Feel supported from supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	0.00	9.09	27.27	63.64	100.00
25-39	3.98	3.54	20.80	29.20	42.48	100.00
40-54	4.52	7.91	22.03	29.38	36.16	100.00
55 and above	2.94	5.88	23.53	23.53	44.12	100.00
Prefer not to say	11.76	11.76	35.29	11.76	29.41	100.00

Total	4.30	5.59	21.72	28.17	40.22	100.00

Table 126: Work experience × Feel supported from supervisor

Work experience	Feel supported from supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.89	3.57	10.71	28.57	56.25	100.00
3 and more years	4.67	5.92	25.23	28.04	36.14	100.00
Prefer not to say	12.50	9.38	25.00	28.13	25.00	100.00
Total	4.30	5.59	21.72	28.17	40.22	100.00

3.4.3.2.2   Feel Improvements in Support

While most respondents noticed positive changes, about 20% chose rather negative values (see Table 127). The differences between men and women are negligible (see Table 128). Slightly higher ratings were chosen by Academics and principal investigators (see Table 129).

Table 127: To what extent have you noticed improvements in the support for gender equality and diversity at your organization over the past three years? (5 is most)

Feel improvements in support	Freq.	Percent
1	53	11.57
2	50	10.92
3	159	34.72
4	96	20.96
5	100	21.83
Total	458	100.00

Table 128: Gender × Feel improvements in support

Gender	Feel improvements in support					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	11.42	10.80	33.95	21.30	22.53	100.00
Male	10.28	8.41	38.32	19.63	23.36	100.00
Other	18.52	22.22	29.63	22.22	7.41	100.00
Total	11.57	10.92	34.72	20.96	21.83	100.00

Table 129: Position × Feel improvements in support

Position	Feel improvements in support					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	13.89	11.11	30.56	5.56	38.89	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	12.12	10.10	28.28	27.27	22.22	100.00
3 Researcher - Postdoc	13.43	11.94	38.81	13.43	22.39	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	14.67	12.00	41.33	18.67	13.33	100.00
Academic	14.29	4.76	28.57	14.29	38.10	100.00
Technical position	16.67	16.67	38.89	19.44	8.33	100.00
Administrative Position	5.69	9.76	34.15	27.64	22.76	100.00
Total	11.60	10.94	34.57	21.01	21.88	100.00

Table 130: Institution × Feel improvements in support

Institution	Feel improvements in support					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	14.29	10.20	42.86	20.41	12.24	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	8.89	10.00	38.89	22.22	20.00	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	10.34	10.34	37.93	20.69	20.69	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	4.17	4.17	41.67	29.17	20.83	100.00
Medical University Sofia	8.57	5.71	31.43	14.29	40.00	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	16.67	20.83	33.33	25.00	4.17	100.00
Semmelweis University	21.05	5.26	10.53	42.11	21.05	100.00
University of Ljubljana	17.95	15.38	35.90	15.38	15.38	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	9.09	9.09	21.21	18.18	42.42	100.00
University of Tartu	14.29	11.43	25.71	34.29	14.29	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	20.00	28.00	24.00	12.00	16.00	100.00
Vilnius University	5.36	7.14	44.64	12.50	30.36	100.00
Total	11.57	10.92	34.72	20.96	21.83	100.00

Table 131: Age × Feel improvements in support

Age	Feel improvements in support					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	9.09	0.00	63.64	9.09	18.18	100.00
25-39	12.11	10.31	33.18	22.87	21.52	100.00
40-54	12.07	13.22	34.48	19.54	20.69	100.00
55 and above	6.06	6.06	30.30	24.24	33.33	100.00
Prefer not to say	11.76	11.76	47.06	11.76	17.65	100.00
Total	11.57	10.92	34.72	20.96	21.83	100.00

Table 132: Work experience × Feel improvements in support

Work experience	Feel improvements in support					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	8.65	9.62	36.54	25.96	19.23	100.00
3 and more years	12.42	10.87	34.78	18.94	22.98	100.00
Prefer not to say	12.50	15.63	28.13	25.00	18.75	100.00
Total	11.57	10.92	34.72	20.96	21.83	100.00

3.4.3.2.3   Feel Improvements in Support from Team

Around 80% of respondents tend to see positive changes in their team, but 20% tend not to (see Table 133). Academics remain significantly positive, while Technical positions remain rather negative (see Table 135).

Table 133: To what extent have you noticed improvements in the support for gender equality and diversity within your team (workplace) over the past three years? (5 is most)

Feel improvements in support from team	Freq.	Percent
1	56	12.28
2	48	10.53
3	155	33.99
4	101	22.15
5	96	21.05
Total	456	100.00

Table 134: Gender × Feel improvements in support from team

Gender	Feel improvements in support from team					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	12.69	9.91	33.75	22.91	20.74	100.00
Male	9.43	8.49	37.74	18.87	25.47	100.00
Other	18.52	25.93	22.22	25.93	7.41	100.00
Total	12.28	10.53	33.99	22.15	21.05	100.00

Table 135: Position × Feel improvements in support from team

Position	Feel improvements in support from team					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	11.11	8.33	30.56	22.22	27.78	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	10.31	8.25	30.93	26.80	23.71	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	11.94	14.93	29.85	20.90	22.39	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	16.00	12.00	32.00	22.67	17.33	100.00
Academic	9.52	4.76	38.10	4.76	42.86	100.00
Technical position	25.00	13.89	38.89	16.67	5.56	100.00
Administrative Position	8.94	9.76	38.21	23.58	19.51	100.00
Total	12.31	10.55	33.85	22.20	21.10	100.00

Table 136: Institution × Feel improvements in support from team

Institution	Feel improvements in support from team					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	20.41	8.16	34.69	18.37	18.37	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	7.78	14.44	37.78	24.44	15.56	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	10.34	10.34	44.83	13.79	20.69	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	12.50	33.33	33.33	20.83	100.00
Medical University Sofia	8.82	8.82	23.53	14.71	44.12	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	30.43	4.35	34.78	21.74	8.70	100.00
Semmelweis University	15.79	5.26	26.32	31.58	21.05	100.00
University of Ljubljana	17.95	15.38	33.33	25.64	7.69	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	6.06	3.03	30.30	18.18	42.42	100.00
University of Tartu	17.14	14.29	22.86	34.29	11.43	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	16.00	12.00	32.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Vilnius University	7.14	8.93	41.07	16.07	26.79	100.00
Total	12.28	10.53	33.99	22.15	21.05	100.00

Table 137: Age × Feel improvements in support from team

Age	Feel improvements in support from team					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	9.09	9.09	36.36	18.18	27.27	100.00
25-39	13.06	9.46	33.33	22.97	21.17	100.00
40-54	12.72	12.72	32.37	23.70	18.50	100.00
55 and above	3.03	6.06	42.42	15.15	33.33	100.00
Prefer not to say	17.65	11.76	41.18	11.76	17.65	100.00
Total	12.28	10.53	33.99	22.15	21.05	100.00

Table 138: Work experience × Feel improvements in support from team

Work experience	Feel improvements in support from team					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	11.54	9.62	26.92	26.92	25.00	100.00
3 and more years	12.50	10.94	35.94	20.63	20.00	100.00
Prefer not to say	12.50	9.38	37.50	21.88	18.75	100.00
Total	12.28	10.53	33.99	22.15	21.05	100.00

3.4.3.2.4   Diversity Initiatives Addressed Needs

On the question of whether the changes promoting diversity and gender equality have addressed their needs, most respondents are not sure (see Table 139). **Women are slightly more positive than men in this respect** (see Table 140). Again, Academics, and to some extent staff scientists, stand out (see Table 141).

Table 139: Do you feel that the gender equality and diversity initiatives implemented at your institution over the past three years have adequately addressed your needs? (5 is most)

Diversity initiatives addressed needs	Freq.	Percent
1	42	9.15
2	40	8.71
3	146	31.81
4	99	21.57
5	132	28.76
Total	459	100.00

Table 140: Gender × Diversity initiatives addressed needs

Gender	Diversity initiatives addressed needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	7.36	9.20	31.60	23.01	28.83	100.00
Male	11.32	6.60	34.91	16.98	30.19	100.00
Other	22.22	11.11	22.22	22.22	22.22	100.00
Total	9.15	8.71	31.81	21.57	28.76	100.00

Table 141: Position × Diversity initiatives addressed needs

Position	Diversity initiatives addressed needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	11.11	11.11	33.33	16.67	27.78	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	12.24	5.10	29.59	21.43	31.63	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	5.97	7.46	40.30	19.40	26.87	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	12.00	8.00	33.33	22.67	24.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	4.76	28.57	14.29	52.38	100.00
Technical position	14.29	20.00	37.14	17.14	11.43	100.00
Administrative Position	6.35	9.52	26.19	26.19	31.75	100.00
Total	9.17	8.73	31.66	21.62	28.82	100.00

Table 142: Institution × Diversity initiatives addressed needs

Institution	Diversity initiatives addressed needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	14.29	2.04	36.73	20.41	26.53	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	8.89	10.00	28.89	24.44	27.78	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	10.71	14.29	28.57	10.71	35.71	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	4.17	4.17	29.17	37.50	25.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	2.86	5.71	25.71	11.43	54.29	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	16.00	8.00	40.00	24.00	12.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	15.79	0.00	26.32	26.32	31.58	100.00
University of Ljubljana	10.26	20.51	28.21	23.08	17.95	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	8.82	2.94	32.35	17.65	38.24	100.00
University of Tartu	11.43	14.29	28.57	22.86	22.86	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	12.00	16.00	44.00	12.00	16.00	100.00
Vilnius University	1.79	5.36	35.71	25.00	32.14	100.00
Total	9.15	8.71	31.81	21.57	28.76	100.00

Table 143: Age × Diversity initiatives addressed needs

Age	Diversity initiatives addressed needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	9.09	0.00	54.55	18.18	18.18	100.00
25-39	7.62	6.73	29.15	24.66	31.84	100.00
40-54	9.77	12.07	33.33	18.97	25.86	100.00
55 and above	8.82	5.88	38.24	14.71	32.35	100.00
Prefer not to say	23.53	11.76	23.53	23.53	17.65	100.00
Total	9.15	8.71	31.81	21.57	28.76	100.00

Table 144: Work experience × Diversity initiatives addressed needs

Work experience	Diversity initiatives addressed needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	5.56	6.48	27.78	26.85	33.33	100.00
3 and more years	9.72	9.40	33.54	19.44	27.90	100.00
Prefer not to say	15.63	9.38	28.13	25.00	21.88	100.00
Total	9.15	8.71	31.81	21.57	28.76	100.00

3.4.3.2.5   Diversity Initiatives have Positive Impact on Career

Only a third of respondents perceive a positive impact of the changes on their own career, while the majority are rather negative about this possibility (see Table 145). Women are slightly more positive (see Table 146), while Academics are significantly more positive (see Table 147). People with short work experience also believe in a positive impact on their career (see Table 150).

Table 145: To what extent do you believe that the institution's gender equality and diversity initiatives have positively impacted your career development? (5 is most)

Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career	Freq.	Percent
1	110	23.86
2	63	13.67
3	141	30.59
4	72	15.62
5	75	16.27
Total	461	100.00

Table 146: Gender × Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career

Gender	Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	20.80	14.68	29.97	17.43	17.13	100.00
Male	29.91	9.35	32.71	12.15	15.89	100.00
Other	37.04	18.52	29.63	7.41	7.41	100.00
Total	23.86	13.67	30.59	15.62	16.27	100.00

Table 147: Position × Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career

Position	Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	27.78	16.67	30.56	8.33	16.67	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	28.57	11.22	25.51	23.47	11.22	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	19.70	12.12	43.94	12.12	12.12	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	28.38	16.22	22.97	13.51	18.92	100.00
Academic	9.52	14.29	23.81	4.76	47.62	100.00
Technical position	22.22	8.33	50.00	8.33	11.11	100.00
Administrative Position	20.93	15.50	27.91	18.60	17.05	100.00
Total	23.70	13.70	30.65	15.65	16.30	100.00

Table 148: Institution × Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career

Institution	Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	30.00	12.00	26.00	22.00	10.00	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	15.56	15.56	36.67	16.67	15.56	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	28.13	21.88	28.13	6.25	15.63	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	8.33	12.50	37.50	33.33	8.33	100.00
Medical University Sofia	20.00	5.71	25.71	14.29	34.29	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	48.00	4.00	20.00	24.00	4.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	31.58	15.79	0.00	36.84	15.79	100.00
University of Ljubljana	23.08	20.51	28.21	20.51	7.69	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	14.71	11.76	29.41	11.76	32.35	100.00
University of Tartu	32.35	11.76	35.29	5.88	14.71	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	28.00	16.00	40.00	4.00	12.00	100.00
Vilnius University	24.07	12.96	37.04	5.56	20.37	100.00
Total	23.86	13.67	30.59	15.62	16.27	100.00

Table 149: Age × Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career

Age	Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	36.36	0.00	27.27	18.18	18.18	100.00
25-39	21.24	15.93	29.65	15.04	18.14	100.00
40-54	25.43	11.56	32.37	18.50	12.14	100.00
55 and above	26.47	11.76	26.47	8.82	26.47	100.00
Prefer not to say	29.41	17.65	35.29	5.88	11.76	100.00
Total	23.86	13.67	30.59	15.62	16.27	100.00

Table 150: Work experience × Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career

Work experience	Diversity initiatives have positive impact on career					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	19.09	11.82	27.27	20.00	21.82	100.00
3 and more years	25.39	14.11	30.72	14.42	15.36	100.00
Prefer not to say	25.00	15.63	40.63	12.50	6.25	100.00
Total	23.86	13.67	30.59	15.62	16.27	100.00

3.4.3.2.6   Diversity Initiatives are Respected within Teams

The majority of respondents are inclined to the view that diversity and gender equality issues are taken seriously within the team (see Table 151). The views of men and women are balanced in this respect (see Table 152), and the usual lead of Academics is not as pronounced (see Table 153).

Table 151: Do you feel that gender equality and diversity are respected within your team? (5 is most)

Diversity initiatives are respected within teams	Freq.	Percent
1	27	5.83
2	29	6.26
3	70	15.12
4	94	20.30
5	243	52.48
Total	463	100.00

Table 152: Gender × Diversity initiatives are respected within teams

Gender	Diversity initiatives are respected within teams					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	5.17	6.69	14.59	22.80	50.76	100.00
Male	4.67	4.67	15.89	14.02	60.75	100.00
Other	18.52	7.41	18.52	14.81	40.74	100.00
Total	5.83	6.26	15.12	20.30	52.48	100.00

Table 153: Position × Diversity initiatives are respected within teams

Position	Diversity initiatives are respected within teams					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	5.56	8.33	19.44	8.33	58.33	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	3.03	2.02	12.12	23.23	59.60	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	5.88	10.29	19.12	20.59	44.12	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	10.81	6.76	12.16	21.62	48.65	100.00
Academic	4.76	9.52	14.29	4.76	66.67	100.00
Technical position	5.56	13.89	19.44	27.78	33.33	100.00
Administrative Position	5.47	3.91	14.84	20.31	55.47	100.00
Total	5.84	6.28	15.15	20.13	52.60	100.00

Table 154: Institution × Diversity initiatives are respected within teams

Institution	Diversity initiatives are respected within teams					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	6.00	6.00	8.00	28.00	52.00	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	5.43	4.35	10.87	19.57	59.78	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	3.33	3.33	13.33	20.00	60.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	4.00	20.00	32.00	44.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	5.71	5.71	8.57	25.71	54.29	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	12.00	12.00	12.00	24.00	40.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	10.53	0.00	15.79	10.53	63.16	100.00
University of Ljubljana	7.69	10.26	20.51	10.26	51.28	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	5.88	5.88	17.65	14.71	55.88	100.00
University of Tartu	8.82	0.00	26.47	23.53	41.18	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	12.00	24.00	12.00	12.00	40.00	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	5.45	21.82	20.00	52.73	100.00
Total	5.83	6.26	15.12	20.30	52.48	100.00

Table 155: Age × Diversity initiatives are respected within teams

Age	Diversity initiatives are respected within teams					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	0.00	9.09	9.09	27.27	54.55	100.00
25-39	5.75	6.19	11.50	22.57	53.98	100.00
40-54	5.14	7.43	19.43	17.14	50.86	100.00
55 and above	5.88	2.94	11.76	23.53	55.88	100.00
Prefer not to say	17.65	0.00	29.41	11.76	41.18	100.00
Total	5.83	6.26	15.12	20.30	52.48	100.00

Table 156: Work experience × Diversity initiatives are respected within teams

Work experience	Diversity initiatives are respected within teams					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	1.80	6.31	10.81	18.02	63.06	100.00
3 and more years	6.25	6.25	15.63	20.94	50.94	100.00
Prefer not to say	15.63	6.25	25.00	21.88	31.25	100.00
Total	5.83	6.26	15.12	20.30	52.48	100.00

3.4.3.2.7   Personally Benefited from Diversity Program

The vast majority deny that they personally benefit from diversity or gender equality programmes (see Table 157). Although women are significantly more likely to agree than men, the majority still refuse to do so (see Table 158). The strongest polarisation (strongly negative but also strongly positive) of evaluations is found in the group of principal investigators (see Table 159).

Table 157: Have you personally benefited from any gender equality or diversity programs? (5 is most)

Personally benefited from diversity program	Freq.	Percent
1	269	57.85
2	36	7.74
3	82	17.63
4	27	5.81
5	51	10.97
Total	465	100.00

Table 158: Gender × Personally benefited from diversity program

Gender	Personally benefited from diversity program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	53.17	7.55	20.54	7.55	11.18	100.00
Male	73.83	7.48	8.41	1.87	8.41	100.00
Other	51.85	11.11	18.52	0.00	18.52	100.00
Total	57.85	7.74	17.63	5.81	10.97	100.00

Table 159: Position × Personally benefited from diversity program

Position	Personally benefited from diversity program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	72.22	0.00	11.11	2.78	13.89	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	62.63	6.06	15.15	8.08	8.08	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	57.35	16.18	16.18	2.94	7.35	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	66.22	6.76	16.22	1.35	9.46	100.00
Academic	66.67	4.76	9.52	0.00	19.05	100.00
Technical position	50.00	11.11	27.78	5.56	5.56	100.00
Administrative Position	46.15	6.92	21.54	10.00	15.38	100.00
Total	57.76	7.76	17.67	5.82	10.99	100.00

Table 160: Institution × Personally benefited from diversity program

Institution	Personally benefited from diversity program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	60.00	6.00	18.00	6.00	10.00	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	40.22	4.35	26.09	10.87	18.48	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	65.63	6.25	18.75	3.13	6.25	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	52.00	12.00	12.00	16.00	8.00	100.00
Medical University Sofia	54.29	8.57	22.86	2.86	11.43	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	68.00	4.00	8.00	8.00	12.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	57.89	0.00	10.53	15.79	15.79	100.00
University of Ljubljana	69.23	15.38	10.26	2.56	2.56	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	61.76	8.82	11.76	0.00	17.65	100.00
University of Tartu	61.76	8.82	14.71	2.94	11.76	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	64.00	8.00	16.00	4.00	8.00	100.00
Vilnius University	65.45	10.91	20.00	0.00	3.64	100.00
Total	57.85	7.74	17.63	5.81	10.97	100.00

Table 161: Age × Personally benefited from diversity program

Age	Personally benefited from diversity program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	54.55	9.09	18.18	0.00	18.18	100.00
25-39	55.07	8.81	18.94	6.17	11.01	100.00
40-54	61.93	7.39	14.77	5.68	10.23	100.00
55 and above	58.82	2.94	17.65	8.82	11.76	100.00
Prefer not to say	52.94	5.88	29.41	0.00	11.76	100.00
Total	57.85	7.74	17.63	5.81	10.97	100.00

Table 162: Work experience × Personally benefited from diversity program

Work experience	Personally benefited from diversity program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	49.11	8.93	17.86	8.04	16.07	100.00
3 and more years	61.99	7.17	16.51	4.98	9.35	100.00
Prefer not to say	46.88	9.38	28.13	6.25	9.38	100.00
Total	57.85	7.74	17.63	5.81	10.97	100.00

3.4.3.2.8 Comments: Suggestion to Improve Gender Equality and Diversity According to Employees

What additional measures or changes would you suggest to further improve gender equality and diversity in your organisation or team?

Respondents suggested a range of measures to strengthen gender equality and diversity.

- Frequently mentioned were **structural supports** like equal pay, clear promotion criteria, institutional kindergartens, and flexible working arrangements—seen as vital for balancing work and family life across genders.
- Many called for **greater awareness** and accountability through mandatory training for managers, more inclusive communication, and better mechanisms for addressing discrimination. The need for visible **female role models** and more women in leadership was also highlighted, especially in male-dominated environments.
- Some expressed concerns about **superficial or symbolic diversity efforts**, advocating instead for a focus on competence and fairness for all. A few respondents questioned the relevance of diversity initiatives altogether.

Overall, the responses show both progress and persistent gaps, with a strong call for institutional action that moves beyond formal policies to real cultural change.

3.4.4 Part 3: Leadership

3.4.4.1   Leaders

The questions in this chapter were answered only by those who currently hold a managerial role. This is about a third of the respondents (see Table 163), twice as likely to be male as female (see Table 164), and more likely to be senior staff (see Table 167) with a longer career in the institution (see Table 168).

Table 163: Are you currently the head of a department, research group, or team at your institution?

Managerial role	Freq.	Percent
No	468	68.72
Yes	213	31.28
Total	681	100.00

Table 164: Gender × Managerial role

Gender	Managerial role		
	No	Yes	Total
Female	73.35	26.65	100.00
Male	56.54	43.46	100.00
Other	75.00	25.00	100.00
Total	68.72	31.28	100.00

Table 165: Position × Managerial role

Position	Managerial role		
	No	Yes	Total
Researcher - PI	22.56	77.44	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	83.90	16.10	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	90.67	9.33	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	93.75	6.25	100.00
Academic	72.41	27.59	100.00
Technical position	87.80	12.20	100.00
Administrative Position	76.61	23.39	100.00
Total	68.88	31.12	100.00

Table 166: Institution × Managerial role

Institution	Managerial role		
	No	Yes	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	64.94	35.06	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	75.41	24.59	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	91.43	8.57	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	62.50	37.50	100.00
Medical University Sofia	67.31	32.69	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	64.10	35.90	100.00
Semmelweis University	70.37	29.63	100.00
University of Ljubljana	75.00	25.00	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	59.65	40.35	100.00
University of Tartu	71.43	28.57	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	44.83	55.17	100.00
Vilnius University	76.71	23.29	100.00
Total	68.72	31.28	100.00

Table 167: Age × Managerial role

Age	Managerial role		
	No	Yes	Total
0-25	100.00	0.00	100.00
25-39	85.98	14.02	100.00
40-54	63.25	36.75	100.00
55 and above	36.96	63.04	100.00
Prefer not to say	54.84	45.16	100.00
Total	68.72	31.28	100.00

Table 168: Work experience × Managerial role

Work experience	Managerial role		
	No	Yes	Total
0-2 years	88.19	11.81	100.00
3 and more years	62.79	37.21	100.00
Prefer not to say	84.21	15.79	100.00
Total	68.72	31.28	100.00

3.4.4.1.1   Leadership Development Opportunities Align Needs

Respondents are rather reserved about whether opportunities to develop management skills match the needs (see Table 169). Particularly alarming is the low level of agreement among principal investigators (see Table 170). This belief also declines with age (see Table 173) and length of experience (see Table 174).

Table 169: To what extent do you believe that the leadership development opportunities at your institution align your needs and expectations as head of workplace? (5 is most)

Opportunities align needs	Freq.	Percent
1	20	9.39
2	25	11.74
3	56	26.29
4	71	33.33
5	41	19.25
Total	213	100.00

Table 170: Gender × Opportunities align needs

Gender	Opportunities align needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	11.57	9.92	30.58	30.58	17.36	100.00
Male	6.02	13.25	20.48	38.55	21.69	100.00
Other	11.11	22.22	22.22	22.22	22.22	100.00
Total	9.39	11.74	26.29	33.33	19.25	100.00

Table 171: Position × Opportunities align needs

Position	Opportunities align needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	11.81	8.66	25.20	38.58	15.75	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	10.53	31.58	26.32	31.58	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	14.29	0.00	28.57	42.86	14.29	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	25.00	37.50	37.50	100.00
Technical position	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
Administrative Position	2.50	25.00	27.50	22.50	22.50	100.00
Total	9.00	11.85	26.07	33.65	19.43	100.00

Table 172: Institution × Opportunities align needs

Institution	Opportunities align needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	3.70	11.11	22.22	51.85	11.11	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	3.33	0.00	16.67	56.67	23.33	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	13.33	0.00	40.00	20.00	26.67	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	17.65	23.53	29.41	29.41	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	7.14	28.57	28.57	35.71	0.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	12.50	25.00	12.50	25.00	25.00	100.00
University of Ljubljana	30.77	15.38	23.08	23.08	7.69	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	4.35	4.35	26.09	26.09	39.13	100.00
University of Tartu	14.29	0.00	42.86	14.29	28.57	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	18.75	15.63	34.38	28.13	3.13	100.00
Vilnius University	5.88	23.53	17.65	23.53	29.41	100.00
Total	9.39	11.74	26.29	33.33	19.25	100.00

Table 173: Age × Opportunities align needs

Age	Opportunities align needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
25-39	8.11	18.92	16.22	29.73	27.03	100.00
40-54	10.58	10.58	27.88	32.69	18.27	100.00
55 and above	8.62	10.34	29.31	36.21	15.52	100.00
Prefer not to say	7.14	7.14	28.57	35.71	21.43	100.00
Total	9.39	11.74	26.29	33.33	19.25	100.00

Table 174: Work experience × Opportunities align needs

Work experience	Opportunities align needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	6.67	6.67	60.00	26.67	100.00
3 and more years	8.85	12.50	27.08	32.29	19.27	100.00
Prefer not to say	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	9.39	11.74	26.29	33.33	19.25	100.00

3.4.4.1.2   Participated in Leadership Training

Slightly more than half of respondents had received some management training in the past three years. The proportions are fairly even in the individual categories; the only interesting thing is the relationship with age - the younger the respondent, the more likely he or she has received some such training (see Table 179).

Table 175: Have you participated in any leadership training programs over the past three years?

Training program	Freq.	Percent
No	97	45.54
Yes	116	54.46
Total	213	100.00

Table 176: Gender × Training program

Gender	Training program		
	No	Yes	Total
Female	43.80	56.20	100.00
Male	46.99	53.01	100.00
Other	55.56	44.44	100.00
Total	45.54	54.46	100.00

Table 177: Position × Training program

Position	Training program		
	No	Yes	Total
Researcher - PI	44.88	55.12	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	57.89	42.11	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	42.86	57.14	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	60.00	40.00	100.00
Academic	37.50	62.50	100.00
Technical position	60.00	40.00	100.00
Administrative Position	40.00	60.00	100.00
Total	45.50	54.50	100.00

Table 178: Institution × Training program

Institution	Training program		
	No	Yes	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	40.74	59.26	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	30.00	70.00	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	100.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	46.67	53.33	100.00
Medical University Sofia	64.71	35.29	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	35.71	64.29	100.00
Semmelweis University	37.50	62.50	100.00
University of Ljubljana	84.62	15.38	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	43.48	56.52	100.00
University of Tartu	35.71	64.29	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	53.13	46.88	100.00
Vilnius University	47.06	52.94	100.00
Total	45.54	54.46	100.00

Table 179: Age × Training program

Age	Training program		
	No	Yes	Total
25-39	24.32	75.68	100.00
40-54	39.42	60.58	100.00
55 and above	70.69	29.31	100.00
Prefer not to say	42.86	57.14	100.00
Total	45.54	54.46	100.00

Table 180: Work experience × Training program

Work experience	Training program		
	No	Yes	Total
0-2 years	46.67	53.33	100.00
3 and more years	45.31	54.69	100.00
Prefer not to say	50.00	50.00	100.00
Total	45.54	54.46	100.00

3.4.4.1.3   Impact of Training Program

Those who have received some management training tend to have a more positive assessment of its benefits (see Table 181).

Table 181: How do you evaluate the impact of the leadership development programs you have participated in over past three years? (5 is most)

Impact of training program	Freq.	Percent
1	2	1.75
2	8	7.02
3	27	23.68
4	48	42.11
5	29	25.44
Total	114	100.00

Table 182 Gender × Impact of training program

Gender	Impact of training program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	0.00	8.96	29.85	31.34	29.85	100.00
Male	2.33	2.33	16.28	58.14	20.93	100.00
Other	25.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	100.00
Total	1.75	7.02	23.68	42.11	25.44	100.00

Table 183: Position × Impact of training program

Position	Impact of training program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	0.00	10.14	26.09	42.03	21.74	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	50.00	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	0.00	0.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	0.00	80.00	20.00	100.00
Technical position	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	100.00
Administrative Position	4.17	4.17	20.83	41.67	29.17	100.00
Total	0.88	7.08	23.89	42.48	25.66	100.00

Table 184: Institution × Impact of training program

Institution	Impact of training program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	0.00	26.67	20.00	13.33	40.00	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	9.52	9.52	57.14	23.81	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	0.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	12.50	37.50	37.50	12.50	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	0.00	16.67	50.00	33.33	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	11.11	0.00	22.22	66.67	0.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	0.00	20.00	40.00	40.00	100.00
University of Ljubljana	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	0.00	0.00	16.67	25.00	58.33	100.00
University of Tartu	0.00	0.00	44.44	33.33	22.22	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	0.00	0.00	33.33	53.33	13.33	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	0.00	33.33	44.44	22.22	100.00
Total	1.75	7.02	23.68	42.11	25.44	100.00

Table 185: Age × Impact of training program

Age	Impact of training program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
25-39	3.57	10.71	25.00	32.14	28.57	100.00
40-54	1.61	4.84	24.19	45.16	24.19	100.00
55 and above	0.00	6.25	18.75	43.75	31.25	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	12.50	25.00	50.00	12.50	100.00
Total	1.75	7.02	23.68	42.11	25.44	100.00

Table 186: Work experience × Impact of training program

Work experience	Impact of training program					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	0.00	12.50	50.00	37.50	100.00
3 and more years	1.94	7.77	23.30	41.75	25.24	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	0.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	100.00
Total	1.75	7.02	23.68	42.11	25.44	100.00

3.4.4.1.4   Skills Improved Ability to Manage

Although most of the evaluations of the benefits of management training for team leadership are rather positive (see Table 187), I note the lowest positive evaluation in the group of principal investigators (see Table 189).

Table 187: To what extent have the leadership skills you developed improved your ability to manage your team (research group, department)?

Skills improved ability to manage	Freq.	Percent
1	1	0.86
2	12	10.34
3	25	21.55
4	55	47.41
5	23	19.83
Total	116	100.00

Table 188: Gender × Skills improved ability to manage

Gender	Skills improved ability to manage					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	0.00	11.76	23.53	44.12	20.59	100.00
Male	0.00	9.09	18.18	52.27	20.45	100.00
Other	25.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	0.00	100.00
Total	0.86	10.34	21.55	47.41	19.83	100.00

Table 189: Position × Skills improved ability to manage

Position	Skills improved ability to manage					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	0.00	11.43	21.43	51.43	15.71	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	0.00	12.50	50.00	37.50	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	20.00	60.00	20.00	100.00
Technical position	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	100.00
Administrative Position	4.17	12.50	25.00	33.33	25.00	100.00
Total	0.87	10.43	21.74	46.96	20.00	100.00

Table 190: Institution × Skills improved ability to manage

Institution	Skills improved ability to manage					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	0.00	12.50	31.25	31.25	25.00	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	0.00	14.29	23.81	42.86	19.05	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	33.33	0.00	33.33	33.33	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	0.00	25.00	25.00	37.50	12.50	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	16.67	33.33	16.67	33.33	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	22.22	11.11	66.67	0.00	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	0.00	20.00	60.00	20.00	100.00
University of Ljubljana	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.85	46.15	100.00
University of Tartu	0.00	0.00	44.44	44.44	11.11	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	0.00	13.33	13.33	60.00	13.33	100.00
Vilnius University	0.00	0.00	22.22	66.67	11.11	100.00
Total	0.86	10.34	21.55	47.41	19.83	100.00

Table 191: Age × Skills improved ability to manage

Age	Skills improved ability to manage					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
25-39	3.57	10.71	21.43	42.86	21.43	100.00
40-54	0.00	9.52	25.40	46.03	19.05	100.00
55 and above	0.00	5.88	11.76	64.71	17.65	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	25.00	12.50	37.50	25.00	100.00
Total	0.86	10.34	21.55	47.41	19.83	100.00

Table 192: Work experience × Skills improved ability to manage

Work experience	Skills improved ability to manage					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	0.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00	100.00
3 and more years	0.95	10.48	20.95	47.62	20.00	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	0.00	100.00
Total	0.86	10.34	21.55	47.41	19.83	100.00

3.4.4.1.5　　　Skills Improved Performance

When we ask about the impact of the training on the team's performance, although the positive evaluation prevails, there are also some values in the negative part of the spectrum (see Table 193). Men are less enthusiastic compared to women (see Table 194) and principal investigators compared to other positions (see Table 195).

Table 193: Have you noticed improvements in your team's performance and dynamics as a result of applying the leadership skills you developed?

Skills improved performance	Freq.	Percent
1	6	5.22
2	17	14.78
3	27	23.48
4	47	40.87
5	18	15.65
Total	115	100.00

Table 194: Gender × Skills improved performance

Gender	Skills improved performance					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	2.94	19.12	26.47	30.88	20.59	100.00
Male	6.98	9.30	18.60	55.81	9.30	100.00
Other	25.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	0.00	100.00
Total	5.22	14.78	23.48	40.87	15.65	100.00

Table 195: Position × Skills improved performance

Position	Skills improved performance					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	7.25	14.49	27.54	39.13	11.59	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	0.00	0.00	12.50	50.00	37.50	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	100.00
Academic	0.00	0.00	0.00	80.00	20.00	100.00
Technical position	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	100.00
Administrative Position	4.17	25.00	20.83	29.17	20.83	100.00
Total	5.26	14.91	23.68	40.35	15.79	100.00

Table 196: Institution × Skills improved performance

Institution	Skills improved performance					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	0.00	18.75	25.00	43.75	12.50	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	5.00	15.00	25.00	40.00	15.00	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	33.33	0.00	33.33	33.33	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	12.50	25.00	37.50	12.50	12.50	100.00
Medical University Sofia	0.00	16.67	16.67	50.00	16.67	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	0.00	22.22	11.11	55.56	11.11	100.00
Semmelweis University	0.00	20.00	0.00	80.00	0.00	100.00
University of Ljubljana	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	7.69	0.00	15.38	23.08	53.85	100.00
University of Tartu	11.11	11.11	44.44	22.22	11.11	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	0.00	20.00	13.33	60.00	6.67	100.00
Vilnius University	11.11	11.11	44.44	33.33	0.00	100.00
Total	5.22	14.78	23.48	40.87	15.65	100.00

Table 197: Age × Skills improved performance

Age	Skills improved performance					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
25-39	3.57	21.43	10.71	50.00	14.29	100.00
40-54	4.84	11.29	29.03	35.48	19.35	100.00
55 and above	11.76	0.00	23.53	58.82	5.88	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	50.00	25.00	12.50	12.50	100.00
Total	5.22	14.78	23.48	40.87	15.65	100.00

Table 198: Work experience × Skills improved performance

Work experience	Skills improved performance					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	12.50	0.00	37.50	25.00	25.00	100.00
3 and more years	4.81	14.42	22.12	43.27	15.38	100.00
Prefer not to say	0.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	5.22	14.78	23.48	40.87	15.65	100.00

3.4.4.1.6   Comments: Further Support in Leadership According to Leaders

What further support would help you enhance your leadership capabilities and improve team management?

Respondents expressed a strong demand for leadership development tailored to the needs of academic and research settings. Many called for more frequent, practical, and accessible leadership training, including programs focused on emotional intelligence, communication, conflict resolution, and strategic decision-making. Several emphasized the importance of ongoing support, such as mentoring, coaching, and peer learning networks.

A recurring theme was the need to expand access to training beyond formal department heads, particularly to research group leaders, core facility managers, and informal leaders. Some noted frustration that training is often limited to administrative managers or is not aligned with the realities of scientific leadership.

In addition to training, respondents highlighted the value of structural and institutional support. This included calls for more administrative assistance (e.g., lab managers or financial officers), reduced bureaucracy, and better systems for onboarding, project management, and evaluation. Others called for clearer leadership frameworks, recognition of leadership roles at the institutional level, and more transparent decision-making.

Some noted barriers to participation in training—such as scheduling conflicts, language limitations, or unclear eligibility—and stressed the need for leadership development to be accessible, inclusive, and integrated into career development plans.

Finally, several respondents underlined that leadership is not only about skills but also about authority, autonomy, and support from senior management. Without institutional trust, recognition, and appropriate delegation of responsibility, even well-trained leaders struggle to lead effectively.

In summary, respondents want leadership development that is continuous, practical, inclusive, and backed by institutional structures that enable rather than hinder effective team management.

3.4.4.2   Employees

Less than half of the respondents want to give feedback to their direct supervisor (see Table 199). Women are twice as likely as men to do so (see Table 200). Among positions, PhD candidates and postdocs stand out above all others (see Table 201).

Table 199: Would you like to evaluate leadership skills of your direct supervisor as well?

Like to evaluate supervisor	Freq.	Percent
No	109	51.17
Yes	104	48.83
Total	213	100.00

Table 200: Gender × Like to evaluate supervisor

Gender	Like to evaluate supervisor		
	No	Yes	Total
Female	39.67	60.33	100.00
Male	65.06	34.94	100.00
Other	77.78	22.22	100.00
Total	51.17	48.83	100.00

Table 201: Position × Like to evaluate supervisor

Position	Like to evaluate supervisor		
	No	Yes	Total
Researcher - PI	59.06	40.94	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	42.11	57.89	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	28.57	71.43	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	20.00	80.00	100.00
Academic	50.00	50.00	100.00
Technical position	40.00	60.00	100.00
Administrative Position	40.00	60.00	100.00
Total	51.18	48.82	100.00

Table 202: Institution × Like to evaluate supervisor

Institution	Like to evaluate supervisor		
	No	Yes	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	51.85	48.15	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	76.67	23.33	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	100.00	0.00	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	73.33	26.67	100.00
Medical University Sofia	35.29	64.71	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	35.71	64.29	100.00
Semmelweis University	62.50	37.50	100.00
University of Ljubljana	46.15	53.85	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	30.43	69.57	100.00
University of Tartu	42.86	57.14	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	50.00	50.00	100.00
Vilnius University	41.18	58.82	100.00
Total	51.17	48.83	100.00

Table 203: Age × Like to evaluate supervisor

Age	Like to evaluate supervisor		
	No	Yes	Total
25-39	54.05	45.95	100.00
40-54	44.23	55.77	100.00
55 and above	58.62	41.38	100.00
Prefer not to say	64.29	35.71	100.00
Total	51.17	48.83	100.00

Table 204: Work experience × Like to evaluate supervisor

Work experience	Like to evaluate supervisor		
	No	Yes	Total
0-2 years	53.33	46.67	100.00
3 and more years	51.56	48.44	100.00
Prefer not to say	33.33	66.67	100.00
Total	51.17	48.83	100.00

3.4.4.2.1   Improvements in Team Productivity

Approximately one-third of respondents did not notice any improvement in the quality of management, while about one-third noticed positive changes (see Table 205). Postdocs are the least observant in this regard, and technical staff the most negative (see Table 207).

Table 205: Have you noticed improvements in team collaboration and productivity as a result of changes in leadership practices of your direct superior (head of team) over the past three years? (5 is most)

Improvements in team productivity	Freq.	Percent
1	161	28.80
2	65	11.63
3	116	20.75
4	107	19.14
5	110	19.68
Total	559	100.00

Table 206: Gender × Improvements in team productivity

Gender	Improvements in team productivity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	27.78	12.12	21.97	17.17	20.96	100.00
Male	28.15	10.37	17.78	25.93	17.78	100.00
Other	46.43	10.71	17.86	14.29	10.71	100.00
Total	28.80	11.63	20.75	19.14	19.68	100.00

Table 207: Position × Improvements in team productivity

Position	Improvements in team productivity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	31.03	6.90	21.84	17.24	22.99	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	26.36	10.91	21.82	24.55	16.36	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	27.40	19.18	23.29	17.81	12.33	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	31.65	13.92	17.72	16.46	20.25	100.00
Academic	36.00	12.00	8.00	16.00	28.00	100.00
Technical position	41.03	10.26	23.08	12.82	12.82	100.00
Administrative Position	24.14	9.66	21.38	20.69	24.14	100.00
Total	28.85	11.47	20.79	19.18	19.71	100.00

Table 208: Institution × Improvements in team productivity

Institution	Improvements in team productivity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	33.33	12.70	20.63	23.81	9.52	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	21.05	11.58	23.16	22.11	22.11	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	28.57	17.86	28.57	17.86	7.14	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	14.29	21.43	25.00	32.14	7.14	100.00
Medical University Sofia	15.22	15.22	15.22	19.57	34.78	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	36.36	24.24	6.06	15.15	18.18	100.00
Semmelweis University	13.64	0.00	13.64	40.91	31.82	100.00
University of Ljubljana	43.48	8.70	21.74	13.04	13.04	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	20.00	8.00	14.00	18.00	40.00	100.00
University of Tartu	47.62	7.14	23.81	14.29	7.14	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	39.02	2.44	34.15	14.63	9.76	100.00
Vilnius University	30.77	12.31	20.00	10.77	26.15	100.00
Total	28.80	11.63	20.75	19.14	19.68	100.00

Table 209: Age × Improvements in team productivity

Age	Improvements in team productivity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	36.36	9.09	27.27	9.09	18.18	100.00
25-39	26.27	15.25	19.07	20.34	19.07	100.00
40-54	31.76	9.01	21.03	18.88	19.31	100.00
55 and above	18.97	8.62	27.59	18.97	25.86	100.00
Prefer not to say	47.62	9.52	14.29	14.29	14.29	100.00
Total	28.80	11.63	20.75	19.14	19.68	100.00

Table 210: Work experience × Improvements in team productivity

Work experience	Improvements in team productivity					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	23.42	12.61	18.92	20.72	24.32	100.00
3 and more years	29.71	11.35	21.26	19.08	18.60	100.00
Prefer not to say	35.29	11.76	20.59	14.71	17.65	100.00
Total	28.80	11.63	20.75	19.14	19.68	100.00

3.4.4.2.2   Current Leadership Abilities of Supervisor

More than half of the respondents perceive the current managerial skills of their direct supervisor positively, about a quarter rather negatively (see Table 211). Men are slightly more positive in this respect (see Table 212). Academics, administrators and staff scientists also rate their boss positively, while principal investigators are less positive (see Table 213).

Table 211: How do you perceive the current leadership abilities of your direct superior (head of team)? (5 is most)

Current leadership abilities of supervisor	Freq.	Percent
1	80	14.08
2	65	11.44
3	119	20.95
4	131	23.06
5	173	30.46
Total	568	100.00

Table 212: Gender × Current leadership abilities of supervisor

Gender	Current leadership abilities of supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	15.06	12.35	19.01	22.72	30.86	100.00
Male	9.70	8.21	26.12	23.88	32.09	100.00
Other	20.69	13.79	24.14	24.14	17.24	100.00
Total	14.08	11.44	20.95	23.06	30.46	100.00

Table 213: Position × Current leadership abilities of supervisor

Position	Current leadership abilities of supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	19.54	12.64	20.69	28.74	18.39	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	6.42	13.76	24.77	22.94	32.11	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	17.81	15.07	19.18	21.92	26.03	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	18.99	10.13	15.19	26.58	29.11	100.00
Academic	16.00	4.00	28.00	8.00	44.00	100.00
Technical position	15.38	10.26	25.64	23.08	25.64	100.00
Administrative Position	11.69	9.74	18.83	21.43	38.31	100.00
Total	14.13	11.48	20.67	23.14	30.57	100.00

Table 214: Institution × Current leadership abilities of supervisor

Institution	Current leadership abilities of supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	17.74	14.52	17.74	32.26	17.74	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	5.05	8.08	13.13	29.29	44.44	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	16.67	10.00	20.00	20.00	33.33	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	3.45	17.24	24.14	27.59	27.59	100.00
Medical University Sofia	8.70	10.87	21.74	17.39	41.30	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	26.47	17.65	20.59	23.53	11.76	100.00
Semmelweis University	4.55	4.55	18.18	22.73	50.00	100.00
University of Ljubljana	17.39	13.04	23.91	21.74	23.91	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	10.00	6.00	26.00	12.00	46.00	100.00
University of Tartu	18.60	16.28	25.58	23.26	16.28	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	36.59	4.88	19.51	19.51	19.51	100.00
Vilnius University	12.12	15.15	27.27	19.70	25.76	100.00
Total	14.08	11.44	20.95	23.06	30.46	100.00

Table 215: Age × Current leadership abilities of supervisor

Age	Current leadership abilities of supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	9.09	9.09	18.18	27.27	36.36	100.00
25-39	9.47	13.99	20.99	23.05	32.51	100.00
40-54	17.95	11.11	18.80	22.22	29.91	100.00
55 and above	12.07	6.90	24.14	27.59	29.31	100.00
Prefer not to say	31.82	0.00	36.36	18.18	13.64	100.00
Total	14.08	11.44	20.95	23.06	30.46	100.00

Table 216: Work experience × Current leadership abilities of supervisor

Work experience	Current leadership abilities of supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	5.93	10.17	15.25	26.27	42.37	100.00
3 and more years	15.22	11.59	21.98	22.71	28.50	100.00
Prefer not to say	27.78	13.89	27.78	16.67	13.89	100.00
Total	14.08	11.44	20.95	23.06	30.46	100.00

3.4.4.2.3   Support from Direct Supervisor

Although more than half of the respondents report that they feel supported by their supervisor in their career development, about a quarter rate this support negatively (see Table 217). Men feel more supported than women (see Table 218). Academics and administrators report high levels of support (see Table 219). The feeling of support decreases with age, but is strong among the young (see Table 221) and the newly employed (see Table 222).

Table 217: How well do you feel supported by your direct superior (head of team) in your professional development? (5 is most)

Support from direct supervisor	Freq.	Percent
1	83	14.61
2	52	9.15
3	108	19.01
4	122	21.48
5	203	35.74
Total	568	100.00

Table 218: Gender × Support from direct supervisor

Gender	Support from direct supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	15.06	9.88	20.00	19.01	36.05	100.00
Male	11.11	7.41	17.78	25.93	37.78	100.00
Other	25.00	7.14	10.71	35.71	21.43	100.00
Total	14.61	9.15	19.01	21.48	35.74	100.00

Table 219: Position × Support from direct supervisor

Position	Support from direct supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Researcher - PI	20.69	6.90	24.14	17.24	31.03	100.00
Researcher - Staff Scientist	8.18	11.82	16.36	25.45	38.18	100.00
Researcher - Postdoc	20.55	10.96	16.44	17.81	34.25	100.00
Researcher - PhD Candidate	19.23	6.41	19.23	26.92	28.21	100.00
Academic	12.00	4.00	24.00	16.00	44.00	100.00
Technical position	20.51	10.26	20.51	17.95	30.77	100.00
Administrative Position	9.74	8.44	18.18	22.08	41.56	100.00
Total	14.66	8.83	19.08	21.55	35.87	100.00

Table 220: Institution × Support from direct supervisor

Institution	Support from direct supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Biomedical Research Center SAS	17.46	12.70	22.22	14.29	33.33	100.00
CEITEC Masaryk University	8.08	4.04	13.13	27.27	47.47	100.00
ICRC FNUSA and MUNI MED	12.90	9.68	22.58	12.90	41.94	100.00
Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis	10.34	0.00	20.69	34.48	34.48	100.00
Medical University Sofia	15.22	13.04	15.22	21.74	34.78	100.00
Medical University of Lodz	26.47	23.53	11.76	20.59	17.65	100.00
Semmelweis University	4.55	4.55	18.18	22.73	50.00	100.00
University of Ljubljana	17.78	4.44	22.22	22.22	33.33	100.00
University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest	10.00	6.00	16.00	18.00	50.00	100.00
University of Tartu	19.05	11.90	30.95	16.67	21.43	100.00
University of Zagreb, School of Medicine	29.27	14.63	17.07	19.51	19.51	100.00
Vilnius University	10.61	9.09	22.73	24.24	33.33	100.00
Total	14.61	9.15	19.01	21.48	35.74	100.00

Table 221: Age × Support from direct supervisor

Age	Support from direct supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-25	18.18	0.00	27.27	9.09	45.45	100.00
25-39	10.70	11.11	16.46	23.46	38.27	100.00
40-54	15.74	9.36	20.00	20.85	34.04	100.00
55 and above	17.54	1.75	22.81	21.05	36.84	100.00
Prefer not to say	36.36	9.09	22.73	13.64	18.18	100.00
Total	14.61	9.15	19.01	21.48	35.74	100.00

Table 222: Work experience × Support from direct supervisor

Work experience	Support from direct supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-2 years	6.78	6.78	14.41	22.88	49.15	100.00
3 and more years	15.90	9.64	20.96	20.96	32.53	100.00
Prefer not to say	25.71	11.43	11.43	22.86	28.57	100.00
Total	14.61	9.15	19.01	21.48	35.74	100.00

3.4.4.2.4   Comments: Suggestions how to Improve Leadership According to Employees

Do you have any suggestions on how leadership in your team could be improved?

Several respondents expressed satisfaction with the current leadership in their teams, highlighting professionalism, support, transparency, autonomy, and a friendly atmosphere. Regular team meetings, open communication, and encouragement for professional development were appreciated. In some cases, respondents described their teams as well-organized and functioning without any issues.

However, many participants offered suggestions for improvement, particularly around communication. They called for more frequent, structured meetings, regular updates on goals and planning, and more open and honest dialogue. Some noted that their supervisors were rarely available or difficult to approach, which limited opportunities for meaningful interaction or feedback. Suggestions included implementing one-on-one sessions, anonymous feedback options, and clearer delegation of tasks and responsibilities.

Another frequently mentioned area was leadership training. Many respondents felt that group leaders and PIs would benefit from mandatory leadership and management courses, especially in communication, emotional intelligence, team motivation, and conflict resolution. Several highlighted that leadership responsibilities often fall on people with no formal training and that this gap needs to be addressed institutionally.

A number of respondents also pointed out structural issues such as the need for clearer strategic direction, more defined roles, support for ethical conduct, and fairness in team management. Some

criticized favoritism, lack of transparency, or dysfunctional leadership styles. Others mentioned the need for new leadership altogether or suggested rotation of leadership roles to avoid stagnation and unaccountability.

3.5   Interviews with Institutional Representatives

Findings from qualitative interviews and institutional questionnaires completed by representatives of the participating organisations suggest that the national context — including the level of institutional autonomy in shaping HR policies and the country's overall attractiveness within the global academic labour market — plays a critical role in shaping the institutional prioritisation of topics and the conditions under which organisations operate.

3.5.1 Part 1: Recruitment

Recruitment has become one of the central pillars of HR reform across A4L institutions, with multiple drivers shaping its evolution.

Professionalization, Transparency, and Strategic Challenges

Recruitment processes across the Alliance4Life partner institutions have undergone notable professionalization over the past three years, largely in response to the implementation of the **HR Excellence in Research Award** and **Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment Policy** (also "OTM-R"), marked by increased standardization, improved collaboration between HR and scientific leadership, and a growing emphasis on fairness, inclusivity, and strategic workforce planning. While varying in maturity, all institutions report significant efforts aimed at modernizing and systematizing their hiring practices, despite persistent structural and contextual challenges.

Standardization and Policy Anchoring

A shared trend among institutions is the development or refinement of written recruitment procedures and OTM-R policies. Institutions like FNUSA and UZSM have institutionalized selection criteria and procedural documentation not only for researchers, but across the board, embedding transparency through standardized documentation and mandatory interview records. CEITEC MU developed a "recruitment package" and introduced the role of HR business partners to align hiring strategies with research group needs. Similarly, UMFCD and University of Tartu integrated recruitment software tools that streamlined application management, enhanced feedback loops, and improved candidate experience.

Collaboration Between HR and Hiring Managers

Most institutions highlight improved cooperation between HR departments and hiring managers. Many institutions (e.g., SU, VU, UMFCD and CEITEC) explicitly mention that HR professionals participate in selection committees or provide direct support to hiring managers. Their involvement serves multiple purposes — they support hiring managers not only in identifying, but also in reaching out to and attracting qualified candidates. At the same time, they help ensure that recruitment processes remain transparent, open, and aligned with institutional standards. Nevertheless, institutions like LIOS or BMC signal gaps in dedicated HR capacity or formal training for hiring

managers, resulting in variable preparedness across departments. The need for regular and tailored support for recruitment leaders remains a widely identified area for further development.

Attracting Talent in Competitive and Constrained Environments

Institutions are acutely aware of the increasing competition for qualified candidates, particularly postdocs. This is exacerbated by regional constraints such as limited salary levels, brain drain (as seen in Slovakia), or language barriers (as in Estonia or Croatia). Some institutions – such as BMC or University of Tartu – actively rely on their reputational capital, research culture, or returnee grants to attract talent. Many institutions (e.g., LIOS, MUL, Semmelweis University, VU, CEITEC) emphasized the growing use of international job portals (EURAXESS, ResearchGate, Nature Jobs) and social media to improve visibility.

Despite efforts, hiring of support staff remains problematic due to lower salary competitiveness, as observed at BMC and elsewhere. Moreover, some institutions struggle to attract foreign researchers, and in some cases, hiring from abroad is perceived as a temporary or "transit" solution rather than a long-term investment.

Transparency and Fairness

A majority of institutions report positive developments in terms of transparency and fairness of recruitment. Public advertising of positions, standardized selection forms, and involvement of selection committees, HR partners including, are now common features. UMFCD and UZSM note the use of scoring rubrics and structured interviews. Still, full consistency remains a challenge where HR is not yet involved in all selection processes or where recruitment is highly decentralized, as seen in LIOS and parts of MUS.

Diversity and Inclusivity

The promotion of candidate diversity is a declared priority, though tangible results are still emerging. Several institutions mention increased diversity among applicants, particularly due to international outreach and the application of inclusive practices. Nevertheless, many institutions admit they do not yet systematically track diversity indicators, and the effect of diversity policies on hiring outcomes is difficult to quantify.

BMC offers a critical reflection: while openness to international candidates is maintained, some foreign hires treat Central European institutions as stepping stones toward Western destinations, raising questions about long-term retention strategies and the dual goal of internationalization and stabilization of talent.

Key Challenges and Future Directions

Across the board, institutions report similar recruitment challenges:

- Limited capacity and decentralization (e.g. lack of dedicated HR roles, fragmented processes)

- Salary competitiveness and funding stability
- Need for targeted support for hiring managers, including training and digital tools
- Bridging gaps between strategic goals (e.g. internationalization) and operational realities

Despite persistent structural barriers, recruitment practices across A4L institutions show a clear trend toward standardisation, strategic alignment, and increased collaboration between HR and scientific leadership. These developments reflect a gradual shift from reactive hiring to more proactive workforce planning.

3.5.2 Part 2: Gender Equality and Diversity

Visibility, Structure, and the Quest for Sustainable Change

Over the past three years, gender equality and diversity (GEDI) have become increasingly visible on the strategic agenda of Alliance4Life institutions. While most partners have adopted formal documents — such as Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) or updated equal treatment policies — the depth and pace of implementation vary. Institutions report a growing number of awareness-raising activities, training initiatives, and inclusive practices, yet systemic challenges remain. These include limited leadership engagement, cultural resistance, and lack of institutional data beyond gender. Institutions are gradually moving from symbolic commitments to more embedded approaches, with promising examples beginning to emerge.

Strategic Anchoring and Policy Development

Most Alliance4Life institutions now have GEPs or comparable frameworks in place. CEITEC MU has been a frontrunner in this area, having introduced its first GEP already in 2016. Since then, it has conducted gender pay gap analyses, expanded the collection of gender-disaggregated data, and integrated GEDI principles into broader HR policies. Vilnius University and University of Tartu have updated equal treatment policies and introduced support roles such as equal opportunity advisors. In both cases, collaboration with national equality bodies provides additional institutional support and legitimacy.

In contrast, institutions like BMC and FNUSA rely more heavily on informal yet consistent practices, such as flexibility, open dialogue, and one-to-one support. While effective in some contexts, this grassroots approach may lack the structure required for long-term sustainability and monitoring.

Awareness Raising and Training

Awareness-raising activities are among the most widely implemented actions. CEITEC, University of Tartu, and UMFCD have all reported internal training focused on unconscious bias, inclusive communication, and leadership. CEITEC MU received particularly positive feedback for its "active bystander" training, aimed at enabling staff to intervene in problematic situations. At LIOS, external training and the work of the GEP group have led to tangible improvements in internal understanding

of gender-related issues. MUL has also implemented training and workshops to raise awareness among HR and managerial staff.

Despite these efforts, institutions commonly report challenges in reaching academic leaders and senior staff. Time constraints, cultural inertia, and a lack of perceived relevance often limit their engagement. The need to integrate GEDI topics into leadership and management development is therefore frequently identified as a key next step.

Representation and Diversity Monitoring

Progress in representation is most evident in improved gender balance among researchers and leadership. UZSM, for example, reports that women now hold over 50% of formal leadership roles. However, several institutions — including CEITEC and LIOS — note stagnation in the number of women in PI or group leader positions. This suggests that while horizontal representation is improving, vertical advancement remains uneven.

Efforts to support broader diversity (nationality, ethnicity, disability, etc.) are less advanced. Institutions like CEITEC and LIOS highlight practices such as inclusive onboarding and "welcome services" for international staff. However, few institutions collect systematic data beyond gender, limiting their ability to monitor and assess the effectiveness of their efforts.

Institutional Culture and Everyday Practice

Some institutions are beginning to embed GEDI into their daily operations. BMC, for instance, supports women in science through informal mentoring, flexible arrangements during and after maternity leave, and a general emphasis on work-life balance. FNUSA notes changing attitudes among younger staff and the growing importance of a respectful, inclusive workplace culture.

There is also increasing interest in institutionalising support structures. The University of Tartu and UMFCD are considering the creation of dedicated offices or roles for diversity and equality coordination. Several institutions emphasise the importance of integrating GEDI considerations into recruitment, performance evaluation, and career development.

Key Challenges and Future Directions

Across the board, institutions report similar barriers to deeper GEDI integration:

- Uneven engagement from academic leadership;
- Persistent unconscious bias and cultural inertia;
- Language barriers, particularly in onboarding international staff;
- Overlooked intersectionality and lack of tailored support for multiply marginalised groups.

Despite these constraints, the past three years have marked a shift from declarative commitments toward more structured action. The strategic direction is clear, and many institutions are well-positioned to take the next steps. The challenge remains in ensuring that GEDI policies do not remain symbolic, but are translated into sustained cultural and structural change.

3.5.3 Part 3: Leadership

From Ad Hoc Activities to Strategic Framing

Leadership development across the Alliance4Life member institutions has evolved from isolated training initiatives toward more structured and strategic approaches. While differences remain in institutional maturity and available resources, a shared shift is visible: the recognition that effective academic leadership is critical not only for research excellence and talent retention, but also for the implementation of institutional change.

Over the last three years, multiple institutions have introduced new training programmes, engaged external experts, and begun to align leadership development with broader HR and governance goals. Yet gaps remain, especially in reaching mid-level leaders, ensuring sustained impact, and balancing leadership with academic duties.

Structured Programmes and Strategic Anchoring

Several institutions have introduced or expanded structured training programmes for academic leaders. The University of Tartu runs a 6 ECTS Leadership Development Programme for heads of structural units and also participates in international leadership initiatives such as Enlight. UMFCD offers a wide portfolio of leadership development formats, combining training in decision-making and strategy with coaching and mentoring. FNUSA and BMC have used external funding to provide targeted leadership education for academic and clinical managers, including through EMBO programmes.

These examples signal a shift from ad hoc sessions to more institutionalised offers. In some cases, such as FNUSA, this shift was described as transformative — breaking down established hierarchies and supporting more open cross-role collaboration. At the same time, other institutions — including LIOS and MUS — report that leadership development remains fragmented or informal, with no long-term programmes in place.

Motivation, Participation, and Engagement Patterns

Overall, interest in leadership development is growing. Institutions such as MUL, CEITEC MU and BMC report high demand and positive feedback from participants, even when training is voluntary. At FNUSA, participants requested follow-up sessions one year after completion of a training cycle, demonstrating a desire for continued reflection and peer exchange. These experiences suggest that leadership development, when well designed, resonates with staff.

However, leadership is still not universally perceived as a professional competence requiring systematic development. Institutions note that some group leaders or department heads are reluctant to attend training, citing time pressure, lack of perceived relevance, or entrenched academic identities (e.g., "scientist first, manager second"). Tailored, role-specific, and practice-

based formats – including short modules, peer-learning, or informal sessions – are emerging as promising responses.

Application and Everyday Practice

Beyond training, some institutions have begun to explore how to support the application of leadership skills in daily practice. CEITEC MU, Semmelweis, University, Vilnius University and University of Tartu offer coaching, peer learning opportunities, and mentoring formats that allow leaders to reflect on specific challenges. FNUSA complements more formal support with informal formats, such as "coffee with the director" sessions, which create space for open conversation and experience-sharing.

Despite these developments, institutional support remains uneven. In many cases, the availability of leadership support depends on project funding or individual initiative. Coaching is not yet a standard or widely accessible service, and several HR departments report limited capacity to sustain and scale these offers.

Evaluation, Recognition, and Organisational Impact

While training and support opportunities are expanding, formal evaluation of leadership competencies remains limited. CEITEC MU and BMC are exceptions. At BMC, part of the year-end reward scheme is based on a leader's contribution to the institution beyond research outputs — such as mentoring, education, or involvement in organisational development. CEITEC has introduced regular leadership interviews between the Director and group leaders. Within two years of launching this initiative, approximately half of all group leaders participated, with the format receiving positive feedback.

However, most institutions still lack mechanisms to formally assess leadership performance or to connect leadership behaviour to career development. As a result, the impact of leadership initiatives on team dynamics, institutional culture, or staff retention remains difficult to measure.

Key Challenges and Future Directions

Institutions report a shared set of challenges in advancing leadership development:

- Limited time for training and reflection due to research and teaching duties;
- Uneven participation, with some leaders disengaged or resistant;
- Lack of institutional frameworks for leadership evaluation or recognition;
- Limited integration of leadership into recruitment, progression, and HR systems;
- Cultural perceptions of leadership as hierarchical or administrative, rather than developmental and collaborative.

Despite these challenges, the transition from isolated trainings to a leadership culture is underway. Institutions are beginning to recognize that leadership is not only about individual skills but also

about shaping institutional values, empowering teams, and navigating complex academic ecosystems.

3.6   Comparison of Survey and Interview Results

Note: Each Alliance4Life institution received an individual analysis of the responses collected from their own participants, enabling them to fully leverage the data and insights gathered. This approach supports a tailored strategy for further development of HR policies and tools that reflect the specific needs and context of each organisation.

A comparison of survey responses and interview data shows that institutional representatives and employees often identify similar systemic issues, such as the lack of structured HR processes, the need for better leadership, and the gap between policy intentions and impacts perceived by employees and managers. While institutional voices tend to emphasise strategic improvements and formal alignment, employee accounts frequently bring attention to everyday implementation gaps and challenges at the operational level — a tension sometimes referred to as the "last mile" problem.

3.6.1 Part 1: Recruitment

Alignment between survey and interviews:

- **Improved structure and transparency**: Both institutional representatives and employees recognise that recruitment processes have become more formalised, especially through the adoption of OTM-R principles, standardised documentation, and publicly advertised vacancies. Institutions like CEITEC, UMFCD, and UZSM confirm these steps in interviews, and employees often appreciate these improvements in their comments.
- **Positive experiences with HR support**: In both data sources, several employees and institutional representatives highlight good collaboration with HR and transparent communication as strengths, although the experience varies.

Divergences:

- **Preparedness and training of hiring managers**: Interviews indicate that hiring managers are in some cases left without training and learn recruitment "on the job". This is reflected in survey comments where some employees report a lack of clarity or inconsistent experiences during recruitment.
- **Onboarding and follow-up**: Institutional interviews often claim that onboarding is part of the process, but many survey respondents note that onboarding is either missing or inconsistent. The gap between declared institutional policies and actual implementation is evident here.
- **Use of modern recruitment tools**: Institutions describe structured interviews and improved advertising, but the survey reveals employees rarely experience advanced candidate evaluation methods (e.g., behavioural or psychometric assessments), and transparency about salary or job expectations is sometimes lacking.

3.6.2 Part 2: Gender Equality and Diversity

Alignment between survey and interviews:

- **Work-life balance as a key issue**: Both sources recognise the importance of flexible working, support during parental leave, and institutional kindergartens. Institutions (e.g., UMFCD, LIOS) report steps taken, while employees confirm that these help inclusion.

- **Growing awareness and formal policies**: Interviews show institutions have adopted Gender Equality Plans and diversity policies; survey responses acknowledge increased visibility of the topic and some improvements (especially for women returning from parental leave).

Divergences:

- **Perception of progress and seriousness**: Institutions describe policy developments and awareness-raising efforts. Employees are more divided — while some see real change, others report persistent gender bias, stereotyping, and tokenism (especially in leadership), sometimes accompanied by frustration at performative diversity efforts.

- **Leadership gender imbalance**: Institutional representatives often mention modest progress or targets; employees are more critical, particularly about the lack of women in senior roles and slow pace of change. Some also perceive **reverse bias** in feminised fields.

- **Intersectionality and inclusion beyond gender**: Institutions like UMFCD address broader diversity dimensions, but most do not. Employees frequently point out gaps in the inclusion of foreigners, underrepresented nationalities, or people with caregiving duties. Interviewees are generally more formal and optimistic, while survey respondents offer grounded examples of exclusion and cultural barriers.

3.6.3 Part 3: Leadership

Alignment between survey and interviews:

- **Leadership development as a priority**: Both sources acknowledge increasing attention to leadership training. Interviews document structured programs (e.g., UT, UMFCD), while in the survey, respondents often refer positively to leadership workshops or express desire for more.

- **Need for soft skills and emotional intelligence**: There is strong agreement on the need for improved communication, empathy, and conflict resolution among leaders. Employees frequently ask for these improvements, and institutions acknowledge them in interviews.

Divergences:

- **Managerial capability and consistency**: Employees in the survey are much more vocal about inconsistent leadership quality. Some report toxic, autocratic or absent leadership, calling for leadership replacement or mandatory training. Institutional interviews are more optimistic and structured, with less focus on negative cases.

- **Leadership accountability and feedback**: While institutions discuss leadership development programs, employees highlight the lack of **feedback mechanisms** or **accountability structures** (e.g., anonymous evaluation of managers), pointing to a gap between training and leadership behaviour in practice.

- **Recognition of informal leaders**: Some survey responses note that capable informal leaders are overlooked due to rigid structures. Institutional representatives rarely address this issue, focusing instead on formal roles and training programs.

3.7   Appendixes

3.7.1 Annex 1: List of Abbreviations

A4L   Alliance4Life

BMC   Biomedical Research Center SAS

CEITEC MU   CEITEC Masaryk University

CEE   Central and Eastern Europe

FNUSA   St. Anne's University Hospital

GEDI   Gender Equality and Diversity Initiatives

GL   Group Leader

GEP   Gender Equality Plan

HR   Human Resources

HRS4R   HR Excellence in Research Award

IC   Internal Communication

ICRC   International Clinical Research Center

LIOS   Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis

MUL   Medical University of Lodz

MUS   Medical University of Sofia

OTM-R   Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment

PI   Principal Investigator

SAV   Slovak Academy of Sciences

SU   Semmelweis University

UL   University of Ljubljana

UMFCD   University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila" Bucharest

UT   University of Tartu

UZSM   University of Zagreb School of Medicine

VRC   Virtual Research Center

VU   Vilnius University

3.7.2 Annex 2: Survey Design

TITLE: "Aligning Efforts with Experience: Survey on Recruitment, Leadership, and Equality"

Introduction text:

Dear Participant,

In recent years, scientific institutions and universities have been racing to introduce new HR policies and tools. Some of these changes are driven from the top down, often in response to requirements from grant providers, while others are motivated from the bottom up.

The critical question we now face is: Are these changes being implemented in a way that genuinely resonates with the employees and leaders they are meant to serve?

That's why we are asking you, the individuals who experience these changes firsthand. We believe it would be unfortunate for institutions to invest significant resources into changes that go unnoticed or unappreciated. Your feedback is crucial in helping us understand whether the initiatives in recruitment, leadership, and gender equality are having the intended impact.

Time to fill-in the survey: **7-15 minutes**

This survey is part of the Alliance4Life initiative, and your responses will help shape the future direction of HR policies across 12 institutions. Your answers are completely anonymous, and your honest input is highly valued.

Thank you for taking the time to share your insights.

QUESTIONS:

*FILTER Q: Are you currently the head of a department, research group, or team at your institution?

Yes	No

AREA 1: RECRUITMENT / SELECTION PROCEDURE

Hiring managers (typically heads of workplaces) and members of selection committee

*FILTER Q: Have you participated as a hiring manager or a member of a selection committee in the recruitment process at your institution within the past three years?

Yes	No

1. **How satisfied are you with the overall recruitment process in your institution over the past three years?**
   (Scale: 1 - Very dissatisfied, 5 - Very satisfied)

2. **To what extent do you feel that the recruitment processes at your institution over the past three years have met your expectations and needs?**
   (Scale: 1 - Not at all, 5 - Fully met)

3. **To what extent do you feel that the recruitment process at your institution is transparent and fair?**
   (Scale: 1 - Not transparent at all, 5 - Completely transparent)

4. **Have you noticed any improvements in the recruitment process in the last three years (e.g., better communication, faster procedures, more diverse candidates)?**
   (Scale: 1 - No improvement, 5 - Significant improvement)

5. **Do you believe the recruitment process at your institution helps to attract high-quality candidates?**
   (Scale: 1 - Not at all, 5 - Very much so)

6. **How do you perceive the diversity of candidates recruited at your institution (gender balance, international backgrounds, etc.)?**
   (Scale: 1 - Not diverse at all, 5 - Very diverse)

7. **How satisfied are you with the level of communication and cooperation between HR and hiring managers during the recruitment process?**
   (Scale: 1 - Not supported at all, 5 - Very well supported)

8. **What is your overall satisfaction with the quality of newly recruited team members?**
   (Scale: 1 - Very dissatisfied, 5 - Very satisfied)

9. **What do you consider the most valuable service or aspect of the recruitment process at your institution, and why?**
   (Open-ended)

10. **Do you have any suggestions or feedback on how the recruitment process at your institution could be further improved?**
(Open-ended)

Newly recruited employees (period of three years – „fresh experience")

CONDITION:

Did you go through the recruitment process for your current position within the last three years?

Yes	No

1. **How clear and transparent was the information provided to you during the recruitment process (e.g., job description, role expectations, selection criteria)?**
(Scale: 1 - Not clear at all, 5 - Very clear)

2. **How satisfied were you with the communication you received from the institution throughout the recruitment process (e.g., timely updates, clarity of next steps)?**
(Scale: 1 - Very dissatisfied, 5 - Very satisfied)

3. **To what extent did the reality of the job match the information provided during the recruitment process?**
(Scale: 1 - Not at all, 5 – Completely)

4. **To what extent did you feel the recruitment process was fair and unbiased?**
(Scale: 1 - Not fair at all, 5 - Completely fair)

5. **How well were you supported in your transition from candidate to employee by your direct superior (e.g., onboarding process)?**
(Scale: 1 - Not supported at all, 5 - Very well supported)

6. **How well were you supported in your transition from candidate to employee by HR department (e.g., administration, HR support, welcome services)?**
(Open-ended)

7. **What was the most positive aspect of the recruitment process, and what do you think could be improved?**
(Open-ended)

AREA 2: GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Heads of workplaces

1. **To what extent have you noticed improvements in the way your organization supports equal opportunities and diversity in the workplace (e.g., work-life balance, gender balance in leadership, gender equality in recruitment, addressing gender-based violence) over the past three years?**
    (Scale: 1 - No improvement at all, 5 - Significant improvement)

2. **Do you feel that the gender equality and diversity initiatives implemented at your institution over the past three years have adequately addressed the needs of your team and yourself?**
    (Scale: 1 - Not at all, 5 - Fully addressed)

3. **How do you incorporate gender equality and diversity considerations in your recruitment and team management decisions (e.g., avoiding unconscious bias in hiring, ensuring team diversity in terms of gender and background)?**
    (Scale: 1 - Not at all, 5 - Very much so)

4. **To what extent do you feel supported by your institution in creating an open, fair, and inclusive work environment that promotes diversity and equal opportunities within your team?**
    (Scale: 1 - Not supported at all, 5 - Very well supported)

5. **What are the main challenges you face in ensuring open, fair and inclusive work environment in your team/department?**
    (Open-ended)

6. **What additional support or resources could your organisation provide to help you, as a head of workplace, promote open, fair and inclusive work environment in your team/department?**
    (Open-ended)

Employees

1. **How supported do you feel in terms of gender equality and diversity in your daily work environment (e.g., work-life balance, gender balance in leadership, gender equality in recruitment, addressing gender-based violence)?**
    (Scale: 1 - Not supported at all, 5 - Very well supported)

2. **Do you feel that the gender equality and diversity initiatives implemented at your institution over the past three years have adequately addressed your needs?**
(Scale: 1 - Not at all, 5 - Fully addressed)

3. **To what extent do you believe that the institution's gender equality and diversity initiatives have positively impacted your career development?**
(Scale: 1 - Not at all, 5 - Very much so)

4. **Do you feel that gender equality and diversity are respected within your team?**
(Scale: 1 - Not respected at all, 5 - Fully respected)

5. **Have you personally benefited from any gender equality or diversity programs (e.g., training, mentoring, flexible work arrangements)?**
(Scale: 1 - No benefit, 5 - Significant benefit)

6. **To what extent have you noticed improvements in the support for gender equality and diversity at your organisation over the past three years?**
(Scale: 1 – No improvement at all, 5 – Significant improvement)

7. **To what extent have you noticed improvements in the support for gender equality and diversity within your team (workplace) over the past three years?**
(Scale: 1 – No improvement at all, 5 – Significant improvement)

8. **What additional measures or changes would you suggest to further improve gender equality and diversity in your organisation or team?**
(Open-ended)

AREA 3: LEADERSHIP

Heads of workplaces (group leaders, heads of departments):

1. **To what extent do you believe that the leadership development opportunities at your institution align your needs and expectations as head of workplace?**
(Scale: 1 – Not at all, 5 – Fully aligned)

2. **How do you evaluate the impact of the leadership development programs you have participated in over past three years?**
(Scale: 1 - No impact, 5 - Significant impact)

3. **To what extent have the leadership skills you developed improved your ability to manage your research group?**
(Scale: 1 - No improvement, 5 - Significant improvement)

4. **How well-supported do you feel in applying the leadership skills you gained through institutional programs (e.g., through coaching, mentorship, or ongoing training)?**
   (Scale: 1 - Not supported at all, 5 - Very well supported)

5. **Have you noticed improvements in your team's performance and dynamics as a result of applying the leadership skills you developed?**
   (Scale: 1 - No improvement, 5 - Significant improvement)

6. **What further support or improvements would help you enhance your leadership capabilities and improve team management?**
   (Open-ended)

Employees:

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1. **How do you perceive the current leadership abilities of your direct superior (head of team)?**
   (Scale: 1 - Very poor, 5 - Excellent)

2. **How well do you feel supported by your direct superior (head of team) in your professional development and team collaboration?**
   (Scale: 1 - Not supported at all, 5 - Very well supported)

3. **Have you noticed improvements in team dynamics and productivity as a result of changes in leadership practices?**
   (Scale: 1 - No improvement, 5 - Significant improvement)

4. **Do you have any suggestions on how leadership in your team could be improved?**
   (Open-ended)

General:

- Not applicable / I don't know as an option

NOTE: Finally, we kindly ask for a few basic information that will help us better understand the survey results across different groups of employees and ensure that the findings are relevant to a wide range of respondents. Your responses will remain anonymous.

* *Please select your gender:*

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

**Please select your age group:*

- Under 25
- 25–39
- 40–54
- 55 and above
- Prefer not to say

**What best describes your position at the institution?*

- Researcher/Scientist
- Technical staff
- Administrative staff

- PhD candidate/Postdoctoral researcher
- Management
- Other (please specify)

When did you start working at the institution?

- Before 2022
- 2022–present
- Prefer not to say

Which institution do you work for?

- Biomedical Research Center SAS
- CEITEC Masaryk University
- Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis
- Medical University of Lodz
- Medical University Sofia
- Semmelweis University
- University of Ljubljana
- University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila" Bucharest
- University of Tartu
- University of Zagreb, School of Medicine
- Vilnius University, Faculty of Medicine

Conclusion and Thank You Note:

Thank you for your participation!

We highly appreciate your time and input in helping us improve recruitment processes, leadership development, and gender equality practices across the Alliance4Life institutions. Your feedback will make a significant difference.

3.7.3 Annex 3: Interview / Institutional Questionnaire

QUESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS[8]

Name:

Position:

Institution:

AREA 1: RECRUITMENT / SELECTION PROCEDURE

1. How would you assess the overall effectiveness of the recruitment processes at your institution in the last three years?

2. Which improvements in the area of recruitment practices did your organisation implement in the last three years?

3. To what extent do you feel that the recruitment measures (e.g., job advertising, interview processes, outreach initiatives) have attracted high-quality candidates?

4. How satisfied are you with the level of communication and cooperation between HR and hiring managers[9] during the recruitment process?

5. Do you feel that hiring managers are well-prepared and supported to lead recruitment efforts (e.g., through training, guidance, or tools provided by HR)?

6. To what extent do you feel that the recruitment process at your institution is transparent and fair?

7. Have you noticed an improvement in the diversity of candidates (in terms of gender, nationality, etc.) as a result of recent recruitment measures?

8. To what extent have recent recruitment policies (e.g., diversity hiring policies, OTM-R policies) positively impacted the quality and inclusivity of the recruitment process?

9. How effective do you find the tools and resources available to you (e.g., recruitment software, job boards, HR analytics) in supporting successful recruitment?

10. [This question is only for HR Managers[10]] How well-supported do you feel by the institution management in implementing policies and actions to improve recruitment practices?

---

[8] This questionnaire should be responded by representatives of the institutes (management member or Head of HR). You can skip questions that feel irrelevant to your institution or that you do not have an opinion on.

[9] Hiring manager is a person who is hiring a new team member, typically head of department, group leader, etc.

[10] If the questionnaire is answered by management member, please skip the question.

11. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges HR faces in improving the recruitment process at your institution?

12. Do you have any suggestions for additional measures or improvements that could further enhance the recruitment process at your institution?

AREA 2: GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

1. How would you assess the overall effectiveness of gender equality and diversity initiatives implemented at your institution in the last three years?

2. To what extent do you feel that your institution's policies and practices related to gender equality and diversity have improved in the last three years?

3. Which improvements in the area of support for gender equality and diversity practices did your organisation implement in the last three years?

4. Have you noticed an improvement in the gender balance and diversity among staff and researchers as a result of recent initiatives?

5. How effective do you believe the institution has been in promoting gender equality and diversity in leadership and decision-making positions over the last three years?

6. [This question is only for HR Managers[11]] How well-supported do you feel by the institution management in implementing policies and actions that promote gender equality and diversity?

7. To what extent have gender equality and diversity training and awareness programs improved understanding and practices in your institution?

8. How effective do you feel the recruitment process has been in promoting gender equality and diversity in the last three years?

9. What do you see as the biggest challenges your institution faces in advancing gender equality and diversity?

10. Do you have any suggestions for further improvements in promoting gender equality and diversity at your institution?

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[11] If the questionnaire is answered by management member, please skip the question.

AREA 3: LEADERSHIP

1. How effective do you feel the leadership development programs are at your institution?

2. To what extent do you believe that the institution's leadership programs have improved the management and leadership skills of heads of workplaces?

3. Have you noticed any positive impact on team dynamics and performance as a result of leadership development initiatives for heads of workplaces?

4. How well does your institution support heads of workplaces in applying their leadership skills in practice (e.g., through coaching, mentorship, additional training)?

5. [This question is only for HR Managers[12]] How well-supported do you feel by the institution management in implementing policies and actions to support leadership competencies of heads of workplaces?

6. What do you see as the main challenges in improving the leadership skills of heads of workplaces?

7. What further improvements do you think are needed to enhance the leadership skills of heads of workplaces at your institution?

3.7.4 Annex 4: Representatives of the Institutions

Institution	Represented by	Position
BMC	Silvia Pastoreková, Marian Grman	Director, Scientific Secretary
CEITEC	Andrea Dvořáková	Head of HR Department
FNUSA	Olga Korvasová	Deputy director for HR
LIOS	Osvalds Pugovics	Director
MUL	Agnieszka Komorowska-Michalek	Head of HR Department
MUS	Vidin Kirkov	General Secretary
SU	Péter Reichert	Director general for human resources management
UMFCD	Simona Stefanopoulos	Head of HR Department
UT	Kristi Kuningas	Head of HR Office
UZSM	Ana Hladnik, Darko Bošnjak	Vice Dean for Administration and Finance, Secretary General
VU	Evelina Jokubaustkyte	HR Manager

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[12] If the questionnaire is answered by management member, please skip the question.

4. GREEN LAB STRATEGIES

Authors:	Silvia Pastoreková, Biomedical Research Center, Slovak Academy of Sciences Ester Jarour, Central European Institute of Technology, Masaryk University
Task:	T1.3 Green Lab Audit
Responsible:	BMC SAV
Working group:	Teele Eensaar, University of Tartu Sergej Pirkmajer, University of Ljubljana Arkady Sobolev, Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis Ksenija Vitale, Univesity of Zagreb, Medical Faculty Judit Jánosi, Semmelweis University

4.1   Introduction

The Alliance4Life consortium partners recognise the environmental impact of scientific research as a significant and urgent challenge. Green Lab approaches are therefore seen as an essential component of institutional culture and responsibility across our member institutions. As research environments are among the most resource-intensive parts of universities and research centres, addressing their sustainability is both a scientific and ethical imperative.

Under the previous A4L_ACTION project, we assessed our compliance with the principles of environmentally responsible research through two structured surveys. These provided valuable insight into both our strengths and areas requiring improvement—particularly regarding the mitigation of environmental burdens linked to everyday research practices. This process catalysed awareness and laid the foundation for change.

The Green Lab audit conducted in 2024 confirmed that Alliance4Life partners have made substantial progress in piloting and embedding Green Lab policies initiated under A4L_ACTION. Yet, full-scale implementation of the Green Lab concept remains demanding. This is primarily due to the complexity of institutional transformation, challenges posed by the specific nature of life science research, and numerous administrative constraints—such as public procurement rules narrowly focused on financial cost, and the limited availability of dedicated resources for environmental upgrades.

Key areas for further development include the practical implementation of Green Lab strategies, the availability of internal guidelines and structured training, systematic carbon footprint monitoring, improved procurement and resource-sharing systems, the adoption of water-saving technologies, and the integration of green chemistry alternatives into research design. On the other hand, waste

management remains a strong point across the consortium, driven by existing legal and ethical frameworks regulating the use and disposal of biological, chemical, and radioactive materials.

To guide the next phase of this transition, the Alliance4Life partners have co-developed a Green Lab Guide with adaptable, actionable steps for institutions, research units, and individual researchers. These recommendations offer a structured pathway to embed environmental responsibility into everyday research operations while respecting the scientific, administrative, and financial realities of Central and Eastern European institutions.

Crucially, this technical work is supported by a comprehensive communication and dissemination strategy aimed at increasing engagement, visibility, and long-term adoption of Green Lab principles. This strategy includes visual tools, shared branding elements, multilingual communication across institutional channels, and alignment with key international environmental awareness days. By promoting consistent and clear messaging—"Bridging the Gap. Greening the Lab. Translating sustainability into everyday scientific practice"—the strategy reinforces a shared identity across the consortium and extends the reach of our message to new audiences, both regionally and across the EU.

The annexes to this deliverable highlight good practices already in place at A4L institutions, often embedded within broader institutional sustainability programmes, and include a pilot carbon footprint assessment carried out at a partner institution. Together, they offer inspiration and concrete starting points for others to follow.

This report marks another important step in Alliance4Life's mission to close the innovation gap while leading a responsible transformation of the research environment across Widening countries and beyond.
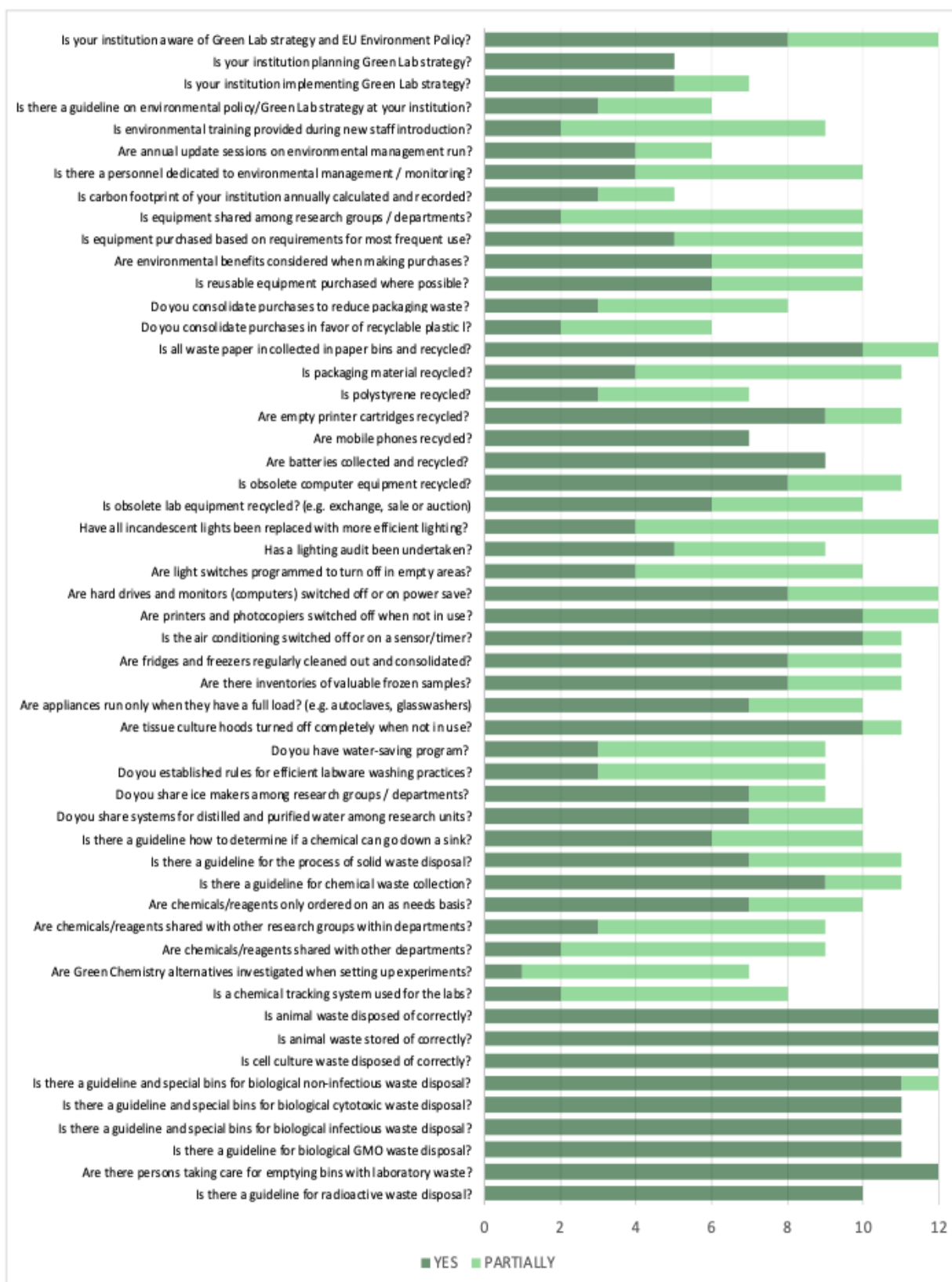
Figure 1 Graphical illustration of the degree of A4L partners' engagement in different aspects of GL practice

4.2   Alliance4Life Green Lab Guide

Scientific research is essential for improving human health and advancing knowledge, but it also comes with a significant environmental cost. Laboratories are among the most resource-intensive facilities in any institutional setting — they consume large amounts of energy and water, rely heavily on single-use plastics, and generate considerable chemical and biological waste. As leading research institutions, we not only produce knowledge but also bear responsibility for how that knowledge is created.

Green Lab strategies provide a practical and structured pathway for reducing the environmental footprint of research without compromising its quality or safety. They offer concrete, achievable steps to optimise operations, save costs, meet regulatory expectations, and demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship.

By following and adapting this guide, each Alliance4Life partner institution can contribute to a shared vision:
A research culture that is innovative, ethical, and environmentally responsible.

Engaging in the Green Lab initiative brings benefits across all levels:

- **For institutions**, it supports compliance with emerging environmental standards, improves operational efficiency, and strengthens their public image as responsible research leaders.
- **For research units**, it enhances collaboration, resource sharing, and safety while reducing waste and costs.
- **For individual researchers**, it empowers them to act on their values, contribute to meaningful change, and take pride in their workplace.

However, sustainability is not a one-off achievement — it is a continuous process. That is why this guide encourages **systematic implementation**, including the appointment of responsible personnel, the development of internal guidelines, and the **annual monitoring of progress**. Institutions that regularly assess their practices can identify gaps, celebrate achievements, and build a strong, data-driven foundation for further improvements.

Ultimately, building and maintaining a sustainable lab environment is not just about ticking boxes. It is about transforming how we think, work, and lead — and doing so in a way that respects both scientific excellence and planetary boundaries.

We invite all our partner institutions to adopt this guide, adapt it to their local context, and work together toward our shared goal:
Bridging the gap. Greening the lab. Translating sustainability into everyday scientific practice.

4.2.1 At the Institutional Level

- Develop and adopt a Green Lab (GL) strategic plan with clearly defined and measurable sustainability goals.
- Promote awareness through regular seminars and training sessions, with a particular focus on new employees and PhD students. Reference relevant studies and resources [Ref. 1].
- Designate specific personnel to oversee implementation and monitoring of Green Lab strategies.
- Appoint ambassadors from each research unit to serve as communication bridges and role models.
- Monitor the institution's energy and water consumption and relate findings to carbon footprint data and economic impact [Refs. 2 and 3].
- Track and analyse the annual volume and composition of institutional waste (e.g. plastic, paper, mixed).
- Conduct regular inventories of heating and freezing equipment; replace with more efficient options where possible.
- Audit lighting, heating, and air-conditioning systems on a routine basis.
- Create a register of energy-intensive equipment and establish guidelines for its efficient use.
- Centralise specialised equipment within core facilities to maximise usage efficiency.
- Encourage inter-unit sharing of equipment and resources.
- Consolidate purchases to reduce packaging waste and transport-related emissions.
- Set general water-saving policies across departments.
- Establish a clearly labelled waste management system for both general and lab-specific waste, with appropriate recycling bins.
- Use reusable or washable dishes and utensils for events and meetings.
- Recognise and reward individuals and teams demonstrating strong engagement with sustainability efforts.
- Publish an annual internal sustainability report to track progress, share best practices, and reinforce institutional commitment.

4.2.2 At the Research Unit Level

- Nominate one or more sustainability ambassadors to liaise with the institutional GL coordinator.
- Establish and communicate unit-specific Green Lab rules to all team members.
- Use colour-coded labelling to indicate which equipment can or cannot be turned off, and how to manage different types of waste.

- Perform regular audits focusing on energy-saving behaviour — checking lights, heating, A/C settings, equipment switches, water taps, and proper waste handling. Report leaks or maintenance issues.
- Conduct annual audits of refrigerators and freezers. Ensure regular defrosting and removal of unused items.
- Monitor fume hood use; close the sash when not in operation to reduce energy consumption by up to 40% [Ref. 4].
- Adjust ULT freezers from -80°C to -70°C where feasible, resulting in up to 30% energy savings [Ref. 5].
- Maintain up-to-date inventories of reagents and sample storage locations.
- Prioritise the purchase of energy-efficient equipment.
- Integrate green chemistry alternatives into experimental design where appropriate [Ref. 6].

4.2.3 At the Individual Researcher Level

- Turn off lab and office equipment when not in use, especially during nights, weekends, and holidays.
- Adjust heating settings to recommended levels during unoccupied periods; avoid ventilating with windows open while heating is on.
- Maintain summer cooling no more than 6°C below outdoor temperatures.
- Reduce water flow; use aerators on taps when possible.
- Close fume hood sashes after use and during UV cycles [Ref. 4].
- Avoid storing outdated or unused samples and reagents.
- Keep a personal log of stored items to reduce unnecessary freezer or incubator access.
- Operate ovens and other equipment only when full; turn them off when idle.
- Turn off lights when leaving unoccupied spaces.
- Follow optimal storage conditions for all reagents.
- Share reagents and consumables within your team or lab.
- Check internal inventory before ordering; coordinate purchases with colleagues.
- Design experiments carefully to avoid unnecessary repetition and minimise use of plastic and reagents.
- Reduce (use minimal volumes and packaging), reuse (e.g. tip boxes), and recycle lab materials wherever feasible [Ref. 7].
- Opt for online meetings and training where appropriate to reduce travel emissions.
- Use energy-saving settings on computers and archive rarely accessed data on external drives [Ref. 8].
- Limit printing to essential documents; print double-sided in black and white.
- Reduce email traffic and unsubscribe from unnecessary mailing lists (each email emits approx. 4g CO_2, more with attachments).

4.2.4 Before Setting Up a Green Lab Strategy

For institutions—particularly those in Central and Eastern European countries where environmental strategies may still be emerging—implementing a Green Lab strategy represents both a challenge and a unique opportunity to lead by example. To ensure the success and long-term sustainability of Green Lab initiatives, we strongly recommend that each institution invest in a **preparatory year** before setting specific goals, such as emission or waste reduction targets.

This preparatory phase allows institutions to build internal capacity, collect meaningful baseline data, and cultivate a shared sense of ownership and motivation among staff. It is also a chance to align environmental responsibility with the institution's mission, values, and operational realities.

4.2.5 Key Recommended Actions

- **Build a network of motivated staff across all departments and roles.**
  Identify and engage staff who are passionate about sustainability—scientists, lab managers, administrators, and facility personnel. This cross-functional group will act as the driving force behind future implementation and culture change.
- **Collect baseline data on energy and water use.**
  Understanding how and where your institution consumes resources is essential for designing effective interventions and for tracking future progress.
- **Conduct infrastructure inventories.**
  Take stock of energy-demanding lab equipment (e.g. fume hoods, ULT freezers), monitor occupancy levels, and assess user behaviours and maintenance practices. This helps identify inefficiencies and priority areas for intervention.
- **Audit the types and volumes of waste generated.**
  Map out the flow of general, chemical, biological, and plastic waste. Identify whether and how waste is currently sorted, stored, and disposed of.
- **Host seminars or workshops to introduce sustainability concepts.**
  Raise awareness about the environmental footprint of research. Engage early adopters who can act as future ambassadors and champions of Green Lab strategies within their departments.
- **Compile relevant literature and case studies.**
  Use peer-reviewed studies, international best practices, and local examples to build a shared understanding and rationale for sustainable lab practices.
- **Run a pilot carbon footprint assessment.**
  Even a simplified evaluation provides useful insights into the most significant sources of emissions. It serves as a valuable starting point for more advanced tracking systems in the future.

By dedicating time to these preparatory steps, institutions will be better equipped to define **realistic, data-informed, and context-sensitive targets**. This approach ensures that sustainability becomes an integrated, institution-wide effort—not just a checklist, but a meaningful evolution toward responsible science.

Taking this path demonstrates leadership, aligns with European sustainability agendas, and signals a clear commitment to future generations. Let's take this opportunity to **bridge the innovation gap** while also **greening the way we do science.**

4.3   Communication and Dissemination Strategy for Green Lab Strategies

Alliance4Life is a growing alliance of leading life science and biomedical research institutions from Widening countries, united by a common vision: to bridge the innovation gap and foster a responsible, inclusive, and sustainable research culture. As part of this mission, the Green Lab initiative represents a key area of action within Work Package 1 (Research Environment), culminating in the creation of the *Green Lab Strategies Report (D1.3)*.

To ensure that the knowledge, good practices, and strategic recommendations contained in this report translate into real impact across the European research landscape, Alliance4Life has developed a coordinated communication and dissemination strategy that will be jointly implemented by all member institutions.

4.3.1 Objectives

The communication strategy aims to:

- Enhance awareness of sustainable research practices in the life sciences and biomedicine.
- Position Alliance4Life and its members as regional leaders in Green Lab implementation.
- Foster knowledge transfer and practical change within institutional settings.
- Support the spill-over effect by sharing tools and inspiration with other institutions in Europe.
- Ensure the visibility of D1.3 as a reference document for sustainability in research environments.

4.3.2 Key Message Framework

- Main slogan:
  Bridging the Gap. Greening the Lab.
- Subheadline:
  Translating sustainability into everyday scientific practice.

This core message reflects both the regional mission of Alliance4Life (bridging the innovation gap across Widening countries) and the practical orientation of the Green Lab strategies (bringing sustainability into real research settings). It will serve as the visual and verbal anchor of all related communication.

4.3.3   Communication Tools and Actions

4.3.3.1   PowerPoint Slide for Internal and External Use

A professionally designed slide summarizing:

- The key principles of Green Lab strategies
- The Alliance4Life slogan and subheadline
- A QR code and link to download the full D1.3 report

This slide will be added to all project presentations and institutional events, and it will be recommended for inclusion in national-level dissemination by partner institutions.

4.3.3.2   Quote Banner in Alliance4Life Newsletters

Every edition of the Alliance4Life newsletter will include a dedicated visual banner with an inspiring quote and the Green Lab slogan, reinforcing our commitment to environmentally responsible science. Example:

"A greener lab is not a perfect lab. It's a lab that cares."
Bridging the Gap. Greening the Lab.
Translating sustainability into everyday scientific practice.

This feature ensures long-term, light-touch engagement without overloading content.

4.3.3.3   Visual Badge for Use by Institutions

Alliance4Life will offer member institutions a digital badge or label (e.g. *"Alliance4Life – Bridging the gap, greening the lab"*) that can be used:

- In email footers
- On institutional websites
- In sustainability reports
- During events, conferences, open days

This element visually represents commitment and affiliation, helping to normalize sustainability as an institutional value.

4.3.3.4   Dissemination via Institutional Channels in National Languages

Each Alliance4Life partner institution commits to disseminate the Green Lab message and the D1.3 report through its own:

- Website (news item or dedicated Green Lab section)
- Internal newsletters or intranets
- Social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter/X)
- Press offices (if applicable)

Content will be adapted to national languages and local communication styles to ensure relevance and resonance. Where appropriate, institutions may share their own examples and stories that

complement the Green Lab strategies. This content will be especially promoted on days that celebrate environment and sustainability.

4.3.4 Proposed Campaign Dates

- **March 4 – World Sustainable Energy Day**
  Promote energy-saving measures in labs (e.g. freezer use, lighting, equipment sharing).

- **April 22 – Earth Day** 🌍
  One of the most visible global campaigns for environmental protection — ideal for launching or spotlighting Green Lab activities.

- **June 5 – World Environment Day** 🌿
  Organized by UNEP, this is a top opportunity for promoting institutional sustainability strategies.

- **September 16 – International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer**
  Can be tied to energy use, fume hoods, and green chemistry awareness.

- **October 4–10 – European Week of Regions and Cities**
  Chance to show your institution's regional leadership in sustainable science.

- **October 24 – International Day of Climate Action**
  Ideal for publishing results from carbon footprint assessments or launching new sustainability pledges.

- **November 10 – World Science Day for Peace and Development**
  Emphasizes responsible science — perfect for underlining Green Lab principles.

- **EU Green Week (usually May or June)**
  Flagship EU environmental policy event — you can align workshops, blog posts, or campaigns.

- **European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) – ~end of September**
  A great umbrella for webinars, campus actions, and communication around institutional sustainability goals.

The Green Lab Strategies initiative represents more than a technical set of guidelines—it embodies Alliance4Life's broader commitment to shaping a healthier, more sustainable, and more responsible research environment across Widening countries and beyond. Through coordinated messaging, visual identity, and targeted campaigns, we aim to create a shared language and visible momentum for change.

By leveraging institutional channels in national languages, engaging with international awareness days, and embedding our core message—Bridging the Gap. Greening the Lab. Translating sustainability into everyday scientific practice—across all communication touchpoints, we ensure that this initiative is not only seen, but felt, lived, and replicated.

Through this joint effort, Alliance4Life institutions will act as role models for sustainable transformation in science. Together, we demonstrate that environmentally conscious research is not a future ambition—it is a present-day responsibility. Let this strategy be a step toward embedding sustainability into the DNA of European life science and biomedical research.

4.4   Conclusion

The Green Lab Strategies initiative within the Alliance4Life_BRIDGE project represents a critical step forward in transforming the research environment of Widening countries toward greater environmental responsibility. Building on the foundation laid during the A4L_ACTIONS project, our current work has moved from awareness-raising and initial piloting to deeper implementation, structured planning, and measurable progress.

The insights gained from the 2024 Green Lab audit, the compilation of good practice examples, and the piloting of carbon footprint assessments clearly show that our institutions are ready—and willing—to embrace the transition toward more sustainable research practices. Despite persisting challenges such as infrastructural limitations, regulatory constraints, and funding gaps, the commitment across Alliance4Life partner institutions is growing stronger. This report captures not only our progress but also our shared ambition.

The Green Lab Guide introduced here offers a practical, flexible, and evidence-based roadmap that can be adapted across diverse institutional contexts. It supports the integration of sustainability at all levels—from institutional leadership to individual researchers—ensuring that environmental responsibility becomes embedded in our daily research routines rather than treated as an afterthought.

To make sustainability a lasting and integral feature of our scientific ecosystems, we must now build on this momentum. That includes dedicating time to preparatory work, setting realistic and data-informed goals, and continuously monitoring and communicating our achievements and challenges. The structured dissemination plan, aligned with key global and European sustainability milestones, ensures that this work reaches far beyond our immediate community, amplifying its impact.

Alliance4Life institutions are not only bridging the innovation gap across Europe—they are also bridging the sustainability gap. By embedding Green Lab strategies into the core of our research culture, we affirm our commitment to scientific excellence that respects both people and the planet. Together, we demonstrate that responsible science is not only possible—it is imperative.

Let us lead by example. Let us green the lab. Let us shape a sustainable future for science.

4.5   References

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4.6   Annex 1

4.6.1 Good Practice Examples by A4L Partner Institutions

This annex presents selected examples of sustainability initiatives implemented by Alliance4Life partner institutions that directly contribute to the advancement of Green Lab awareness and its integration into everyday research practices. These initiatives reflect the institutions' commitment to environmentally responsible science and align with the broader objectives of Alliance4Life to foster a sustainable, inclusive, and innovation-driven research environment in Widening countries.

By showcasing institutional strategies and actions, we aim to inspire mutual learning across the Alliance and highlight pathways to embed Green Lab principles into organisational culture.

4.6.2 CEITEC Masaryk University (Czech Republic)

As part of Masaryk University, CEITEC actively contributes to the implementation of the MU Sustainability Strategy, built on four key pillars: Education, Science and Research, Social Responsibility, and Environment. The institute promotes energy efficiency and behavioural change through university-wide campaigns such as #MUNIsaves, which successfully reduced electricity, water, gas, and heat consumption. This initiative illustrates how centralised efforts, supported by clear goals and awareness campaigns, can lead to measurable environmental improvements within a research infrastructure. More information: https://sustain.muni.cz/en

Best Practice Case Study: Sustainability in Research at Masaryk University

Introduction

Masaryk University (MU), the second largest university in the Czech Republic, has emerged as a leading example of how sustainability can be meaningfully embedded into the research environment of a large academic institution. Through its comprehensive strategy, interdisciplinary projects, and infrastructure optimisation, MU offers an inspiring model for institutions aiming to advance sustainability within their research ecosystems.

Strategic Integration of Sustainability in Research

At the heart of MU's approach is its Strategic Plan 2021–2028, which identifies sustainability as a cross-cutting priority. The plan emphasizes the university's role in addressing global and local challenges through research in key areas such as health, quality of life, responsible use of natural resources, climate change mitigation, and technological innovation. Sustainability is not treated as a siloed agenda but integrated across disciplines, decision-making, and operational frameworks. This strategic positioning ensures that sustainability remains a visible, long-term commitment throughout the university's research agenda.

Research Projects Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals

MU actively aligns its research output with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Faculties across the university conduct research on climate action, clean water, energy transition, environmental health, and sustainable urban development. These projects are catalogued and showcased as part of the university's public-facing sustainability platform, offering transparency and inspiration. This practice not only demonstrates commitment but also facilitates external engagement, funding opportunities, and partnerships within the broader European Research Area.

Living Lab and Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Through its **RECETOX centre**, MU operates a Living Lab model—an interactive platform connecting researchers, public administration, businesses, and civil society. The Living Lab approach supports applied research and real-world testing of sustainability-focused innovations, particularly in the area of environmental health. This method promotes **co-creation of knowledge**, stakeholder

engagement, and a strong science-policy interface—key components of responsible research and innovation.

Infrastructure Optimisation: The #MUNIsaves Campaign

The university's proactive energy-saving campaign **#MUNIsaves** is another cornerstone of its sustainability efforts. This initiative has led to measurable reductions in electricity, water, gas, and heat consumption across MU's campuses and laboratories. This internal awareness campaign demonstrates how operational sustainability—particularly in research facilities—can be improved through low-cost, behaviour-focused interventions and consistent communication.

Sustainability Rankings and External Recognition

MU's efforts are reflected in international rankings. In 2024, it ranked 124th out of 1,477 universities globally in the UI GreenMetric ranking, placing it among the top 9% of the world's most sustainable universities. Such recognitions strengthen the university's global reputation and validate its internal efforts to advance sustainability across research, teaching, operations, and engagement.

Key Best Practices from Masaryk University

Area	Best Practice
Strategy & Governance	Embedding sustainability in the university's strategic plan and aligning research with the SDGs
Research	Funding and conducting interdisciplinary research focused on climate, health, and sustainable development
Collaboration	Operating a Living Lab model through RECETOX for co-creation and stakeholder engagement
Operational Measures	Reducing energy and resource consumption through the #MUNIsaves campaign
Transparency & Communication	Publicly sharing research sustainability data and engaging with the university community
Recognition & Benchmarking	Participating in international sustainability rankings to benchmark progress

Conclusion

Masaryk University's approach offers a comprehensive, actionable example of how sustainability can be embedded into a university's research environment. By aligning strategy, research, operations, and communication under a shared sustainability vision, MU demonstrates leadership not only in Czechia but also within the European higher education landscape.

Other institutions—particularly those in the Widening countries—can look to MU's model for inspiration, practical ideas, and tangible steps for transforming their own research environments into more sustainable and responsible ecosystems.

4.6.3 Medical University of Lodz (Poland)

Recognising its role as the largest medical university in Poland, MUL developed the EcoUMED programme to institutionalise sustainability in university operations. The programme focuses on sustainable building practices, responsible energy use, and education promoting ecological behaviour. EcoUMED also coordinates the development of the Green Campus model—an integrated approach that mirrors Green Lab principles at campus-wide scale and aligns well with Alliance4Life's goal of fostering environmentally conscious research environments.

More information: https://studymed.umed.pl/about-mul/ecoumed/, and https://alliance4life.com/media/3802410/a4l_action_d18_report-on-green-labs-piloting_964997.pdf

4.6.4 University of Tartu (Estonia)

The University of Tartu established the Centre for Sustainable Development to promote cross-disciplinary research, teaching, and policy engagement on sustainability. The Centre coordinates strategic initiatives, organises public debates and training activities, and advises on sustainability-related matters both internally and externally. Its role in shaping institutional policies and curricula provides a valuable example of how Green Lab principles can be systematically embedded into core academic and research functions—thus advancing Alliance4Life's mission to create more sustainable and innovative institutions across Central and Eastern Europe.
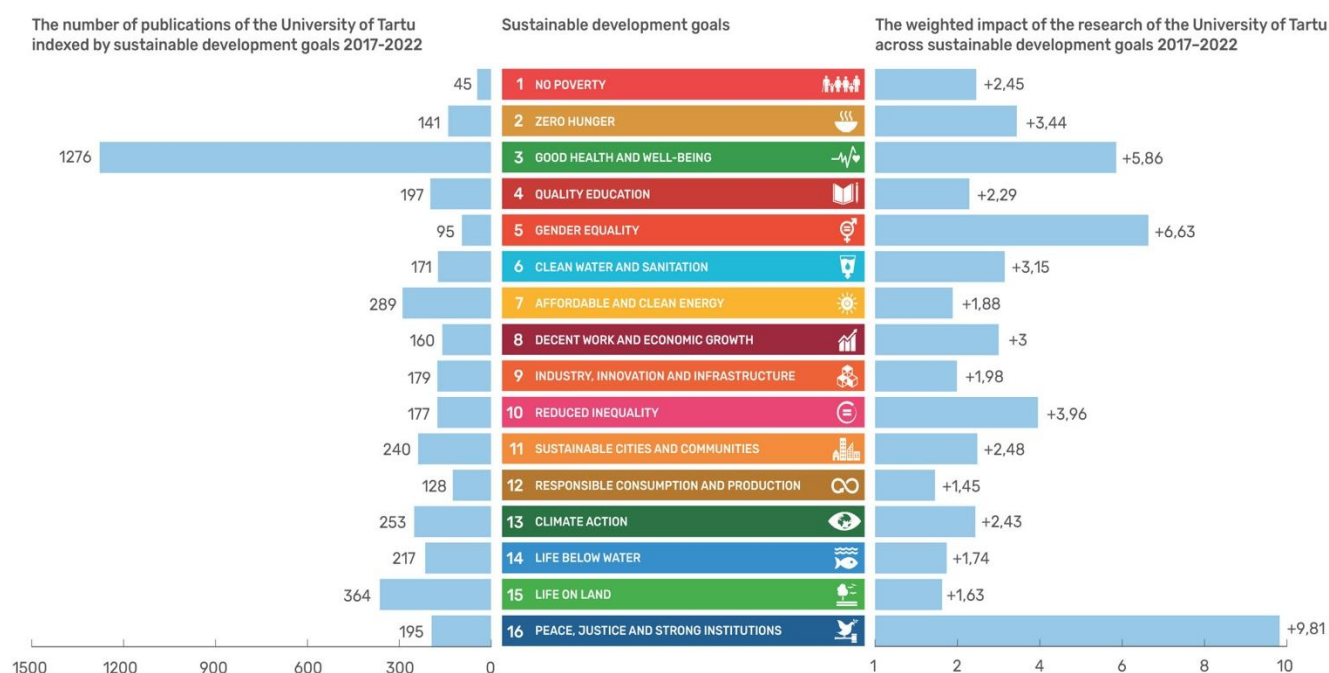
On the web link https://kestlikuarengukeskus.ut.ee/en/content/research-sustainable-development the University of Tartu displays a number of publications on the sustainability topic, including Environmental Report of the University of Tartu 2019-2023 (in Estonian only)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions of the University of Tartu in 2019–2023 and comparison with the other universities in Estonia 2019-2023.

Sustainable academic and research buildings

Sustainable Lifestyle Recommendations at the University of Tartu (only in Estonian)

Figure below shows the weighted impact of the above-mentioned UT publications.

The number of publications of the University of Tartu indexed by sustainable development goals 2017-2022 / Sustainable development goals / The weighted impact of the research of the University of Tartu across sustainable development goals 2017–2022

Publications	SDG	Weighted impact
45	1 NO POVERTY	+2,45
141	2 ZERO HUNGER	+3,44
1276	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	+5,86
197	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	+2,29
95	5 GENDER EQUALITY	+6,63
171	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	+3,15
289	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	+1,88
160	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	+3
179	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	+1,98
177	10 REDUCED INEQUALITY	+3,96
240	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	+2,48
128	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	+1,45
253	13 CLIMATE ACTION	+2,43
217	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	+1,74
364	15 LIFE ON LAND	+1,63
195	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	+9,81

Researchers of the University of Tartu implement a number of projects dedicated to environmental topics, see the following links: https://tymri.ut.ee/en/news/biological-plant-growth-stimulator-improves-soil-quality-and-combats-pests, https://landscape.ut.ee/what-we-do/projects/?lang=en, and https://ut.ee/en/content/european-research-council-grants.

Every Tuesday, all 4,500 employees of the University of Tartu receive a digital information bulletin in their email inbox. This newsletter includes a dedicated section titled "Sustainable Development", which brings together news, updates, and events across the university that align with sustainability goals.

The University of Tartu also publishes a special Sustainable Development Newsletter four times a year (only in Estonian). This publication is available in digital format only and provides more in-depth coverage of sustainability-related initiatives, achievements, and future plans within the university.

More information: https://ut.ee/en/content/sustainable-development-and-university

4.6.5 Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (Latvia)

To support the implementation of Green Lab principles, LIOS has recently joined the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sustainable/case-studies/2020/aug/take-part-leaf) and is currently performing initial steps to implememnt this program into the real-life practice.

4.6.6 Faculty of Medicine, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)

The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ljubljana is committed to protecting the environment and promoting sustainable research practises. In line with this commitment, the Faculty of Medicine has started to implement key components of the Green Lab strategy to reduce the environmental impact of laboratory work. Notably, Faculty of Medicine was awarded the DGNB Gold pre-certificate for sustainable building (DGNB Gold pre-certificate ULMF), which will enable it to create modern research and teaching premises at its new Vrazov Trg Campus. The Faculty of Medicine thus became the first university building and first public building in Slovenia to hold this certificate, and one of only five buildings in Slovenia so far to have obtained a certificate that is making a significant contribution to the development of sustainable building in this country. Furthermore, the Institute of Pathophysiology, one of the Faculty of Medicine's main research departments, has recently introduced a new waste management strategy which, in line with the Alliance4Life Green Lab Strategy, involved auditing the types and quantities of waste generated, including mapping the flow of general, chemical, biological and plastic waste and identifying whether and how waste is sorted, stored and disposed of. In addition, events, such as workshops, are already being organised to introduce sustainability concepts and raise awareness of the environmental footprint of research. Such events form the basis and catalyse the creation of networks of motivated employees in all departments and functions of the faculty. Further improvements will be guided by the recommendations of the Alliance4Life Green Lab Strategy to ensure alignment with best practice in sustainable science. This is the start of an ongoing journey and long-term commitment to more responsible and environmentally conscious research, with further progress planned for the future.

4.6.7 Semmelweis University (Hungary)

Semmelweis University implements the Green University Project, which encourages sustainable habits among students and staff. It provides a Sustainable University Life Guide, organises initiatives such as Green University Day, Earth Hour, composting schemes, gardening, and waste collection campaigns. These community-driven activities raise awareness and create a sense of shared responsibility, which is essential for successful implementation of Green Lab strategies across research groups.

A dedicated team is responsible for environmental protection and sustainability at the institutional level, supported by designated volunteer staff members within laboratories and other university units. These so-called 'environmental protection delegates' are committed to sustainability and environmental protection, and their familiarity with the specific characteristics of their respective units enables them to contribute effectively to continuous environmental improvements across the institution.

More information: https://semmelweis.hu/zoldegyetem/

4.6.8 Medical University of Sofia (Bulgaria)

The university empowers its academic community to adopt sustainable behaviours through strategic documents and action plans, including the Policy for Sustainable Development, the Strategy for Sustainable Development (2023–2026), and a comprehensive Sustainability Plan. These instruments support campus-wide transformation in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The focus on institutional accountability and inclusive participation is fully aligned with the Green Lab framework and the Alliance4Life ambition to bridge systemic gaps across research institutions in Widening countries. More information: Sustainability Strategy at MUS.

4.6.9 Conclusion

These examples reflect a diversity of approaches tailored to each institution's context, demonstrating that there is no single path to sustainability. What they all share is a proactive mindset, a willingness to adapt, and an alignment with the shared goals of Alliance4Life—to strengthen the research environment, improve institutional culture, and bridge the innovation gap through sustainable science. By sharing and learning from these practices, partner institutions can accelerate the uptake of Green Lab strategies and reinforce their commitment to responsible research across Europe's Widening region.

4.7   Annex 2

4.7.1 Piloting Carbon Footprint Assessment

As part of the Alliance4Life effort to foster responsible and sustainable research environments, a pilot carbon footprint assessment was conducted at the Biomedical Research Center of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (BMC SAS) in collaboration with INCIEN (Institute of Circular Economics), a non-profit organization and one of Slovakia's leading institutions in the field of environmental protection and circular economy.

4.7.2 Why Measure the Carbon Footprint?

The carbon footprint represents the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with an institution's operations. It is a fundamental component of any low-carbon strategy and provides a comprehensive overview of an organization's environmental impact.

While the focus is predominantly on carbon dioxide (CO_2) as the most significant anthropogenic GHG, the footprint is expressed as **CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e)**, encompassing the effects of other gases such as methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6), in line with the Kyoto Protocol.

For research institutions and universities, calculating a carbon footprint offers both strategic and operational benefits:

- Identifies key sources of GHG emissions and their contribution to climate change.

- Raises internal awareness of environmental performance and energy use.
- Supports the development of targeted emissions reduction strategies.
- Improves energy management practices based on real consumption data.
- Guides procurement and operational choices towards lower-emission alternatives.
- Generates cost savings through more efficient practices.
- Enables transparent communication about institutional sustainability commitments.
- Aligns with emerging EU priorities, such as integrating carbon footprint data into green public procurement processes.

4.7.3 Baseline Status

Before this pilot, BMC SAS had not previously measured its carbon footprint. The year 2022 represents the baseline for all future comparisons.

4.7.4 Calculation Scope and Results

The emissions inventory covered BMC SAS facilities in both **Bratislava** and **Košice**. It included mandatory **Scope 1** (direct emissions from fuel use) and **Scope 2** (indirect emissions from purchased energy), as well as selected categories from **Scope 3** (optional indirect emissions) in line with the GHG Protocol.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions at BMC SAS in 2022 (tCO$_2$e):

Category	CO$_2$e Emissions (tons/year)
Total Carbon Footprint (All Scopes)	803.16
Carbon Footprint per Employee (n = 422)	1.90
Scope 1+2 (Mandatory Emissions)	741.92
Scope 1+2 per Employee (Slovak: „Uhlíková stopa na 1 zamestnanca (len povinné emisie zo spotreby palív a energie)")	1.76

4.7.5 Distribution of Emissions

The analysis confirmed that Scope 2 emissions (electricity and heat) were the dominant source, followed by Scope 1 (mainly gas for heating) and selected Scope 3 items such as waste and water use.

Summary Table by Scope and Category:

Scope	Emission Source	CO$_2$e (t/year)	Share (%)
1	Natural Gas for Heating	220.08	27.40
	Fuel in Official Vehicles	15.17	1.89
2	Electricity	439.17	54.68
	Electricity Used for Heating	67.50	8.40

3	Business Trips and Teambuildings	5.25	0.65
	Tap Water Consumption	4.29	0.53
	Waste	21.88	2.72
	Purchase of Electrical Equipment	29.83	3.71

The following emission sources were not included due to data limitations: official car purchases, home-office energy use, research supply deliveries, and employee commuting.

4.7.6 Analysis Limitations

Several data-related constraints affected the accuracy of the 2022 assessment:

- Incomplete data on transport during business trips.
- Lack of specific details on accommodation quality; a 3-star hotel standard was used as an average.
- Missing information on emissions from procurement of office and lab supplies.

To improve future reporting:

- Collect more detailed data on travel, accommodation, and purchasing patterns.
- Extend coverage to include Scope 3 items like packaging, office paper, or bottled drinks.
- Collaborate across departments for data consistency and verification.

4.7.7 Methodology

The calculation was based on internationally recognized methodologies:

GHG Protocol – Corporate Standard:
Developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), this is the most widely used framework for GHG accounting. It requires reporting of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and recommends reporting of Scope 3.

ISO 14064 – Part 1:
This standard aligns with ISO's family of environmental management tools and reflects the GHG Protocol structure. It provides consistency for organizations seeking to integrate carbon footprinting into broader environmental or energy management systems.

Two possible approaches are used to define reporting boundaries:

1. **Equity Share Approach:** Based on ownership interests.
2. **Control Approach:** Based on operational or financial control—recommended for research institutions, as it reflects real-world responsibilities and potential for action.

4.7.8 Strategic Value for Alliance4Life

This pilot assessment directly supports the goals of Alliance4Life by:

- Building capacity for environmental accountability within Central and Eastern European research institutions.

- Laying the foundation for data-driven Green Lab strategies.
- Promoting transparency and readiness for future regulatory trends at EU level.

4.7.9 Conclusion

To keep global warming below 1.5°C, the elimination of GHG emissions must be achieved by 2050. Institutions in the public research sector have a duty to lead by example.

It is no longer sufficient to reduce emissions from direct and energy-related sources (Scopes 1 and 2) only. Institutions must also take responsibility for their indirect emissions (Scope 3) by influencing supply chains and travel behaviours.

Each organization should prioritize emission reductions through internal action. Where reductions are not feasible, offsetting mechanisms may be considered to neutralize unavoidable emissions. A transparent and science-based carbon strategy can deliver climate benefits, operational improvements, and reputational value.

The experience from this pilot will guide other Alliance4Life members in initiating similar assessments, thereby contributing to the broader transformation of research practices toward sustainability across Widening countries.