

შოთა რუსთაველის სახარტიველოს
ეროვნული სამეცნიერო ფონდი

SHOTA RUSTAVELI NATIONAL SCIENCE
FOUNDATION OF GEORGIA

Internal Gender Equality Assessment

Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia



This research has been carried out by SRNSFG in the context of CALIPER project through the funded European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation under Grant Agreement No 873134.

Executive Summary

In the context of the Horizon 2020 project, [CALIPER](#), the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG) has conducted an analysis to identify gender bias and inequalities inside the Institution.

This internal assessment followed the **three ERA priorities on Gender Equality** and examined them in the context of **specific activity/service areas** (e.g., human resources, institutional governance, institutional communication, research, teaching, student services, transfer to market, sexual harassment, intersectionality) inside SRNSFG.

The assessment depicts the situation based on data collected from the previous three years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2018-2020). SRNSFG has carried out the research activities (surveys, interviews, focus groups, desk research), involving different stakeholders (high-, and middle-management level, professors, researchers, etc.), and collected their qualitative and quantitative data.

These findings may lay the grounds for the design of the SRNSFG'S Gender Equality Plan and its implementation and exploitation by the Institution as envisioned by the [CALIPER](#) project.



Introduction

Purpose & Scope

The internal assessment has been implemented by SRNSFG as the first step towards structural changes. The core goal has been to identify the existing gender bias and inequalities in internal processes, practices and procedures. The further analysis has concluded on the exact situation of the organisation and on the measurement units useful to compare and monitor the progress.

The internal assessment analysis has involved all the ERA priorities on Gender Equality¹:

1. Removing barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers.
2. Addressing gender imbalances in decision-making processes.
3. Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation content.

The above priorities have been addressed through the analysis of the following research institutions activity/service areas:

1. Human resources
2. Institutional governance
3. Institutional communication
4. Research funding
5. Gender/sexual harassment
6. Intersectionality

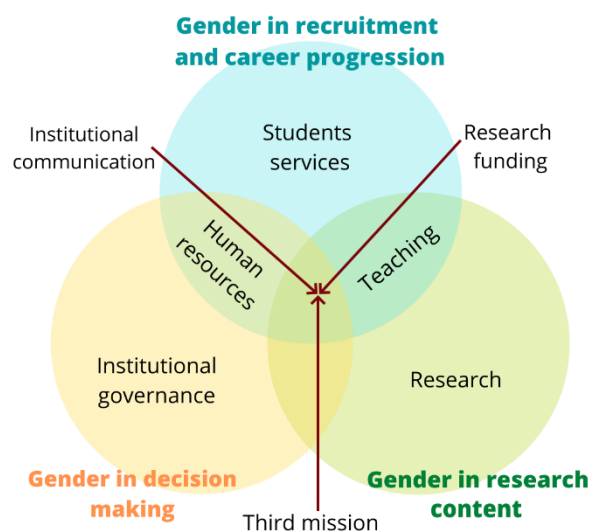


Figure 1: Connections between ERA priorities and research institutions activity/service areas

The matrix on the right represents how the 3 ERA priorities on gender equality in research touch upon the different activity- service areas/functions of SRNSFG.

¹ Communication of the European Commission of the 17.07.2017



Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (Research Funding Organisation)

The data validation

The internal assessment of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG) that follows stems from qualitative and quantitative data. They have been collected by the institution researchers, through desk research and policy analysis, interviews, surveys and focus groups.

The data collection process

Different departments of SRNSFG were involved, according to the other research area (human resources, research funding, etc.). Taking into consideration organisation size, some of the SRNSFG departments participated in the research, not the total of them. For example, based on organisational structure, there is not a separate human resources department. The department of Law and Administration is responsible for the recruitment and career progression, and thus it was involved in the research. This department was also in the research areas of institutional governance, intersectionality and gender/sexual harassment. For the institutional communication area, the Office of Public Relations was involved. For the research funding area, the Science Department was concerned because it is responsible for calls announcement and the evaluation process. Besides that, for the collection of Administration data (Director General, Deputies of Director General), the Department of Finance and Economics and Office of International Relations and Fundraising actively participated.

The data are referring to the years from 2017 up to 2020. The data collection took place during April until end of August 2020. During the assessment, all required data were gathered according to every required indicator (D1.1). However, there were some limitations during the data collection process. Mainly, the limitations were related to the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some desk research data were not available electronically, and the relevant hardcopies were stored at the office, where the access was limited for an extended period. Besides that, it was hard to communicate with persons to receive feedback, especially for focus groups and interviews. In the end, it required more time but was managed through online tools. Apart from the limitations related to COVID-19, the additional ones were associated with the lack of detailed data collected in the last three years at the organisation.

Source of data

In terms of **desk research and policy analysis**, it is essential to mention that the SRNSFG has no long-term experience in dealing with gender equality. Therefore, it doesn't have particular policies and regulations. The SRNSFG is at the beginning of development and implementation for a gender equality system at the organisation. As a result, it was not possible to analyse concrete policies and approaches towards gender equality. However, the process of internal assessment demonstrated helped to find out the potential gaps and problems related to gender equality where changes are required. Relevant recommendations identified in particular areas, such as the development of gender equality policies, regulations and tools. The SRNSFG gathered data from the resources listed in 0 References.

Turning to the **interviews**, SRNSFG has completed **15 interviews** in total, with high and middle managers. The majority of them have been females, 12 out of 15. One **focus group** took place on 29th June 2020 at Tbilisi, Georgia with six (6) participants, including a high-level, a middle-level and four low-level managers. Two (2) of them were males and the rest four (4) females. With regards to the **survey**, thirty-eight (38) responds collected by six (6) males and thirty-two females (32) with different profiles, including full Professors, head of the department, the staff of administrative, HR and other offices.



Responders’ gender distribution shows that most females provided feedback through interviews and surveys while in focus groups, the difference between the male and female participants seems to be much lower.

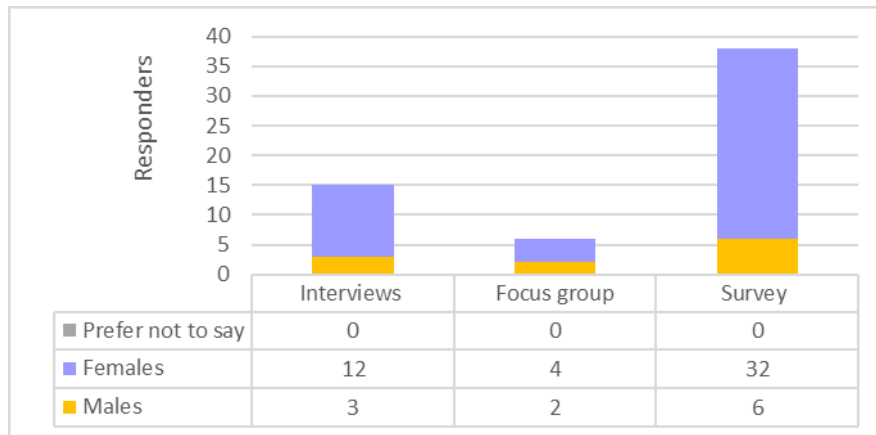


Figure 2: SRNSFG responders gender distribution

About the responders’ position in the institution, it is positive that both in interviews and focus groups participated high and middle-level managers.

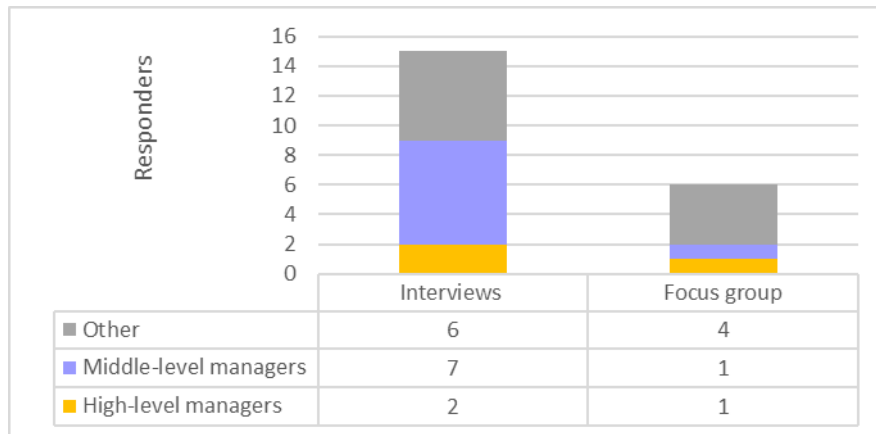


Figure 3: SRNSFG interviews and focus group responders’ position in the organisation

The survey distribution of responses is grouped into the different position of the persons involved, and it is depicted in the figure below.

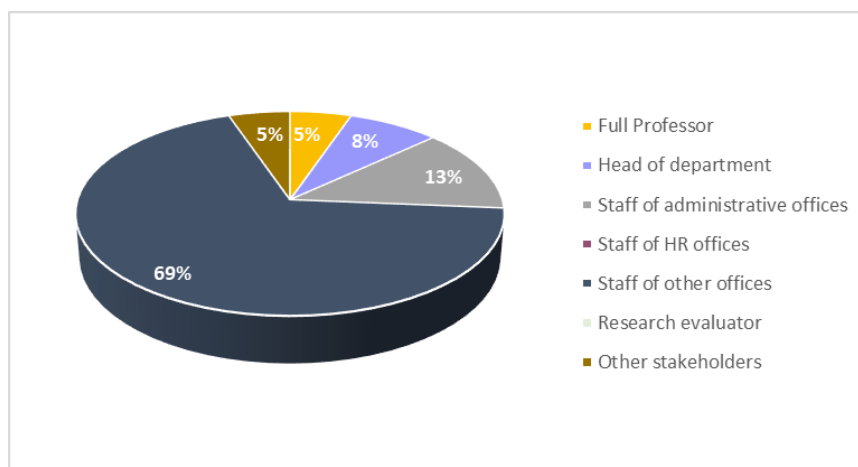


Figure 4: SRNSFG survey responders’ position in the organisation



Internal assessment analysis of the activity/service areas

1. Human resources

The SRNSFG project team has been investigating the existence of **gender-sensitive recruitment protocols/policies** and **policies to prevent gender bias in recruitment** in the organisation. The research results from interviews, focus groups and desk research show that unfortunately, at organisation level, there are no particular gender-sensitive recruitment protocols/policies. However, SRNSFG is obliged to follow the regulations provided at a national level; Article 9 of “Law of Georgia on Public Service” and Chapter 1, article 2, sub-article 4 of “Labor Code of Georgia”.

Additional research work in the field **career progression** has been carried out to explore the existence of **transparent and flexible criteria for the promotion** of staff (both academic and non-academic) of the institution. Based on the interview results with high and middle management level, the organisation doesn’t have any flexible or fixed criteria for the promotion of staff. The career progression can be done only following the particular rule; the employee of the Foundation, who is appointed to the position through competition is able to take place on the basis of the Head’ recommendation. Complementary, investigation took place to identify any **specific measures** that adopt SRNSFG to support the **career progression** of the under-represented gender, but no relevant measures have been found.

The research carried out at the human resources division to have a full view of the gender balance status during the last three years at several sub-areas. At the sub-area of recruitment, more females (65%) are applying for **open working positions**. The **success rates** of women applicants are increasing at the departments of Science, Law and Administration and IT, while this rate is decreasing at the Administration department. About the current staff, a few more males have a temporary contract (57%), and also more males are having children (43%).

At the **horizontal segregation** sub-area, the top management level is comprised mainly by men (67%) while more women are the staff of the mid and low management levels (90% and 64% respectively). At the **recruiting and promotion boards** sub-area, more women are part of the boards (70%)². At the **career progression** sub-area, it seems that it takes four years for men aged from 30-40 to get a promotion, while it takes only one year for younger and older men to progress. On the other hand, it takes almost two years for women of any age to get a promotion. About the number of persons who applied for a promotion, both the same number of males and females applied from the low and middle management level³. The statistics about **work-life balance**, shows along the last three years, women used to drop out or break their careers in a shorter period than men, but this gap is decreasing progressively. On the other hand, we notice that as time passes, more women are dropping out. No parental leaves and no part-time/flexible hours arrangements were at the organisation. During the last three years, there weren’t any teleworking positions at organisation. After COVID-19 situation most of the departments switched to remote working. Not all of the departments were able to switch due to physical infrastructure. However, it was identified that some positions are able to switch to remote working. But it is not clear, and there are no expectations that after the pandemic regulations end any teleworking positions will be introduced. In terms of remuneration, the gender Pay Gap is 15,88%. At SRNSFG there is no hourly-paid system of remuneration. Employees receive a set amount of salary that is paid monthly. The gender pay gap is calculated according to monthly salaries. The figures below depict the overall situation.

² It is average distribution of gender of those who are permanent members of the board for every announced vacancy. The figure below does not include other different members of the board whose participation depends on the department

³ Calculations of average number of years for promotion for w/m are made based only on the data available electronically



Human resources



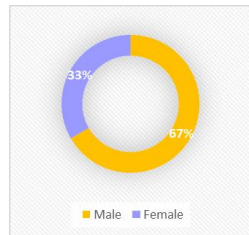
Figure 5: SRNSFG HR current situation (part A)



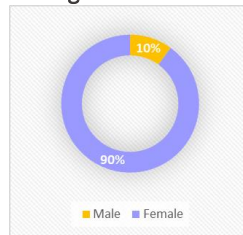
Human resources

Horizontal segregation

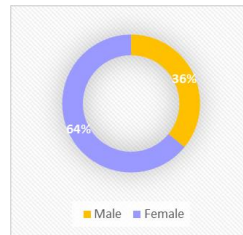
Top level management



Gender distribution of staff per level
Middle level management

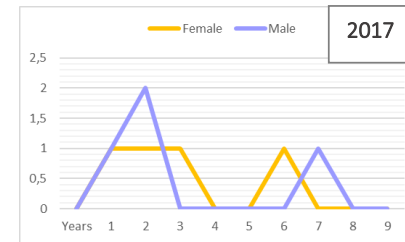


Low level management



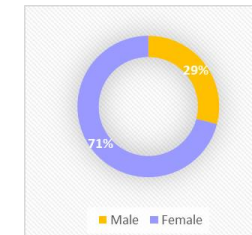
Work life balance

Female career breaks and drop-outs in the last 3 years



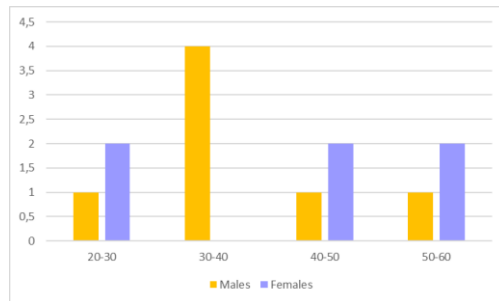
Recruiting and promotion boards

Average distribution of gender in the last 3 years

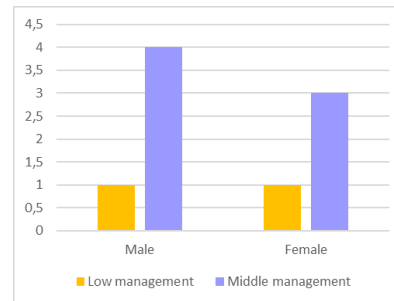


Career progression

Average number of years/per for promotion per age:



Number of women and men applying for a promotion in the last 3 years



Remuneration

Rewards or additional remuneration by gender in the last 3 years

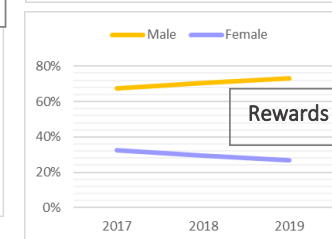
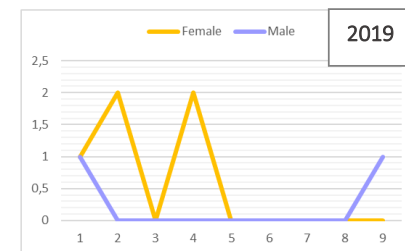
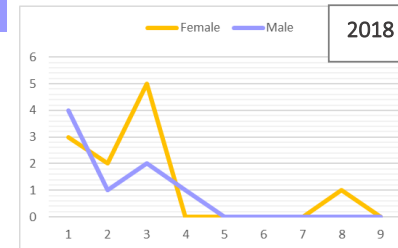
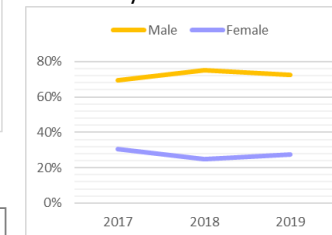


Figure 6: SRNSFG HR current situation (part B)



2. Institutional governance

Until now, it seems that **the commitment of SRNSFG to gender equality** is limited. The official documents and regulations don't mention any gender equality issues, and in addition, there is no ongoing evaluation/monitoring process on gender equality and no gender-sensitive budgeting. However, there is an electronic system for the gender-disaggregated data collected. In the system are recorded the data submitted for the call applications and organisation's open vacancies, data of funded grants and winners of the calls, data of evaluation committees. It includes the gender dimension and provides the overall statistics of the distribution of male/female participants.

Institutional activities to foster gender balance in **decision-making processes** are not in place yet. Currently, there are no strategies/policies to foster gender balance in decision-making process which can provide gender quotas applying to the appointment of leadership positions or elections to decision making positions/governing bodies. There are not either strategies/policies that guarantee the maintenance of gender balance in this area.

In addition, the organisation structure does not include **gender equality bodies** or any other positions related to gender equality. The total budget does not foresee any unique financial resources for this sector.

The figure below shows the current status with regards to institutional governance.

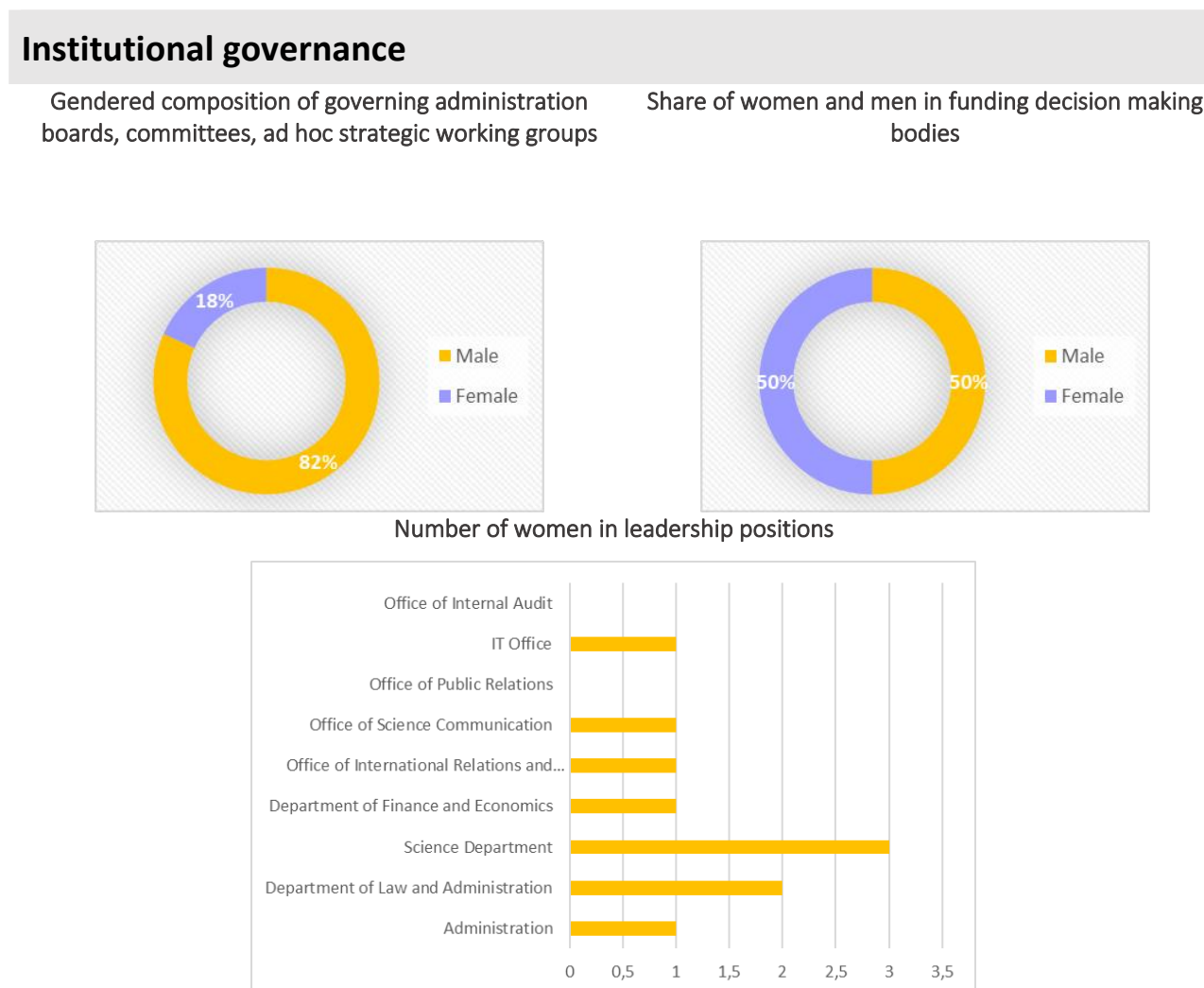


Figure 7: SRNSFG institutional governance current situation



3. Institutional communication

The institutional communication is comprised of two parts, the external which is targeted to the audience of the institution and the internal, which is targeted to the members of the institution.

To assess **external institutional communication**, the research team examined the gender sensitivity of the public institution website and other printed publications. During the desktop research, specific criteria and communication materials that reflect “diversity” (in terms of sex, age, ethnicity, disability, etc.) haven’t been identified in policy documents. However, the materials of the institution are presenting genders equally.

At corporate media product, press releases, announcements, distribution of audio-video material, inclusive language is used, the content is free of sexist language, discriminatory terminology and how the content will be perceived by people of different sexes is considered. The SRNSFG **website** doesn’t promote gender equality as a core message. But, it presents the information on the various activities, awards and calls of other organisations which are related to the topic of women in the science field and helps to promote concrete events. It also contains information about the Foundation's activities aiming provision of a better understanding of the role of women in the development of science in Georgia, as well as the contribution of women scientists from different countries to the development of Georgian sciences, popularisation of Georgian history and culture. The images that appear at the website home page are uploaded according to the ongoing events, and they are usually changed every 1-2 weeks. The gender ratio depends on the events which take places and who are the participants of the events. Through **social media**, a strategy does not exist about posts relevant to gender equality. However, SRNSFG promotes well-known women scientists through **awareness-raising campaigns**, which is important for the establishment of gender equality priorities in the public consciousness that women and men play an equal role in all areas of public life, including science.

The internal communication of the institution has space for many additional activities. On the one hand, there are International guidelines, recommendations, and local laws - "On Gender Equality", "On Freedom of Speech and Expression", "On the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination" are considered in administrative communication. On the other hand, there are not any institutional policies in place, and therefore we do not meet tailored actions in this respect.

4. Research funding

The research around research funding is related to the current evaluation process that the institution follows to grant a research funding and is also about funding programme.

The SRNSFG existing evaluation processes do not include any official guidelines and protocols about gender equality. In particular, the funding **decision-making** bodies, and the scientific evaluation panels are not measured whether they are gender-balanced. The SRNSFG policies about the **recruitment of evaluators** do not include any specific gender-sensitive protocols. These policies are determined by the Code of Conduct for Independent Experts under the Decree N87 of the Director-General of SRNSFG. The code does not include criteria on gender-sensitive recruitment of evaluators. In the following, at SRNSFG, there are no guidelines on gender stereotypes and unconscious bias to evaluators. The evaluators are not trained, and also, they are not provided with any kind of gender-related evaluation practices. Turning to the **evaluation forms/templates** of the grant call administrated by SRNSFG, currently, they do not include a paragraph on gender equality in research teams and gender dimension in research content. The annual statistics of SRNSFG show, there are more women participants and winners than men, but it is not achieved through the foundation’s internal regulations. The adoption of the gender dimension in the evaluation form is crucial.



According to Normative Acts and Regulations of the grant calls⁴ the Foundation uses only single-blind review process when the applicants do not know who the evaluators are. There is no double-blind review process adopted by SRNSFG to avoid gender bias. Adoption of the **double-blind review process** for SRNSFG would require systematic changes, such as new evaluation criteria for every grant call, new forms and templates for grant call documentation and useful annexes. Opinions of the person survey are contradictory on this matter, whether the double-review process is sufficient to avoid gender bias. Moreover, the integration of the gender analysis into **research content** is not yet foreseen by the organisation, since there are not in place guidelines or training for grant applicants and evaluators for this topic.

At the beginning of every year, the Government of Georgia approves the official annual budget of SRNSFG, where every expenditure is planned beforehand. Until now, the SRNSFG does not administrate gender-specific funding programs. Regarding the Grand calls in other topics, gender equality is still not a funding requirement. There are no specific policies which will be the guarantee that gender equality in research teams is represented nor in research content. Furthermore, the SRNSFG grant call documentation contains gender-neutral language; there is no bias towards a particular sex or social gender and no adoption of the use of exclusionary forms.

The figure below depicts the current status in this field.

⁴ Decrees of the Government of Georgia, Decrees of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, Decrees of Director General of SRNSFG



Research funding

Share of men and women among applicants and successful applicants in the last 3 years

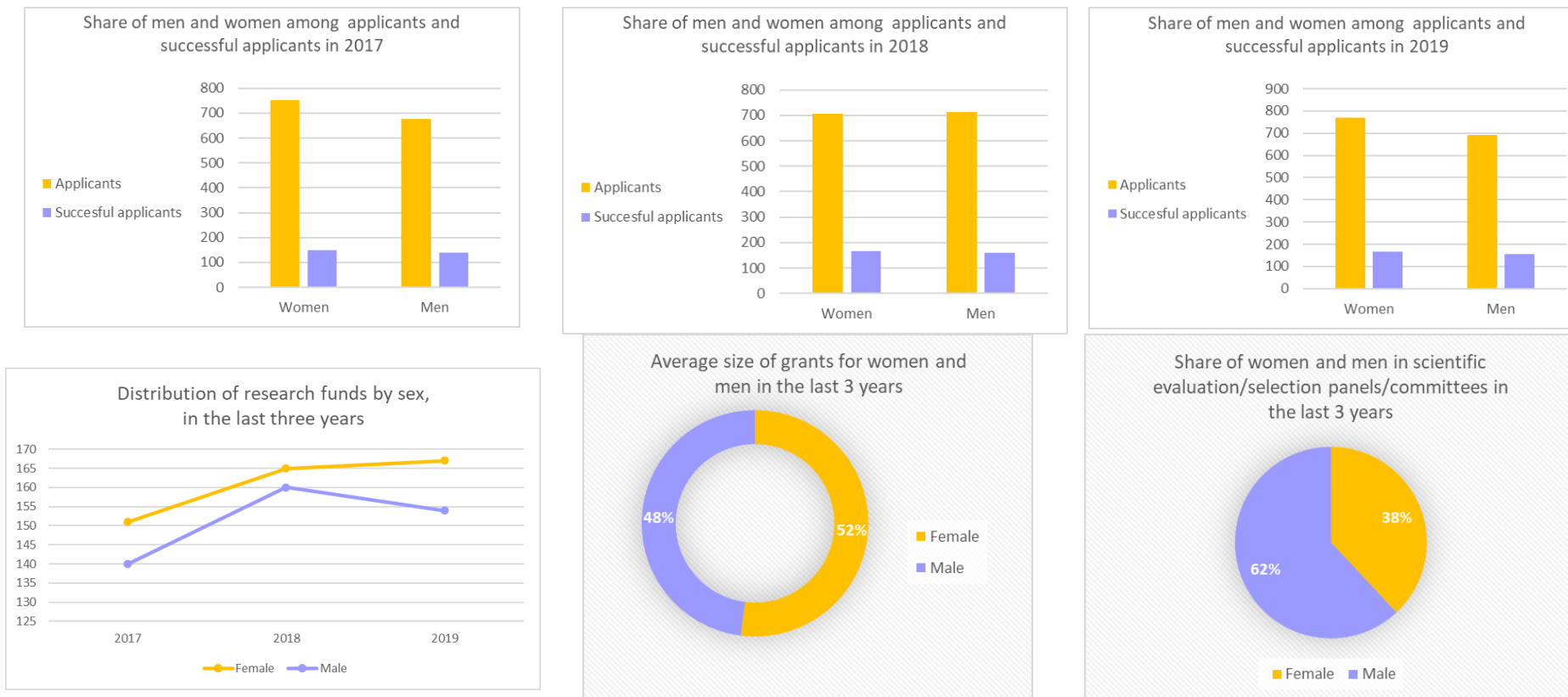


Figure 8: SRNSFG research funding current situation



5. Gender/sexual harassment

Within the Foundation, particular policies and initiatives addressing sexual harassment do not exist. However, the SRNSFG is obliged to follow the regulations provided at a national level; Chapter 1, Article 2, Sub-articles 4 and 41 of “Labor Code of Georgia”.

Relevant research on this area showed that during the last three years, the organisation had no organized training. It had not taken any measures to elicit reporting formally gender/sexual harassment, and no cases of harassment (by victims/ and by bystanders) have been reported.

6. Intersectionality

At the moment, the only available document that includes the idea of gender equality in conjunction with other discriminations and structural inequalities is the N187, Article 14 of SRNSFG Director General. There are no other specific institutional measures concerning about this issue.

Assets and points worth of attention

The SRNSFG follows the national regulations about gender-sensitive protocols/policies for **recruitment and hiring**, recruitment and promotion boards are comprised mainly by women, but the institution itself lacks individual policies/protocols. In **recruitment processes** there are not any discrimination cases reported. More females apply for open positions across all departments, succeed and have temporary contracts. However, they get a middle or low management position, while top management positions are covered by males. In addition, male employees receive higher rewards and additional remunerations. As for the **career progression**, a very few females experienced discrimination. The organisation has set a procedure to follow for career progression, but the survey results proved that the procedure lacks transparency. The organisation hasn’t adopted any transparent and flexible promotion/tenure criteria for the promotion of staff yet, e.g. continuing education as well as individual performance measurement, neither for measures to support employees during major life events like childbirth, care work etc. This seems to refer to **work-life balance** issues in the organization, and the highest share of females dropping out in recent years might signal this.

Institutional governance activities to foster gender balance include an electronic system for gender-disaggregated data collection and a well gender balanced decision-making body. Though, there are no official regulations to monitor and evaluate gender equality, no gender-sensitive budgeting in place, no mentoring or coaching services/activities to foster leadership position dedicated to women, and not a gender equality body.

SRNSFG seems to cope well with gender sensitivity during the **external institutional communication**, even though it doesn’t not have an official action plan. In terms of **internal institutional communication**, the staff adopts international guidelines and local laws on the use of gender-sensitive language but relevant training is not taking place, there are no internal guidelines and protocols on gender-sensitive non-biased communication/language use, or complaint mechanisms in cases of gender-biased/sexist communication.

The institution recruits **research evaluators** based on an official Code of Conduct, but it does not include any gender sensitive criteria and currently they are mostly men. They do not receive any additional training or guidelines on gender stereotypes and unconscious bias. Also, the review process is single and no double-blind. Moreover, the **grant calls** contain gender-neutral language, since the Georgian language is gender-neutral itself (there are no exclusionary forms he/she). Also, the grant winners are mostly females. However, the calls for grants do not include gender evaluation related criteria, neither they require integration of gender into research content. Each year the Government approves the official annual budget of SRNSFG, and it is possible to add a **new research funding program** on gender equality.



No **sexual harassment** cases have been reported in the institution until now. On the other hand, there is not a tailored desk/service taking actions to raise awareness on the national regulations and organize informational activities.

In terms of **intersectionality**, there are available national policies on equality and discriminations, but this aspect is not yet measured in the institution. Most participants to the research needed additional details on understanding intersectionality and the need of an intersectional approach to gender equality.

References

The list of references studies during the desk research and policy analysis:

[“Law of Georgia on Public Service”, Article 9, \(2015\)](#)

[“An Ordinance of the Government of Georgia on the Procedure for the Conduct of Competitions in Public Service”, \(2017\)](#)

[“Law of Georgia on Remuneration in Public Institutions”, \(2017\)](#)

SRNSFG official website, available at: <http://rustaveli.org.ge/>

[SRNSFG Statute](#), (2010)

[“Labour Code of Georgia”, Article 2, \(2010\)](#)

“Code of Conduct for Independent Experts LEPL Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia” (2018)

