

Reflective survey: your experience in a scientific organization

This survey by the International Science Council (ISC), the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), and the Standing Committee for Gender Equality in Science (SCGES) explores how scientists participate in scientific organizations over the course of their careers - including experiences of access, benefits and opportunities, career evolution, and organizational culture. Your perspective will contribute to a broader understanding of how scientific organizations function and evolve globally.

Note: In this survey, “scientific organization” refers to organizations that bring scientists together to advance science, support the scientific community, or contribute to science policy. These may operate at national or international level and include organizations with either individual or institutional membership. Such organizations include national academies of science, medicine, or engineering; international scientific unions; disciplinary societies; professional associations; young academies; and international science networks (e.g. the Global Young Academy). It does not include your employer (e.g. university or research institute).

Important: Many scientists are engaged in more than one scientific organization. For the purpose of this survey, please answer with reference to one specific organization — the one you are currently most involved with, or the one you identify with most strongly. If you feel it is important to reflect experiences from another organization, please indicate this clearly in the open text fields.

For any comment or feedback about the survey, please contact Léa Nacache, at [lea.nacache\(at\)council.science](mailto:lea.nacache@council.science).

Section 1: Personal characteristics

What is your gender?

Woman

Man

Prefer to self-describe (open text)

Prefer not to say

What is your age group?

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55–64

65+

What is your nationality? *If you hold dual or multiple citizenships, please list them all.*

Where do you currently live?

Please indicate whether you identify with any of the following groups or experiences (select all that apply).

Belong to an ethnic, racial, or national minority group

Belong to an Indigenous group

Identify as LGBTIQ+

Person with a disability

Refugee or displaced person

From a conflict-affected area

From a climate-affected area

Other (please specify)

None of the above

Prefer not to say

Have you ever had a spouse or long-term partner? (Please select one that best applies to you.)

Yes – I currently have a spouse or long-term partner

Yes – I have had a partner in the past, but not currently

No

Prefer not to say

If yes, what is (or was) your partner's or spouse's main occupation? (If you have had more than one long-term partner, please respond in relation to the one most relevant to your career experience.)

Employed in science or academia

Employed outside science or academia

Self-employed

Not currently employed

Retired'

Prefer not to say'

Other (please specify)

Do you consider your partner's career to have influenced your own career decisions or opportunities? (If you have had more than one long-term partner, please respond in relation to the one most relevant to your career experience.)

Yes

No

Not sure

Prefer not to say

If yes, please briefly explain how.

If no, please briefly explain why.

Do you have children?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

If yes, how many children do you have?

Please indicate how many children you have in each of the following age ranges:

0-5

6-12

13-18

19+

Section 2: Professional background

What is your primary occupation? (e.g. biologist, sociologist, ...)

What is your current function or job title? (e.g. Associate Professor, Senior Researcher, ...)

What are your three most important roles in your current position? (e.g. PhD supervisor, grant coordinator, peer reviewer)

What type of institution or organization do you work in?

University

Public research institute

Private company

Non-profit/NGO

Other (open text)

What is your primary discipline?

1. Natural Sciences

1.1 Mathematics

1.2 Computer and information sciences

1.3 Physical sciences

1.4 Chemical sciences

1.5 Earth and related environmental sciences

1.6 Biological sciences

1.7 Other natural sciences

2. Engineering and Technology

- 2.1 Civil engineering
- 2.2 Electrical engineering, electronic engineering, information engineering
- 2.3 Mechanical engineering
- 2.4 Chemical engineering
- 2.5 Materials engineering
- 2.6 Medical engineering
- 2.7 Environmental engineering
- 2.8 Environmental biotechnology
- 2.9 Industrial biotechnology
- 2.10 Nano-technology
- 2.11 Other engineering and technologies

3. Medical and Health Sciences

- 3.1 Basic medicine
- 3.2 Clinical medicine
- 3.3 Health sciences
- 3.4 Medical biotechnology
- 3.5 Other medical sciences

4. Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences

- 4.1 Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries
- 4.2 Animal and dairy science
- 4.3 Veterinary science
- 4.4 Agricultural biotechnology
- 4.5 Other agricultural sciences

5. Social Sciences

- 5.1 Psychology
- 5.2 Economics and business
- 5.3 Education
- 5.4 Sociology
- 5.5 Law
- 5.6 Political science
- 5.7 Social and economic geography
- 5.8 Media and communications
- 5.9 Other social sciences

6. Humanities and the Arts

- 6.1 History and archaeology
- 6.2 Languages and literature
- 6.3 Philosophy, ethics, and religion
- 6.4 Arts (arts, history of arts, performing arts, music)
- 6.5 Other humanities

What is your main field or area of expertise?

What is your current career stage?

- Doctoral researcher or PhD candidate
- Early-career (within 5 years post-PhD or equivalent)
- Mid-career (5–15 years post-PhD or equivalent)

Senior (more than 15 years post-PhD or equivalent)

Emeritus/retired

What is the type of your current contract?

Permanent

Temporary or fixed-term

Freelance or consultant

Not currently employed

Retired

Other (please specify)

What is your current working time arrangement?

Full-time

Part-time (by choice)

Part-time (not by choice)

Other (please specify)

Where did your professional career in science begin?

Academia

Public research

Private sector

Industry

Non-profit/NGO

Other (open text)

Did any mentor(s) influence your decision to pursue this path? (Mentors are individuals who provided you with direct support or guidance.)

Yes

No

If yes, what was the gender of the most influential mentor?

Woman

Man

Other (please specify)

Prefer not to say

Please briefly explain how this support was instrumental in your choice of a science career.

Did any role model(s) influence your career path? (Role models are individuals you looked up to or were inspired by, even without direct interaction.)

Yes

No

If yes, who was/were this/these role model(s), and in what way did they inspire you?

Have you studied in more than one country or region?

Yes

No

What level(s) of education did you complete abroad? (Select all that apply)

Bachelor's or equivalent

Master's or equivalent

Doctorate (PhD or equivalent)

Postdoctoral research

Other (open text)

Have you worked in more than one country or region during your career?

Yes

No

If yes, in how many countries have you worked (for at least 6 months)?

Please briefly describe how these international experiences have shaped your scientific career or professional outlook.

Have you received any professional awards or recognitions?

Yes

No

If yes, please indicate the main awards and recognitions received.

How many times did you apply or get nominated before receiving your first award or recognition?

Please briefly describe your experience with the process.

Have you taken time off in your career?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

If yes, what was the total duration of your career break(s)?

Less than 6 months

6 months to 1 year

1–2 years

More than 2 years

More than 4 years

Prefer not to say

What were the main reasons for taking time off?

Parental or caregiving responsibilities

Health-related reasons

Lack of funding or contract not renewed

Personal development or sabbatical

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify)

If you wish, please briefly explain your reasons or circumstances.

Section 3: Involvement in scientific organizations

Are you or have you ever been actively involved in a scientific organization?

Yes

No

Please list the main scientific organization(s) you are affiliated with or participate(d) in (e.g., academies, unions, societies).

For the purpose of this survey, please indicate the one organization you will refer to in your answers (the one you are most involved with or identify with the most):

What type of scientific organization is it?

National academy of sciences

National academy of medicine

National academy of engineering

Regional or global academy (e.g., African Academy of Sciences, TWAS)

International scientific union or disciplinary federation

National professional society or disciplinary association

Multidisciplinary science council or platform

Young academy

Informal scientific network or initiative

Other (please specify)

Not sure

Is the organization primarily:

Discipline-based (e.g., a union or professional society in your field)

Non-discipline-based (e.g., national academy, multidisciplinary council)

Not sure

Other (please specify)

If the organization is non-discipline-based, please specify the field or expertise under which you were nominated or affiliated.

At what career stage did you first become involved?

- Student (Bachelor's, Master's or equivalent)
- Doctoral researcher or PhD candidate
- Early-career (within 5 years post-PhD or equivalent)
- Mid-career (5–15 years post-PhD or equivalent)
- Senior (more than 15 years post-PhD or equivalent)
- Other (please specify)

How did you become involved?

- I applied on my own initiative
- I was nominated
- I was invited
- I was elected
- Other (open text)

Were you encouraged or supported by anyone to pursue involvement?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If yes, who encouraged or supported you? Select all that apply.

- A senior colleague
- A mentor
- A peer or friend
- A supervisor
- A family member
- Other (please specify)

If you were encouraged or supported, what was the gender of the person who played the most significant role?

- Woman
- Man
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say

How important was this encouragement in your decision to get involved?

- Not important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important

Very important
Essential

Would you like to share anything further about the factors that influenced your involvement in scientific organizations?

What roles have you held?

Ordinary member (not actively involved)
Working group or task force member
Committee member
Board member
Advisor or expert contributor
Leadership role (e.g. President, Vice-Chair)
Other (please specify)

If you've sought leadership or governance roles within a scientific organization, how would you describe the process?

How much time do you currently (or did you previously) dedicate to your involvement in this organization? (Select the option that best reflects your average time commitment).

A few hours per month
Half a day to 1 day per month
2–3 days per month
4–5 days per month (about 1 day per week)
6–10 days per month
More than 10 days per month
It varies significantly over time
I'm not sure

Is (or was) your involvement in the organization voluntary or compensated?

Entirely voluntary (unpaid)
Partially compensated (e.g. travel covered)
Fully compensated (e.g. contract, salary, paid role)
Not sure

Would you like to comment on the time you dedicated or the compensation you received for your involvement (if any)?

What motivated you to join the organization?

Did you encounter any barriers when attempting to join this organization?

Yes

No
Not sure
Prefer not to say

If yes, please describe the barriers you encountered.

If you experienced barriers, did they affect your motivation to stay engaged or your level of participation in the organization?

Section 4: Participation benefits and barriers in scientific organizations

What do you value most about your involvement in scientific organizations?

To what extent has being a member of a scientific organization provided you with access to opportunities that would otherwise not have been available to you?

Not at all
To a small extent
To some extent
To a large extent
To a very large extent
Not sure

Please describe the kind of opportunities you are referring to.

Have you ever declined or missed an opportunity offered by the organizations?

Yes
No

If yes, why?

Has the organization provided any support to facilitate your engagement or contributions?

Yes
No
Not sure

If yes, what types of support have you received?

Mentoring or coaching
Leadership or governance training
Scientific communication or public speaking training
Support from affinity or peer groups (e.g., for early-career researchers, women, regional groups)

Access to professional or disciplinary networks
Opportunities for collaboration or team-based activities
Financial support related to your involvement (e.g., travel grants, stipends)
Other (please specify)

To what extent does your scientific organization offer clear and accessible opportunities for growth or progression (e.g., in leadership, recognition, or visibility)?

Not at all
To a small extent
To some extent
To a large extent
To a very large extent
Not sure

Please describe any opportunities you've observed or experienced.

Have you encountered any barriers to progressing or being recognized in your scientific organization?

Yes
No
Not sure
Prefer not to say

If yes, please describe the barriers.

Have you had opportunities to attend scientific events, congresses, or conferences as part of your engagement with this organization?

Yes
No
Not applicable

Have you ever declined or missed such opportunities due to constraints?

Yes
No
Prefer not to say

If yes, what were the main reasons? (Select all that apply)

Lack of funding or travel support
Care responsibilities (e.g. children, elders)
Lack of institutional support or encouragement
Visa or travel restriction
Health-related limitations
Lack of inclusion at events
Lack of safety at events

Scheduling conflicts (e.g. events overlapping with major personal commitments)

Other (please specify)

Have you observed or experienced any gender-based differences in access to or visibility at such events?

Yes, in my own experience

Yes, in how others were treated

No

Not sure

Prefer not to say

If yes, could you describe the situation or what you observed?

Does the organization provide any of the following to facilitate inclusive participation in events?

Childcare or family support for conference attendees

Travel funding

Hybrid or virtual participation option

Codes of conduct or inclusion guidelines for events

None of the above

Not sure

Overall, has your involvement in scientific organizations benefited your career?

Not at all

To a small extent

To some extent

To a large extent

To a very large extent

Not sure

Please briefly explain your answer.

Section 5: Inclusion, diversity, and organizational culture

How would you describe the way people work and interact within your scientific organization? (You may wish to comment on aspects such as collaboration, inclusion, hierarchy, decision-making, leadership style, or communication.)

Thinking about the organization's leadership, committees, and events - how well do you feel the following types of diversity are reflected?

| Type of diversity | Not at all | Small extent | Some extent | Large extent | Very large extent | Not sure | N/A |
|---|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|----------|-----|
| Different scientific disciplines | | | | | | | |
| Different regions or countries | | | | | | | |
| Different types of institutions (e.g. large universities, smaller institutions, research centers) | | | | | | | |
| Career stages (e.g. early-career, senior) | | | | | | | |
| Gender | | | | | | | |
| Other underrepresented groups (e.g., based on ethnicity, disability, language) | | | | | | | |

What helps - or limits - the diversity and inclusion you observe in your organization?

Have you benefited from peer support, collaborative teams, or peer/affinity networks within the organization (e.g., for early-career researchers, women, or regional groups)?

Yes

No

Not sure

Please describe the kind of support or collaboration you received, and how it affected your experience.

Have you observed any patterns in how support or collaboration is shared within teams or networks (e.g., based on gender, seniority, discipline, or other characteristics)?

Yes

No

Not sure

Prefer not to say

If 'Yes', please describe the pattern(s) you've observed.

To what extent do you feel that people engaged in the organization are fairly recognized for their contributions?

Not at all

To a small extent

To some extent

To a large extent

To a very large extent

Not sure

Please describe how visibility or recognition is given in your organization — and whether you’ve observed any patterns in who tends to receive it.

Section 6: Policies and practices

For the purpose of this survey, please answer with reference to one specific organization — the one you are currently most involved with, or the one you identify with most strongly. If you feel it is important to reflect experiences from another organization, please indicate this clearly in the open text fields.

Are you aware of inclusion or equity policies in your organization?

Yes

No

Not sure

If yes, please describe or name any policies you are aware of.

If no, please share what you think is missing.

How are new members or leaders typically selected within the organization?

In your view, how transparent are these selection processes?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Very

Extremely

Prefer not to say

Please share any experience that illustrates your view on transparency.

In your opinion, what are the main barriers—if any—to achieving equity within the organization?

Section 7: Experiences of discrimination, harassment and marginalization

Note: *The following questions explore experiences that may have negatively affected your sense of inclusion, safety, or visibility in scientific organizations. Your answers will remain anonymous and will only be used to inform a broader understanding of how scientific environments can be made more inclusive and respectful.*

Have you personally experienced any of the following within your scientific organization? (Select all that apply)

Verbal harassment

Sexual harassment

Discrimination based on gender

Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, or religion

Discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity

Discrimination based on disability

Micro-aggressions (e.g. repeated subtle slights dismissive remarks)

Being overlooked for roles nominations or leadership opportunities

Having your contributions ignored downplayed or credited to others

Facing higher expectations or scrutiny compared to peer

Being asked to do invisible labour (e.g. note-taking, organizing) without recognition

Being perceived as a “diversity” appointment rather than a qualified expert

Experiencing resistance when advocating for gender or equity issues

Other (please specify)

None of the above

If you selected any of the above, how frequently have these experiences occurred?

Never

Once

A few times

Frequently

Prefer not to say

If experiences varied across types (e.g., frequent micro-aggressions but rare formal discrimination), feel free to specify:

What was the impact of these experiences on your engagement in the organization?

None

Little

Some

High

Very high

If it had an impact, could you describe what happened and how it affected you or your engagement in the organization?

Did you report the incident(s) to anyone within the organization?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

If yes, was the response adequate?

Yes

No

Not sure

Prefer not to say

If no, why not?

Do you feel the organization has a safe and trusted mechanism to report misconduct?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Don't know

Have you witnessed discriminatory, harassing, or exclusionary behaviour directed at others in the organization?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

If yes, how did you respond?

What changes, safeguards, or cultural shifts would you recommend to help prevent discrimination and exclusion in scientific organizations?

Section 8: Final reflections and feedback

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience in scientific organizations?

Thank you for completing this survey.

Your responses will help us better understand how scientific organizations function and how participation, recognition, and inclusion can be improved. All responses will be treated confidentially and analysed anonymously. If you have any final thoughts or suggestions about this survey, please feel free to include them below.

Do you have any feedback about this survey?