



CALIPER
Gender Equality in STEM Research

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY DESIGN AND DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE GEP

The SRNSFG Experience



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“ EU CONTEXT: EXISTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Horizon Europe sets gender equality as a crosscutting principle and aims to eliminate gender inequality and intersecting socioeconomic inequalities throughout research and innovation systems. In particular, European Research Area Priority 4 focuses on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research and innovation[1]. The objective is to foster scientific excellence and breadth of research approaches by fully utilising gender diversity and equality.

Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) have been recognised as an effective gender mainstreaming tool for Research and Innovation (R&I) and Higher Education (HE) institutions to tackle the objectives of the European Research Area (ERA) via a set of actions implemented along with clear timelines and monitored through specific indicators[2]. This is evident as well, since a GEP is an eligibility criterion for acceding Horizon Europe funding for the R&I Institutions. Lastly, the Ljubljana Declaration[3] adopted in 2021 highlights the importance of GEPs as a tool “to achieve long-term and sustainable advancement towards Gender equality in R&I”.

Even though the institutional change strategy implemented through GEPs has had very positive impacts in many research organisations and has been a catalyser at national and EU level, there is still a need for a renewed approach[2] which will enable Institutions to go beyond the minimum requirements for a GEP as defined in Horizon Europe eligibility criteria for effectively addressing the persisting structural barriers in R&I institutions.

For this reason, the recent ERA policies on gender equality in R&I have expanded their scope to cover innovation at large aiming at connecting academic research with society and the economy. This is evident from the European Commission’s (EC) most recent policy directions on Gender Equality in R&I and institutional change that seek for ‘inclusive’ Gender Equality Plans referring to “intersectoriality” as one of the dimensions along with intersectionality and geographic inclusiveness.

The **H2020 CALIPER project** was designed and is now being implemented, (since 2020) addressing these three dimensions and in particular having intersectoriality as its key specific feature embedded in all steps of the institutional change process, from the internal assessment to the GEPs design and implementation phase, as well as in monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, drawing upon the experience of the CALIPER project which aims at addressing gender inequality in STEM in 9 RPOs and RFOs across the EU and which has been built based on the GEAR tool but offering an additional inclusive approach, this policy briefing highlights the main takeaways on the design & development, of an inclusive Gender Equality Plan. This particular policy briefing is the first version of three policy briefings to be developed focusing on the inclusive GEP process.

Elaborating on the different dimensions of inclusiveness addressed by the CALIPER project, this policy brief aims at guiding national stakeholders in Georgia to effectively contribute to tailoring GEPs to specific domestic needs and developing quality assurance for GEPs. Although Georgia is a non-EU country, the institutions are willing to adopt gender equality policies to achieve institutional change. SRNSFG sets the example.

“ THE GEORGIAN CONTEXT: EXISTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Georgia has various laws and national policies in place that prevent discrimination in the workplace, including Higher Education Institutions. Until 2010, there were no laws specifically referring to gender equality. Adopted in 2010, the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality[4] is one of the key legal acts regulating gender balance in higher education. It determines the state's obligation to ensure equality of women and men in all spheres of public life, including education and science. Particularly, Article 7 of the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality addresses equality in access to higher education. Analyses of the national legislation and the policy documents show that currently there are no national programs that integrate a gender dimension in scientific programs. Sexual harassment in the workplace is regulated by the Organic Law of Georgia[5] of the labour code, complemented by the Gender Equality Law mentioned above. The Organic Law of Georgia also regulates procedures of leaves, maternity leaves, leaves for the adoption of newborn children and compensation issues. In addition to this, it ensures gender equality in family relations. Finally, Georgia has established three national bodies to address gender inequality: 1) the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament[6], 2) the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues[7], and 3) the Gender Department of the Public Defender's Office[8].

EVIDENCE ON SRNSFG GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES”

The external environment and the regulations in Georgia do not ensure gender equality within the institutions. The internal policies are insufficient if there are any in place. The lack of GE policies causes internal implications and sets barriers towards gender equality. There are no specific regulations on gender sensitive recruitment protocols, and there are no policies to support career progression for women.

As a result, women are under-represented in top management positions and the gender pay gap is 15.88%. The institution doesn't provide sufficient parental leaves, or flexible and part-time positions. Also, before COVID teleworking was not a regular practice. SRNSFG doesn't have an allocated budget for promoting gender equality, nor has it established any gender equality bodies. However, there is an electronic system that gathers disaggregated data, providing the staff with a clearer view of the gender equality status in the institution. In regard to the communication material, the website has a relatively gender balanced content and the social media accounts promote women scientists. Although, there are no policies for gender equal internal communication material. In terms of research content, the institution doesn't follow any specific regulations to ensure gender balance in the research teams and the evaluation processes, but they use gender neutral and unbiased language. Lastly, SRNSFG doesn't implement specific policies against sexual harassment, nor does it provide training for the staff. There are no cases reported in the institution.

CALIPER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE GEP

Setting up the scene for the GEP design and development: Perform an analysis of external and internal conditions for the GEP development and acceptance. Identify potential gender biases and inequalities along with scenarios towards change using the proposed actions below:

Set up a GEP Working Group:

Suggested members of the GEP working group include staff members at different managerial levels including stakeholders from middle and high management.

Perform a qualitative and quantitative gender analysis:

Suggested areas for data collection include human resources, institutional governance, research, teaching, student services, transfer to the market, institutional communication, and sexual harassment.

Tools: Set up intersectional indicators and targets to be achieved and collect sex-disaggregated data via desk research and interviews.

Set up Research & Innovation (R&I) Hub:

Adopting the quadruple helix approach, gather information through desk research, network analysis and interviews with key stakeholders from academia and universities, industry, ministries/government, public sector, civil society organisations and identify the regional/national innovation ecosystems in which they operate and engage them in the GEP design and development process.

Suggested members of the R&I Hub:

Stakeholders from academia and universities, industry, ministries/government, public sector, civil society organisations.

Develop strategic change scenarios to better understand and reflect key factors, the potential measures, and the strategic collaborations with internal and external stakeholders that need to be leveraged with regards to the implementation of the GEP.

Suggested methodology: Develop three scenarios focusing on the identification of the maximum resistances, the maximum opportunities, and a mix of both in the areas mentioned in the gender analysis. For SRNSFG the most realistic scenario was the third one, which was the only one developed.

Suggested main components of the scenarios: Situation; Main problems; Objective(s); Possible solutions; Resistances (including strategies to overcome them) and Opportunities.

- For SRNSFG, the structure and use of the strategic change scenarios gave some direction to the Institution and helped in the mapping of the resistances. The most important resistances were detected in the organisational level regarding the structural change and the possible conflicts with the national legal framework. Through negotiations, the resistances can be overcome.

Organise Multi Stakeholder dialogues

involving the R&I Hubs assess the above-mentioned scenarios and investigate opportunities and barriers for collaboration with the regional and national stakeholders.

SRNSFG stakeholder dialogues: Through the dialogues with the R&I Hubs, the SRNSFG had

the opportunity to broaden its network, and many stakeholders expressed their interest for further cooperation, including private and state Universities.

GEP design and development: Develop an inclusive GEP based on the knowledge and experience gained and the targets set.

Recommended areas to focus when designing and developing a GEP in Georgia, on the basis of SRNSFG's GEP design and development process:

Human Resources: Actions to address gender equality include **tailored training for the staff involved in the recruitment and selection process** to raise awareness and change the attitudes and stereotypes against women; **exit questionnaire to detect the reason(s) employees drop out of their careers**, adopting a gender perspective (the end goal is to create a more work/life balanced environment); **deliver training for the upskilling of the employees** in all departments to facilitate their career progression and help them keep up with the fast pace of technology development.

Institutional Governance: To address the low representation of women in high level positions and decision making bodies: **Collect gender/sex disaggregated data at the organisational and institutional level**, by adopting a methodology that will be regularly updated. This procedure can be monitored by the top management. **Publish annual reports on gender equality can be helpful.**

Institutional Communication: The popular perception of male dominance in the STEM community creates the need for gender neutral language in the internal and external

communication content. The proposed activities include: **Establish a gender sensitive communication policy.** A specialised strategy including training, conferences, workshops, symposia, etc. to raise awareness, inform and facilitate the demolition of stereotypes. **Create a dedicated page on the institutional website to promote successful (Georgian) women in STEM** and to encourage and inspire young women to follow STEM related career paths. **Develop a strategic communication plan** targeted to relevant internal and external stakeholders to further engage the local STEM community in a sustainable and effective way.

Research funding: If gender equality measures are not a funding requirement, proposed policies include: **Set up a gender balance control mechanism to monitor the number of female researchers.** Gender balance can be checked by creating a control field in the electronic system, where Principal Investigators will fill in the information about the number of female/male researchers involved in the project. **Develop and deliver training sessions** and relevant material to ensure successful bias free evaluation processes. After the end of the training, provide the evaluators and the committee members with a guide on gender sensitive evaluation processes. **Establish an award for women scientists**, to encourage young women to use role models and lead to positive change in attitudes towards women scientists.

Sexual Harassment: To address the issue of sexual harassment, proposed measures include: **Adopt a formal policy to combat harassment** and provide definitions and guidance regarding the behaviours that are considered as harassment. The policy may contain the anticipated consequences of

abusing it, for creating a safe environment and promoting equal employment opportunities. **Establish a mechanism of reporting such cases** to encourage and support the victims and build trust, to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace.

Intersectionality: Set up a reporting system to gather data on gender in conjunction with ethnicity, age, disabilities, etc.

“CONCLUSION

The present policy briefing describes the European and Georgian national context as well as the institutional context regarding gender equality policies and practices as they have been depicted in the extensive external and internal analysis conducted within the context of the CALIPER project. Based on the abovementioned context, SRNSFG’s GEP has been designed and described here for giving the example to other Research Funding or/and Performing Organisations operating in Georgia for setting up their inclusive GEP.

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Learn more about CALIPER project and the Gender Equality Plans:



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