



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

Internal Gender Equality Assessment

Executive Unit for Higher Education, Research,
Development and Innovation Funding in Romania



This research has been carried out by UEFISCDI 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 Executive Unit for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding in Romania (UEFISCDI) 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 UEFISCDI.

The assessment depicts the situation based on data collected from the previous three years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2018-2020). UEFISCDI 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 UEFISCDI's Gender Equality Plan and its implementation and exploitation by the Institution as envisioned by the [CALIPER](#) project.



Introduction

The internal assessment has been implemented by UEFISCDI 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

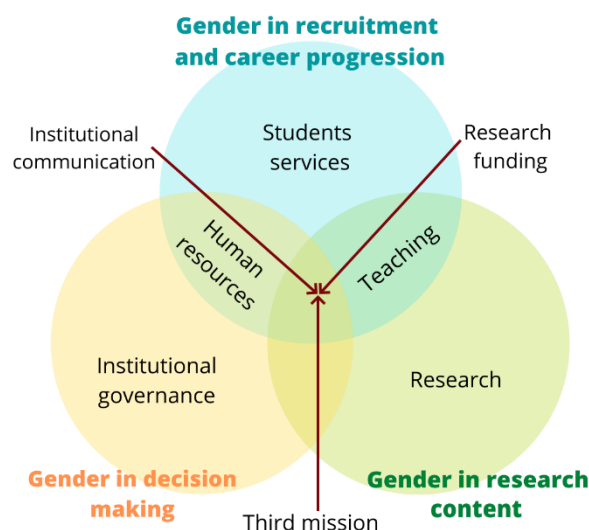


Figure 1: Connections between ERA priorities and research institutions activity/service areas

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 UEFISCDI.

¹ Communication of the European Commission of the 17.07.2017

Executive Unit for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding in Romania (RFO)

The internal assessment of the Executive Unit for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding in Romania (UEFISCDI) 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 validation

The data collection process

The process of data collection focused on gathering both qualitative and quantitative data, as they are complementary in nature and present different advantages for a researcher. The data covered as many categories of employers as possible so that the analysis could include a large spectrum of answers. The objective of this data collection was to ensure that the gathered information was rich and reliable for our analysis so that data-driven hypothesis could be elaborated after its results. The UEFISCDI employees were very open to the idea of the project and showed support to the implementing team by providing precise and complete answers, according to their professional experience.

Source of data

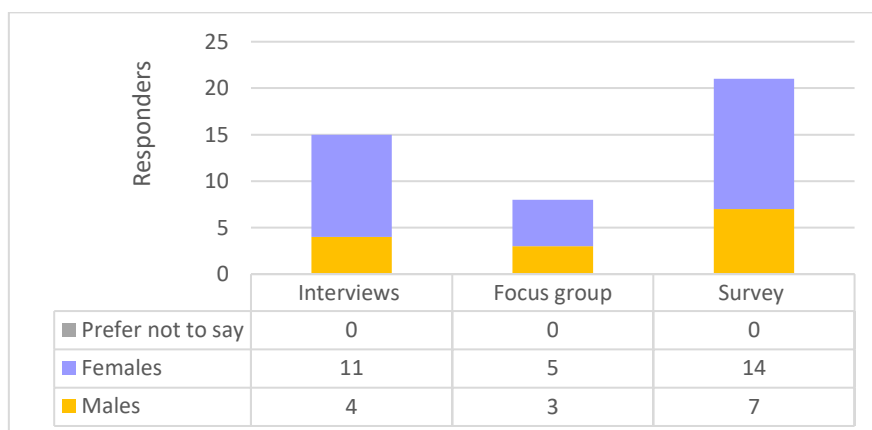


Figure 2. UEFISCDI responders gender distribution

As for the professional profile of the responders, both high and middle-level managers took part in the interviews, while some middle-level managers participated at the focus groups.

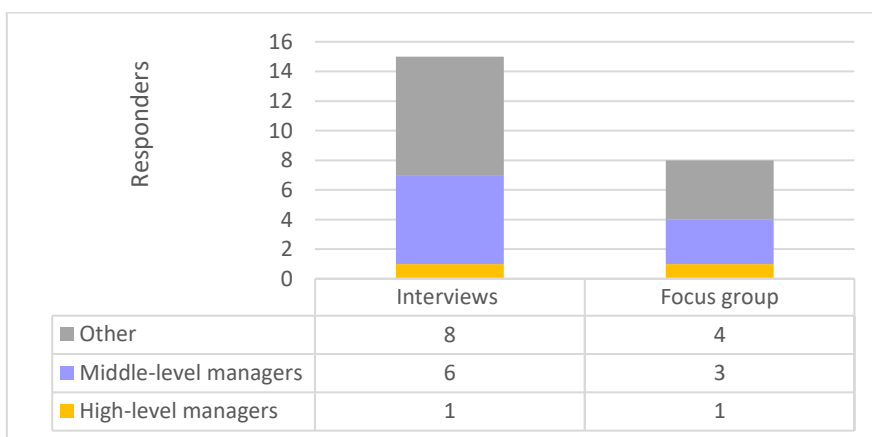


Figure 3. UEFISCDI interviews and focus group responders' position in the organisation



The survey has been mainly completed by Full professors, staff of administrative offices and other offices. A small percentage of responses is comprised by researchers and heads of department etc.

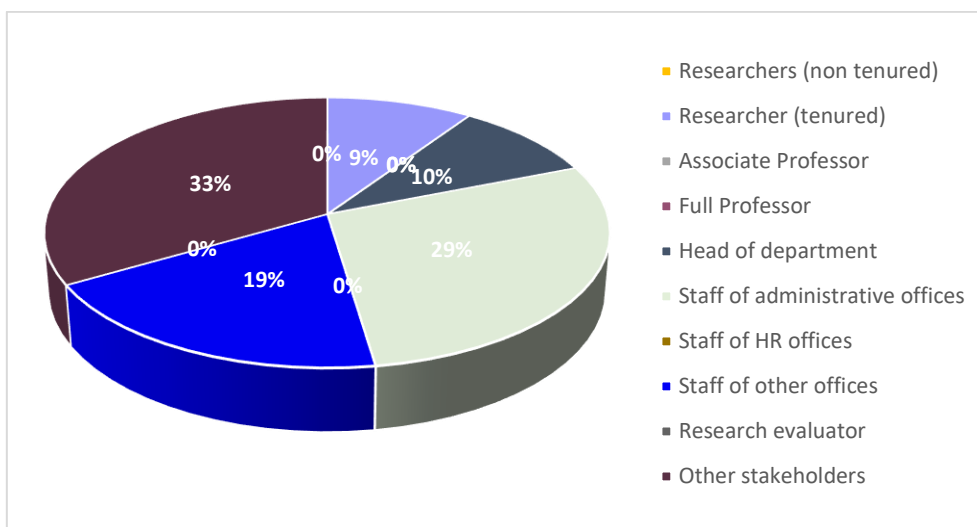


Figure 4. UEFISCDI survey responders' position in the organisation

Internal assessment analysis of the activity/service areas

1. Human resources

In terms of **recruitment** policies, the expert selection activities take into account the non-discrimination principle as the selection process will not allow / encourage discrimination of sex, nationality, ethnicity or religion. This is extracted from the Order approving Operational Procedure for external expert selection in the projects team, Code: PO-01, UEFISCDI. When it comes to the **career progression**, the recruitment and promotion procedures are based on merit, the competitions are public and transparent, while the rules for progress in the public system are very clear – they are the established by the legislation for public servants – and this did not take into account gender. According to the bureaucratic rules, the recruitment is realized based on a transparent selection process. In UEFISCDI, women are over-represented both at management and experts' level.

In relation to the sub-area of **work-life balance**, for maternity/paternity leave, UEFISCDI is acting in line with the legislation and respects the decisions of the parents related to the period chosen for maternity leave (maximum 2 years). According to the focus groups, the organization culture allows work-life balance and the care for the employee is a top management priority. Of course, the tasks should be completed by each employee according to the requirements of his/her position, but employees can work from home if there is a special situation, people working on projects have part-time options, pregnant women are supported to adapt their programme according to their needs and in case of family issues of an employee all colleagues supports the fulfilment of his/her tasks. All these are part of the organizational culture. All the employees considered that the measures have/will have a positive impact in their professional and personal life. All the employees used the teleworking / remote working (especially during the restriction period due to the covid-19 pandemic). Other measures that were frequently used were part time jobs and maternity/paternity leave.

With regards to the **policies on equal pay**, based on an analysis of the payments in the international projects, the equal pay principle is respected. For the same position in a project, there are same hour rates for both women and men. As in the entire public system, the salaries are legally established and this does not take gender into consideration. However, institutionally for same position and same experience salaries are the same.



The figures below depict the current situation.

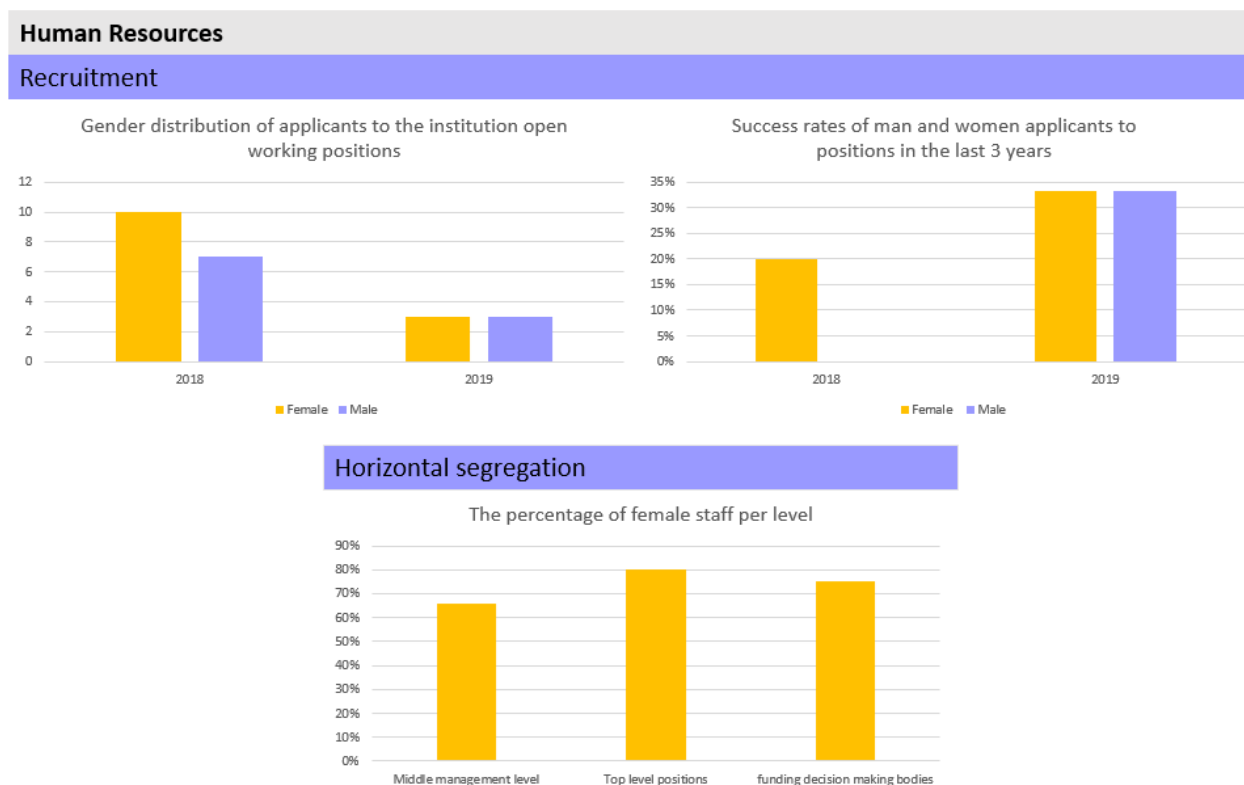


Figure 5. UEFISCDI HR current situation

2. Institutional governance

The current status regarding the sub-area of **commitment to gender equality** is that gender equality is one of the fourth principles of UEFISCDI's work: *equal opportunities and performance: through dialogue, transparency and visibility of results, we ensure equal opportunities for performance funding regardless of age, gender, institutional and geographical affiliation. Projects are funded solely on a competitive basis.* Gender equality is part of the organizational values and cultures. Some dimensions of the concept are mentioned in the Code of Ethics: condemnation of sexual harassment. While there is this commitment, there is no evaluation/monitoring process on gender equality in place as well as the existence of gender-sensitive budgeting. When it comes to gender disaggregated data, the gender dimension is included among the data collected for the projects financed. There are statistics related to the gender of the project leader for each of the funding calls coordinated.

The interviews revealed that fostering **gender balance in decision making** is part of the organizational culture. At institutional level there are no mentoring programmes, but all the employees are allowed to access all the trainings held at internal level or different training opportunities from partners or external collaborators.

There is no Gender Equality Plan nor a Gender Equality Body.

The figures below depict the current situation.



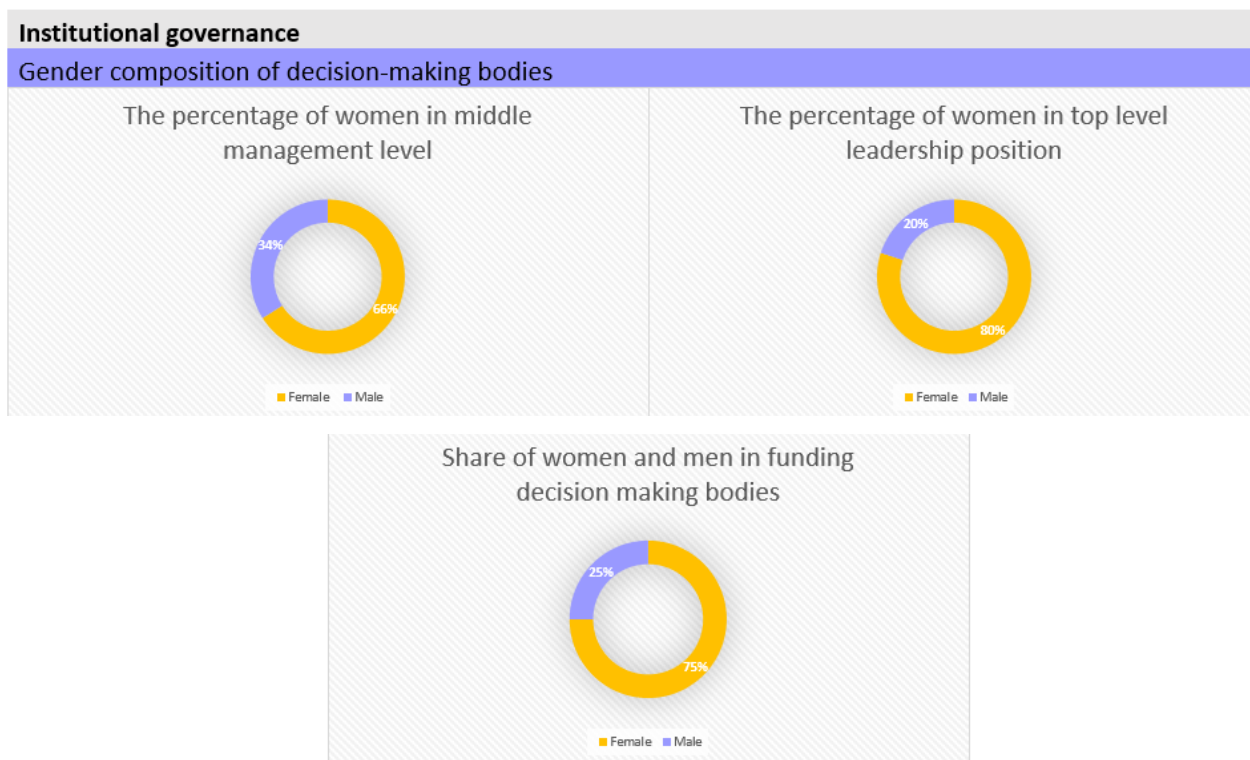


Figure 6. UEFISCDI Institutional governance current situation

3. Institutional communication

For the **external communication** of UEFISCDI, the general institutional website and other printed tools assures the representations of both women and men and promote diversity. Women are portrayed as active players in science in the visuals and texts. The overall communication including the social media pages reflects the diversity. The institutional social media promote gender equality through visuals. All the visuals including graphics representing people include both men in women. Another dimension is by sharing links to relevant initiatives promoting women – ex. The competition „For Women in Science” organized by L’Oreal and UNESCO. Gender equality is mentioned as a principle on the page Institutional Presentation: *equal opportunities and performance: through dialogue, transparency and visibility of results, we ensure equal opportunities for performance funding regardless of age, gender, institutional and geographical affiliation.*

Communication activities promoting women are included in the texts of the funding calls where is mention that for each project, the project leader should assure gender balanced in the project team. In addition, activities promoting women are conducted by sharing links to relevant initiatives promoting women – ex. The competition „For Women in Science” organized by L’Oreal and UNESCO. In the communication, gender stereotypes in science are avoided and women are portrayed as active players in science in our visuals and texts. There are some articles and photos promoting women - e.g. an article promoting the LOREAL programme for women in science or pictures promoting the results competitions where there are mixt team composed by a woman and a man, both researchers.

In relation to the **internal communication** of UEFISCDI, currently, there are no guidelines/protocols on gender sensitive nonbiased communication/language use. Gender sensitive language is used informally – according to the level of knowledge and awareness of the staff member. UEFISCDI does not have guidelines or protocols of gender sensitive communication, but the members are aware of the international recommendations relating to gender inclusive language.



4. Research funding

There is no fund for specific programs on gender studies in the last 3 years. There are, under the Human resources dimension, call texts which allow projects for social sciences and humanities where projects on gender topics can be submitted. In addition, there are guidelines on the integration of the gender analysis into research; the call texts mention that in developing and implementing the project, project managers must take all measures to promote equal opportunities for men and women and to have gender balanced teams, but there is no specific legislation and the guidelines are not provided in the data.

The figures below depict the current situation.

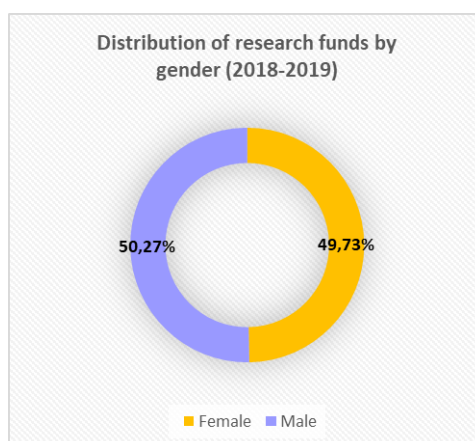


Figure 7. UEFISCDI Research funding current situation

5. Gender/sexual harassment

UEFISCDI follows the Code of Ethics mentions in Article 17: „It is considered a deviation from the Code of Ethics and is sanctioned according to the legislation in force the following: (...) m) sexual harassment”. The institution acts according to the law and to the Code of conduct/ethics, sanctioning any attempt of sexual harassment. No cases of gender/sexual harassment have been reported, thus no counselling for gender-based offences and harassment has been conducted.

6. Intersectionality

Inside the organisation gender equality is correlated with non-discrimination and ethics and it is part of the organizational culture. Looking at the projects funded and at the organizational culture, gender is taken into consideration in relation with age, ethnicity, all these being part of the non-discriminatory policy promoted.

Assets and points worth of attention

There is a clear commitment to gender equality in UEFISCDI, while the participation of women in decision making bodies is encouraged. At the same time, there is no evaluation/monitoring process on gender equality in place as well as the existence of gender-sensitive budgeting. It is identified that there are no mentoring programmes at institutional level. While the UEFISCDI is quite advanced in this specific area of **institutional governance** (66% women in middle management level, 80% women in top level leadership position). UEFISCDI employees seem satisfied about the **work-life balance** measures and policies. In relation to **work-life balance**, parental leaves have been taken mainly by females and currently there are no data on part time/flexible hours arrangements, tele-working positions, career breaks and drop-outs in by gender. With regards to the **policies on equal pay**, the salaries are legally established, and this does not take gender into consideration.



UEFISCDI is taking **external and internal communication** seriously, internal communication can be improved as there are no guidelines or protocols on gender sensitive language and non-biased communication and as a result employees rely on their level of knowledge in using gender sensitive language. At the same time, there is no reporting mechanism to report gender biased language.

In the area of **research funding**, there is no provision about the integration of the gender analysis into research or/and in funding programmes.

No cases are reported to the UEFISCDI in regard to **gender/sexual harassment**. The institution lacks a specific mechanism to report and tackle the cases as it mainly relies on the Code of Ethics and its sanctioning measures.

Finally, about the **intersectional** approach, overall, it was found that is a strong need of having an incremental and active learning on gender issues and that a successful initiative of promoting gender equality would need to encompass various measures including also changing people's perception of the role of women and men, promoting non-discrimination and acting on various layers: texts, videos, and internal policies.

References

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