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Equal Opportunities Survey Final Report

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Managerial summary

The company Information Technology Administration Plzeň (hereinafter SIT Plzeň, or SIT) decided to implement an equal opportunities survey in 2022. This report summarises the findings of the audit team, consisting of Petra Kubálková and Aneta Buldřová implemented between March and August 2022.

The need to understand the new rules for Horizon 2020 grants and the willingness to further develop the company culture led to the commissioning of the survey. The implementation team feels obliged to point out that the survey cannot provide easy answers and easy solutions. For example, increasing the representation of women in the industry - IT, science and research - is a lengthy process that needs to involve the whole organisation. The audit team helps to use its knowledge, skills and investigation to define the areas that need to be addressed and thus motivate the company's leadership and management to implement measures that will lead to the expected goal.

The report first defines the terms used to avoid misunderstandings, then presents the standards and legislative documents that are crucial for gender equality, and summarises basic information about Horizon 2020 and the HR Award. The context of the contracting authority survey is then discussed: the reasons for the survey, the selection of the contractor and the implementation process.

The second part of the report then describes the findings identified by the audit team, examples of good practice, and areas where the process and organisation of work could be moved towards a more open and fairer society.

The report is accompanied by a list of analysed documents and a proposal for an action plan for the SIT Pilsen organisation.

The whole audit process was designed to involve the minimum number of actors needed. At the same time, the analysis is defined as a GAP analysis and the investigation has led to the creation of an action plan, the draft of which is attached to this report.

The audit team evaluates the setup of the entire SIT Plzeň organisation as innovative, open and friendly. The main recommendations are thus directed towards more conscious work with gender aspects of the activities. A more detailed description of the situation and recommendations can be found in this document and the integral annexes.

On behalf of the

smoke Petra Kubálková

Acknowledgements:

On behalf of the audit team, we must thank **Luděk Šantor for** a very friendly welcome and especially for his support of the audit team. The audit team had at its disposal all the requested documents and assistance it needed to carry out the investigation. At the same time, Luděk Šantora is a distinctive person who sets a positive example for the whole organisation and this is the basis for the current and future success of SIT Plzeň.

Definitions, legislative framework and basic documents

A thorough explanation of the concepts at the beginning leads to unnecessary misunderstanding and miscommunication. Since discussions on gender are very often accompanied by misunderstanding or confusion of terms, this clear definition seems essential.¹

Gender

The term gender is based on the recognition that differences between men and women do not result from their innate difference (sex in the biological sense), but from socially formed and reproduced and simultaneously changing ideas of "masculinity" and "femininity", which is why gender is sometimes referred to as social gender. Gender permeates all areas of social life. It is both a binary concept (i.e. it assumes only the possibilities of "masculinity" and "femininity" linked to "male" and "female" sexes) and a hierarchical concept, where phenomena, activities, characteristics and other areas of human life associated with "masculinity" are ranked higher than those attributed to "femininity". Gender relations are thus inherently power relations, favouring men as a group in most cases.

Gender equality

Achieving gender equality implies opening up opportunities for free choice lifestyle and the development of one's own talents (e.g. career, participation opportunities in decision-making positions and others) regardless of the assumed gender and identity of the individual or his/her sexual orientation.

Gender equality

Gender equality is the ideal state in which both sexes are free to develop their abilities and equally enjoy opportunities in different areas of life. At the same time, it is a state in which there is no direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of gender. The concept of gender equality thus refers to an assumed binary gender category (male, female), i.e. it does not take into account other possible gender identities (transgender or other).

Gender mainstreaming

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (hereinafter referred to as the GM Strategy) is based on achieving gender equality and is part of the Amsterdam Treaty² (or also the Treaty of

¹ Definitions are taken from the Gender Audit Standard, 2016, unless otherwise stated.

Available at

https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/dokumenty/Standard-gender-oveho-auditu_V2_brezen-2016.pdf

² Treaty of Amsterdam, European Commission, 1997. Available from www:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/CS/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11997D/TXT> (cited 20.4.2022)

on the European Union), the European Pact for Equality between Women and Men³, as well as Czech legislation⁴ (Anti-discrimination Act). The Czech Republic belongs to the group of countries that have signed and are governed by all of these documents or laws.

The Council of Europe defines GM as follows: "Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of conceptual processes by ensuring that all stakeholders at all levels and at all stages use a gender perspective."⁵

According to the European Commission, "gender mainstreaming does not mean that efforts to promote equality should be limited to the introduction of specific measures to help women, but rather that all general policies and measures should be mobilised specifically to achieve equality, by taking active and open account of their possible effects on the respective situations of men and women (gender perspective) already at the planning stage. This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking these possible effects into account when defining and implementing them." The same definition is also recognised by the Czech Republic, which recognised the GM method as a legitimate tool for the implementation of equal opportunities policy in 2001.⁶ In addition to gender audits, specific tools for gender mainstreaming include gender budgeting (gender-sensitive budgeting), or gender impact assessment (gender impact assessment of legislative and non-legislative materials submitted to the Government of the Czech Republic, as well as other conceptual materials).

From all the definitions, then, it follows that the GM Strategy must be part of the HR processes and procedures, the internal rules of organizations. This requirement then translates into anti-discrimination and employment legislation. Since 2005, the GM Strategy has also been required by the European Commission in the field of science and research, with a transition period that ended in 2020, and gender mainstreaming requirements have been incorporated into grant frameworks and calls for proposals.

³ Council Conclusions of 7 March 2011 European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), European Commission, 2011. Available from [www: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/CS/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52011XG0525%2801%29](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/CS/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52011XG0525%2801%29) (cit. 20.4.2022)

⁴ Act No. 198/2009 Coll., on Equal Treatment and Legal Means of Protection against Discrimination and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Anti-Discrimination Act). Available from [www: https://ppropo.mpsv.cz/zakon_198_2009](https://ppropo.mpsv.cz/zakon_198_2009) (cit. 20.4.2022)

⁵ EUROPEAN COMMISSION. Manual on gender mainstreaming in employment, social inclusion and social protection policies. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2008, 40 p. ISBN 978-92-79-09261-9.

⁶ What is gender mainstreaming?, MPSV, 2005. Available from [www: https://web.archive.org/web/20140202125104/http://www.mpsv.cz/nahled/cs/940](https://web.archive.org/web/20140202125104/http://www.mpsv.cz/nahled/cs/940) (cit. 20.4.2022)

Does GM only apply to gender?

In its interpretation, gender mainstreaming (see the word gender) refers to equality and equal opportunities for representatives of both sexes, i.e. men and women. However, the legislation defines a whole list of discriminatory grounds that should not be ignored or disregarded. In Czech legislation, discriminatory grounds are defined by the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Anti-discrimination Act and other employment laws

As mentioned above, the area of equal opportunities and non-discrimination is addressed by a number of laws and decrees in the area of labour law, which is an integral part of the equal opportunities investigation (gender audit). The whole process expects all organisations to comply with the employment legislation of their respective countries. The equal opportunities investigation must therefore cover also in this area if the institution has not already undergone a gender audit or investigation.

For the purpose of the equal opportunities investigation (gender audit) in the field of employment, it is sufficient to use the framework of three basic legislative norms, which are - the Anti-Discrimination Act, the Employment Act and the Labour Code.

Anti-discrimination law

Act No. 198/2009 Coll. - Act on Equal Treatment and Legal Means of Protection against Discrimination and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Anti-Discrimination Act) was approved

17 June 2009 and is the first comprehensive legislation to incorporate European Commission directives and international treaties to which the Czech Republic is bound. The Anti-Discrimination Act (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") defines the right of every natural person to equal treatment and prohibition of discrimination in the area of the right to employment and access to employment, access to occupation, business and other self-employed activities, membership of the in trade unions, works councils or employers' organisations, access to education, healthcare, social security, etc. The AZ also defines direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, permissible forms of differential treatment, the principle of equal treatment for men and women in social security for workers and regulated legal remedies against discrimination.

Employment Act

Employment Act No. 435/2004 Coll. defines what constitutes equal treatment and prohibits discrimination in the exercise of the right to employment. It states that discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, maternity, paternity or gender identification is also considered discrimination

because of gender. The Employment Act also defines possible exceptions to the advertising of job positions in logical cases where the female or male gender of the applicant is an essential, decisive and necessary prerequisite for the performance of the job. These exceptional cases are typically in the field of artistic professions (actor/actress). For example, it is not possible to exclude all women in advance from jobs

that involve greater physical demands. The fulfilment of the physical strength requirement must be assessed for male and female jobseekers individually.

Labour Code

Act No. 262/2006 Coll., the Labour Code, as amended, establishes the obligation of equal treatment and non-discrimination in employment relations, the requirement the right to reconcile private and professional life, the employee's right to a grievance hearing, the prohibition on monitoring the employee, the prohibition on requesting information unrelated to the performance of work. The Labour Code also prohibits discrimination not only on the grounds of sex, but also on the grounds of sexual orientation, racial or ethnic origin, nationality, citizenship, social origin, gender, language, health, age, religion or belief, property, marital or family status or obligations, political or other opinion, membership and activity in political parties or political movements, trade unions or employers' organisations. Discrimination on grounds of pregnancy, maternity, paternity or gender identity shall also be considered here for sex discrimination.

All three legislative norms are reflected in the Gender Audit Standard (hereinafter referred to as the GA Standard), which is the required methodology for the implementation of equal opportunity surveys. At the same time, all three legislative standards understand discrimination as a concept that goes beyond "gender".

Gender Audit Standard

The GA standard was approved by the Government Office in 2016 and is the official methodology for conducting equal opportunity surveys (gender audits) in the Czech Republic. GA is one of the one of the basic tools of gender mainstreaming, where internal processes are analysed and organisational structures with regard to gender, identifying critical areas and making recommendations for improvement

The areas that the GA Standard assesses are as

follows: Organizational Objectives

- Mission, vision and strategic goals of the organisation
- Specific objectives in the field of gender equality

Institutional support for gender equality policy

- Environment - friendly, safe and motivating
- Zero tolerance of sexual harassment, bullying and

discrimination Workplace organisation

Personnel policy

- Recruitment
- Dismissal of male/female employees
- Gender representation in the organisation and diversity
- Career development and employee turnover, substitutability

- Development and education
 - Adaptation processes (see parent/parent management)
 - Mentoring
- Fair remuneration
 - Salary transparency
 - Benefits - transparency and clarity (information available to all)
 - Holidays - fair distribution of the holiday plan
- Reconciling work and personal life
 - Working hours
 - Flexible forms
 - Maternity/Parental Management
 - Support for active fatherhood, including parenting
 - Age management in relation to gender
 - Conditions (not only) for carers
 - Provision of care for children (not only) of pre-school age
 - Transport options to work
- Business trips and long-term business trips

Communication

- General - communication strategies, use of gender-correct language, institutional control of language use, visual materials
- Internal - intranet (and its availability), directives (and other binding documents and the way of dissemination), formal (e.g. communication rules in hierarchy) and informal (e.g. everyday communication and activities outside work - networking, teambuilding)
- External communication and cooperation - website, advertising, participation at conferences and competitions (dissemination of good practice), communication of vacancies, etc.
- Relationships - hierarchical (decision-making processes), collegial (team, networking, etc.)
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- Cooperation with schools - internships and support for non-stereotypical gender-specific career choices
- Cooperation with NGOs
- Sponsorship settings
- Employee volunteering

In general, it is possible to conduct a gender audit in public administration organisations, local government and in the private sector. When auditing an academic institution, it is also appropriate to take into account the priorities

and the legislation related to the Horizon Europe programme⁷, which introduces the so-called eligibility criteria, i.e. the criteria whether an organisation is eligible to apply for funding from this programme. It also includes a Gender Equality Plan, where gender equality is a horizontal priority⁸. The audit is in line with the principles enshrined in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and includes the criteria required for the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award (see below).

The Gender Audit as well as the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) are instruments of gender mainstreaming⁹, a principle binding on all EU Member States. As mentioned above, it is a strategy to promote gender equality, which involves applying a gender perspective at all stages of policy or regulation-making to combat discrimination. The concept of gender is used as a horizontal analytical category that is intersected with others - such as age, nationality, ethnicity, sexual identity, etc.

HR Award

The HR Excellence in Research Award (HR Award) is an award given by the European Commission for excellence in the management of human resources in a scientific environment. The areas assessed are: staff care, openness and transparency of the selection process, quality of the working environment, especially in the field of science and research. The HR Award is considered an international standard. The HR Award process started in 2010. By 2021, 655 institutions across Europe have been awarded the award. By the end of 2021, 57 institutions in the Czech Republic had been awarded the award.

European Charter and Code for Researchers

The basis for receiving the HR Award is the acceptance of the guidelines and requirements the responsibilities and rights of researchers and their employers as defined in the European Charter for Researchers¹⁰ (hereafter the Charter). The Charter was issued by the European Commission in 2006 under the English title "*Directorate-General for Research - Human resources and mobility*" and was a response to the Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers. The whole Charter is intended to help the European scientific

⁷ Regulation 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28.4.2021 and Council Decision 2021/764 of 10.5.2021

⁸ To ensure compatibility with the European Commission's requirements, this audit also used the methodology of the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plan, European Union, 2021 and the methodology of the European Institute for Gender Equality Gender Equality in Academia and Research, European Union, 2016.

⁹ "What is gender mainstreaming", EIGE. Available from [www: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming) (cited 20.4.2022)

¹⁰ European Charter for Researchers, Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers,

European Commission, 2006. Available from www:
https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/brochures/kina21620b1c_cs.pdf (cited 20.4.2022)

space to compete with other progressive parts of the scientific world and at the same time to define such standards for research and work in it that it is more attractive not only for the implementation of projects, but also for building a scientific career.

The Charter also mentions the principle of non-discrimination in its general principles and requirements: *'Employers and/or funders of researchers shall not discriminate in any way against researchers on the basis of sex, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic conditions.* ¹¹" and gender balance: *"Employers and/or funders should strive to create a representative gender balance at all staff levels, including supervisory and management levels. This balance should be achieved on the basis of a policy of equal opportunities at the time of recruitment and during the later stages of career development, but without taking precedence over the criteria of quality and ability. To ensure equality of treatment, selection and evaluation committees must be composed on the basis of an appropriate gender balance.* ¹²".

The Charter defines key areas (author's transcript):

Research and working environment

- Favourable research environment
 - Freedom of Research
 - Ethical principles - intellectual property rights, co-authorship
 - Professional responsibility, attitude and accountability
 - Compliance with contractual and legal obligations
 - Safety and good research practices
 - Dissemination, sharing and exploitation of results not only within research teams but also to the public
 - Transparent procedures, evaluation and feedback
 - Control and management
- Favourable working culture
 - Recognition of the profession
 - Non-discrimination
 - Gender balance
- Working conditions
 - Favourable research environment
 - Favourable working conditions
 - Stability and job stability

¹¹ Art. 16, dtto.

¹² Art. 18, dtto.

- Financing and payroll

Recruitment

- Transparent recruitment methods - advertising, selection, evaluation, qualifications
- Regular professional evaluation
- Transparent and open recruitment process
- Ensuring career growth

Career development

- Motivating teams and individuals
- Career development
- Vocational training and support in the early stages of a career
- Access to training and continuous development of researchers
- Access to expert advice
- Transparent evaluation of scientific research and teaching

Transparent evaluation system Mobility

- International support
- Promoting intersectoral mobility
- Support for mobility between and within functions

Adequate social security

- Ensuring the transfer of pension rights
- Ensuring social security

Institutional Assurance

- Re-auditing, reviewing and developing the environment in the spirit of the Charter
- Control - Supervisors
- Complaints and appeals
- Participation in decision-making bodies

Given that it is unethical, inappropriate and probably illegal to create groups of employees (say, first and second tier) that would be treated differently by the institution, it is expected that the rules that apply to the group employed in scientific and educational positions will also apply to the group employed in other positions. In addition to following the rules for building a supportive scholarly environment, all of the rules from Work Environment, to Recruitment, to Career Development, to after Institutional Assurance to be applied to all male and female employees of the organization.

HRS4R strategy

The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) is a comprehensive implementation tool for obtaining the HR Award and then complying with the obligations arising from the award. It is based on a set of 40 principles enshrined in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. An action plan is drawn up on the basis of an internal or external investigation and submitted to the European Commission (EC), which then awards an award for excellence in the care of human resources in a scientific environment. For researchers, an organisation with an HR Award is a guarantee of European standards of staff care, openness and transparency in selection procedures and the quality of the working environment.

The strategy involves multi-level steps and takes several months. The first step is a so-called GAP analysis (report) that maps the gaps, the next step is to draw up a concrete improvement plan (action plan).

The actual methodology and procedure of the analysis is not prescribed, but most organizations use the Gender Audit Standard approved by the Government of the Czech Republic and external specialists registered with the Gender Expert Chamber. This procedure is objective and recommended.

Context for the Equal Opportunities Inquiry SIT Pilsen

Supplier assignment

The SIT Plzeň organisation decided to conduct a gender audit in 2022. The terms of reference for the equal opportunities survey included the requirement to implement services within the scope of the requirements of the GA Standard, the HR Award and areas relevant for the development of the GEP itself. The areas assessed are the HR AWARD: employee care, openness and transparency of the selection procedure, quality of the working environment, communication and corporate culture.

Equal Opportunities Investigation at SIT Pilsen

The Equal Opportunities Inquiry used gender audit methodologies in combination with methodologies for assessing gender equality in academic institutions developed by the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality. A gender audit is a type of HR audit that focuses on internal organisational processes and human resource management from a gender perspective. Its output is the identification of strengths and, in particular, areas for possible improvement on which the audit team will make recommendations.

Methodology of the gender survey

A gender audit (equal opportunities survey) uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. These are mainly gender analysis of internal and external documents of the audited institution, individual and group interviews and questionnaire surveys. The gender audit is also governed by strict ethical rules, including confidentiality of the identity of all respondents, confidentiality agreements between the commissioning and the implementer of the audit, rules for handling non-public documents provided for the audit within the implementation team or a standard for conducting focus groups and making video recordings or recordings for the purpose of preparing the audit report. All these matters have been addressed.

The gender audit itself consisted of several phases:

- Initial: Includes specification of the terms of reference, requirements and constraints for the audited organisation. This phase of the audit was conducted in March and April 2022. This phase included discussion of focus groups, their focus and possible staffing, the scope of the survey and its focus, and the staffing of semi-structured interviews and their number. At the same time, the necessary documents to be provided by the organisation and, of course, the timetable were addressed.
- Implementation: includes the survey itself ran April to May.
- Final phase: finalisation of the final report and communication of outputs and recommendations. Validation of information generated during the baseline

presentation of conclusions.

Document and data analysis

During the preparatory phase, a list of internal documents, requirements on gendered data and statistics, and other appropriate public resources were discussed. A complete list of documents is provided in the annex to this report. For public sources, the last date the source was visited for the report is indicated. A list of the documents provided is in the annex to this report.

Questionnaire survey (quantitative)

The questionnaire survey was already prepared by SIT Plzeň before the audit was commissioned. The audit team considers the processing of the survey to be sufficient and the results of the survey in this report imply gender issues.

Interviews and focus groups (qualitative research)

A total of **three individual in-depth interviews** were conducted with employees. This number was entirely appropriate given the size of the organisation. Individual male and female respondents were nominated for the interview by the sponsor. The interviews and focus groups took place on 28 April 2022 at the premises of the SIT Plzeň organisation. If the respondent gave his/her consent, the interviews were recorded and the transcript was used for the analysis. The recordings and transcripts are not part of the audit report and will be deleted after the audit in order to maintain the anonymity of the respondent(s). Similarly, it is not desirable to mention the names of the persons who gave the interviews, although the implementation team is under no illusion that the names are not known at this time.

Three focus groups (group interviews, hereafter abbreviated as FS) were conducted as part of the qualitative research. The composition of the groups was guided by a combination of socio-demographic data and status - e.g. parents' group, female employees' group, managers' group. The group interviews took place on 28 April 2022 at the premises of SIT Pilsen. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The capacity of the focus group was limited to 8 people.

Where consent was given by all present, the interviews were recorded and the transcript used for analysis. Neither the recordings nor the transcripts are part of the audit report and, in order to maintain the anonymity of the respondent(s), will be deleted after the audit. Twenty persons - men and women - participated in the group interviews. The selection of interviewees and the nomination of participants in the group interviews was entirely the responsibility of SIT Plzeň.

Investigation report

Contextual analysis of the organisation

Region Pilsen Region

The Pilsen Region is the third largest region in the Czech Republic, but it also has the third lowest population density. Although we can observe a trend of increasing population for several years (thanks to migration), this figure remains at around 579 thousand inhabitants (5.5% of the total population in the Czech Republic), of which 50.5% are women, which is slightly more balanced than the ratio in the whole Czech Republic (50.7%). The age structure of the population corresponds to the national statistics: 63% are in the active age of 15 - 64 years, 16% are in the age of 0 - 14 years and 21% aged 65+. However, according to the average age and the age index, the region ranks eighth and seventh respectively, and is therefore one of those with a higher proportion of older population.

Two thirds of the population live in cities. The Pilsen Region traditionally has a low unemployment rate (1.7% compared to the national rate of 2.5%) and the third highest median gross wage in the interregional comparison (after Prague and the Central Bohemia Region). The region's share in the national GDP has been around 5% for a long time, and in terms of GDP per capita it is fifth among the regions.

There are 224 elementary schools, 15 grammar schools and 44 vocational education branches without a superstructure in the region. Higher education is possible at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, which offers 9 faculties (e.g. pedagogical, electrical engineering, applied sciences, etc.), also at the Faculty of Medicine belonging to Charles University in Prague, a university centre belonging to the Metropolitan University, o.p.s. Prague and the Faculty of Operational Economics of the Czech University of Agriculture in Prague, located in Klatovy. Secondary education in IT fields can be obtained in the region at 6 secondary schools (e.g. Secondary Industrial School in Tachov or Secondary Vocational School in Plzeň); higher vocational education in IT at the Technical College in Domažlice or Plzeň. The ratio of university-educated inhabitants is slightly lower than the national average (14.4% to 17.6%), while the proportion of secondary school graduates without a high school diploma is a full 2% higher than the national average (33% to 31%) - this indicates the more industrial nature of the region. Gendered statistics show a majority of college-educated women (53%), and secondary-educated women with a high school diploma (55%); women are in the minority for secondary education without a high school diploma (43%), but dominate for primary education (60%).¹³

Information technology and gender

Information technology in general is a sector where there has long been a strong gender imbalance. Although, according to data from the Ministry of Education and Science, women outnumber university graduates by roughly 60:40, the hierarchy of those employed in this field is heavily dominated by men. In IT, we can observe so-called vertical gender segregation. In practice, this means that the higher the hierarchical position, the fewer women can be found in it. According to data from the Czech Statistical Office, this phenomenon can be observed both at the management level and at the level of

job classification (see below). According to Eurostat, women in the Czech Republic are also strongly underrepresented in research positions (less than 30%). Within the EU, the Czech Republic was the worst performer in this indicator in 2018 among all Member States.

¹³ All data available on the website of the Czech Statistical Office, www.czso.cz

In addition to vertical gender segregation at universities, we can also observe so-called horizontal gender segregation, where in some fields of study one gender significantly outweighs the other. Technical fields are among those where women are significantly less represented than men in the long term. According to European Commission figures from 2021, women accounted for 43.7% of all doctoral graduates in the Czech Republic, but for example in IT, only 4.05% of the total number of graduates were women. The results of the gender audit should therefore be seen in the broader social context of the current state of gender equality in the Czech higher education environment and in the academy in general.

Competition

As part of the investigation, the audit team tried to define, together with the employees, the existing competition within the region. As the work of SIT Pilsen is unique, no direct competition was identified. Indirect competition can be defined as universities offering robotics or IT companies offering IT management services. However, no company with the same focus and scope has been identified within the region.

Career at SIT Pilsen

The Human Resources Development Management Plan is a concept of SIT Plzeň that should ensure equal access to education, science, enable professional development and contribute to the cultivation of relationships within the organisation.

For example, transparent information about vacant positions, courses, training, foreign trips, grants can contribute to equality of access in career development for all potential candidates (including those on maternity and parental leave).

For training offered in the afternoon, the company should provide, for example, babysitting. Career development should apply to all types of positions. Everyone should have a personal Career Development Plan.

Therefore, to understand where the organisation stands in this area, it is useful to answer the questions from the following Competency Model, which represents a comprehensive HR strategy.

The key areas here are:

- **Recruitment:** a clear definition of who SIT Pilsen wants/needs to recruit and why.
- **Selection:** a transparent selection process that has clearly defined criteria may include affirmative action.
- **Evaluation:** defined and transparent measurement of the achievement of objectives not only for the position but also on the basis of the Career Development Plan. Evaluations should be regular, at least 1:1, open and constructive. Of course, also recorded and agreed by both parties.
- **Development:** how does SIT Plzeň determine development needs? This could include, for example, rejuvenating the workforce, reaching out to more female candidates, reaching out to more male candidates, reaching out to more foreigners living in the Czech Republic, etc. Based on the definition of Development Needs, both the training offer for own employees is compiled, HR strategies are adjusted, or existing candidates are sought for future vacant positions, replacements or for new fields.
- **Career planning:** growth criteria, measurable, objective metrics, both internal and external.
- **Retention:** includes the care of existing employees. Retention is not only related to with the attractiveness of the organisation, but also with the perception of SIT Plzeň as an employer that offers an interesting, motivating, open and transparent working environment. It should include a process of employee satisfaction survey.
- **Leaving:** leaving is a natural part of any work environment, so it is necessary to know the reasons why people leave, why they do not continue in their current career, etc. Mapping the reason for leaving is an important element of the overall HR strategy.



Figure 1 Competence model

Based on the diagram, it is clear what all should be implemented in the targeted development of human resources in the organization, for all types of positions.

Recruitment

Advertisement

Recruitment is one of the important elements that can change diversity. Recruitment is also one of the indicators that is evaluated in the HR Award process.

During the interviews and focus groups conducted, there was a very clear consensus that the recruitment process should be fair and gender-blind, but experience-based. Gender discrimination is prohibited in the recruitment process, which includes the whole topic of motherhood and parenthood. All processes are evaluated as part of the recruitment process - from the job posting, through the interview process and the evaluation of male and female candidates, to the final selection. The recruitment process also includes an adaptation process to properly motivate and guide the new team member through the probationary period.

As part of the recruitment process (whether from a GA or HR Awards perspective), the

first thing that is assessed is the gender correct way in which vacancies are advertised, which is

absolute basis in the "must have" phase according to Czech legislation and HR Award and at the same time the easiest change that can be achieved.¹⁴

In the Czech Republic, gender-incorrect language is often used in job advertisements, either explicitly, when the preferred gender of the candidate is explicitly stated, or implicitly, when the generic masculine or feminine is used. Such a practice not only violates the rules of equal access to employment (Employment Act, No. 435/2004 Coll., Anti-Discrimination Act, No. 198/2009 Coll.), but may also have a negative impact on the recruitment process itself.

For example, an advertisement "We are hiring a female manager" does not have the potential to appeal to many male applicants. Similarly, an advertisement such as 'Hire a manager' may not appeal to all women and some will not respond to the job offer. Thus, the use of gender-incorrect language in recruitment advertising can lead to an unnecessary waste of market potential. Although Czech case law is not yet too gender-sensitive, the Public Defender of Rights has already identified the following type of advertisement as discriminatory within the meaning of the aforementioned legal norms.

The analysis of advertising was limited to advertisements posted on the organisation's website. According to the information obtained from the focus group interviews, the department heads themselves write the advertisements because "they know what they want". It is questionable whether the advertisements are subsequently edited, e.g. also for gender correctness. Advertising jobs in Czech is inconsistent in terms of using gender-correct or inclusive language. The text of the advertisement, published on the website, uses gender-incorrect language (relabelling). In doing so, the advertisement can be used to target an under-represented group (e.g. women) for a specific job position. For example, the text of the advertisement may state that applications from women are particularly welcome.

SIT then uses the Jobs.cz application, which is already set up to eliminate any gender stereotypes and misconceptions.

¹⁴ For more on gender linguistics, see, for example, www.valdrova.cz.

Kariéra

LEKTOR KROUŽKU PRO DĚTI

Baví tě práce s dětmi?

Máš zkušenosti s elektronikou, programováním nebo 3D tiskem?

Láká tě učit se nové věci?

Chtěl/a bys pracovat v příjemném prostředí?

Náplň práce:

- vedení kroužku pro děti

Požadujeme minimálně základní zkušenost s:

- „bastlením“
- elektronikou
- programováním

Figure 1. Sample job posting dated 4.7.2022

This sample advert was withdrawn from the organisation's website on 4.7.2022 and unfortunately does not comply with the requirements of Czech legislation or recommended good practice. The advertisement does not comply with the inclusive rule for both genders.

Example of possible solutions:

- Lecturer
- Lecturer
- Lecturer (m/f or f/m)

Possible addition to the

advertisement:

- The organisation offers flexible working hours
- The position is suitable for parents with young children
- The position is suitable for graduates of technical universities with a minimum of teaching experience
- Benefits offered by SIT Pilsen
- and others...

Selection procedure and SIT Plzeň

The selection and recruitment process is an important mechanism that significantly influences the staffing of any institution. The most important thing for any employer is to recruit the best quality staff under the right conditions. Another consideration may be the emphasis on team diversity as a long-term comparative advantage.

From a gender equality point of view, it is important that the selection and recruitment process does not reduce the chances of potential male and female applicants or prejudice their rights. Therefore, the recruitment process should be set up in such a way as to avoid the occurrence of inappropriate and discriminatory practices that could result in

unequal access to jobs for women and men.¹⁵ .

¹⁵ Attention should be drawn here to the already described situation of the recruitment of two men for positions filled by women who have gone on maternity/parental leave.

The selection and recruitment of male and female staff should be transparent and well documented, including recording the reasons for accepting or not accepting a specific candidate. Documentation should be archived. A minimum of two people, ideally a man and a woman, should attend the interview to reduce the possibility of personal bias. The male and female staff responsible for recruitment should be trained in gender equality issues.

In the evaluation of the indicator, the rules that were heard in the focus groups were available: there is a selection procedure where the head of the unit and his/her deputy are present and both express their opinion on whether the candidate will be accepted or not. On the other hand, it was reported by staff that they had an interview directly with the head of the organisation and elsewhere there was a multi-phase assessment centre.

Adaptation processes and SIT Plzeň

The aim of the adaptation process is primarily to make the new employee's integration as smooth as possible, and it also includes an evaluation and assessment of whether the employee has met the objectives set for the adaptation during the probationary period and is therefore competent to continue in the position.

No document summarising the onboarding process was submitted to the Inquiry. Information on the existence of a comprehensive onboarding process was verified in focus groups. According to the representative group, no one pays attention to people in an organised way after onboarding, rather information is passed on randomly as the employee comes into contact with it. There was also a complaint that induction takes up a lot of the managers' time and therefore he/she often does not do it himself/herself but assigns more experienced colleagues. A good practice of SIT Pilsen in certain departments is to work in pairs that change randomly. This way the pairs exchange experiences, listen to each other and give each other feedback. Despite the initial resistance to this practice, everyone got used to it and it works very well not only in training newcomers.

According to information from the HR department, as part of the onboarding process, the new employee must undergo mandatory training, such as OSH, etc.

Career progression/evaluation

Career development should be available to every worker regardless of gender or marital status. To develop people successfully, it is advisable not only to establish process frameworks such as regular performance reviews and workplace relationships, setting development goals, but also to budget for additional training and development for all employees. The whole process should then be characterised by transparency and accessibility. At the same time, the cost of career development should be evaluated by tracking both the individual's personal growth and the goals of the entire company in relation to the costs incurred. The preferred approach is to answer the following questions:

- What needs does SIT Pilsen have? (Expertise, pedagogical activities, THP activities)

- What are the needs of the workers in each position?

- We have workers, who have by could achieve the necessary positions if the right conditions are set?
- What funds do we have and in what proportion do we want to invest them?
- Do we have a regular, transparent and friendly evaluation of goal achievement?

A review of available documents revealed that regular monthly appraisal interviews should be held, primarily to evaluate the past month's performance and set tasks for the following month. It is not only linked to the remuneration system, but it is also an opportunity to talk about 'anything', including setting the individual's development plan. The criteria for the award is completion of the set work tasks and achievement of at least level three on the six-point performance appraisal scale below¹⁶ :

Employee category	Performance evaluation	Performance description
Staff exceeding targets	6	The individual's performance exceeds the requirements of the specified major tasks over the long term
	5	The individual's performance in most cases exceeds the requirements of the specified major tasks
Employees achieving set targets	4	The individual's performance achieved, in several cases exceeded , the requirements of the specified major tasks
	3	The individual's performance achieves the requirements of the specified major tasks
Underperforming staff	2	The individual's performance in several cases partially achieved the specified significant tasks
	1	The individual's performance does not meet important tasks set

However, interviews with employees show that the evaluation process varies by department and is mostly in the form of feedback. Information for evaluation is obtained from the Tasks etc. application, from customers, from managers and colleagues. Some departments have evaluations regularly (monthly), some irregularly. In the focus groups, it was mentioned that the rewards are set to match the table salaries to make the organization attractive to job seekers, thus some managers do not work with them motivationally, but remain more or less the same and thus do not fulfill their mission. However, it is good practice to

¹⁶ taken from the SIT Plzeň document "Remuneration and Motivation of Employees"

Once a month, sit down with each team member for an hour to discuss anything other than work issues. As was expressed by the respondents, this not only builds trust in the manager and relationships in the workplace, it also creates a space for the employee to say what they enjoy and what bothers them.

However, according to the information given in the focus groups, even in departments where the evaluation is not carried out on a monthly basis, there is such an atmosphere that if an employee is worried about something, he/she can come to the manager at any time. Similarly, if an employee needs to be reassured that he/she is doing his/her job well, he/she can go to the manager and talk about it. However, if appraisal conversations are set up on a regular basis, these situations can be avoided because everyone will have a clear idea of what job performance they are giving.

Formal evaluation takes place once a year in all departments, as confirmed by all interviewees. Here there is even more room to talk about possible career progression or growth. According to the representative(s), SIT Plzeň is an organisation that supports further education, there is also a case where flexible working hours have been allowed due to the completion of higher education. The prevailing feeling is that male/female employees have the opportunity for career development and know cases of transition between departments. Despite the complications that these transitions bring (finding and training a new person, retraining the one who is transitioning), it was expressed in the groups that "if he/she is watching, it is better for us if he/she stays in the company, as long as he/she is a quality worker." Similarly, rep(s) described feeling that they would definitely be accommodated if they came up with a suggestion for e.g. one-to-one training, courses or study trips. However, there was also a sigh that although there would be support from the company for training, there is no time to go there because there is a lot of work.

An area that would be worthy of internal analysis is the area of opportunities for individual and group learning. According to the findings of the focus groups, individual and group learning is available. However, the rules and costs are not quantified and monitored.

There is one area that could be better analysed, and that is the area of succession and the process of 'nurturing' future leaders. There is no set rule in this area.

Retention

Retention, or employee retention, is a big topic, especially for fast-growing companies. The importance of the topic is growing as the number of vacancies increases and the number of talent available on the job market decreases. It is common for positions to be created within HR departments to focus on employee satisfaction.

As part of the investigation, the audit team received the results of a survey conducted by an external company in the first quarter of 2022. This survey was one of the first to be conducted in SIT Plzeň. The results of the survey indicate that SIT Plzeň is exceeding expectations and meeting market best practice.

The audit investigation confirmed the results, yet the audit team believes there are areas

that could be further addressed (see recommendations). The audit team also verified that

An exposed group of male and female respondents are very loyal and satisfied with their current employer.

Departures

If a company has a high turnover rate, it can be assumed that many of the company's processes and procedures do not meet the standards that the current generation of diversity employees would expect or demand. At the same time, the labour market situation is burdened with large differences in expectations between different generations. The boomers will have different habits and requirements and the Gen Z workforce will have different expectations. To meet all demands means a high degree of flexibility for employers, and it is common that this flexibility has its limits. It is therefore good for a company to understand which group of workers is more attractive and which is not.

As part of the investigation, the audit team met with a selection of employees from which it can be inferred for whom SIT Plzeň is an attractive employer. It was also verified that SIT Plzeň attracts more stable employees.

Figures on departures were not supplied, but according to comments received in the focus groups, the most common reason for leaving is financial constraints on remuneration or going on maternity/parental leave. As departures are not a concern for SIT Plzeň, it was not necessary to investigate this area in more depth.

Suggestions for improvement

- **Recruitment**

- Consistent compliance with gender-correct language, which is required not only by Czech legislation. As part of the measure, a document can be prepared, for example "staff minimum" where to insert a sample advert.
- Unification of the selection process - led by the Head of Department and another male/female associate (ideally gender-balanced representation in the selection process). It is good practice at SIT to pre-select candidates by the HR department to determine compensation, benefits and flexibility requirements. This is followed by an interview with a team leader or team member. Which corresponds (with variations) to current established practices. Here a more proactive approach is expected from the HR department, which should not play "only" an administrative role, but should move into the HR department.
- Finalize the interview record. The output should be a spreadsheet or other type of record clearly stating the reasons for acceptance or non-acceptance. And this documentation will be archived.
- Another area that deserves more attention is the process of adaptation of new colleagues. The process is not uniform across the company and should therefore be standardised. For example, a uniform

A document where the designated person would record the progress of onboarding, including the established procedure for completing the probationary period.

- Introduce an assessment interview at the end of the adaptation process to obtain feedback on the learning and integration process.

- **Careers**

- As part of the professionalisation of the field, we recommend introducing and standardising regular career appraisals, recommended on an annual basis with motivational targets. The appraisal need not be formal, but certainly a development plan for the next year should emerge from the conversation. By evaluation here we mean not the usual monthly feedback, but a comprehensive discussion in the form of 1 : 1 on motivations, goal setting, criteria on goal achievement and identification of needs leading to goal achievement. Involvement of the mentoring method is appropriate.
- The management team should dedicate space for training in communication, feedback and other more professional HR practices.
- It is advisable to start working on a succession system and nurturing future talent.

- **Retention**

- A good practice for 2022 is to survey the employed. This practice is recommended to follow the same format and be conducted on an annual basis. A variation that we would recommend implementing is the remuneration blast, which was not included in the current survey but has been identified as an area that influences potential leavers.

- **Departures**

- The turnover in SIT Plzeň is low, therefore there is no perceived need to change the established procedure. Formally, everything is in place, however, the audit team recommends to standardise the exit interview process to determine the reasons for leaving.

Equal representation of women and men

Equal representation, or at least striving to achieve it, is one of the basic requirements for the equalisation of inequalities. There are many fields where equal representation (whether of women or men) cannot be achieved because society has historically been set up in a way that does not support equal representation and favours a particular group. A number of areas are affected by unequal representation (IT, finance, administration, education and many others) and correcting this situation is intractable in the short term. However, the current requirements to change this situation are defined and every

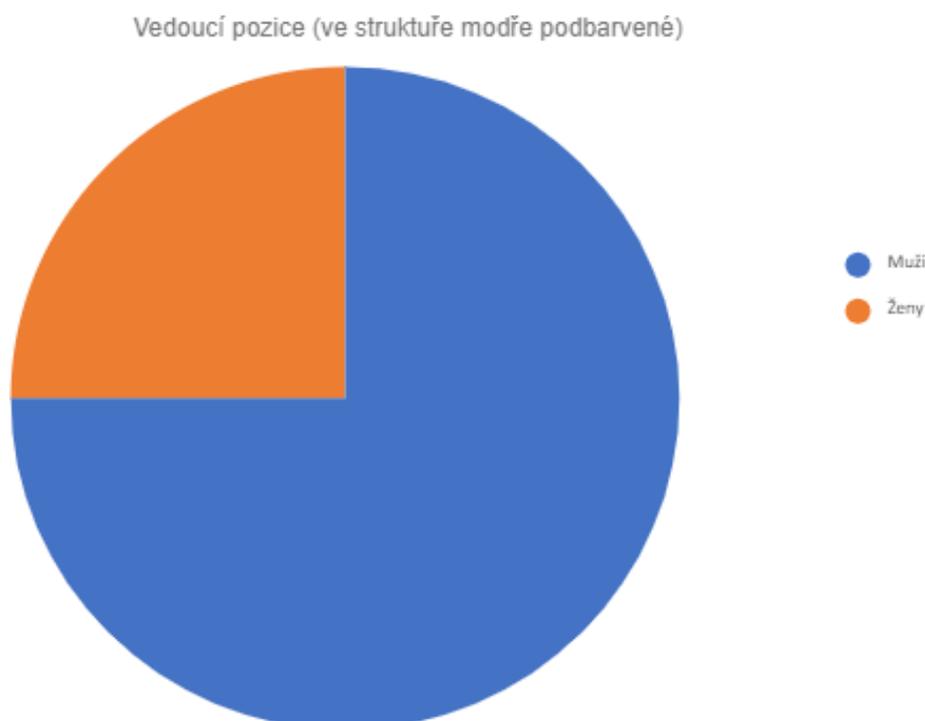
company or individual should strive to correct the current situation.

The audit team is aware that it is not within the power of SIT Pilsen to change certain tendencies in society or to interfere, for example, with the rights of parents and influence the future career of their children, but we would like to point out that SIT Pilsen has the opportunity to be an example of positive practice and that there are ways to influence local society in the long term.

Women make up 29.2% of the total number of SIT Plzeň employees, the ratio of women in managerial positions is 25%. In this respect, the structure corresponds to the minimum future requirements of the European Commission for the representation of women in managerial positions (21%).

It should be noted, however, that women work mainly in administrative positions (payroll, accounting, contact centre, HR), where they also hold management positions. The only more technical department is the Robotics Centre, which is both managed and fully staffed by women. Even this could be seen as partly typical, as their agenda is primarily pedagogy and education.

	Men	Women
Employed	85	35
Management of SIT Plzeň	1	0
Management positions (other than Director of the organisation)	14	5



Organisational structure of SIT Plzeň

The company has a relatively clear and simple organizational structure with one director, divided into eight departments, five of which are clearly technical (Applications, Infrastructure, Development, Drones, User Support) and one THP department (Back office). The Applications, User Support and Back office departments are further subdivided into sub-departments; each department has a clearly defined head. In terms of staff structure, there are departments where there are only men (Infrastructure, Support, Drones), only women (Back office, Robotics Centre), where the ratio of men to women is balanced (SIT Port 3:4, Development 4:2) and where men predominate - Applications 30:6. Interestingly, in the User Support department, the two female departures on maternity leave were both replaced by a male. This double change could indicate that the company has resigned itself to empowering women.

Suggestions for improvement

- It would be advisable, when filling senior positions, to reach out more intensively and motivate women to apply. If successful, it should be consciously communicated that there is a woman in the top job. SIT Plzeň has few promotional and communication opportunities, given its position in the region.

Reconciling work and private life

The concept of reconciling private and family life can have different meanings. Work-family balance, or better, work-life balance, is nowadays seen as an imperative of human resource management. One important area that affects work-life balance is the setting of working time, both in terms of hours of work and the amount of hours worked. Typically, the setting of flexible working hours, support for personal development and time for mental restart are monitored.

Reconciliation at SIT Plzeň

The possibility of reconciling work and private life is viewed positively by both parents and childless workers. During the focus groups it was expressed that SIT Plzeň (except for some shift positions) allows and respects personal needs. A number of male/female respondents also mentioned that they prefer to go to the office where they feel comfortable and where they can bring their children in acute cases, which was very positively appreciated. Some, on the other hand, lamented that home-office did not remain as a benefit after the pandemic:

"I was a bit disappointed that the option was left only in the extreme middle... I don't know about everybody, but I think it's proven to work from home, because the work has to be done, whether you're at home or in the office. And so that's honestly a little disappointing to me that it's only left when there's no other option."¹⁷

In other departments, however, home-office as a benefit continues to operate. More transparency would certainly be helped by clearer rules across all departments.

¹⁷ heard at the focus groups on 28.4.2022

There were also words about the injustice to the childless, that parents are more accommodating. However, this sounds rather positive for the company, which recognises that parents have other responsibilities and allows them to get their work done at any time of the day.

Suggestions for improvement

Given that ST Plzen has managed the demands of the pandemic and lockdowns, the audit team recommends that consideration be given to retaining a more relaxed schedule, for example, allowing 3 days in the office and 2 days at the home office.

Equal pay

Equal pay is one of the sensitive topics that is not widely supported in the Czech Republic. In international surveys, the Czech Republic has long been below the EU average in terms of the gender pay gap, to the disadvantage of women.¹⁸

The audit team was not allowed to analyse the difference in remuneration as part of the investigation. We therefore base our analysis only on the results of the questionnaire survey. However, the team was provided with the governing documents, which it found to be free from defects.

Suggestions for improvement

The research team would recommend an in-depth analysis of equal pay. Attention should also be paid to the type of employment contract, their accumulation and chaining, and possible opportunities within grants and projects.

Company culture and climate

Organizational culture is a multifaceted, broadly defined concept. For the purposes of this analysis, organizational culture includes the shared values, assumptions, attitudes, and norms that prevail in an organization. That is, what attitudes and patterns of behavior are considered acceptable at SIT, how power asymmetric interpersonal relationships (supervisor/subordinate) are set up, what the communication system looks like, and how the system for dealing with negative phenomena in the workplace is set up, all from a gender perspective. The physical working environment and conditions themselves also shape the organisational culture.

Gender-correct language and the visibility of women in communication also fall within the area assessed. SIT is an exemplary company in this area. The website has text that is free of transgressions; photographs and images are balanced and show men and women in completely non-stereotypical positions. The communication, the atmosphere and the working environment do not suggest that SIT has serious problems. Neither did anything come up in the focus groups that indicated problems with gender equality; rather, there is also a desire among managers to employ more women, for example, for their communication qualities. Diverse teams are considered to be more dynamic.¹⁹

¹⁸ In 2020, the GPG would be 16.4%. Source:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender_pay_gap_statistics

¹⁹ heard at the focus group 28.4.2022

The employee survey shows a high level of satisfaction with the employer, employees feel supported and interested by their supervisors, their opinions are heard and they feel they are important parts of the organisation. This survey also shows the aforementioned phenomenon of inconsistency in staff appraisal and subsequent development; otherwise it does not reveal any significant scope for development.

Another area that we targeted is the atmosphere at the workplace and the possible occurrence of undesirable phenomena (harassment, sexual harassment, bossing, discrimination). During the focus groups, several experiences with similar phenomena were reported, but always from previous jobs, not at the SIT Plzeň workplace. The work rules define the procedure for reporting such phenomena. The procedure is logical and transparent and employees know it or can deduce it logically.

What SIT PLzeň lacks is a person in charge of the area required by the HR Award. The area is not just a formal ticking off of completed milestones, but a deeper conceptual strategy that has the potential to enrich SIT Pilsen not only in the area of HR, but also in the area of project submissions and innovation.

Suggestions for improvement

- As part of shifting the culture of the organisation, we recommend incorporating gender-correct language into working documents (at least the employment contract).
- Similarly, even if the problem was not identified in the investigation, we recommend the development of a more detailed ethical framework, including the possibility of filing a complaint about real (or perceived) discrimination or unfair treatment.
- It is recommended that the topic of gender and the horizontal topic of equal opportunities for women and men be further addressed. Workshops and seminars or facilitation activities focusing on the gender impact of particular areas and projects may be an appropriate activity. For example, to take gender into account in the next internal survey.

Gender in science and education

The theme of gender in science and education is one of the five recommended themes for the Equality Roadmap (GEP) as an eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe.

based on the documents submitted and all the interviews, it appears that SIT Plzeň is not consciously working with the concept, but neither is it fighting it. Which is in fact a positive finding.

Should the company wish to address the topic in the future, the following practices are key for the area:

- composition of research and working teams
- research content (extension to gender identity of the target user) project evaluation and its gender impacts

- communication and promotion of the project and outputs
- monitoring and gender statistics
- international cooperation, sharing and adopting good practice

Suggestions for improvement

- The audit team recommends a review of the implementation of the horizontal themes, which include gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Considering the activities and projects of SIT Plzeň, a similar discussion on gender impacts could also provide interesting suggestions for the project.

List of recommendations

For a detailed list, see separate document.

Nejdůležitější doporučení pro splnění GEP	
01	Institucionalizovaná agenda diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pověřená osoba• časové, personální a finanční zdroje• školení v oblasti akademických i neakademických pracovníků
02	Monitoring a sběr dat <ul style="list-style-type: none">• genderově diverzifikovaná data• zvážení změny technického šetření - personalistika, adresáře, rodiče• zapracovat i do studentských anket a průzkumů
03	Revize a aktualizace klíčových dokumentů <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nábor• onboarding• etický kodex• kariérní proces
04	Školení a vzdělávání <ul style="list-style-type: none">• personální oddělení• vedoucí• věda a výzkum

List of analysed documents Ů

See separate document.