

**ACTION PLAN
FOR PROMOTING AND ENSURING
GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE
BIOARCHAEOLOGICAL AND
ETHNOCULTURAL RESEARCH
INSTITUTE (ICBE)
(2024-2025)**

DECEMBER 2023

INTRODUCTION

This Action Plan for Promoting and Ensuring Gender Equality aims to eliminate gender imbalances and barriers while ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals involved in fundamental scientific research with applied objectives. The plan focuses on generating solutions to address issues related to the archaeological and ethnographic heritage of the Republic of Moldova, enhancing its monitoring and management within the Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" (ICBE).

Current Context of Gender Equality Strategy at the European and National Level

At international level, there is a strong commitment regarding gender equality, assumed through Goal 5 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The EU has made significant progress towards ensuring equality between women and men. The measures that have yielded results are: legislation on equal treatment, integration of gender perspective in all institutional policies, specific measures to promote women.

The EU Strategy for Gender Equality aligns with the commitment of the European Commission to achieve a Union of Equality. The key objectives are: ending violence against women; combating gender stereotypes, eliminating gender disparities on the labor market; ensuring equal participation of women and men in different economic sectors; eliminating the pay gap between women and men and gender disparities regarding pensions; eliminating gender discrepancies in assuming family responsibilities and achieving gender balance in political decision-making.

In the Republic of Moldova, women, compared to men, represent 52.1% of the country's total population, 51.3% of the labor force, 52% of qualified specialists, 59% of voters, 49-52% of political party members. Despite the quantitative representation of the two genders, high-level political decision-making spheres, party structures or public administration institutions are not equally accessible to women and men. Women remain, most often, confined to executive activities, having limited opportunities for promotion or affirmation in frontline politics.

The policy regarding equal opportunities and equal treatment between women and men was first regulated by the Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, No. 5, approved on February 9, 2006 by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. As a result, multiple changes have taken place, both for legislative harmonization, as well as within the institutional framework and even in the structure of government bodies.

The Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, which focused specifically on gender equality (the Gender Equality Law), aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on gender criteria in both public and private sectors, across various fields such as work, education, health, culture, information, provision and access to goods and services, etc.

Under Article 17 of Law No. 5/2006, the Government of the Republic of Moldova developed and approved the *Strategy for Ensuring Equality between Women and Men in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2021 and the Action Plan for Implementing the Strategy for*

Ensuring Equality between Women and Men for 2017-2021, which recommended all public entities to undertake necessary measures to achieve the objectives of the Strategy.

The Strategy has three general objectives:

- (1) Ensuring a comprehensive approach to equality between women and men;
 - (2) Reconciling professional life with family and private life;
 - (3) Encouraging women's participation in the decision-making process;
- and five intervention areas:

- (1) education,
- (2) health,
- (3) labor market,
- (4) balanced participation in decision-making processes,
- (5) gender mainstreaming.

For the implementation of the Strategy for Ensuring Equality between Women and Men, a Governmental Commission was established, comprising representatives from relevant ministries as well as representatives from civil society.

INSTITUTIONAL DESCRIPTION

The Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute (ICBE) is a non-governmental, apolitical, non-profit public utility association, established through the free expression of will of its associated members, for the purpose of jointly achieving the goals determined by its operating statute. The association possesses distinct assets, necessary for ensuring the activities provided by its statute, and bears responsibility for its obligations with these assets.

ICBE carries out its activities throughout the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Law no. 837-XIII of 17 May 1996 on public associations, based on the principles of freedom of association, legality, publicity and transparency, equal rights for all members, free expression of opinion by all members and their access to any information concerning the Association's activities.

ICBE is a free association to choose its own activities, forms and methods of operation and to establish its internal organizational structure, promoting in its activity national, civic and cultural values and interests, democracy and the rule of law, partnership, open competition, while respecting the ethical norms of the non-commercial sector.

Objectives of the Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute (ICBE)

- To contribute to the country's sustainable development as a result of research and development activities, to promote and implement scientific and cultural values at national and international levels.
- To preserve and enhance the cultural, historical, archaeological, ethnographic, and architectural heritage of the Republic of Moldova and beyond its borders.

- To provide consultancy services, develop guidance materials (consultation, advisory), and prepare documentation to promote national cultural heritage.
- To organize and conduct fundamental and applied scientific investigations in the field of archaeological and ethno-cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova.
- The Association's research activities include:
 - Fundamental research – acquisition of new theoretical and universal knowledge of national and international interest for the development of synthesis works, collective and individual monographs, methodological guides;
 - Applied research – preparation of popular science and educational literature; conducting scientific field investigations, etc.
- The issuance of reports, notes and recommendations to central and local state institutions regarding the situation and problems of historical, archaeological and ethnographic monuments in the Republic of Moldova or in the territory of other states, if they are related to national history and culture.
- Contribution to the knowledge and dissemination of scientific works in the fields of architecture, history, ethnology, archaeology, anthropology and other transdisciplinary domains, developed by researchers from the Republic of Moldova and Romania, through free or paid donations of available literature to various public institutions, both domestic and foreign.
- Organization and implementation of activities of historical, cultural, educational, informational, instructional, academic, student-oriented, museographic, scientific and research nature, of public utility (conferences, seminars, symposiums, working sessions, round tables, systematic and salvage archaeological research, anthropological research, demographic research, ethnographic research, colloquiums, summer archaeological and ethnographic schools and camps, experimental archaeology circles, olympiads and other similar activities).
- Implementation of programs and projects addressing current issues of research, protection and preservation of historical, archaeological, ethnographic and (immovable) cultural heritage, with emphasis on providing advisory, methodological, analytical, evaluation and monitoring assistance in this field.
- Conducting historical and cultural research aimed at supporting the cultural, linguistic and spiritual identity of ethnic Romanians and others in the Republic of Moldova and diaspora, as well as those in states where ethnic Romanians are indigenous.
- Facilitating cultural relations and exchanges between Romanians in the diaspora and those in the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and worldwide.
- Engagement in national/international projects and programs, including cross-border initiatives, for the research and valorization of national, local, and regional cultural-historical and spiritual heritage.

- Collaboration with other state and private institutions, organizations, associations, and foundations in the Republic of Moldova and other countries, establishing bilateral and multilateral partnerships to achieve the statutory objectives of the Association.

Main Functions of the Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute (ICBE)

- Conducts scientific field research, both fundamental and applied, aimed at obtaining and introducing into circulation national and universal values of historical and ethno-cultural heritage.
- Contributes to the training of qualified personnel by involving researchers in scientific field and laboratory investigations.
- Develops recommendations for utilizing research results and contributes to their implementation in the social and cultural-spiritual sphere.
- Ensures technical equipment and organization of the research process.
- Ensures the protection, transfer and acquisition of rights over intellectual property objects, scientific information, and confidential scientific-technical and technological information.
- Funds activities in the science and innovation sphere, including through investment in projects and programs.
- Participates in the development of state programs and research and innovation projects.
- Conducts other legal activities in the field of science and innovation.

The governing body of the Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute is the General Assembly of members or their delegates, which convenes in ordinary and extraordinary sessions and has the following main responsibilities:

- Determines the main directions of ICBE's activities;
- Decides on the adoption, completion or modification of the Statute;
- Reviews and approves the annual budget and financial statement;
- Elects and recalls members of the Board of Directors, the Audit Committee, and the President;
- Approves the reports of the Board of Directors and the Audit Committee;
- Decides on any other matters pertaining to ICBE's activities.

The term of office for all bodies elected by the General Assembly is 5 years.

INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES FOR DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Within the framework of promoting and maintaining equal and equitable representation of women and men among both permanent and contracted staff - at management/leadership levels as well as execution/consultant positions - the Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" adopts the following vision and priorities:

- Equal and equitable representation of women and men within the staff of the Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" or among persons working for the benefit of the institution is achieved through a lifecycle approach. This ensures representation at various stages of an employee's/consultant's career path - regardless of generic title or type of contractual relationship - from preselection, recruitment, selection, hiring, promotion, transfer, to delegation, constituting an inclusive and participatory process.

- Challenges and risks regarding equal and equitable representation of women and men will be carefully monitored and managed, particularly those related to: Ethnicity; Religion; Race; Social status; Sexual orientation; and concerning persons with disabilities.

- Women and men shall be inclusively and equitably represented in all processes and at all decision-making levels within the Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute", including:

- Oversight committees
- Working committees or groups
- Competitions, consultations and evaluations
- Project teams and their nominal composition
- Other working formats, regardless of their official designation.

- Institutional policy documents and other standard operational procedures, activity plans within the Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" shall consider and address the specific needs and requirements of both women and men, and shall be adapted according to emerging necessities.

- The Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" will promote a friendly and inclusive policy for work-life balance;

- The Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" equally and equitably encourages the participation of both women and men in competitions and project calls;

- The Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" supports existing institutional leadership development programs, including: Awareness-raising activities; Sensitization campaigns; Advocacy initiatives; Development programs; Empowerment measures learning opportunities (through mentoring and career development programs).

- The Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" promotes and prioritizes the creation of women's professional networks (networking opportunities) within the field;

- The Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" supports the development of gender-sensitive budgets at both institutional and project levels.

To achieve excellence in its fields of activity, the association aims to create an inclusive environment, promoting diversity and inclusion in its operations, based on adherence to the principle of gender equality.

The Gender Equality Plan serves as an instrument that: On one hand, reiterates core institutional values (such as equality, inclusion, diversity, and transparency); On the other hand, proactively addresses challenges to ensure compliance with gender equality principles across all institutional processes and practices.

To define and implement a gender equality policy within the Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute", the following institutional measures may be adopted:

1. Establishment of a Regulatory and Institutional Framework
Adoption of an internal gender equality policy – An official document defining the principles, objectives, and specific measures for promoting equality between women and men within the institute.

2. Promotion of Gender Balance in Human Resources

Fair Recruitment and Selection – Implementation of transparent procedures for hiring, promotion, and grant allocation, avoiding gender biases.

Continuous Gender Equality Training – Organization of workshops and training sessions for staff and management on topics such as:

- Prevention of harassment and discrimination
- Inclusive leadership

Integration of gender dimensions in research projects

3. Ensuring an Inclusive Work Environment
Work-Life Balance Flexibility – Introduction of work-life balance policies.
Monitoring and Combating Harassment – Clear mechanisms for reporting and investigating cases of discrimination or inappropriate behavior.

4. Mainstreaming Gender Perspective in Research

Promoting gender-sensitive research projects - Priority funding for studies analyzing gender dimensions in bioarchaeology and ethnoculture. Inclusive publications and communication - Using gender-neutral language and promoting research findings addressing equality

5. Transparency and Continuous Evaluation

Periodic gender equality reports - Publishing statistics on women's/men's representation in leadership positions, projects and publications. Feedback and adjustments - Anonymous surveys to assess policies and identify unmet needs.

6. External Collaborations for Promoting Equality

Partnerships with academic institutions and NGOs – Engagement in national/international networks supporting gender equality in research; Participation in dedicated funding programs (e.g., Horizon Europe, EU equality programs).

Through these measures, the institute can become a model of best practices in promoting gender equality in the field of archaeological and cultural research, contributing to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 - "Gender Equality".

Through the development of this gender equality plan, we aim to ensure that all our employees benefit from good and equal working conditions, and that all activities carried out follow the principles of equal opportunities and treatment, diversity, inclusivity, and non-discrimination.

We equally support every member's opportunity (regardless of gender, religion, or ethnicity) to: Acquire new knowledge, Participate in professional training activities, Freely publish their research results, Assume responsibilities, Engage in leadership activities.

In other words, we promote equal opportunities among employees at all levels, from hiring and throughout their careers, valuing quality and competence.

Furthermore, through all actions we have undertaken or will undertake in the future, we want our employees to enjoy a good balance between career and private life.

Data Collection

To monitor developments in the field and enable comparative analysis between baseline and current status, the following data has been selected for reference years 2018-2023:

- Total number of members by biological sex;
- Number of male and female members by activity profile;
- Number of PhD candidates, male and female;



Chart 1. Members of the Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" during the period 2018-2023.

Table 1. PhD, men and women, registered in 2023 at ICBE.

No. of PhD	Women	Men
24	5	19

Table 2. Number of members by gender and research fields at ICBE, 2023.

Research fields	Women	Men
Archaeology	1	12
Ethnology	3	0
Anthropology	1	2
Agronomy	0	2
Sociology	0	1
Geology	1	2
Traceology	1	0
Paleontology	0	2
Choreography	0	1
Cultural Marketing	1	0

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

Within the Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute, an imbalanced distribution between male and female employees is observed:

- In the table *Members of the Public Association "Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute" for the period 2018–2023*, men dominate (e.g., 70%), indicating a structural imbalance.
- The institute provides a safe work environment, free from gender-based violence or harassment.

1. Quantitative Analysis

Gender distribution in 2023:

- PhD candidates: 24 total (5 women, 19 men) — 20.8% women.
- Research fields (2023):
 - *Archaeology*: 1 woman vs. 12 men.
 - *Ethnology*: 3 women vs. 0 men.
 - *Anthropology*: 1 woman vs. 2 men.
 - *Other fields (geology, paleontology, etc.)*: Predominantly male presence.

Observed trends:

- Major imbalance in academic and research positions, especially in fields like archaeology (only 7.7% women).
- Only ethnology shows female dominance (100% women), suggesting gender segregation by field.

2. Qualitative Analysis

A. Policies and Implemented Measures (2024–2025 Action Plan):

- Strengths:
 - Clear regulatory framework: Gender equality policy, transparent recruitment procedures, anti-discrimination training.

- EU-aligned objectives: Integration of equality in research, gender-sensitive budgets, mentorship programs.
- Focus on work-life balance: Flexible arrangements for professional-personal life reconciliation.

B. Identified Challenges:

- Structural disadvantage for women in STEM: Male dominance in fields like archaeology reflects global trends in exact sciences.
- Risk of "tokenism": Symbolic presence of women in some fields (e.g., 1 woman in archaeology) may mask inequalities.
- Monitoring policy impact: Annual satisfaction surveys and equality reports.

3. Conclusions

- Quantitatively: ICBE shows significant gender imbalance (<25% women in research), with extreme variations across fields.
- The Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research Institute is a safe workplace for its employees, free from gender-based violence or harassment.
- Women are more involved in organizational and support activities and less in leadership roles. They should be encouraged to take on leadership responsibilities.
- Employees, whether men or women, are not required to work overtime or during rest periods (weekends, holidays, legal leave).

Perspective: Based on internal analysis, national and EU requirements, by 2025, ICBE aims to consistently implement the action plan to become a model for promoting equality in humanities research.

ACTION PLAN FOR PROMOTING AND ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY (2024-2025)

The Gender Equality Action Plan covers intervention areas, specific actions to be implemented, target groups, timelines, and responsible parties.

Domain 1: Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

Actions	Target Group	Timeline	Responsible Party
1. Conduct an updated diagnostic of the current gender equality situation, based on relevant data – biannually or as needed.	All members	2024-2025	Board of Directors, including designated women members invited to participate.
2. Review institutional documents, if necessary, to better integrate a gender perspective.	All members	2024	Director and senior leadership.
3. Ensure balanced representation in committees	All members	2024-2025	Director and senior leadership.

and commissions from a gender equality perspective.			
---	--	--	--

Domain 2: Promoting Gender Balance in Recruitment and Selection at All Levels

Actions	Target Group	Timeline	Responsible Party
1. Analyze hiring and promotion procedures to identify potential gender-based discrimination factors.	All members	2024 – 2025	Board of Directors, based on HR specialist data.
2. Promote career opportunities within the institute through diverse outreach channels.	Women and men across all professional categories.	2024 – 2025	Human Resources Department.

Domain 3: Work-Life Balance

Actions	Target Group	Timeline	Responsible Party
1. Implement flexible work programs to help employees manage professional and personal responsibilities.	ICBE members	2024 – 2025	Human Resources Department.
2. Organize recreational and team-building activities to foster healthy workplace relationships and reduce stress.	ICBE members	2024 – 2025	Director and leadership team.

Domain 4: Measures Against Gender-Based Violence, Including Sexual Harassment

Actions	Target Group	Timeline	Responsible Party
1. Develop and implement a clear policy against gender-based violence and sexual harassment, communicated to all employees and collaborators.	ICBE members	2024 – 2025	Human Resources Department.

FINAL PROVISIONS

The Policy on Ensuring Equal Opportunities (Gender) Between Women and Men within the NGO Institute of Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research supports the development of gender-sensitive actions at both the institutional and project levels. This document serves as a guiding and orienting framework. It does not replace the legal framework or international commitments assumed before the adoption of this policy or after its implementation.

The Policy on Ensuring Equal Opportunities (Gender) Between Women and Men may be supplemented or amended and enters into force as of the date of approval

This document shall be implemented by the NGO Institute of Bioarchaeological and Ethnocultural Research during the period of 2024-2025.

GENERAL DIRECTOR

Andrei COROBCEAN

Prepared by:

Doina Solomon,

Marketing and Logistics Specialist, Member of the Administrative Team