

# Strategic Plan

for the Promotion of Mendel's Legacy to Science,  
Culture and Humanity in the Czech Republic and Austria.  
G.J. Mendel's Legacy to Science, Culture and Humanity, ATCZ278



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Prepared by: the Old Brno Abbey of the Order of St. Augustine

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## 1. Foreword:

The bicentenary of the birth of Gregor Johann Mendel, the father of genetics, celebrated in 2022, has given us the opportunity to present our brother Gregor as a man of faith and science who, through his incredible diligence, achieved a phenomenal scientific discovery, and even though his discovery was not understood during his lifetime, he indomitably continued in his scientific and spiritual career. For many years the Old Brno Abbey of the Order of St. Augustine used to be Mendel's home and as a result it owns authentic items related to Mendel's life and work.

Together with our project and strategic partners we have agreed that spreading Mendel's legacy should go hand in hand with the revelation of his entire personality; the world should know more about his childhood, his entry into the Order, his scientific work, religious faith, the source of his inspiration, the people who steered his life path, and the source of the knowledge that was later applied in his research in Brno. When communicating with the public, it is necessary to set up an appropriate communication strategy, which is the content of this strategic plan.

Thanks to the cooperation with Austrian project partners, we were able to unite the Czech and Austrian public to share a common interest in the personality of Gregor Johann Mendel. We showed that his discoveries also stem from the productive scholar years spent in Vienna and we want to emphasize the fact that if he had not spent his life on both sides of the current border, he might not have discovered his laws of heredity.

I believe that our strategic plan will serve as a basis for promoting Mendel's legacy in the years ahead, thus uniting the Czech and Austrian public in their common interest.

Mgr. P. Juan Provecho, OSA  
Delegate Provincial of the Abbey

## 2. Key Terminology



- Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Mendel's Legacy to Science, Culture and Humanity in the Czech Republic and Austria, hereinafter referred to as the **Strategic Plan**
- The Old Brno Abbey of the Order of St. Augustine, hereinafter referred to as the **Abbey**
- Masaryk University, hereinafter referred to as **MU**
- Mendel Museum of Masaryk University, hereinafter referred to as the **Mendel Museum**
- Museum of the Old Brno Abbey, hereinafter referred to as **MUSO**
- Universität Wien, hereinafter referred to as **Univie**
- Universität für Bodenkultur Wien, hereinafter referred to as **BOKU**
- Společně, o.p.s., hereinafter referred to as **Společně**

### 3. General Information on the Abbey Grounds

The Abbey complex, located at Brno, Mendlovo nám. 1, is an immovable cultural monument registered in the Central List of Cultural Monuments of the Czech Republic under the Register No. 23059/7-23. The complex is a part of the Brno Urban Conservation Area, established by Government Decree No. 54/1989 Coll., on the declaration of the territory of the historical cores of the cities of Kolín, Plzeň, Brno, Lipník nad Bečvou and Příbor. With effect from 1 July 2023, the Abbey will become a national cultural monument. At the same time, as indicated by the South Moravian Region it can also be legitimately expected that steps will be taken to include the Abbey on the indicative list for UNESCO inscription.

The Abbey belongs among the most important monastery grounds in the Czech Republic, and contains, among others, the remains of the oldest sacral building in Brno from the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries and a unique work of Baroque metalwork, a silver altar serving as a repository of perhaps the most important medieval sacral painting in Moravia called Palladium of Brno.

### 4. General Information on Mendel Greenhouse

The restored Mendel greenhouse is located on Abbey grounds on plot No. 8, cadastral zone Staré Brno. It is a multifunctional building made of glass and steel, intended especially for:

- Exhibitions
- Audio-visual productions
- Lectures, workshops
- Ceremonial events
- Private events, etc.

The greenhouse is designed as a barrier-free building with a capacity of about 60 people. The building itself is a legacy to the original greenhouse, which used to be on the grounds of the immovable cultural monument of the monastery until the 1950s, where Gregor Johann Mendel carried out most of his professional activities. The greenhouse is located in the garden of the Abbey, which is open to the public from 6.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m. to

6 p.m. on weekends. The greenhouse is adjacent to the entrance to the Mendel Museum, which also houses Café Mendel, where we can find barrier-free toilets.

## 5. Target Groups of the Strategic Plan

### 5.1. General Public

The general public is the main target group of the Strategic Plan. Mendel's legacy is tangible in everyday life and gaining public awareness of the common heritage of the Czech Republic and Austria is a significant benefit of cross-border cooperation. At the same time this important bond between the two countries will give the public on both sides of the border an additional feeling of togetherness.

The general public can be internally divided into:

1. Experts
2. Children and youth
3. Adults
4. Tourists
5. Believers
6. Seniors

Each of the sub-groups of the general public needs to be approached with respect to their specific needs in mind.

### 5.2. Educational and Research Institutions and Education/Training Centres and Schools

Improving the general public's knowledge of Mendel's legacy is to be achieved through educational and research institutions and education/training centres and schools, whereas this is where the project partners come from. These institutions are already being approached to use the greenhouse for professional and cultural activities. The project and strategic partners of the project, who fall under this target group, have already confirmed their long-term interest in using the greenhouse.

### 5.3. Local Public Entities

Local public entities promote Mendel's legacy as an important regional element within the scope of their activities, both through their own activities and their contributory and other established organisations.

Next target groups, legal entities, are and will be approached to use educational materials produced in the framework of the project and to spread awareness of Mendel's legacy among the general public.

## 6. Objectives of the Strategic Plan

### 6.1. Key Objectives of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan serves as a basis for the promotion of Mendel's legacy in the Czech Republic and Austria and as a guideline on effective use of the restored greenhouse. The goal is the benefit of all target groups and dissemination of Mendel's legacy also outside the project area borders.

The Strategic Plan ensures the sustainability of the project, the promotion of the common cultural heritage, its preservation and development because it is a key potential for cultural tourism.

## 6.2. Specific Objectives of the Strategic Plan

- Popularization of Mendel's legacy among target groups in the Czech Republic and Austria
- Summary of partner activities in the greenhouse
- Proposal for the future public use of the greenhouse

## 7. General Principles for the Implementation of the Strategic Plan

- Emphasis on the observance of the 3E (economy, efficiency, expediency) & 3K (communication, coordination, cooperation) principles
- Continuous evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Plan
- Consultations with the partners

## 8. Validity Period of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is prepared with a medium-term outlook of 5 years, i.e. until the end of 2028.

## 9. Communication Channels

To inform about the project the Abbey has established its own website (<https://www.opatstvibrno.cz/>) and the project website (<https://gjm200.cz/>).

Communication of Abbey's activities related to Mendel's legacy has long been provided by Společně, on social media through the Facebook profile @MendelFestival, which has a large coverage among the project's target groups, and on Twitter through the @MendelBrno account. A specific feature of Abbey's communication is also reaching out to the faithful at services, both in the Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and, in collaboration with the Bishopric of Brno, in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in Brno.

To inform about its activities the Abbey also uses the notice boards located on its premises.

Communication is in Czech and for larger events in English and German.

The project partners communicate on their websites and Twitter profiles, both in their native languages and in English.

A distinctive visual element is a 7 m high green balloon, the so-called inflatable pea, which Společně places at Mendel-related events both in the Czech Republic and Austria, thus drawing attention to Mendel and communicating Mendel's legacy in an engaging way.

## 10. Analytical Section

### 10.1. Accessibility of the Abbey



From the historical perspective, the Abbey is located in the oldest and most significant part of the town. A total of 15 public transport lines stop at Mendel Square, an important interchange, from which the Abbey grounds can be accessed. It is possible to arrive directly to the Abbey by car, there is a paid car park as well as plenty of parking spaces in the surrounding area. Free parking is available on the paved area in front of the Basilica during services, the same applies per request for tour bus parking. From Mendel Square there is a direct public transport line to the main train and bus station, and therefore the Abbey is easily accessible from everywhere. The bus lines of the Integrated Transport System of the South Moravian Region also leave from Mendel Square, and with one change to the bus it is possible to use public transport to Brno-Tuřany International Airport. The Abbey is within walking distance to BVV Exhibition Centre, to Vida!, it is adjacent to the Starobrno Brewery, which is much visited both in the summer and winter months. The Mendel Museum of MU is located directly on the Abbey grounds.

Services, including accommodation facilities, are of an excellent level, there are many hotels, restaurants, shops and sports facilities in the vicinity. In addition to exhibitions and fairs, large concerts of foreign performers and cultural festivals are held on the premises of BVV Exhibition Centre.

#### 10.2. Abbey's Attendance

The statistics are largely influenced by the waning pandemic of COVID-19, therefore the relevant figures are the ones from 2022, when the covid restrictions no longer affected museums, etc.

Within the Abbey premises we currently monitor the number of visitors of two entities, namely the Mendel Museum and MUSO.

The Mendel Museum recorded a total of 14,656 visitors by the end of October 2022.

MUSO recorded 3,368 visitors by the end of October.

From an operational point of view, it is possible to further increase the number of visitors to both museums, especially to MUSO, which is now preparing a new exhibition on Mendel's abbey career; in conjunction with the original Rubens painting, MUSO is therefore gaining in attractiveness.

In the summer months, the Abbey opens free of charge to the public on the occasion of both the Meeting Brno Festival (attendance usually up to 1,000 people) and the Mendel Festival (attendance usually up to 5,000 people, in 2022 more than 20,000 people).

#### 10.3. Abbey Rentals

The Abbey offers the following spaces for rent: Mendel's Refectory, Tagast's Hall, Cistercian Refectory, Chapter Hall, Monastery Courtyard, Basilica. In 2022, we concluded 279 partial rentals.

At the same time, there is a so-called medical house on the Abbey grounds, which houses 20 medical practices on 4 floors and we rent office space to 15 companies.

#### 10.4. Staffing of the Abbey Grounds

The Abbey employs qualified facility managers who have many years of experience in managing and repairing listed buildings. MUSO is managed by an art historian with a professional background in sacred art. The Mendel Museum is staffed by qualified curators and lecturers. The Abbey has a long-term cooperation with the National Heritage Institute and local conservation departments to be able to manage the cultural monument properly.

Společně provides the Abbey with advice on subsidies, seeks grant opportunities and represents the Abbey in strategic negotiations regarding Mendel's legacy in the Czech Republic and abroad. Společně also provides the Abbey with strategic recommendations regarding long-term plans how to disseminate Mendel's legacy.

The management of the greenhouse will be under an entity, either a natural or legal, which will ensure the proper maintenance and operation of the greenhouse and offer it for rent in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

#### 10.5. Estimate of an Unused Abbey's Potential

The restored greenhouse, which can be opened up on a longer side, will allow the garden on which it stands to be used for larger events such as team building, informal gatherings, weddings, etc.

It is also possible to consider opening up the garden at the Basilica. Following the return of the Order to the Abbey in the 1990s, it was decided to close this garden for safety reasons, as the monument listed enclosure wall of the site was in a state of disrepair and there was a risk of injury. The Abbey is currently seeking funding to repair the boundary wall and reconstruct the garden so that the public can once again enjoy this beautiful space of over 7,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The garden provides plenty of shade and space and can offer a welcome retreat for local kindergartens and schools as well as for the elderly or residents living in the area.

Opening of the garden will definitely have a positive impact on the locality, however, the negative impact may be an increased security risk to the Abbey due to the potential gatherings of troublesome individuals currently residing in the vicinity of Mendel Square. It will therefore be necessary to think about the security system and set up a cooperation with the Brno Municipal Police.

#### 10.6. Financing of the Mendel Greenhouse

Taken into account an analysis of rentals of other sections of the Abbey, it is a realistic expectation to rent the greenhouse 2.5 times a month, both for full-day rentals (usually various trainings, workshops, lecture series) and half-day rentals (artistic performances, ceremonial events, award ceremonies, etc.). With regards to maintenance costs, energy and staffing, we expect the operation of the greenhouse to be slightly loss-making from an economic point of view.

#### 10.7. Overview of Grant Opportunities for 2023



## Subsidies from the City of Brno budget

Area of culture

Area of monuments conservation

MMB individual subsidy

Applicant's minimum participation is 20%

## Subsidies from the South Moravian Region budget

Support for development in the field of culture and conservation of monuments

Individual subsidies of the South Moravian Region

Applicant's minimum participation is 50%

## Subsidies from EU funds

IROP, Cultural Heritage and Tourism, applicant's participation is 15%

INTERREG, Priority Axis 2 – Environment and Resources, subsidy 85% from EU,

5% from the state budget, applicant's participation is 10%

## 11. Existing Partnerships Promoting Mendel's Legacy in the Years Ahead

On 12 November 2022, at the opening ceremony of the Mendel Greenhouse, the Office of the Commissioner General of the Czech Republic's participation in the Universal World Expo, the Abbey and Společně o.p.s. signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, which aims to implement the statement that Gregor Johann Mendel is considered one of the Czech national symbols with which visitors to the EXPO Universal Exposition in Japan in 2025 will be able to identify, and which can characterize the Czech Republic as a creative place that promotes education and research. Thanks to this cooperation, Mendel's legacy will continue to spread, not only in the Czech Republic and Austria, but all over the world.

On 14 December 2022, the Mendel Museum, VIDA! and Společně, o.p.s. signed a document anchoring the cooperation between the museum, science centre and the company, exerting long-term activities and efforts to take care of Mendel's legacy. The cooperation will mainly concern mutual promotion of the institutions and harmonization of PR activities due to the proximity of the institutions and proximity of the target groups and focus, i.e. in popularization and educational activities.

The next memorandum, which will be concluded on the anniversary of G.J. Mendel's death on 6 January 2023 by and between MU, Mendel University in Brno, Global Change Research Institute CAS, the Abbey and Společně, o.p.s., establishes a common interest in the foundation of the Gregor Johann Mendel Sustainability Centre, the objective of which is to promote the principles of sustainable development.

Mendel Genetics Conference, organized as a tribute to Mendel's life and work in July 2022 by MU, Mendel University in Brno, the Moravian Museum, the Abbey and Společně, o.p.s., received an extraordinary recognition from both participants and the scientific community worldwide. The organisers have agreed to continue with the successful event and the next



conference will be held in 2025, when the Mendel Greenhouse will become the dominant feature of the conference.

The Work Group MENDEL22+ was established in Brno in 2020. The key objective is to coordinate the activities of the participating members (the City of Brno, the South Moravian Region and their contributory organisations, universities, museums, TIC and other institutions carrying out activities promoting Mendel). The synergic effect of this group ensured that the Mendel anniversary celebrations in the summer of 2022 were the talk of the country and the celebrations resonated around the world. It was agreed that the working group will continue to meet several times a year to keep members informed of each other's activities and to coordinate their steps. On December 6, 2022, the Work Group meeting took place directly in the Mendel Greenhouse.

The GJM200 Project has also had an exceptional recognition in Austria, and therefore the project teams from CZ and AT were invited to the Wiener Ball der Wissenschaften (Vienna Science Ball), which takes place on 28 January 2023 in the state rooms of the Vienna City Hall and is one of the three most important balls in Austria. This is an exceptional opportunity to present the results of the project to the Austrian scientific community and at the same time it is the proof of project's sustainability.

The representatives of the South Moravian Region and the City of Brno have also decided to hold one of the regular meetings of the South Moravian Region Council in the greenhouse, probably on 1 February 2023.

The representatives of the Abbey, the Mendel Museum, KLI, Univie and ESTA have jointly applied for a small grant to the Global Evolutionary Biology Initiative 2022. The grant will be used to develop teaching methods to make the science, especially evolution biology, more popular. The project also includes a two-day workshop that will be held in the Abbey, particularly in the greenhouse.

## 12. Popularisation of Mendel's Legacy among Target Groups in the Czech Republic and Austria

Both project and strategic partners are involved in the promotion of Mendel's legacy, depending on the agenda they are addressing. The partners can be divided into the following groups according to their focus areas:

### Cultural section

- Abbey
- Moravian Gallery
- Brno Conservatory
- Bishopric of Brno (hereinafter referred to as the Bishopric)
- Společně

### Popularization and educational section

- Moravian Science Centre Brno, contributory organisation (hereinafter referred to as VIDA!)
- Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (hereinafter referred to as NHM)
- Mendel Museum
- Společně

#### Tourism, PR and marketing

- South Moravian Region (hereinafter referred to as JMK)
- Statutory City of Brno (hereinafter referred to as the City of Brno)
- TIC BRNO, contributory organisation (hereinafter referred to as TIC)
- Tourism Centre – South Moravia, z.s.p.o. (hereinafter referred to as Tourism Centre)
- Společně
- Weinviertel Tourismus

#### Professional activities

- Konrad Lorenz Institut für Evolutions- und Kognitionsforschung (hereinafter referred to as KLI)
- MU
- BOKU
- Univie

The individual target groups will be addressed by the partners through their activities, communication channels, as well as online and offline communication campaigns.

### 12.1. Cultural Section

Cultural activities in the restored greenhouse, and consequently within the entire Abbey premises, are the key focus of this plan.

The Abbey already organises regular well-established events, such as:

- Commemoration of the death of G. J. Mendel: annually on 6 January
- Festival Mendel: annually over the weekend of the week around 20 July ([www.mendelje.cz](http://www.mendelje.cz))
- Advent programme for families with children: December
- Exhibition about the history of the monastery: May
- Concert of the choir Music from Old Brno: October
- Marian pilgrimage: August
- Reconciliation pilgrimage (Meeting Brno): June/July (<https://www.meetingbrno.cz/>)

Now, these events can also make use of the Mendel Greenhouse, further promoting Mendel's legacy by showing the public the attractiveness of this unique structure. The cultural section is aimed at all target groups. Particular emphasis will be placed on the elderly, visiting the local branch of SeniorPoint operated by Společně, and local parishioners, or the faithful in general. These target groups are generally not well targeted by local cultural scene and the Abbey considers it necessary to remedy this unsatisfactory situation.



The Mendel Festival, which has been organised by Společně and the Abbey for 6 years, has a relatively broad and stable visitor's base that comes to the festival every year. We need to say that thanks to a targeted campaign in the 2022 anniversary year, the festival attendance was five times higher, which is the number we intend to maintain for the years ahead.

The communication tool of the cultural section is mainly a targeted outreach towards the visitors of their respective institutions; the Abbey and the Bishopric can invite the visitors to participate in events in the greenhouse or the Abbey during the services (this already happened before the opening of the greenhouse), the Moravian Gallery and the Brno Conservatory can post flyers in their buildings and share the content of the online campaign that will be provided by the Abbey through Společně on social media.

The following new events can be organised in the cultural section in the future:

- Permanent exhibition of the Mendel Study (within MUSO, estimated opening at the end of 2022)
- Augustinian Week in Old Brno (around 24 April, which is the anniversary of the Augustinian Order)
- Exhibition of Marian Iconography (in August together with the Marian Pilgrimage)

## 12.2. Popularization and Education Section

On 14 December 2022 the Mendel Museum, VIDA! and Společně signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (see point 11.). In this section, emphasis will be placed on conveying information about Mendel's legacy to all target groups through targeted activities of the concerned institutions that focus on Mendel, genetics or natural sciences in general. These institutions approach the popularisation of science with very innovative methods, e.g. active participation of the participant, logical puzzles, creative work, which then leave a deep impression on the visitor.

At the same time, information leaflets will be available in these institutions with the aim to attract the public to visit the Abbey and to use the greenhouse. The institutions can also share the content of the online campaign provided by the Abbey on social media.

## 12.3. Tourism, PR and Marketing

It is a big advantage that the strategic partners from the Czech Republic and Austria, whose core activity is the promotion of destination tourism, are involved in the project. We can thus use communication channels of TIC, the Tourism Centre and Weinviertel Tourismus to attract tourists to Brno and present Mendel's legacy in its entirety. TIC can promote Mendel's legacy e.g. in the printed magazine KAM in Brno and on the popular online portal GotoBRNO.cz (already established on a regular basis), we can also place leaflets in the information centres as needed. The Tourism Centre can inform about events on [www.jizni-morava.cz](http://www.jizni-morava.cz) and at the same time prepare presentations for particular events. The City of Brno already regularly informs the public about Mendel's legacy in the monthly magazine

Metropolitan, on its social networks, in the information booth at the Main Railway Station, and the City of Brno informs the public about the greenhouse on a large-scale billboard in Mendel Square. The South Moravian Region spreads Mendel's legacy, for example, on Krajské LISTY. It is desirable to continue with these activities to spread Mendel's legacy also in the future. Weinviertel Tourismus can effectively disseminate Mendel's legacy to target groups from Austria on its website. Through targeted online campaigns on FB @MendelFestival, Společně can continue to strengthen the awareness of Mendel's legacy, inviting the public from the Czech Republic and Austria to Mendel-related events.

#### 12.4. Professional Activities

The partnership established in the framework of the project will continue, all institutions guarantying professional activities have expressed interest not only in spreading Mendel's legacy further, but also in using the Mendel Greenhouse for their activities, whether it be meetings, workshops, seminars, etc. All of these institutions are leaders in their fields, so through their communication channels (websites, social networks) they will inform about events held in the greenhouse or dedicated to Mendel's legacy and have the opportunity to reach not only the professional public, but also the general public in the Czech Republic and Austria.

The Abbey already hosts established professional events on a regular basis, such as:

- Mendel Days: November (<https://mendelovydney.cz/>)
- Mendel Lectures: continuously throughout the year (<https://mendellectures.muni.cz/>)

It is now being considered to move Mendel Days to July and to hold the event as a part of the week-long Mendel Festival programme to reach wider audience. If the attendance is high, the events can take place in both the refectory and the greenhouse. The Mendel Genetics Conference will also be held at the Abbey at regular intervals over several years, with the first event scheduled for 2025, and the next probably in 2027.

In July 2022, the Abbey hosted an international meteorological conference, as this is a field of Mendel's study that we also have to take into account when addressing the professional public.

In 2023, the Abbey will celebrate 700 years since its foundation, and a part of the professional conference will take place on the Abbey grounds.

The interest in the greenhouse and other premises of the Abbey was also expressed by several research groups from CEITEC.

At the same time, the entire Abbey grounds are visited by a large number of visitors as a part of accompanying programmes of various professional conferences held in Brno, as Mendel's legacy is extremely fascinating for the scientific community. We will target these events through cooperation with the Brno Convention Bureau, established by the Tourism Centre, as well as partner universities and scientific institutions. We can see a great potential also in Work Group MENDEL22+, especially due to the established cooperation and dissemination of information about the Mendel-related events held in Brno.



### 13. Conclusion

To be able to effectively spread information about Mendel's legacy, it is essential that the partners, who develop activities related to the life and work of G. J. Mendel, set up a long-term communication and a framework of cooperation. For the visitors, who do not live in Brno, it is crucial to present Mendel comprehensively within the entire site, not separately only in connection with the individual partners. It is desirable that the communication runs online on social networks of the individual partners, it is also necessary to use a stable base of Společně followers on social networks and expand it, other partners should then be appropriately tagged and should share these posts.

The offline campaign also needs to be targeted comprehensively, one of the examples is for instance a „Mendel's Old Brno in the new“ leaflet, attracting the visitors to visit the Abbey and VIDA!, where they can learn everything about Mendel's legacy and plan for instance one “Mendel Day” while being in Brno. The leaflet is available in Czech, German and English. In addition, it is necessary to continue using a visual promotion, which is the inflatable pea, both in the Czech Republic and Austria.