



# **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

2021-2022

*UE fiscdi*

Executive Agency for Higher  
Education, Research, Development  
and Innovation Funding



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*“UEFISCDI is one of the first Romanian public institutions to undertake the implementation of a Gender Equality Plan. Through this initiative, we aim to continue the role of innovators that we have assumed and try to be a best practice model for other institutions in Romania, public or private. But, beyond setting an example, we wish to start a dialogue with our partners on this extremely serious subject, which has long been left behind our interests and actions: gender equality in Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) in Romania. It is time to admit that we will be able to reach our potential in RDI only if we manage to transform it into an inclusive environment, because equality, diversity and inclusion are the pillars of a healthy culture of innovation. RDI is a dynamic and diverse domain that should be accessible to everyone and addressed to everyone. It is diversity that can open new horizons in a field, often difficult to predict, and in which success may come by walking off the beaten track and may take extremely diverse forms; and equality and inclusive environments are indispensable to diversity. By recognizing and cultivating as many interactions as possible, we will broaden our knowledge, we will better understand the world around us and we will be able to find better solutions to the problems we face as individuals, organizations, communities or nations.*

*UEFISCDI is committed to upholding and promoting these values, including by means of this Gender Equality Plan, and this initiative is a small step we are taking in tackling a major issue, in understanding inequalities, eliminating imbalances and barriers, so as to ensure equal opportunities and rights for all.*

*I would like to thank my colleagues who devoted their passion and determination into the drafting of this document, our CALIPER project partners who guided us in designing this gender equality plan, the committee members who will oversee the plan’s implementation and will monitor the actions, and the partners from the Romanian society who have already shown their support and openness.*

*I conclude with a manifest-invitation addressed to everyone who is a member of the RDI and innovation entrepreneurship community. Diversity and an inclusive environment matter to the entire society. Let’s act together as a transformational force”*

**Adrian Curaj, general director of UEFISCDI**

# Introduction

The Gender Equality Plan to be implemented by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) in the period 2021-2022 is the first step in a broader approach that UEFISCDI is undertaking to promote equality within the institution.

The Gender Equality Plan is an instrument that, on the one hand, reiterates some of the values that are central to the institution's governance (such as equality, inclusion, diversity, transparency), and on the other hand proactively responds to challenges to ensure that gender equality principles are upheld in all institutional processes and practices.

Institutional support for gender equality comes as a natural response, as in its role of key actor of the innovation ecosystem, UEFISCDI is highly interested in social responsibility, and this role is strongly based on equal opportunities between women and men. Increased attention to gender equality issues reinforces the fact that UEFISCDI recognizes that men and women have equally important professional roles, in a context of equal opportunities, regardless of their area of activity or hierarchical level, and therefore have diverse experiences and perspectives, thus bringing a complex approach within the organization. Gender equality is a corollary of equal rights and freedoms and guarantees equal opportunities. It also enhances the development of skills and the acquisition of new knowledge, by including everyone, regardless of gender, promoting a better and more motivating work environment and, consequently, higher levels of productivity and satisfaction among employees. UEFISCDI is therefore committed to ensuring the promotion and incorporation of a culture of diversity and inclusion based on respect and equal opportunities. Such a culture, integrated in the institution's identity, will serve as a reference for the organization's internal and external activities.

UEFISCDI is among the first public institutions in Romania to undertake the elaboration and implementation of a Gender Equality Plan. The process began in 2020 with an internal analysis of how gender equality is addressed within the institution and an overview of the national legislative framework. Following this internal analysis, the working group proposed a series of measures aimed at addressing those institutional issues that would have ensured more equal opportunities within the organization. These measures were tested in several meetings, both with institutional partners, as well as with the UEFISCDI management team, and the feedback was used in the drafting of a series of actions that formed the basis of this Gender Equality Plan.

The current Gender Equality Plan was developed within the EU CALIPER project in which UEFISCDI is a partner. UEFISCDI is also a piloting platform, so our initiative will help us to apply and learn, and you to initiate your own discussions on this topic, to experiment and, finally, to learn together.



# Objectives, Principles and courses of action

Under the motto "We continue to innovate", UEFISCDI aims to promote more inclusive perspectives and organizational culture, both among employees, as well as in the interactions with institutional partners, initiating dialogue within the RDI community on the importance and benefits of respecting gender equality principles.

The measures adopted within the present Gender Equality Plan aim to:

- Promote mutual respect and ensure equal opportunities for UEFISCDI employees
- Recognize differences as a potential source of development and growth, at both individual as well as organizational level, and to promote and enhance diversity
- Adopt positive measures meant to address and prevent inequalities, promoting both internally and externally values that ensure equal opportunities in RDI.

# Objectives.

## Principles and courses of action



In the fight against inequalities and towards the elimination of imbalances and barriers, in order to ensure equal rights and opportunities, UEFISCDI has assumed a set of principles to guide the entire process:

- Inclusion - promoting an inclusive culture based on respect for dignity, equality, differences, and on the fight against stereotypes, discrimination, harassment and violence (in any form)
- Diversity - promoting mutual respect and a framework that integrates cultural, religious or ideological differences; undertaking initiatives that enhance the understanding of diversity and, consequently, promote the transfer of knowledge
- Gender equality - promoting at institutional level practices and policies that ensure a balanced representation at all levels of decision
- Equality - promoting institutional processes that ensure equal opportunities, as well as equal and efficient access one's career in the institution (from recruitment to career development)
- Work-life balance - promoting individual or collective measures that reconcile family life with professional life
- Transparency and integrity - development of practices to ensure institutional transparency by applying the principles of excellence, equal opportunities and diversity
- Freedom - developing and encouraging critical and creative thinking by protecting freedom of expression; promoting a healthy and safe working environment
- Personal development - supporting the achievement of individual potential by promoting personalized measures



## **The main courses of action standing at the base of the Gender Equality Plan are:**

- Human resources
- Institutional governance
- Institutional communication
- Sexual/moral harassment
- Research funding
- Innovation ecosystem



## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Recruitment and selection

**Proposed measure:**

Developing an informative kit with specific instructions regarding ways to tackle gender discrimination and recognize and prevent stereotypes in the recruiting process

**Objective:**

Provide support to recruiting experts so as to enhance their awareness with regard to the stereotypes that may intervene in the selection process

**Timeframe:**

September 2021 – December 2021

**Target audience:** recruitment experts //  
Human Resources department //  
UEFISCDI employees

**Secondary objectives:**

- To raise awareness in UEFISCDI regarding any possible discrimination that could affect the recruitment process
- To improve institutional commitment to gender equality
- To better communicate the measures regarding gender sensitive recruitment protocols

**Activities**

- Research for best practices regarding gender sensitive recruitment protocols
- Developing a first draft of the informative kit
- Gathering feedback from stakeholders regarding the informative kit
- Organizing a training with the recruitment experts and HR department in order to present the measures included in the informative kit
- Informing all UEFISCDI staff about the updates on the recruitment protocols
- Evaluate the recruitment experts' knowledge on the means to ensure gender equality in the selection process

**Performance indicators:**

- Short term: >90% of all staff should be aware of the existence of gender sensitive recruitment protocols
- Medium term: when evaluated >80% of the recruitment experts should be able to tackle any kind of situation that can lead to discrimination

**Outcomes:**

- One informative kit
- One training session



## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Working conditions and work-life balance

**Proposed measures:**

**1. Back-to-work training**

**Objective:**

To help employees returning from parental leave to get accustomed to the recent developments in the institution and the projects they were previously working on

**Timeframe:**

September 2021 – June 2022

**Target audience:**

employees returning from parental leave

**Secondary objectives:**

- To reduce by 50% the period needed by an employee recently returned from parental leave to readjust and have the same work efficiency as before leaving
- To reduce the possible stress that an employee has to face due to the fact that when returning he/she is dealing with two simultaneous different situations: regaining their work competences and being a parent

**Activities:**

- Training sessions with the department managers on how to implement support measures
- Information sessions among employees about the importance of the transition period and on the means to offer support
- Developing specific trainings for each department
- Evaluation

**Outcomes:**

- one training for department managers (7 people trained)
- one training for each department (7 people trained)

**Performance indicators:**

- Short term: raising awareness about the importance of work life balance
- Medium term: increase employees' work efficiency and professional satisfaction by 50% in the first 3 months after their return from parental leave
- Long term: when evaluated, more than 70% of UEFISCDI's employees see an improvement in their work life balance



## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Working conditions and work-life balance

**Proposed measures:**

**2. Soft skills training**

**Objective:**

To increase work efficiency and improve work life balance for employees returning from parental leave

**Timeframe:**

September 2021 – June 2022

**Target audience:**

Employees returning from parental leave

**Secondary objectives:**

- More than 80% of the employees returning to work improve their soft-skills needed in order to have a healthy work-life balance
- Increase time management skills for more than 70% of the employees returning to work

**Activities:**

- Research for best practices and similar trainings regarding soft skills and time management for the employees returning to work
- Developing and organizing training sessions and an informative kit on the topic
- Evaluating the result of the training session

**Outcomes :**

+50% employees trained, one training

**Performance indicators:**

- Short term: raising awareness about the importance of developing soft skills among employees
- Medium term: when evaluated more than 70% should be able to indicate precise soft skills improved or developed following the trainings
- Long term: >70% of trained employees see improvements in their daily work routine and in their work life balance

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Career progression

#### Proposed measures

##### 1. Mentoring for leadership positions

#### Objective:

To increase the number of employees acceding to leadership positions

#### Timeframe:

September 2021 – July 2022

#### Target audience:

All employees

#### Secondary objectives:

- To increase by 50% the number of employees that become aware of their skills following the mentorship programme
- To increase by 50% the employees fit to accede to leadership positions

#### Activities:

- evaluation of leadership qualities and competences
- developing a “shadowing” program (each participant is partnered with a top/ middle management colleague and shadows his/her routine for a specific period of time)
- selection of relevant candidates
- development of personalized coaching & mentoring program for the selected participants

#### Outcomes:

10-15 employees trained

#### Performance indicators:

- Short term: raising awareness about the importance of mentoring programs
- Medium term: when leadership positions are available, more 70% of the employees in the recruitment process should be mentees of the program
- Long term: former mentees become mentors for future generations of employees



## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Career progression

#### Proposed measures

#### 2. Internal personal development programmes

##### Objective:

On one hand, employees participating in the programme discover their latent potential and the abilities they do not fully use, and on the other hand department managers acknowledge their colleagues' abilities as well as their other interests

##### Timeframe:

September 2021 – July 2022

##### Target audience:

- Employees in execution positions
- department managers

##### Secondary objectives:

- help employees match their skills with their task
- help middle manager better distribute the tasks according to employees' skills

##### Activities:

- evaluation of the skills and competences, both by the employees in execution positions, as well as by department managers
- developing a career plan for participants in the program (a collaborative action between employees and manager)
- evaluation of the program

##### Outcomes:

Career plans developed for each participant

##### Performance indicators:

- Short term: >25% of employees enrolled in the programme
- Middle term: increase by 50% the number of participants that become aware of their abilities and acknowledge whether these abilities are put to best use
- Long term: when evaluated, more than 60% of the participants agree that their skills are put to best use

## SEXUAL AND MORAL HARASSMENT

**Proposed measure:**

Developing an informative kit regarding sexual and moral harassment

**Objective:**

Raising awareness on sexual and moral harassment, on how to recognize abuse and the means to identify and differentiate between the various types of abuse, defining limits and concepts

**Timeframe:**

September 2021 – January 2022

**Target audience:**

All employees

**Activities:**

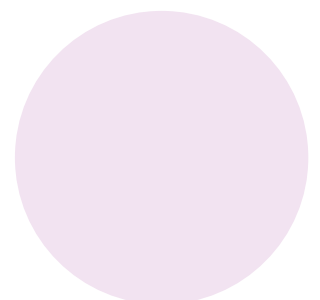
- Internal research for best practices and case studies regarding sexual or moral harassment informative kits
- Developing the informative kit
- Organizing a training on the content of the informative kit
- Evaluate the knowledge gained by employees following the training session

**Outcomes:**

- one informative kit
- one training session

**Performance indicators:**

- Short term: >90% employees informed
- Middle term: when evaluated more than 80% of the employees should be able to identify different types of harassment and indicate what further actions should be taken
- Long Term: More than 80% of the employees are familiar with the concepts and types of sexual/moral harassment and know what action to take in case of any kind of sexual or moral harassment



## INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

**Proposed measure:**

Establishing a Gender Equality Body (GEB)

**Objective:**

Establishing a body whose main activity will be to ensure gender equality in UEFISCDI and the implementation and supervision of the Gender Equality Plan

**Timeframe:**

September 2021 – December 2021

**Target audience:**

All employees

**Secondary objectives:**

- Identifying the employees most fit to be part of this body
- Identifying potential external partners to be part of this body
- Making the body operational
- Investing the body with institutional authority

**Activities:**

- Conducting discussions with top management in order to identify the most appropriate internal and external candidates
- The actual selection of candidates
- Developing mechanisms to ensure the operationalization of the body and its investment with institutional authority
- Developing protocols for the supervision of the GEP's implementation

**Outcomes:**

5 employees + 1-2 external stakeholders to be part of GEB

**Performance indicators:**

- Short term: +10 candidates express their interest for GEB
- Medium term: more than 75% of the performance indicators in the GEP are attained
- Long term: GEB remains operational even after the GEP's implementation

## INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

**Proposed measure:**

Developing an informative gender sensitive communication kit

**Objective:**

To ensure that all institutional communication, both internal and external, is gender sensitive

**Timeframe:**

September 2021 – January 2022

**Target audience:**

All employees in the communication department

**Secondary objectives:**

- Adopt protocols regarding gender sensitive communication and the use of an inclusive and indiscriminatory language
- Training addressed to employees on how to recognize language leading to discrimination and on indiscriminatory communication instruments
- Improving internal and external institutional communication skills

**Activities:**

- Research on gender sensitive communication kits and best practice examples
- Developing the informative kit
- Adopting protocols for internal and external communication
- Organizing a training session
- Evaluation of the knowledge gained by participants in the training session

**Outcomes:**

- one informative kit regarding gender sensitive communication
- one training session
- one communication protocol developed by the communication department

**Performance indicators:**

- Short term: More than 90% of the employees are informed on the communication protocols, >80% participate in the training sessions
- Middle term: More than 70% of the informed employees understand the need and importance of using gender sensitive language both in internal and external communication
- Long term: When evaluated, more than 80% of employees use a gender sensitive language and more than 60% follow the communication protocols on daily basis



## RESEARCH FUNDING

### **Proposed measures:**

#### **1. Analysis of women participation in research projects**

#### **Objective:**

Understand the reasons why women participate in smaller numbers in research programs

#### **Timeframe:**

September 2021 – July 2022

#### **Target audience:**

Researchers applying for funding at UEFISCDI, Brainmap researchers

#### **Secondary objectives:**

- Understand how women's reduced participation in research programmes impacts research
- Identify means for encouraging women researchers to join research areas typically dominated by men

#### **Activities:**

- Identify the pool of projects to be analyzed
- Conduct the analysis
- Draw conclusions following the analysis
- Promoting the results and recommendations

#### **Outcomes:**

Policy recommendation drafted

#### **Performance indicators:**

- Short and medium term - more than 50% of projects funded via UEFISCDI are analyzed
- Long term: the proposed recommendations are considered when preparing the future calls for projects





## RESEARCH FUNDING

### **Proposed measures:**

#### **2. Training on gender equality addressed to research projects evaluators**

### **Objective:**

Ensure that when evaluating projects with a gender component, evaluators are able to recognize this component and do not misinterpret it or mis-judge it as 'ideological'

### **Timeframe:**

September 2021 - July 2022

### **Target audience:**

Evaluators of projects financed by UEFISCDI

### **Secondary objectives:**

- developing informative materials on how evaluation may be subject to gender discrimination

### **Activities:**

- research on examples and best practices on gender-sensitive project evaluation
- drafting of informative kits regarding gender equality and how gender equality should be approached when evaluating research projects
- organizing training sessions / online video trainings

### **Outcomes:**

One informative kit, one information session/video material

### **Performance indicators:**

- Short and medium-term: >80% of evaluators take part in the training sessions and go through the information kits
- Long term: a 50% decrease in the number of misinterpretations affecting the evaluation process



## INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

**Proposed measure:**

Implementing quotas/targets in speaker panels at the events

**Objective:**

- Increasing the representation of women in speaker panels

**Timeframe:**

September 2021 – December 2021

**Target audience:**

Speakers invited at Innovation Café events

**Secondary objectives:**

- to increase women's visibility in the Romanian innovation ecosystem  
- to increase the number of women speakers by 50%  
- to increase the number of topics related to gender equality by 50%

**Activities:**

- Elaborate guidelines on the topic  
- Establish quotas for each event (depending on subject)  
- Promote the implementation of quotas at events  
- Propose a list of topics related to gender equality to be addressed in the Innovation Café events

**Outcomes:**

One guideline drafted

**Performance indicators:**

- Short & medium term: when evaluated, more than 50% participants at Innovation Café events are able to identify a substantial increase in gender equality topics  
- Long term: An increase by 50% of women participation at events

