



**CALIPER**  
Gender Equality in STEM Research

# HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY DESIGN AND DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE GEP

*The YU Experience*



Policy Briefing v1 | Turkey  
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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 Turkey is a non-EU country, the institutions are willing to adopt gender equality policies to achieve institutional change. YU sets the example.

## “**THE TURKISH CONTEXT: EXISTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

In Turkey there are no specific legal texts/acts relevant to the field of gender equality policies in higher education. Gender equality is addressed within a broader concept of anti-discrimination and equality in various laws and acts including the Turkish Constitution. In 2015 a “Gender Mainstreaming” strategy was prepared by the Council of Higher Education. In 2015, the Council of Higher Education established a gender studies in academia unit, which aims to raise the awareness of the next generation of researchers on gender equality through various activities including lectures, seminars and policies. The unit is coordinated by seven prominent female researchers from prestigious higher education institutions in Turkey. Dedicated policies of increasing women’s participation in the research were recently adopted by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey. Female employment is a priority area for national strategic documents and dedicated provisions (even if not mandatory) exist in terms of quotas in management positions. However, female leadership in companies constitutes only 13.40% in Turkey. The rate falls even lower when it comes to female ownership of firms and female top management, with only 3.9%. Also, maternity leave is regulated, whilst paternity leave is not overseen by the law. An ad hoc legislation is foreseen concerning sexual harassment. Turkish Labour Law (No 4857)[4] contains clauses on sexual harassment and regulates the actions to be taken by the employer as well as the rights of the employee to prevent sexual harassment or other forms of harassment in the workplace. The share of female STEM students is higher than the male

students in the science oriented High Schools called FEN Lisesi, but then it dramatically decreases in Higher Education. Particularly low is the percentage of women among founders and leaders of start-ups (19%). No regulations are in place in terms of promoting the integration of gender as a scientific dimension in research both at national and regional levels.

## **EVIDENCE ON YU GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES”**

Recruitment and hiring are based on the principles set out in the document for procedures and principles of academic and administrative staff ‘regardless of gender’. There is no support for career progression for the underrepresented gender at the institutional level. In the sub-area of retention, the reasons for resignation include spouse related leaves, changing cities for the educational futures of children, childcare and elderly care while resignation due to marriage is in first place for female employees. The main challenge in institutional governance is that the institution has a need for more women in decision-making bodies and leadership positions. While the number of female deans is high, the senior management - general secretary, financial affairs, rector and vice presidents - are all males. The representation of men and women in the communication material is balanced, but there are not many activities to raise awareness about gender equality issues. In the sub-area of research content, YU lacks funds for gender research, and there are no guidelines on the integration of gender analysis into research. Regarding student services, there is no provision for the integration of gender equality in the orientation programmes. The university does

not carry out tailored actions to increase awareness around the issue of gender-based offences and harassment. Finally, there are no existing institutional measures with regards to intersectionality and there is a lack of awareness.

## **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, intersectionality, 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 adopting 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.

- YU developed all three scenarios and examined their probability to happen. After their evaluation, the most realistic seemed to be the third scenario, which was the one they used to develop their GEP.

### **Suggested main components of the scenarios:**

Situation; Main problems; Objective(s); Possible solutions; Resistances (including strategies to overcome them); Opportunities.

### **Organise Multi Stakeholder dialogues**

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

**YU case:** The stakeholder dialogues were fruitful and strengthened its local network. They achieved strong engagement with different types of stakeholders trying to adopt gender policies.

**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 Turkey, on the basis of YU's GEP design and development process:**

**Human Resources:** In this area, the subtopics are recruitment selection and career progression. In order to adopt gender sensitive policies, proposed measures include: **Adopting gender-sensitive recruitment procedures.** The regulations should be monitored and updated. **Revision of the promotion criteria of staff,** to establish transparent processes and develop guidelines and training for the involved personnel. Monitoring of the process is required. **Support measures for underrepresented gender at the institutional level,** through dialogue meetings with the top and middle management and the HR department, to organise co-creation activities for the development of an institutional mentoring program for female researchers.

**Institutional governance:** To address the low representation of women in high level positions and decision-making bodies, the measurements include: **Setting up a Gender Equality Body (GEB)** appointing specific tasks to its members and organising an awareness raising campaign. **Collection of gender disaggregated data** by the responsible personnel. The collection should be done through a dedicated process, accompanied by monitoring and evaluation reports. **Increase**

**awareness of the top-level management regarding gender balance** in decision making processes through planning, development, implementation, monitoring and reporting of activities such as meetings with top management, gender equality training and webinars. **Organising an empowerment programme** with a collaborative approach with the involvement of academic and administrative units. A pilot implementation phase can be initiated. The programme should be monitored, evaluated, and revised/enriched.

**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: **Development and implementation of gender-sensitive institutional communication guidelines.** In collaboration with relevant academic and administrative departments, desk research can be conducted for the components of the document. The presentation of the document to top management and the adoption of the guidelines should follow. The document should be implemented, monitored, and evaluated. **Training the relevant staff members** based on the aforementioned guidelines.

**Research:** In order to adopt gender sensitive policies in the focus area of research, proposed measures include: **Integration of gender into the institutional strategic plan and institutional funding mechanisms** using targets and measures. **Organisation of awareness raising activities** (workshops, training, webinars) on the application of gender analysis and gender dimension into research. **Establishment of a Gender Researchers Group at the Institution.** The group's structure can be designed by gender

experts and potential researchers who would like to be a member of this group. Identification of the goals, activities and sub-working groups is needed to implement the research project.

**Teaching:** The lack of gender sensitive teaching practices can be addressed through: **The development and adoption of principles and guidelines for integrating the gender dimension** into curricula and teaching. **Training of academic staff on gender sensitive teaching** and pilot implementation of the curriculum with a gender dimension in one department from each faculty. The training and the pilots should be monitored and assessed for further improvement.

**Sexual harassment:** Proposed measures to combat sexual harassment include: **Development of a policy document against sexism and sexual harassment** and be officially adopted. **Establishment of Gender Based Discrimination, Violence and Sexual Harassment Prevention Unit.** It should provide information about the definition of sexual harassment and the procedures of handling such cases, as well as the responsible commission. The sexual harassment subject is recommended to be integrated into all orientation programmes.

## CONCLUSION

The present policy briefing describes the European and Turkish 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, YU's GEP has been designed and described here for giving the example to other Research Performing Organisations operating in Turkey for setting up their inclusive GEP.

## “**REFERENCES**

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Learn more about CALIPER project and the Gender Equality Plans:



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