



Funding for EcoLab: Women, gender and upskilling context 19/01/2026

The core staff of the laboratory consists of three women with strong technical and professional backgrounds. They possess deep expertise in chemistry, microscopy, and geology; however, their skills are becoming underutilized due to structural changes in the labour market. The industrial enterprises where they previously worked are currently optimizing costs and shutting down non-core laboratory activities.

They are based in Kryvyi Rih, where the local labour market offers very limited opportunities for specialists of this profile. When a large enterprise reduces operations or closes, there are often no alternative employers in the city able to absorb qualified chemists and geologists, leaving highly skilled professionals with nowhere to work in their field.

In parallel, Ukraine lacks specialists capable of identifying asbestos in materials, which creates a critical skills gap in an area directly linked to public health and environmental safety.

Targeted additional training, built upon their solid scientific foundations, would allow these women to return to the labour market in qualified positions, instead of being forced into low-skilled but more readily available jobs such as retail workers or cleaners. Without such support, there is a real risk of losing valuable expertise through long-term deskilling.

This approach enables us to preserve intellectual capital and, through focused and highly specialized training, to develop high-level professionals in a field where qualified experts are urgently needed.

All three women are single and two of them have children. They are 26, 41, and 52 respectively. Supporting their professional reintegration contributes not only to individual empowerment but also to broader social and economic resilience.