

Inside Life Science Minds

POLAND 2025/2026

Salaries and Working Conditions
in the Life Science Industry

2025/26 Poland Edition





About ExecMind

ExecMind is a Life Sciences executive search and strategic talent advisory firm partnering with founders, boards, and investors to build leadership and scientific teams that accelerate growth, de-risk execution, and increase enterprise value.

We deliver executive and board search for biotech, biopharma, and MedTech companies across Europe, with a focus on C-level, board, and critical R&D leadership hires in venture-backed, scaling, and innovation-driven organisations.

Our work supports company creation, scale-up, portfolio value creation, and leadership upgrades at key inflexion points from early-stage build-outs to late-stage expansion.

Founded in 2015, ExecMind operates exclusively within the Life Sciences sector. We combine executive search rigour with deep domain expertise in biotech, biopharma and medtech innovation. Our team brings first-hand industry and scientific experience, enabling high-precision assessment of leadership, technical credibility, and execution capability.

Beyond search, we advise on talent strategy, leadership benchmarking, succession planning, and market intelligence, helping investors and management teams make high-stakes hiring decisions with confidence. ExecMind is a long-term talent partner to innovation-led companies and investment-backed ventures where leadership quality is a core driver of performance and valuation.



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The report does not constitute legal, tax, financial, or business advice, nor does it represent a recommendation regarding compensation policies, employment decisions, or human resources strategies. The information contained in the report should not be relied upon as the sole or decisive basis for any business, personnel, or financial decisions.

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The data, salary data, conclusions and comments presented in the report are indicative and statistical in nature. Actual compensation levels may differ materially depending on industry, role, scope of responsibilities, location, company size, market conditions, and individual contractual arrangements.

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1. About the Report

This report delivers **the first comprehensive compensation and workplace analysis of R&D, operations and commercial roles in the Polish Life Science market**. Despite the sector's strategic importance to biotechnology, healthcare, and scientific innovation, publicly available data on salary trends and employment conditions have been remarkably limited. This lack of transparency poses challenges for leaders navigating talent acquisition, retention, and workforce planning.

To address this gap, we undertook a structured nationwide survey designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights. The instrument combined open-ended questions with single- and multiple-choice formats, ensuring a robust, multidimensional view of the talent landscape.

A total of **190 professionals across Poland participated**, with full anonymity guaranteed to ensure honest and accurate input. Demographic information presented in this report reflects respondents' self-identified data.

Data was collected during Q3 2025, with outreach supported through dedicated distribution, social media communication, and the ExecMind website to ensure broad and diverse representation.

All responses were thoroughly validated, with incomplete or inconsistent entries removed to strengthen analytical reliability. Subsequent statistical processing, performed in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), generated descriptive insights into employment conditions and emerging workforce patterns across the sector.

This report provides leaders with the first data-backed benchmark of compensation and working environments in Polish Life Science equipping organisations with actionable intelligence to support strategic talent decisions in an increasingly competitive market.

“

At ExecMind, we support organisations across Europe in building strong, future-ready scientific teams, and we see every day how the absence of transparent market data contributes to challenges in talent acquisition, retention, and strategic workforce planning.

Through conversations with candidates, hiring managers, and industry leaders, one message consistently emerged: the Polish market needs impartial, data-driven insights.

This gap not only slows decision-making but also limits the sector's ability to compete internationally for top scientific talent.

This report was needed because the Polish Life Science sector, despite its dynamic growth, scientific potential, and increasing global visibility, has lacked a credible, publicly available benchmark for compensation and working conditions in R&D and business roles.

For these reasons, we initiated the first comprehensive analysis of salaries and workplace conditions in Polish Life Science R&D and business.

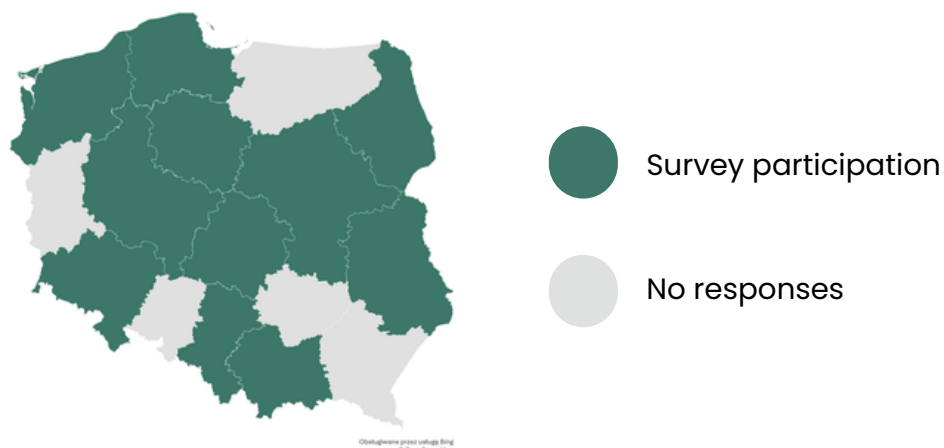
Karolina Jarosińska - CEO and Founder at ExecMind

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2. Respondent Profile

2.1. COMPANY CHARACTERISTICS

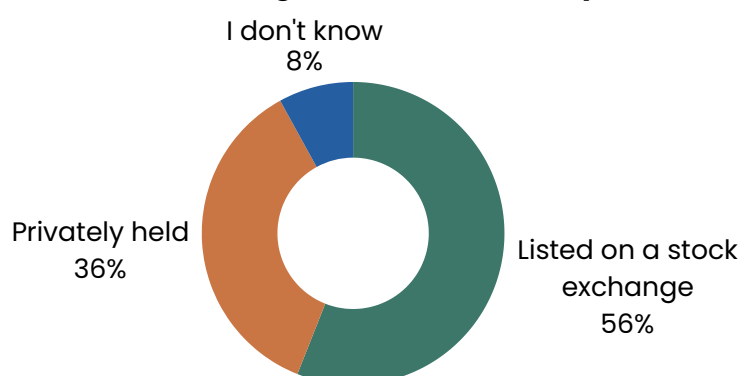
Geographical distribution of companies across Polish voivodeships.



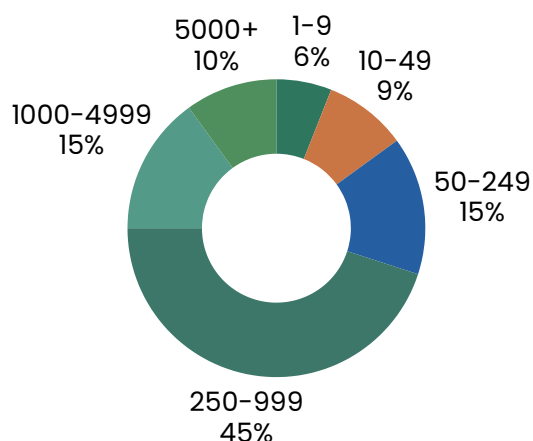
The survey respondents primarily represent **medium and large organisations**, with the largest share employed in organisations of 250–999 people.

Most participants work in **companies** rather than academic institutions, and over half are employed in **publicly listed firms**.

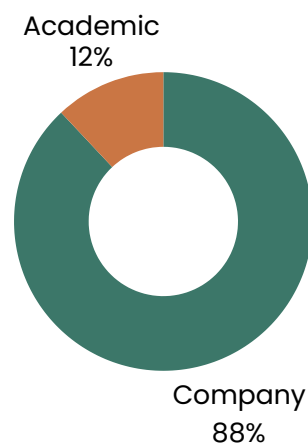
Organisation ownership

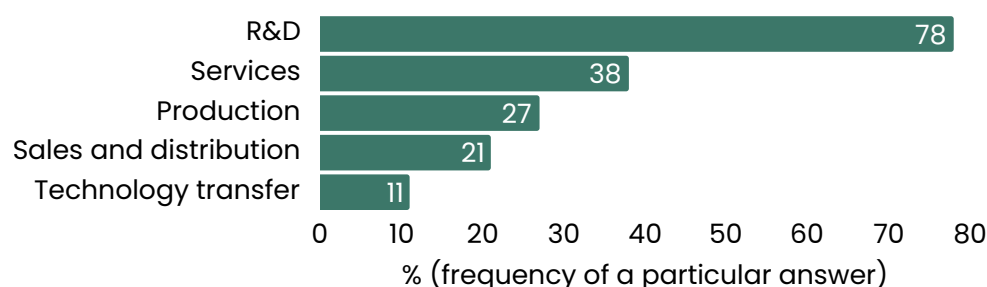
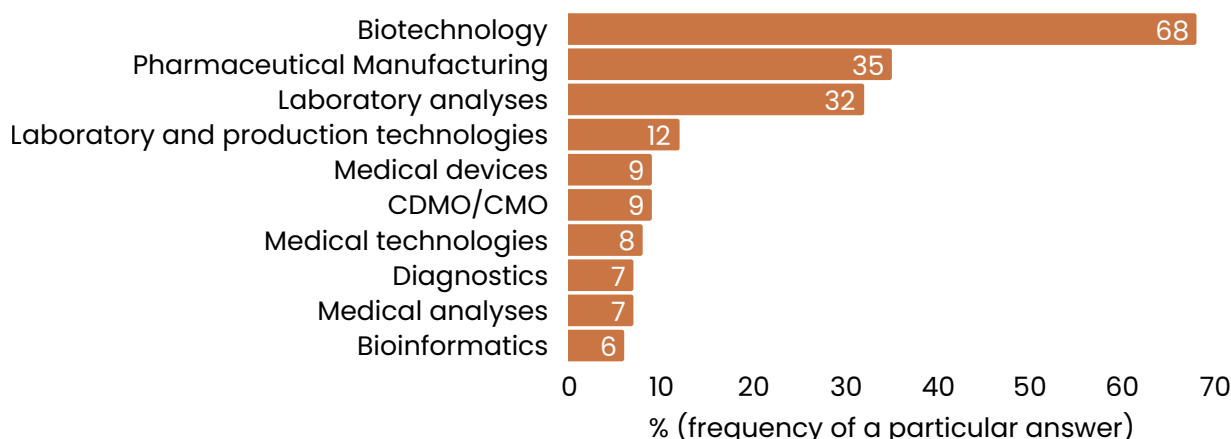
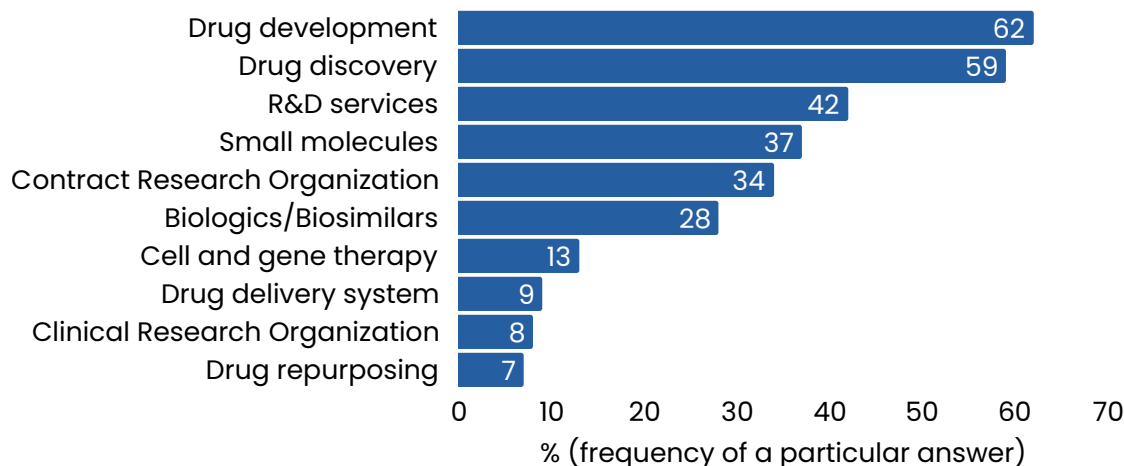


Organisation size (by number of employees)



Organisation type



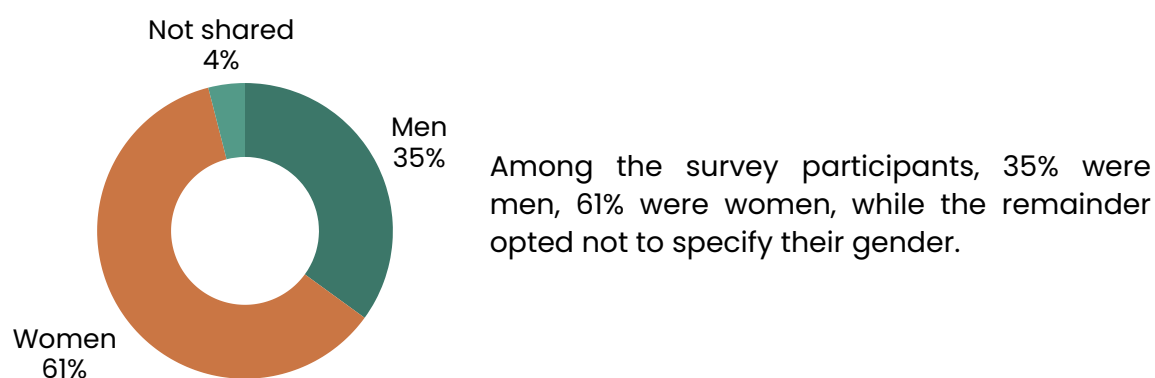
Organisation activity (more than one answer was allowed)**Life Science sector** (more than one answer was allowed)**Business activity** (more than one answer was allowed)

The profile of companies highlights innovative organisations operating across major scientific disciplines and contributing to the dynamic progress of the Life Science industry. Survey respondents are employed by companies focused on **research and development, services, and production** within the Life Science sector. The majority of these firms specialize in biotechnology, pharmaceutical manufacturing, or laboratory analyses. Their business activities are primarily centered around **drug development, drug discovery and R&D services**. There is also involvement in both **small molecules and biologics**, as well as advanced fields like cell and gene therapy.

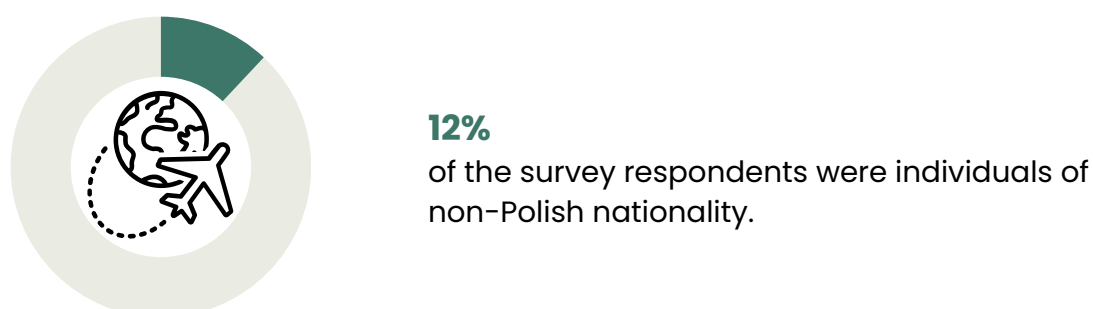
2.2. JOB CATEGORIES



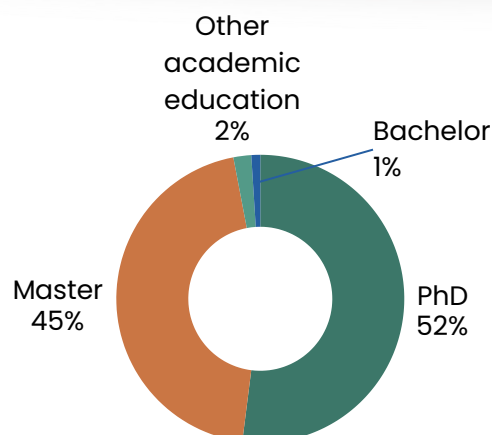
2.3. GENDER



2.4. EXPATS PRESENCE IN POLAND



2.5. EDUCATION and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE



52% of respondents hold a PhD, 45% a Master's degree, and the remaining respondents have either other types of academic education or a Bachelor's degree.



MBA degrees were reported by **15% of all respondents**.

The **highest share** is among **Owners/Founders and Sales/Business Development (30%)**.

In Professional roles the share is 28%, in Operations/Production/Technical 17%, and in scientific roles 8%.

PhD among respondents in different job categories



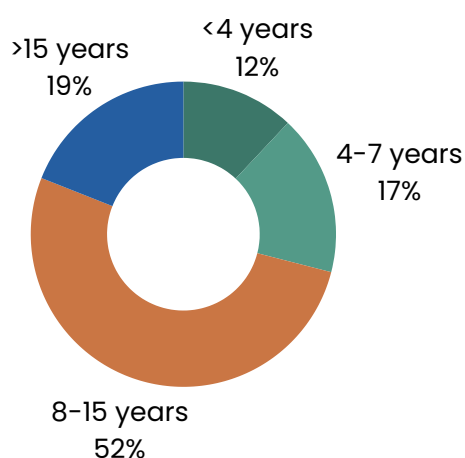
PhD holders represent **the majority at Scientific positions**, which is not surprising taking into account the nature of Life Science businesses.

Their presence is lower but **still very high: 39%**, in **Technical and general Professional roles**.

In **Sales and Business Development positions** the percentage of employees with a PhD is 21%, as in those roles, business experience per se and other educational paths, such as an MBA, are more valid for success.

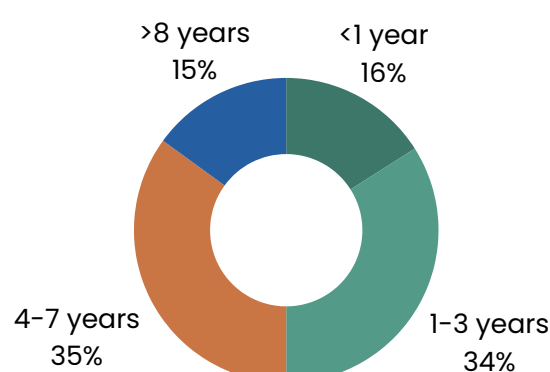
Professional experience

Total professional experience



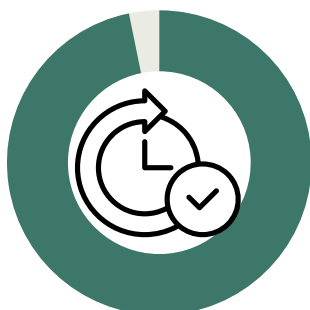
The respondent group is predominantly composed of **mid- to senior-level professionals** with the majority having spent **more than eight years** in the Life Science sector.

Number of years at current company

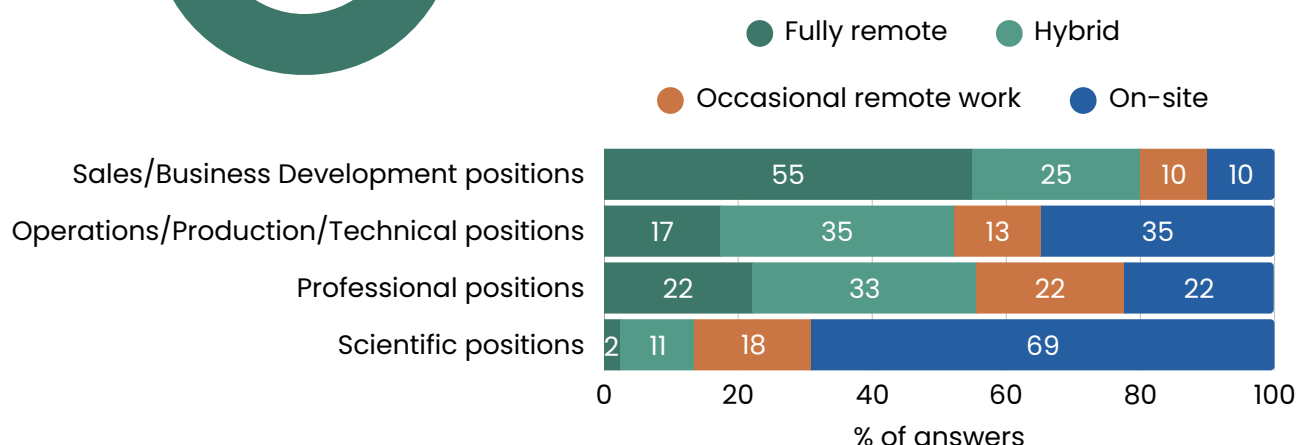


50% of respondents have been with their current company for **more than four years**.

Employment conditions – type of contract and mode of work



97% have a **full-time job** and **92%** are employed under an **employment contract**.

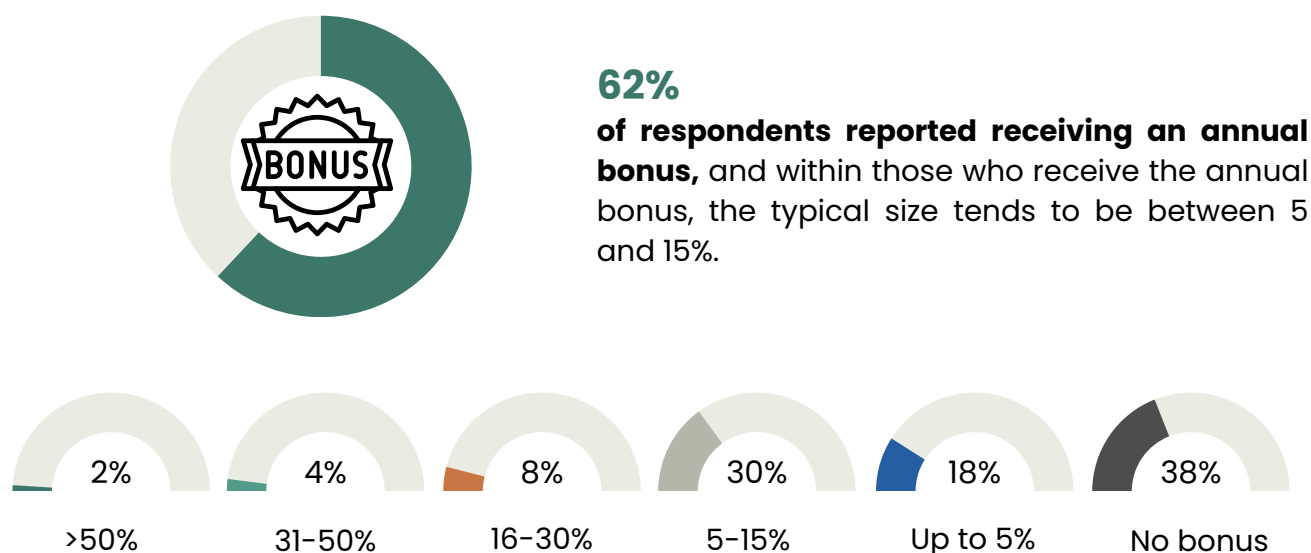


The results indicate that **remote work** options are more common in **non-technical and commercial roles**, whereas **Scientific and Technical positions** remain largely site-dependent due to operational requirements.

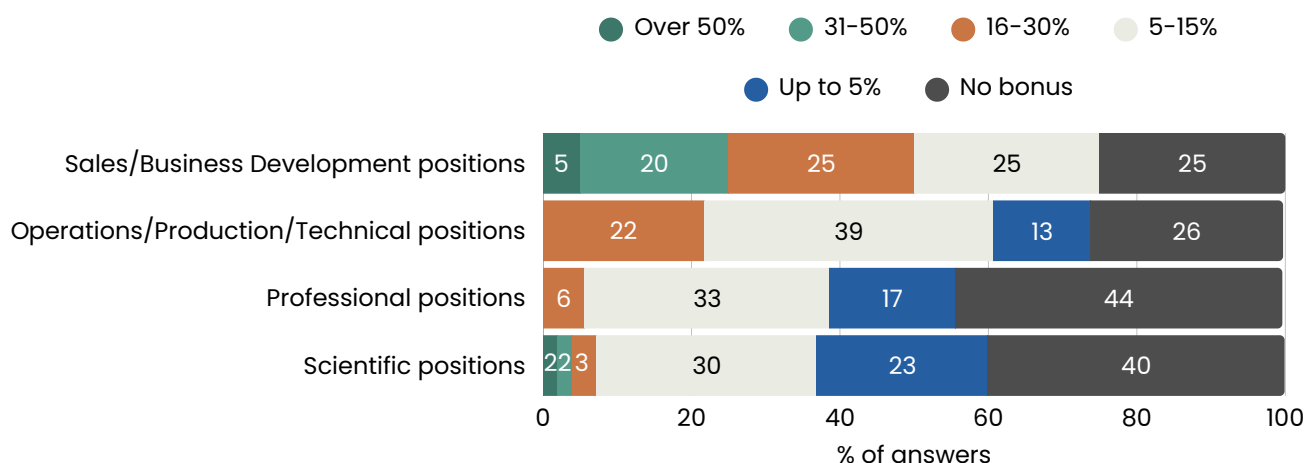
These findings align with broader labor market trends in the Life Science sector, where **digital transformation has expanded remote opportunities** for certain roles.

3. Annual Bonus & Benefits

3.1. ANNUAL BONUS



Annual bonus level in different job categories



Bonus amounts vary across position types in the Life Science sector.

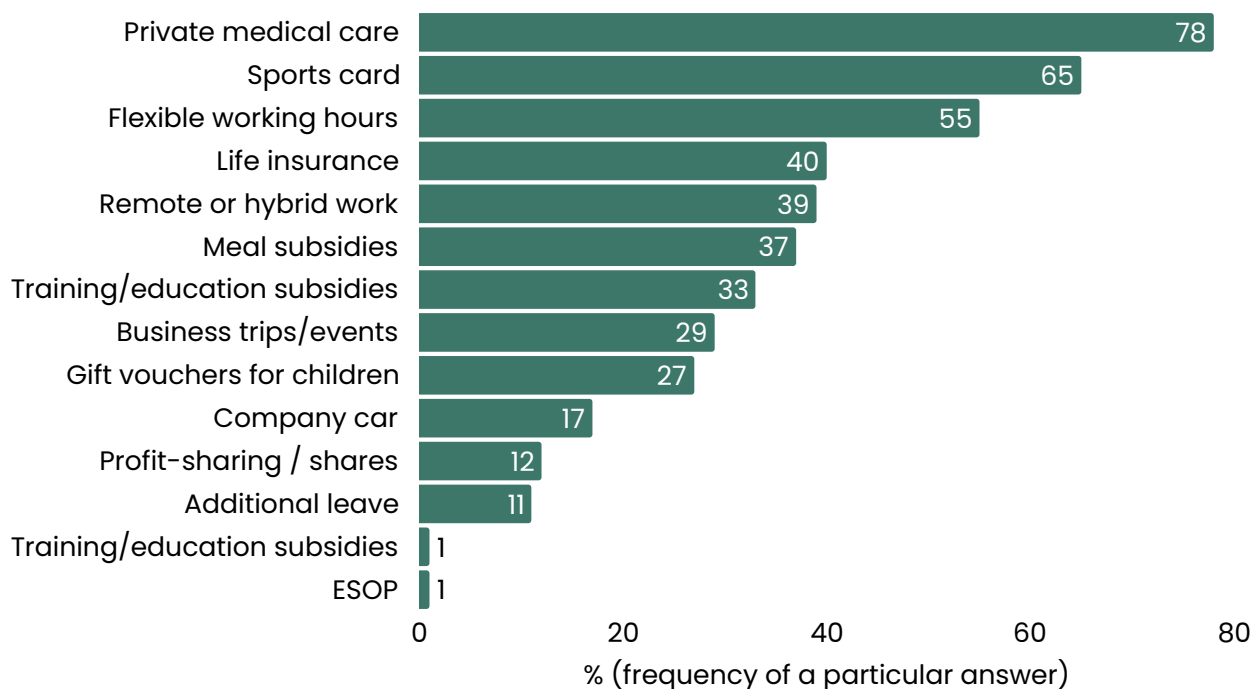
Sales and Business Development roles display a broader range of bonus levels, including 25% receiving bonuses above 30% of annual salary.

Operations/Production/Technical positions show higher occurrences of bonuses in the 5-30% bracket.

Professional and scientific roles are more frequently associated with bonus amounts below 15% or no bonus (44% and 41% for the respective job category).

3.2. BENEFITS

Benefits (more than one answer was allowed):



The most prevalent benefits in this sector include **health coverage, physical activity support, and flexible working hours.**

Life insurance, remote or hybrid working modes, and meal subsidies are also highly ranked.

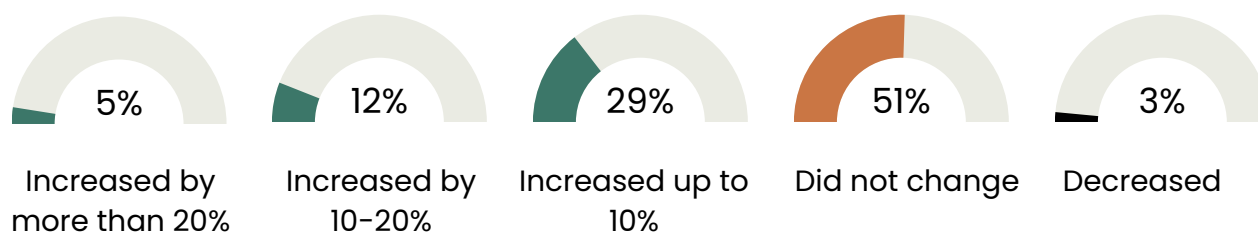
6% of respondents reported receiving **no benefits.**

4. Salary Landscape (employees' perspective)

4.1. SALARY CHANGE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS



The salary landscape remains **largely stable**, with the majority of respondents having maintained compensation.

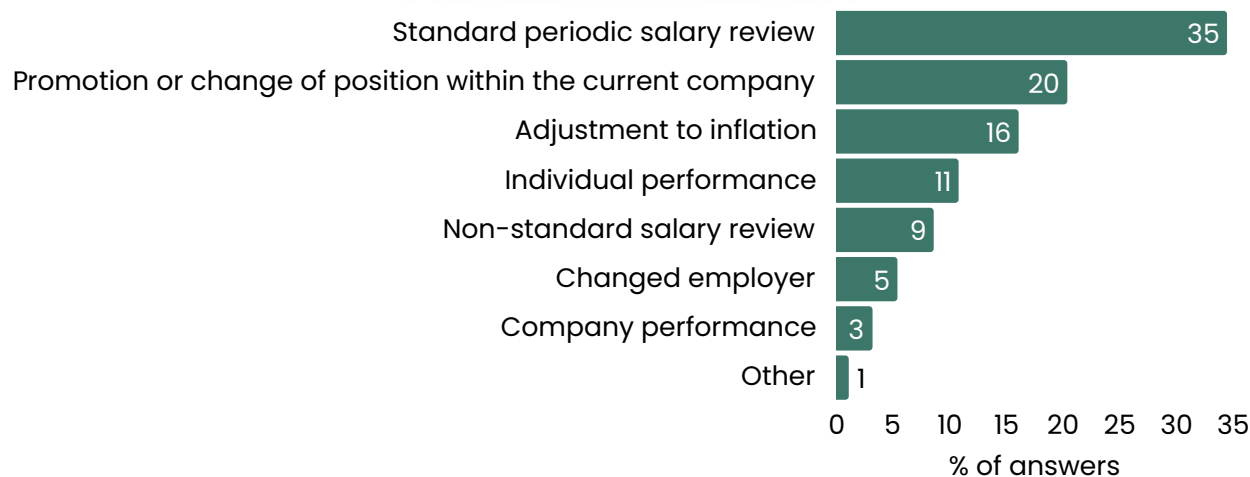


46% reported salary **increase** in the past 12 months.

51% of respondents indicated that their base salary remained **unchanged**.

3% of respondents, reported that their compensation **decreased**.

4.2. SALARY INCREASE – REASONS



Most standard salary increase reasons in the Life Science industry are very similar to those in other industries: periodic salary reviews by the company, promotions within the company (usually closely tied to individual performance), and adjustments for inflation.

A change of employer resulted in the following salary outcomes:

- 20% of respondents indicated a salary increase exceeding 20%,
- 40% reported an increase in the range of 10% to 20%,
- 20% indicated an increase of up to 10%,
- 20% reported a reduction in salary.

4.3. SALARY DECREASE – REASONS

3% of respondents reported salary decrease.

It happened primarily due to factors such as company or individual performance, non-standard salary review processes, and employer changes.

In particular, pay reductions were reported in cases of international relocation to Poland with a lower cost of living compared to the individual's previous place of residence.

“

Salary levels in the Polish Life Science sector have shown limited movement in recent years. This stability is driven by several factors:

- Challenging biotech market conditions – Limited access to capital and high R&D costs push companies to prioritise financial resilience over aggressive salary growth.
- Employer cost-control strategies – Many organisations focus on maintaining operational stability and internal equity, resulting in cautious compensation policies.
- Inflation versus budget realities – Although inflation has increased costs, salary adjustments in specialised scientific roles have not always kept pace, with budgets divided across multiple organisational needs.
- Stable supply of qualified talent – A strong and steady pool of well-educated specialists reduces pressure on employers to escalate salaries rapidly.
- Attractive living standards – Despite lower compensation levels than in Western Europe, Poland offers a comfortable standard of living, making the market competitive and reducing wage escalation pressure.

Together, these factors help explain why compensation in the Polish Life Science sector remains relatively stable despite the industry's ongoing growth and internationalisation.

Karolina Jarosińska – CEO and Founder at ExecMind

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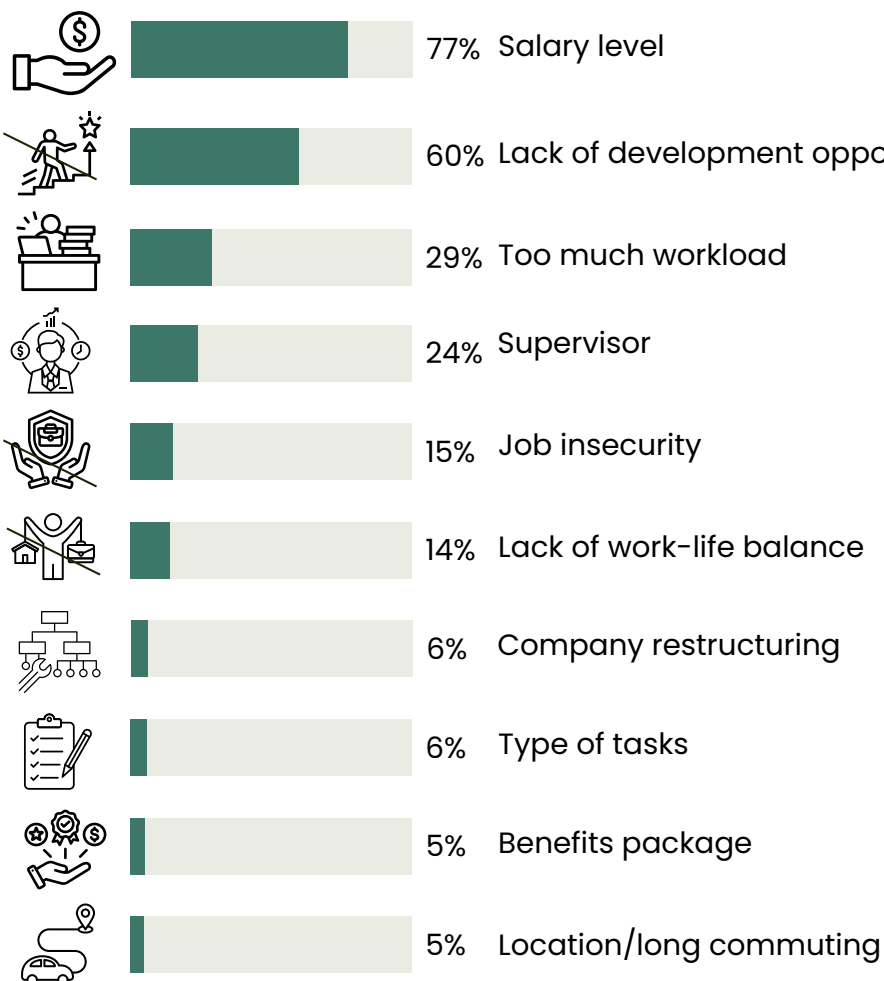
5. Work Satisfaction and Career Plans

5.1. JOB CHANGE INTENTIONS OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS



5.2. REASONS FOR CONSIDERING A JOB CHANGE

Top 10 answers (more than one answer was possible):

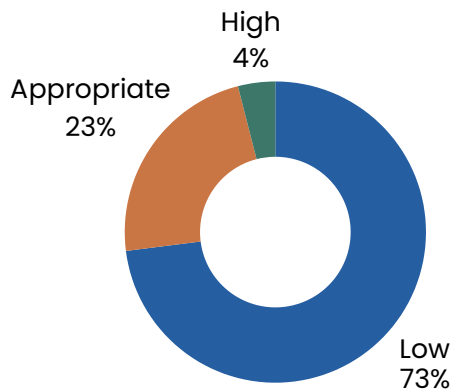


Among respondents working in **scientific positions**, some of the most reported reasons of job dissatisfaction include also:

- having **too few challenges** and
- **lack of mental support**.



5.3. SALARY vs RESPONSIBILITIES (Question: How do you assess your salary in relation to your responsibilities?)



73% respondents reported that their **responsibilities outweigh their compensation**, which may reflect dissatisfaction and potential risks for employee motivation, retention, and engagement.

About **23%** of respondents believe their remuneration is **appropriate** for their responsibilities.

4% think they receive **high pay** relative to their responsibilities.

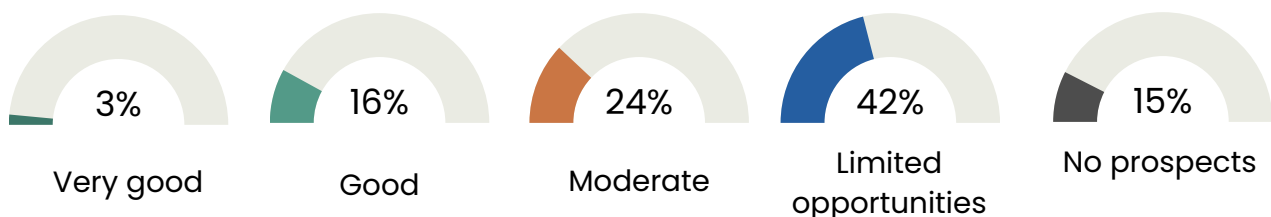


53% of respondents who do not intend to change their job consider their salary to be low relative to their responsibilities, indicating that **factors other than compensation** play a decisive role in employee retention.

5.4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CURRENT COMPANY



The opportunities for **professional development** within the company are generally perceived as **limited**.

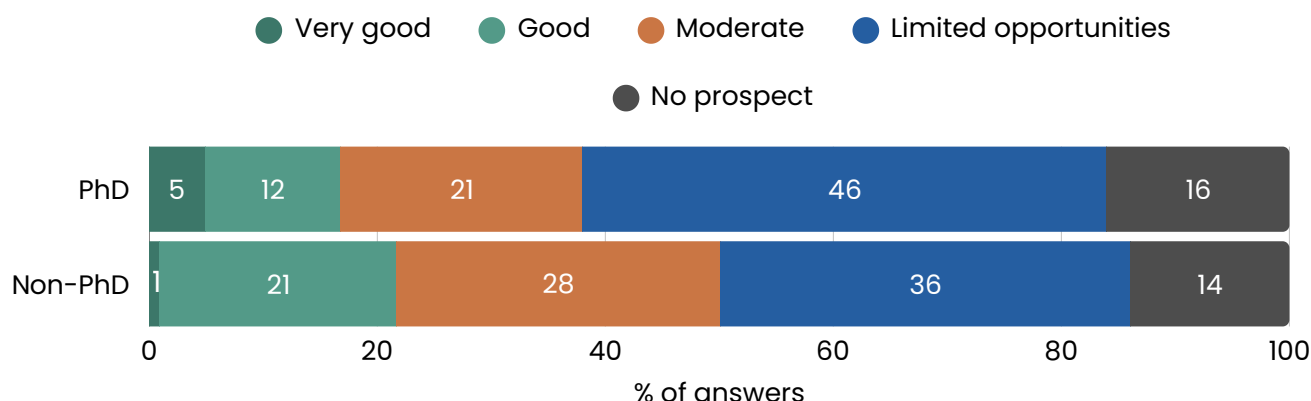


Opportunities for professional development were rated as **very good** by **3%** of respondents and as **good** by **16%**.

A further **24%** assessed their opportunities as **moderate**.

42% of respondents indicated **limited opportunities** for growth, while **15%** reported **no prospects**.

How do PhD and non-PhD holders perceive development opportunities in their current company?



Regardless of whether employees hold a PhD or not, the overall trend in perceived career development opportunities within the current company is broadly similar.

In both groups, the majority of respondents position themselves in the categories of **limited opportunities or moderate prospects**, while only a relatively small proportion see their outlook as good or very good.

“

The relatively high proportion of respondents perceiving “limited opportunities” or “no prospect” merits particular attention, as it reflects potential risks for talent retention and engagement within the industry. These findings underscore the urgent need for organisations to strategically invest in transparent career progression frameworks, diverse skill-building initiatives, and coaching/mentorship programs designed to foster long-term growth for all staff, regardless of educational attainment.

On the other side of the coin, these results also highlight the importance of individuals proactively defining and taking ownership of their professional development. In addition to relying on institutional structures, employees are encouraged to regularly reflect on their career aspirations, identify key strengths and areas for growth, and craft deliberate strategies for upskilling and broadening their experience. A self-directed approach, grounded in continuous learning, networking, and purposeful goal-setting, can empower professionals to navigate organisational constraints and achieve meaningful, sustainable career fulfilment, even in contexts where systemic support remains limited.

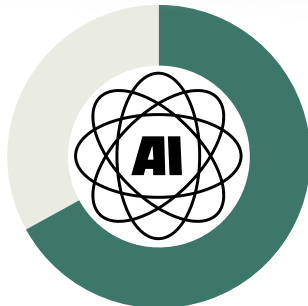
Such measures can play a pivotal role in enhancing both organisational vitality and individual satisfaction, addressing the root causes of professional stagnation highlighted by these survey results.

Dorota Szczepaniak-Krupowska, PhD – Scientific Talent Acquisition Specialist at ExecMind

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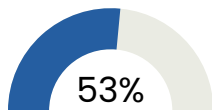
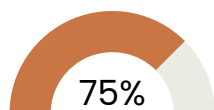
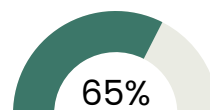
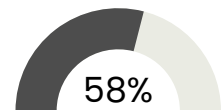
6. Impact of Artificial Intelligence in Life Science

6.1. PREVALENCE OF USING AI TOOLS AT WORK

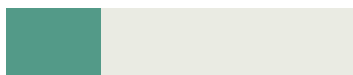
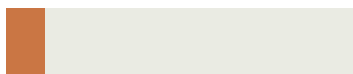
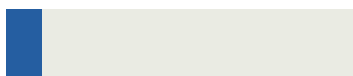
**59%**

of respondents are using AI tools at work.

Frequency of using AI tools at work:

Scientific
professionalsSales/Business
Development
specialistsRespondents from
university/research
institutesRespondents from
companies

6.2. HOW AI WILL AFFECT CAREER PROSPECTS?

**52%** of respondents believe that **AI will not affect job opportunities** available to them.**27%** thinks that **AI will create more job opportunities than eliminates**.**11%** answered that **AI will eliminate more jobs than creates**.**10%** did not point at **any of scenarios** provided in answers.

6.3. CONCERNS ABOUT AI REGARDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN LIFE SCIENCE SECTOR

**71%**

do not express concerns regarding AI in relation to employment opportunities.

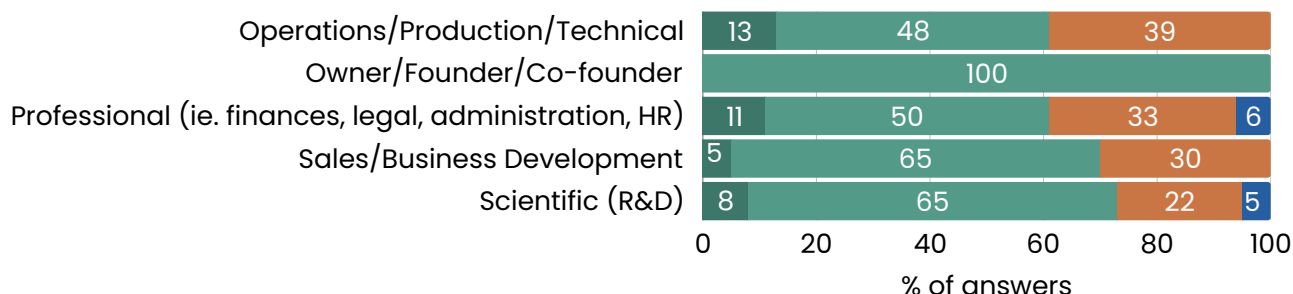
How do you think AI will affect your career prospects?



All respondents.

Strongly NO NO YES

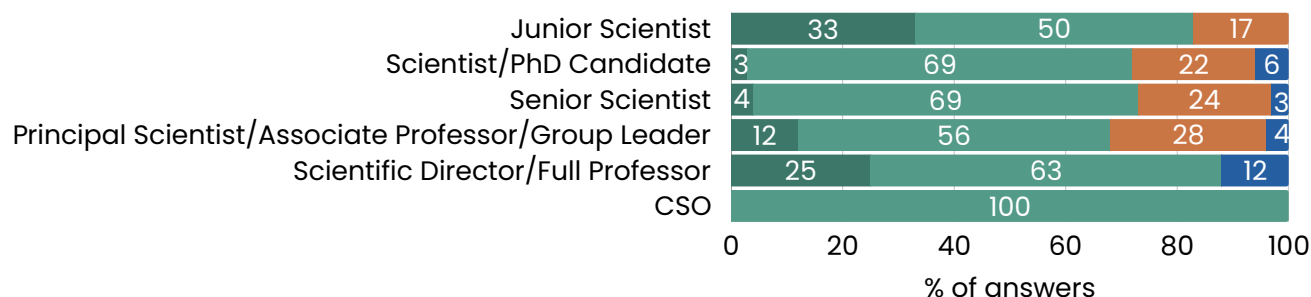
Strongly YES



73% of respondents in scientific positions indicated a general lack of concerns about AI.

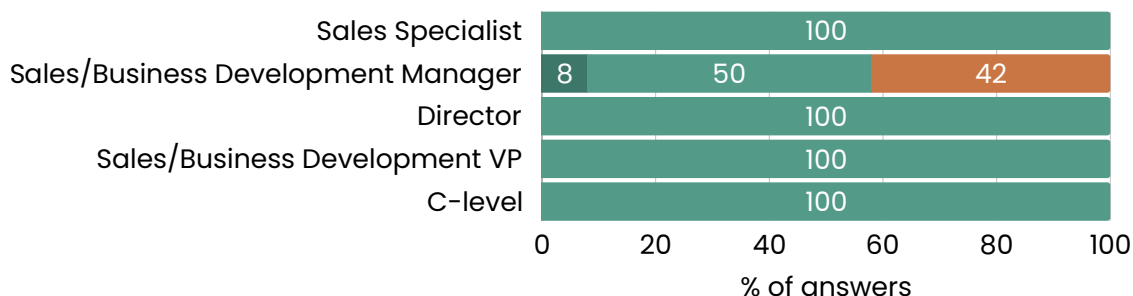
Strongly NO NO YES

Strongly YES



70% of Sales and Business Development specialists indicated a general absence of concerns regarding AI.

Strongly NO NO YES



The most concerns are expressed by **Operations/Production/Technical** and **Professional positions** (i.e., Finance, Legal, Administration, HR), with both groups equally reporting concerns at **39%** (by answering yes or strongly yes to the question about having worries regarding AI).

7. Scientific positions – characteristics and salary

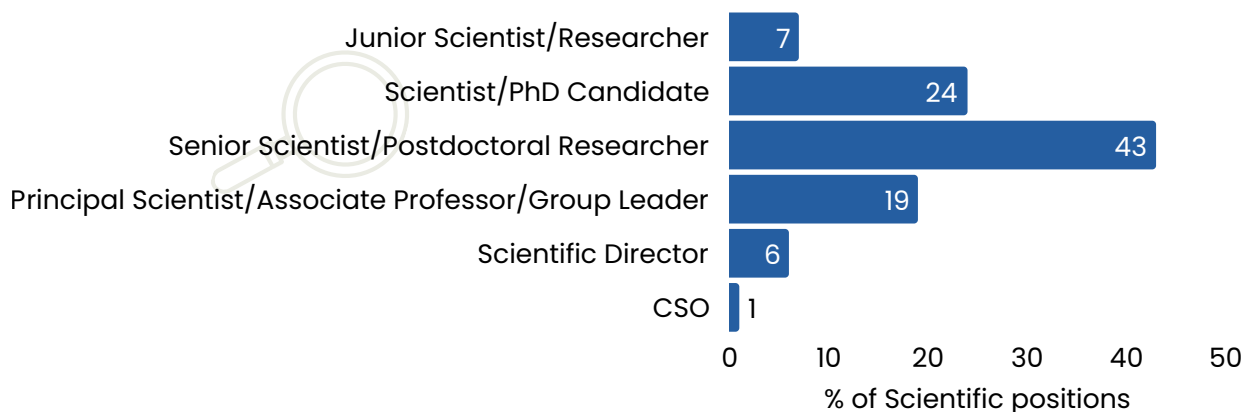
7.1. SCIENTIFIC POSITIONS – characteristics

**66%**

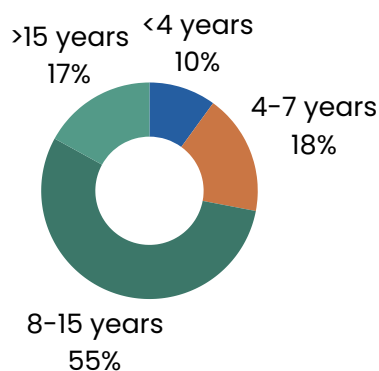
of respondents work in
Scientific positions.

**85%**

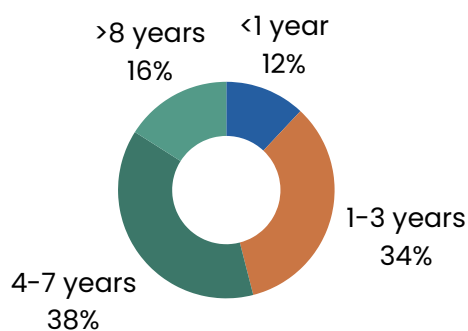
of scientific respondents were from
companies and 15% from
universities/research institutes.



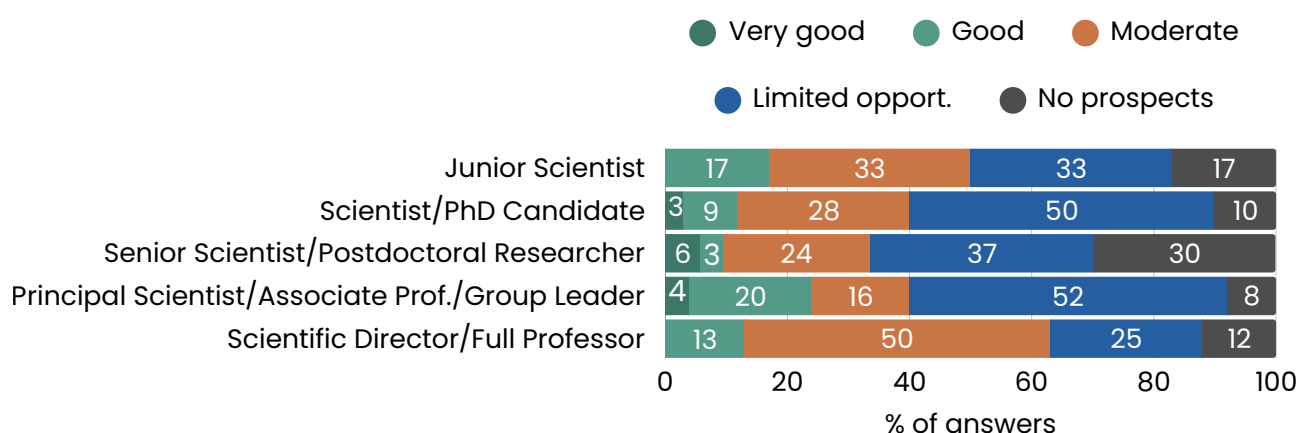
Total professional experience



Number of years at current company

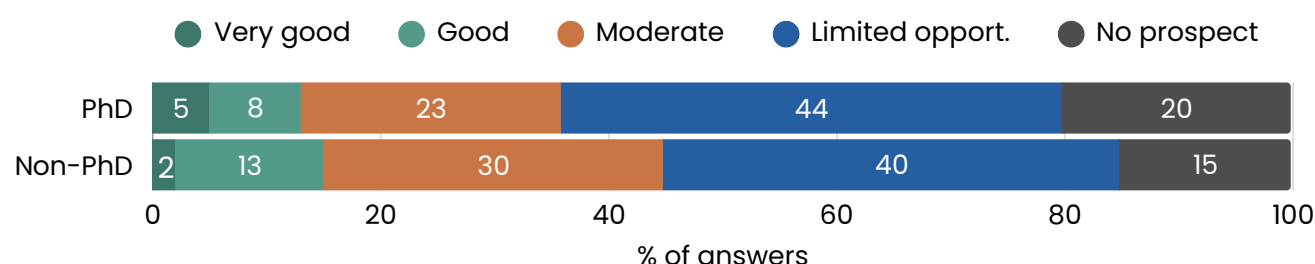


7.2. CAREER DEVELOPMENT PERCEPTIONS IN A CURRENT COMPANY



- 50% of Junior Scientists indicated good (17%) or moderate (33%) opportunities for career development in their current company. The other half reported limited opportunities (33%) or no prospects (17%).
- 50% of Scientists/PhD candidates see mainly limited opportunities.
- 37% of Senior Scientists/Postdoctoral Researchers indicated limited opportunities and 30% no prospects with 9% having good development perceptions and 24% moderate.
- 52% of Principal Scientists/Associate Professors/Group Leaders indicated limited opportunities and 8% no prospects with 24% having good development perceptions and 16% moderate.
- Scientific Directors and Full Professors express relatively more optimism, with most rating their opportunities as moderate (50%) or good (13%).

Scientific positions: How do PhD and non-PhD holders perceive development opportunities in their current company?

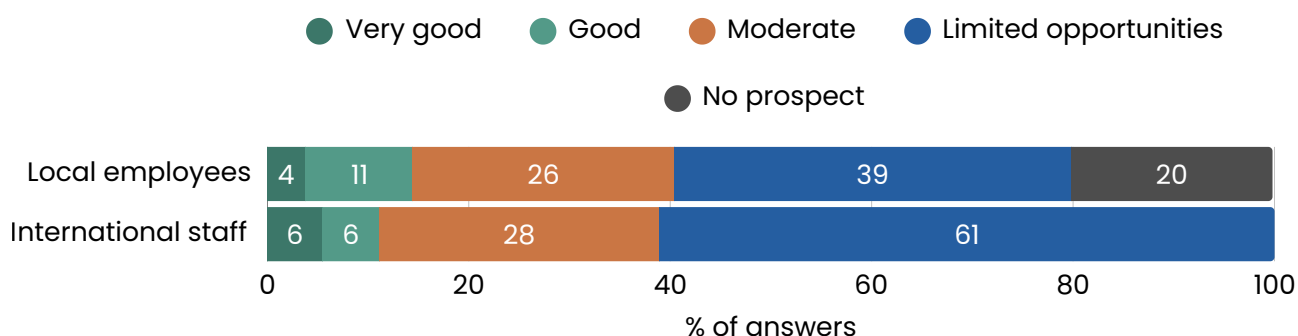


Scientific R&D employees, both with and without PhDs, predominantly perceive limited career development opportunities within their current organisations.

- Among PhD holders, 64% reported no or limited opportunities for development, 23% assessed their opportunities as moderate, and 13% considered them good or very good.
- 55% of non-PhD respondents indicated either limited (40%) or no prospects (15%), while 30% rated their growth opportunities as moderate and 15% as good or very good.

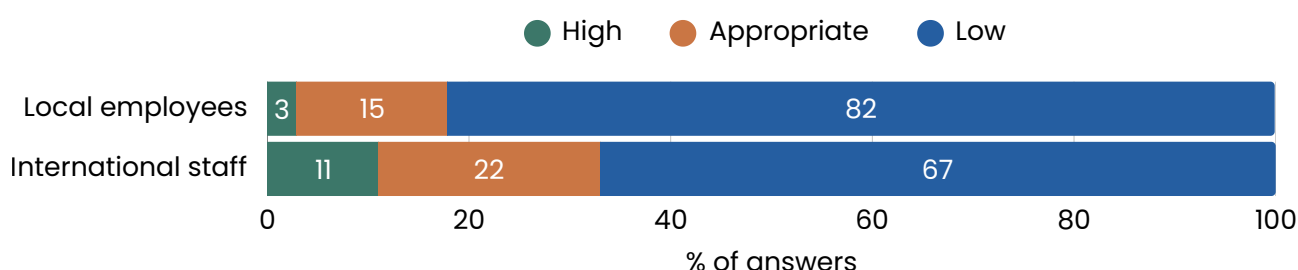
How international staff's work satisfaction differ from that of local employees in scientific positions?

Career development opportunities:



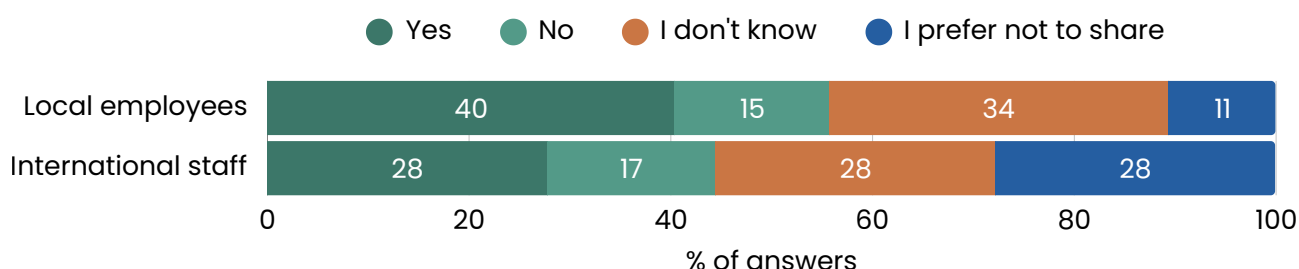
Both groups report comparable views on development opportunities, with approx. 60% seeing **limited or no prospects**.

Salary to responsibilities ratio:



Most respondents in both groups consider their **salary low in comparison to their responsibilities**, although the sentiment is more optimistic within international staff.

Willingness to change job:



The trends in work satisfaction between international and local scientific staff are very similar.

How international staff work satisfaction differ from that of local employees in scientific positions? – comment

“

An important insight emerging from the data is that both local and international professionals perceive their career development opportunities in Poland as somewhat limited. This sentiment is strongly influenced by the structural characteristics of the Polish biotech and Life Science market.

Poland's biotech landscape consists of approximately 200 companies (pharma companies were excluded from this report), the majority of which are small or medium-sized organisations employing fewer than 100 people. While these companies often foster innovation and scientific agility, their scale naturally restricts the availability of well-defined career pathways, senior leadership roles, or opportunities for rapid upward mobility.

As a result, international specialists arriving in Poland encounter similar constraints to those experienced by domestic employees. The limited organisational structures, combined with resource constraints typical of early-stage biotech environments, create a market where professional growth tends to be incremental rather than stepwise.

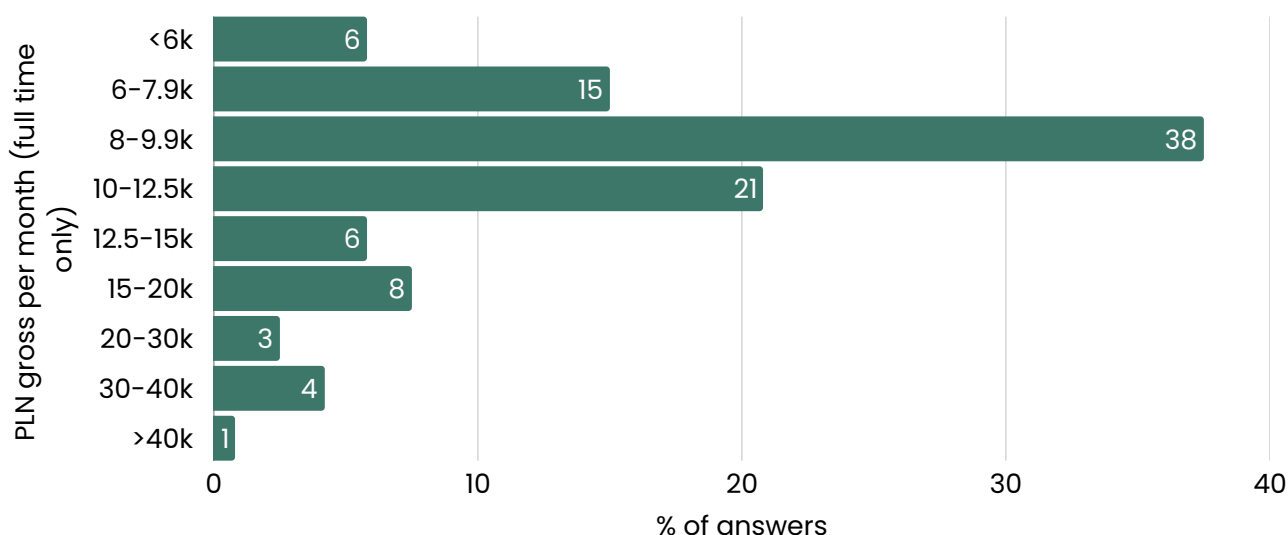
Despite these challenges, the data shows parallel patterns of satisfaction between local and international respondents across key aspects such as work environment, team culture, and overall role engagement. This suggests that while career progression may be perceived as restricted, day-to-day professional experiences remain rather positive and comparable for both groups.

Karolina Jarosińska – CEO and Founder at ExecMind

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7.3. BASE SALARY (PLN gross per month)

Base salary range distribution



Base salary in Scientific positions

Position*	PLN gross per month (full-time job only)			
	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Junior Scientist/Researcher	6 220	6 200	5 500	6 900
Scientist/PhD Candidate	7 652	7 500	#4 500	12 000
Senior Scientist/Postdoctoral Researcher	9 963	9 500	6 900	18 000
Principal Scientist/Associate Professor/Group Leader	13 529	12 000	8 000	30 000
Scientific Director/Full Professor	25 000	26 000	17 000	35 000

*CSO not included.

The salary is below national minimum wage. Possibly a stipend as a form of salary was provided.

The data reveals a **progression of salaries in the Life Science sector**, with median earnings rising consistently alongside career advancement.

Entry-level positions are associated with relatively uniform salaries, while more senior roles show both higher remuneration and greater variation.

The **transition from early-career researcher to senior and group leader roles is marked by steady increases**, while executive-level positions such as Scientific Director stand out with a pronounced jump in median salary.

The report does not include salary ranges for Chief Scientific Officer roles, which are typically compensated at a higher level than Scientific Director positions.

Differences in remuneration between companies and universities in selected Scientific positions

The analysis of median gross monthly salaries reveals consistent **differences between the academic and corporate sectors** in Life Science in Poland.

Organisation	Position	PLN gross per month (full-time job only)			
		Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Company	Scientist/PhD candidate	8 048	7 700	4 700	12 000
	Senior Scientist/ Postdoctoral Researcher	10 192	9 500	6 900	18 000
	Principal Scientist/ Associate Professor/ Group Leader	14 700	12 300	9 400	30 000
University/ Research Institute	Scientist/PhD candidate	6 060	5 000	4 500	8 000
	Senior Scientist/ Postdoctoral Researcher	8 677	8 800	7 300	9 618
	Principal Scientist/ Associate Professor/ Group Leader	10 017	10 250	8 000	12 600

“

The data makes one point very clear: Life Science professionals continue to earn more in the private sector than in academia. While the difference in pay does narrow as seniority increases, the gap never fully closes. This reflects deeper, structural differences in how each environment approaches compensation and career progression.

In academia, early-career researchers, especially PhD candidates, often operate within fixed stipend schemes with additional remuneration coming from grants or teaching activities. Even with these opportunities to supplement the income, these additions rarely match the more comprehensive packages available in industry. Companies typically combine higher base salaries with performance incentives, broader benefits, and clearer advancement pathways, creating a more competitive total proposition. *On top of that, companies seem to offer better stability of employment, as the academics need to constantly apply for funding, regardless of their seniority.*

As a result, the industry continues to attract talent not only through higher pay but also through greater financial stability over the course of a career. For academic institutions, this underscores the need to strengthen non-financial value or rethink compensation models to keep pace with the evolving Life Science job market.

Michał Gołqbek – Senior Executive Search Consultant at ExecMind

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Does a gender pay gap exist in Scientific positions?

Position	Gender	PLN gross per month (full-time job only)			
		Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Junior Scientist/ Researcher	Women	6 150	6 100	5 500	6 900
	Men	6 500	6 500	6 500	6 500
Scientist/ PhD Candidate	Women	7 823	7 500	4 500	12 000
	Men	7 257	7 000	4 700	11 250
Senior Scientist/ Postdoctoral Researcher	Women	10 210	9 600	6 900	18 000
	Men	9 840	9 300	8 000	14 000
Principal Scientist/ Associate Professor/ Group Leader	Women	12 238	12 000	8 000	19 000
	Men	16 113	12 050	10 000	30 000
Scientific Director/ Full Professor	Women	24 000	20 000	17 000	35 000
	Men	25 750	28 000	17 000	30 000

“

The analysis shows a largely positive picture at the specialist level: women and men earn comparable salaries across junior, mid, and senior roles, when taking medians into account. This suggests that Life Science organisations in Poland are applying consistent salary frameworks regardless of gender.

However, the situation changes at the top of the scientific career ladder. A clear gender pay gap still persists at the highest level, indicating that structural imbalances remain in the upper tiers of leadership and senior research roles. These differences may stem from a mix of factors, such as unequal access to leadership opportunities, disparities in grant acquisition, or slower progression for women into higher level positions.

For employers and institutions, the takeaway should be that the work on closing the gap is still not completed. Addressing the disparity at the leadership level will require a more intentional approach to career development, pathways, and transparency in compensation practices – the new act on salary transparency should have a long lasting impact. Addressing the gender pay gap is critical for retaining top talent and ensuring that the Life Science ecosystem continues to grow.

Michał Gołqbek – Senior Executive Search Consultant at ExecMind

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Correlation between PhD and salary level

Position*	PhD status	PLN gross per month (full-time job only)			
		Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Senior Scientist (with or without PhD)/ Postdoctoral Researcher	PhD (81%)	9 844	9 500	6 900	16 000
	not PhD (19%)	10 473	9 550	8 000	18 000
Principal Scientist/ Associate Professor/ Group Leader	PhD (79%)	14 079	12 100	8 000	30 000
	not PhD (21%)	11 440	10 000	9 400	17 000

*Only the most represented groups within each category were considered.

Holding a PhD has a limited impact on salaries for Senior Scientists, as median salaries for PhD and non-PhD holders are almost identical.

While a PhD does not influence salary at the senior specialist level, it is associated with significantly higher earnings at the management and leadership level of a scientific career in Poland's Life Science sector.

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A PhD degree plays a decisive role in positions tightly connected to R&D and scientific project management. Roles that require advanced methodological decision-making, long-term experimental planning, and responsibility for research outcomes are clearly dominated by PhD holders. This shows that employers expect doctoral-level competence for independent and high-stakes scientific work.

When it comes to compensation, individuals with PhDs tend to earn more, not because of the degree alone, but because of the functional value it brings. Doctoral training equips researchers to run complex projects independently and to take responsibility for scientific direction and outcomes. This increases efficiency and allows organisations to entrust PhD holders with tasks of higher strategic and financial impact. In effect, the combination of specialisation and autonomy naturally translates into higher earnings.

Leading research groups, in particular, demand deep, highly specialised knowledge. Such domain expertise, typically developed during a PhD, enhances the quality of scientific decisions, reduces uncertainty, and improves the reliability of project execution. The fourfold indication of dominance across roles (80/20 in average) highlights how consistently the doctorate is valued.

Dorota Szczepaniak-Krupowska, PhD – Scientific Talent Acquisition Specialist at ExecMind

How experience translates into salaries?

Position	Total experience	PLN gross per month (full-time job only)			
		Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Scientist/ PhD candidate	<4 years	6 422	6 900	4 500	8 600
	4–7 years	7 400	7 650	4 700	10 200
	8–15 years	8 895	8 400	7 200	11 700
	>15 years	8 731	8 731	5 461	12 000
Senior Scientist/ Postdoctoral Researcher	<4 years	9 832	9 832	8 864	10 800
	4–7 years	8 931	8 900	8 000	9 618
	8–15 years	10 075	9 500	6 900	18 000
	>15 years	10 443	9 500	8 000	14 000
Principal Scientist/ Associate Professor/ Group Leader	4–7 years	11 133	9 400	8 000	16 000
	8–15 years	14 020	12 000	8 000	30 000
	>15 years	13 500	12 750	9 500	19 000
Scientific Director/ Full Professor	8–15 years	23 000	23 000	20 000	26 000
	>15 years	25 800	30 000	17 000	35 000

The salary progression in scientific careers generally shows a **positive correlation between years of experience and pay**.

As professionals advance from early career stages such as PhD candidates to senior roles like full professors or scientific directors, **median salaries increase**.

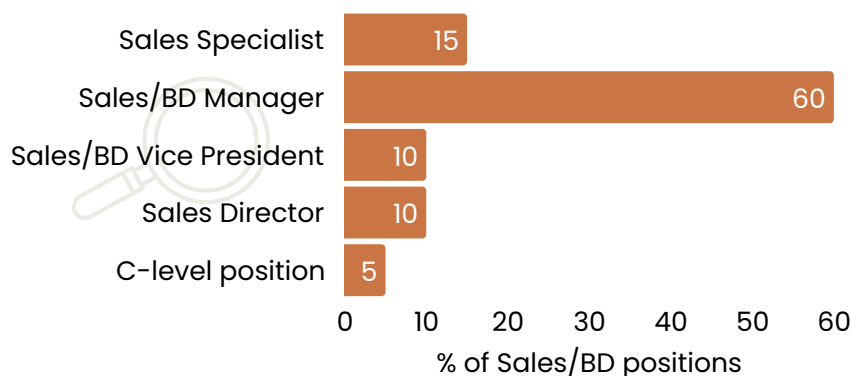
The most notable jumps in salary are observed at higher seniority levels, which possibly reflects broader responsibilities and expertise as well as responsibility for milestones delivery for the projects.

8. Sales/Business Development positions - characteristics and salary

8.1. SALES/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT POSITIONS CHARACTERISTICS

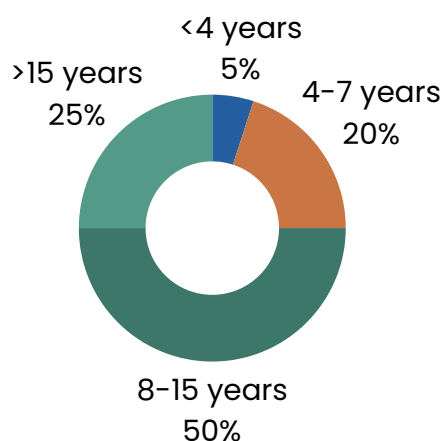
**11%**

of all respondents work in
**Sales/Business
Development** positions.

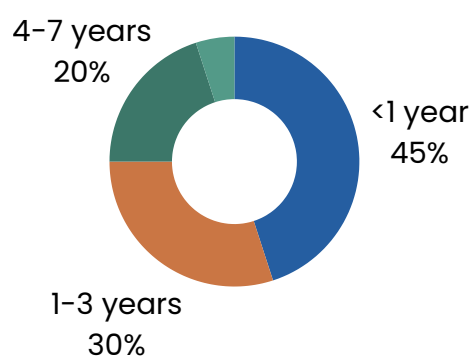


Professional experience among BD positions

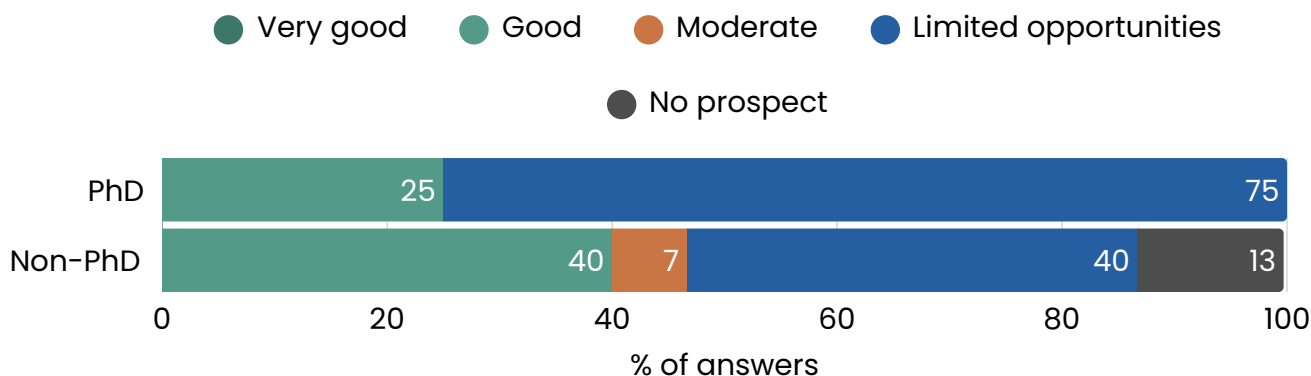
Total professional experience



Number of years at current company



Sales/BD positions: How do PhD and non-PhD holders perceive development opportunities in their current company?



The survey results for Sales and Business Development roles in Life Science companies reveal a **positive outlook** on career development opportunities compared to scientific positions.

Among non-PhD employees, 40% rate their prospects as good, although 53% still perceive no or limited opportunities.

PhD holders (21% of respondents among Sales/BD positions) in these roles report more constrained outlooks, with 75% indicating limited development opportunities and only 25% seeing good prospects. Notably, no PhD respondents in business development reported having no prospects.

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The data highlights a clear difference in how career opportunities are perceived within sales and business development functions in Life Science.

Non-PhD professionals report relatively stronger career growth potential in Sales and BD. These roles typically offer clearer progression logic, built around commercial execution, market exposure, and measurable business impact. At the same time, the fact that more than half of non-PhD respondents still see limited opportunities suggests that many organisations lack transparent or well-defined career frameworks even in commercial functions.

For PhD holders, the challenge is more pronounced. While none report a complete lack of prospects, the majority perceive their development opportunities as limited. This points to a misalignment between scientific training and the competencies required for advancement in sales and business development. Academic careers emphasise depth of expertise and analytical rigour, whereas commercial roles demand value articulation, negotiation skills, prioritisation, and a strong business mindset.

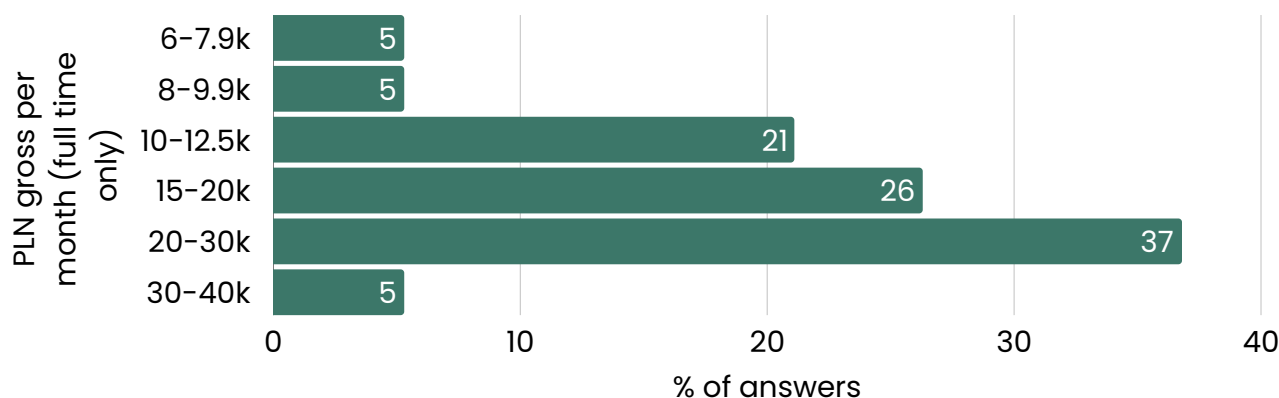
For scientists aiming to grow into Sales or BD leadership, commercial capability building is not optional. Developing sales skills, customer-facing confidence, and business thinking is often the critical step that determines progression. Companies can support this transition through mentoring and structured development, but the primary driver must come from the individual.

In Life Science career progression in Sales and BD is shaped by academic very specific knowledge and even more by translation of expertise into commercial impact.

Monika Kozdroń-Sikorska – Managing Partner at ExecMind

8.2. BASE SALARY (PLN gross per month)

Base salary range distribution



Between **Sales and Business Development professionals** in the Life Science sector 63% respondents earn between 15 and 30k PLN gross per month, reflecting the sector's emphasis on rewarding commercial talent and unique skills in translating scientific knowledge into business value.

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Sales and business development roles are demanding by nature, particularly in Life Science, where commercial complexity meets high scientific and regulatory standards.

The intensity of these roles goes well beyond target ownership. Frequent travel, often international, requires a level of personal flexibility that not everyone is willing or able to sustain long-term. Performance is continuously measured against results, creating a level of visibility and accountability that is materially higher than in many other functions. Daily work is highly relational, involving constant interaction with clients, partners, and internal stakeholders, which can be energising for some and exhausting for others.

An additional, often underestimated aspect is the psychological resilience required. Commercial roles involve regular exposure to rejection, prolonged negotiation cycles, and delayed outcomes. Maintaining momentum, confidence, and credibility despite setbacks is a core part of the job, particularly in complex B2B and Life Science sales environments.

These factors directly influence compensation structures: base salaries, variable pay and long-term incentives. Remuneration reflects both the revenue impact of the role and the demands placed on individuals performing it.

Another important insight is that longevity in Sales and BD is closely tied to mindset and energy management. Professionals who thrive tend to combine commercial discipline with emotional intelligence, strong self-management, and high self-awareness. As a result, the salary paid for experienced Sales and BD leaders is not solely about technical skill, but about proven endurance and consistency in high-pressure environments.

Monika Kozdroń-Sikorska – Managing Partner at ExecMind

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Base salary in Sales/Business Development positions

Position	PLN gross per month (full-time job only)			
	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Sales Specialist	8 167	8 000	7 000	9 500
Sales/BD Manager	15 571	16 000	12 000	20 000
Sales Director/VP	28 500	24 500	20 000	45 000

“

In case of Business Development functions, Polish Life Science companies increasingly operate within a global competitive landscape. Securing experienced professionals, particularly those with a proven track record in negotiating partnering agreements, closing licensing deals, and strategic collaborations, requires compensation packages that match international standards rather than local market norms.

This is especially visible in therapeutic development projects, where companies need highly specialised BD executives capable of managing complex, high-value transactions. In these cases, compensation is driven not by a candidate's place of residence, but by global market dynamics, as well as their competencies, strategic expertise, and proven track record of executing partnering deals at an international level.

Karolina Jarosińska – CEO and Founder at ExecMind

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9. Market perspective

The insights presented in this report highlight both the strengths and the strategic challenges facing the Polish Life Science sector as it continues its trajectory toward international competitiveness. Transparent, reliable workforce and compensation data is a critical foundation for building organisations that can innovate, scale, and compete globally.

By delivering the first comprehensive salary and workplace analysis for R&D and business roles in Poland, our intention is to elevate the conversation, set new standards for market understanding, and provide decision-makers with the clarity they need to plan for the future.

As the sector matures, companies that adapt quickly aligning their talent strategies with global benchmarks, strengthening leadership capabilities, and investing in scientific excellence will define the next chapter of growth. We encourage all stakeholders to use this report as a strategic reference point in shaping organisational priorities, workforce structures, and long-term talent investments.

ExecMind remains committed to supporting the industry with deep expertise, ongoing research, and thought leadership that advances the competitiveness of the Polish Life Science ecosystem. We look forward to continuing this effort and contributing to the sector's sustainable and globally relevant development.





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