RIQL
Research Institute for Quality of Life

ROMANIAN ACADEMY
National Institute for Economic Research
Costin C. Kiriţescu

Strategy and Plan on Gender Equality for the period 2022–2026

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List of Abbreviations
ACS – Research Assistant CS – Researcher
GEG – Gender Equality Working Group
RIQL – Institute for Quality of Life Research
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
GEO – Gender Equality Officer
GEP – Gender Equality Plan
SEG – Gender Equality Strategy
UEFISCDI – Executive Unit for the Financing of Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation

This document was prepared by a group of researchers from the RIQL and approved at the RIQL Scientific Council meeting on 01.08.2022.

Introduction

The Research Institute for Quality of Life (RIQL, ICCV acronym in Romanian) was established in 1990. The institute is part of the Romanian Academy's research network and is a member of the National Institute for Economic Research "Costin C. Kirițescu." RIQL carries out scientific activities in the major research areas of quality of life and social policies, as well as in related fields such as health, education, employment, housing, family life, living standards, poverty, public services, social development, and the social economy. It is also concerned with analyzing the transition process and, more broadly, the long-term changes in Romanian society.

In addition to its fundamental scientific research activity, RIQL assumes responsibility for actively contributing to the development of Romanian society, particularly through involvement in institutional development programs and the drafting of legislation in the social field.

RIQL has a team of over 50 scientific researchers and research assistants, holding PhDs or pursuing doctoral studies in sociology. RIQL researchers have significant academic experience gained through participation in research networks and consortia, as well as in research programs at both the national level, funded by Romanian sources, and the international level, funded by European programs (Framework Programmes 5, 6, and 7, COST-type programs, etc.).

As part of its activities, the RIQL has developed this Gender Equality Strategy (GES) and the corresponding Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for the period 2022–2026 following consultation with the Institute's staff, taking into account the interests of all its employees, research and administrative staff alike, regardless of gender. Following the monitoring and evaluation process, the plan will be reviewed and improved, if necessary, annually or whenever needed. The SEG and PEG were developed based on the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2015–2019), as well as the European Strategy for Gender Equality (2020–2025) and the European Commission's recommendations on gender equality plans.

In 2020, the European Commission launched the European Union Strategy on Gender Equality (2020–2025), with the aim of building a Union of Equality. The strategy sets out policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by 2025 toward a gender-equal Europe, where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are free to pursue their chosen paths in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can participate equally in and lead European society.

The main objectives of the EU Strategy on Gender Equality are: eliminating gender-based violence; eliminating gender stereotypes; reducing gender gaps in the labor market; achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy; reducing gender pay and pension gaps; and reducing the gender gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and politics.

In addition, gender equality is part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to which Romania has committed as part of the UN 2030 Agenda. Gender equality is addressed under Goal 5 and includes targets related, among other things, to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, "recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies, and promoting shared responsibility in the household and family, as appropriate at the national level," along with "ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life"

(Source: https://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/obiectivul-5-egalitate-de-gen).

In addition, a European directive reiterates the principles of ensuring a work-life balance and establishes, among other provisions, flexible working arrangements (reduced working hours, flexible working hours, and flexibility regarding the workplace) for all parents with children up to 8 years of age and all caregivers, or for parents in vulnerable situations, such as single parents, adoptive parents, parents with disabilities, parents whose children have a disability or a chronic illness, etc.

(Sursa: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1311).

By implementing the Gender Equality Strategy and Plan, we are institutionally strengthening the RIQL as a safe space for all employees, where all activities and processes adhere to the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion, and non-discrimination.

The RIQL Gender Equality Plan for 2022–2026 includes a series of objectives and measures, as well as indicators to measure progress in its implementation and revisions. RIQL, in keeping with its mission and values, through the implementation of the 2022–2026 Gender Equality Strategy and Plan, ensures and promotes equality and diversity in knowledge and skills acquisition for all. The SEG objectives will be implemented through specific actions aimed at fostering an equitable and inclusive organizational culture and promoting gender equality at all levels. As such, the SEG/PEG will proactively enable: raising awareness of gender equality; developing skills and competencies in the area of gender equality; strengthening gender balance in decision-making structures and processes, including in recruitment; and promoting the integration of the gender dimension and gender equality in research.

The Current Situation: An Overview of Requirements, Policies, and Case Studies

In developing this strategy and the accompanying plan, RIQL management appointed a group of researchers who reviewed existing requirements, policies, recommendations, examples, and case studies related to discrimination, inclusion, and gender equality. Similar plans from research institutes and universities in Romania and across Europe were taken into account, including the EU Strategy for Gender Equality 2020–2025. The resources used are included in the list of references.

Diagnosis

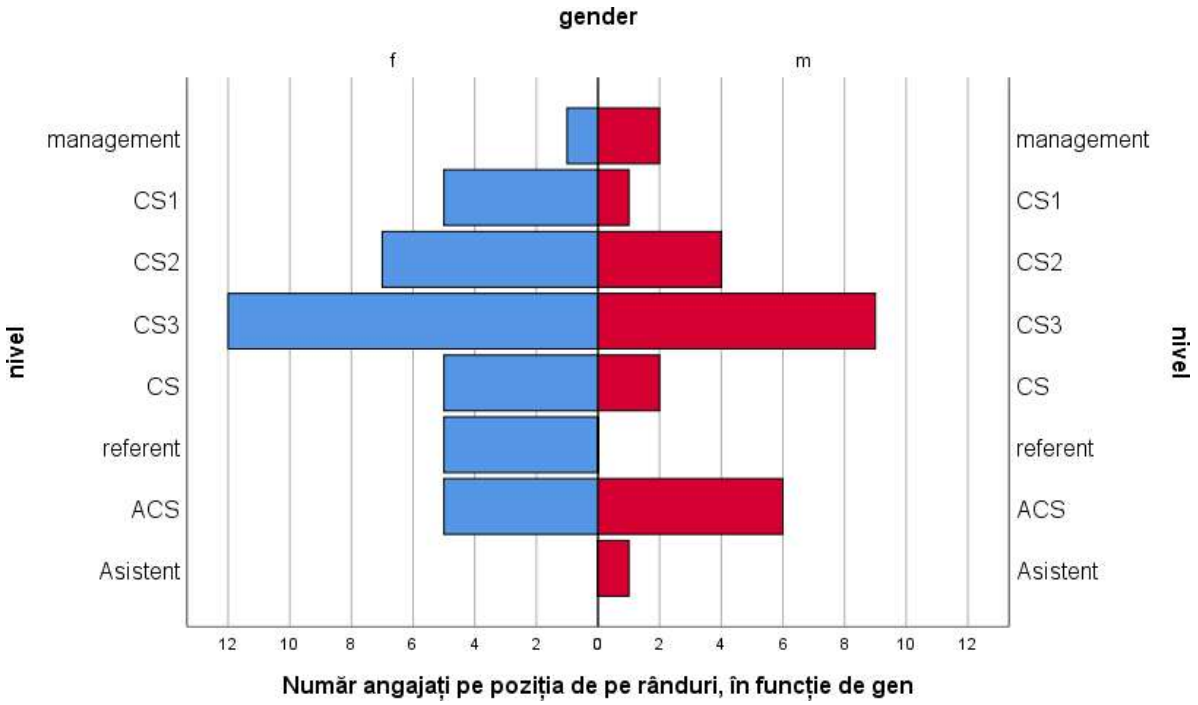
Of the 65 employees at RIQL, as of January 1, 2022, there were 40 women and 25 men. RIQL does not currently have any employees who identify as non-binary.

In total, in 2022, there were three management positions, 6 Scientific Researchers 1 (SR1), 11 SR2, 21 SR3, 7 Scientific Researchers (SR), 5 Reviewers, 11 Assistant Researchers (AR), and one Research Assistant.

The distribution by research level and gender indicates a prevalence of women in senior positions (CS1-CS2), except for management roles, where the ratio is reversed. In other words, at the CS1-CS2 level, the proportion of female employees is higher than that of female employees in the total workforce. Men are more numerous in relative terms in lower-level research positions (CS3, ACS, Assistant), with the exception of CS.

The differences are not significant; therefore, it can be said that there is a relative gender balance at all employment levels.

The RIQL operates through eight research groups, five of which are led by women, which broadly reflects the gender distribution within the RIQL and at the CS1-CS2 level.



The Scientific Council consists of nine members elected by a vote of all researchers. Of the nine elected members, five are women and four are men. In addition, there are two directors. From this perspective, although women are in the majority, the distribution indicates a higher proportion of men relative to their share of the total workforce.

The honorary position of Secretary of the Scientific Council is held by a woman, partially balancing the inequality observed at the management level.

RIQL does not have statistics on the number of men and women on parental leave in recent years or the duration of such leave. Currently, no employee is on parental leave.

Data on staff and their distribution across hierarchical positions were analyzed internally at RIQL and by the team designated to develop this plan.

SWOT analyses conducted at RIQL over the past decade were also reviewed, revealing the absence of a gender dimension in these analyses.

The key findings of these analyses can be organized into two categories:

1. The gender distribution of positions at RIQL does not reveal any discrimination. In the future, it would also be useful to conduct a comparative analysis of performance and individual career development goals based on position and gender to identify any discrimination or inequalities. Additionally, it is necessary to strengthen support for gender equality and to avoid discrimination and related stereotypes.
2. It would be useful for future SWOT analyses to also take gender aspects into account, both in terms of differences in employee attitudes and satisfaction, and by including specific analyses of gender stereotypes and gender discrimination.

Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2026

Based on the analyses conducted and on European and national recommendations and policies, the RIQL has developed and adopted this Gender Strategy, accompanied by an implementation plan.

The Institute for Quality of Life Research, Romanian Academy, by approving this Gender Equality Strategy and the associated plan, has decided to create a position of Gender Equality Officer (GEO) within the institution. The role of the Gender Equality Officer will be to actively monitor the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan, to report any difficulties in its implementation to the Institute's leadership, and to centralize proposals for improving the plan as they arise. The Gender Equality Officer will monitor developments in legislation (both national and European), as well as the plans and strategies of similar institutions, and is required to report to the RIQL management any necessary adjustments to the SEG/PEG in this regard. The Gender Equality Officer will be appointed by the RIQL management for a term of 4 years.

At the institutional level, with the launch of the process to develop the SEG/PEG 2022–2026, a working group was established within the RIQL to draft the SEG/PEG. The group consists of four researchers in various positions, including one man and three women. The Gender Equality Working Group (GEG) will become a permanent structure within the RIQL. Its role is to facilitate and monitor, together with the Gender Equality Officer, the implementation of the RIQL PEG 2022–2025. The group will be elected and will serve for a term of 4 years (2022–2026). The election is conducted directly, by vote, by RIQL members (research and administrative staff) from among RIQL employees (research and administrative staff) who have expressed a desire to be part of the group.

Gender Strategy 2022–2026

The SEG is structured around five major areas of focus, each with several associated objectives.

Scope of intervention	Objective
1. Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture at the RIQL	Supporting a balanced work-life integration
	Promoting gender equality within the institutional culture of the RIQL
2. Promoting gender equality in leadership positions and decision-making processes	Promoting gender equality in institutional promotion and decision-making processes and practices within the RIQL
3. Promoting gender equality in recruitment and throughout one's career	Promoting gender equality in the recruitment of scientific and administrative staff at RIQL
4. Integrating a gender perspective into research	Strengthening the integration of gender perspectives into RIQL's research activities
5. Preventing and combating gender-based violence and sexual harassment	Raising awareness of the importance of gender equality and fostering a positive attitude toward diversity among RIQL employees

The gender strategy is part of the RIQL's commitment to promoting a culture of diversity and non-discrimination. The aim is to create a positive work environment that encourages creativity, autonomy, and free expression. In this context, gender equality is both a result of and an integral part of the organization's overall approach.

Gender Equality Plan

The RIQL Gender Equality Plan, presented below, was developed in accordance with the guidelines provided by the European Commission and UEFISCDI. It outlines the areas of focus, objectives, and proposed measures for achieving those objectives, and specifies the indicators that facilitate monitoring the plan's implementation and progress.

Scope of intervention	Objective	Measure	Indicator	Responsible for implementation
1. Work-life balance and organizational culture	Supporting a balanced work-life integration	Using electronic tools to increase flexibility in the workplace and to plan and streamline work meetings	Procedure for the use of electronic devices in the workplace	RIQL Management; OEG; GEG;
		Support for a flexible work schedule, including the option to work part-time or remotely	Procedure established regarding flexible work arrangements	RIQL Management; OEG; GEG; Human Resources Manager RIQL
	Promoting gender equality within the institutional culture of the RIQL	Establishing specific positions within the RIQL to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan;	Functional institutional structure established to address gender equality within the RIQL (GEC)	RIQL Management
		Establishing a routine for reviewing and incorporating a gender perspective into all RIQL products	Procedure developed for assessing/incorporating the gender perspective into RIQL products	OEG; GEG;
		Activities marking special occasions, such as International Women's Day and the International Day of Women and Girls in Science	Analyses that incorporate a gender perspective Public statements that include such analyses, which help foster a climate of debate on gender equality	OEG; GEG
		Incorporating a gender perspective into organizational analyses	Annual analysis reports on the organization's status will include a gender perspective as part of the analysis, whenever possible	The institutional "SWOT analysis" program; OEG
				The institutional "SWOT analysis" program; OEG

Scope of intervention	Objective	Measure	Indicator	Responsible for implementation
2. Promoting gender equality in leadership structures and decision-making processes	Promoting gender equality in institutional decision-making processes and practices within the RIQL	Review and revise RIQL's internal promotion procedures to clearly incorporate the principle of gender equality	Number of procedures reviewed	RIQL Management ; OEG; GEG; Head of Human Resources, RIQL
		Entering information regarding the number and ages of children, as well as parental leave (based on employee consent), into the RIQL employee database	The RIQL employee database, supplemented with information on the number and ages of children, parental leave, and the analysis of this data in annual reports	RIQL Management; OEG; GEG; RIQL Human Resources Manager
		The annual survey of RIQL employees' opinions on possible measures to improve compliance with the principle of gender equality within the RIQL and, where applicable, satisfaction with measures already implemented	Annual research at the RIQL	RIQL Leadership; OEG; GEG; RIQL Institutional SWOT Analysis
		Aligning the Gender Equality Plan with other strategic documents developed within the RIQL	Periodic reviews of RIQL's strategic documents	RIQL Management ; OEG; GEG;
	Promoting gender	Review and revise hiring procedures to clearly incorporate the principle of gender equality; job postings will avoid discriminatory language	Number of procedures reviewed Drafted job posting template designed to be free of potential gender discrimination	RIQL Management ; OEG; GEG; RIQL Human Resources Manager

3. Promoting gender equality in recruitment and throughout one's career	equality in the recruitment of scientific and administrative staff at the RIQL	Promoting courses and training programs on gender equality	Number of RIQL employees who have participated in courses and training sessions on gender equality New employees receive information upon hiring about the culture of gender equality at RIQL and are briefed on the Gender Equality Strategy	OEG; GEG; RIQL members

Scope of intervention	Objective	Measure	Indicator	Responsible for implementation
4. Integrating a gender perspective into research	Strengthening the integration of gender perspectives into RIQL's research activities	Organizing internal discussions on the use of a gender perspective in research activities	The number of participants in the organized debates	OEG; GEG; RIQL members
		Promoting research projects on gender equality or that incorporate gender equality as a key dimension	The number of participants in presentations of research projects on gender equality or that incorporate gender equality as a dimension	OEG; GEG; RIQL members
5. Preventing and combating gender-based	Raising awareness of the importance of gender equality and fostering a positive attitude toward diversity among RIQL employees	Organizing debates on the following topics: discrimination; violence; harassment (including sexual harassment)	The number of participants in the debates organized on discrimination, violence, and harassment	OEG; GEG; RIQL members
		Revising the RIQL Code of Ethics with a focus on combating sexual discrimination, gender-based violence, and sexual harassment	Report on the RIQL Code of Ethics from the Perspective of Sexual Discrimination, Gender-Based Violence, and Sexual Harassment	OEG; GEG;

violence and sexual harassment		Promoting inter-institutional collaboration, particularly with the Academy's research institutes that have similar gender equality plans, to jointly support gender equality as a cross-cutting objective of the strategic development directions of the Romanian Academy	Biannual Report on Joint Actions with Other Institutions to Promote Gender Equality	OEG; GEG

PEG Monitoring and Evaluation

This Gender Equality Plan of the Institute for Quality of Life Research will be implemented over the next four years. The OEG and GEG play active roles in implementing the plan and will work closely with RIQL leadership to identify and mobilize resources to achieve the PEG's objectives.

Implementation will be closely monitored by the OEG, and the Gender Equality Working Group will periodically assess progress made in implementing the plan through annual meetings (or as often as necessary). Following these meetings, if necessary, corrective measures will be proposed to ensure the Plan's objectives are met. The corrective measures will become part of the Gender Equality Plan for the following year (or as often as necessary).

The GEG's annual reports will be distributed/presented during RIQL's internal discussions. When analyzing personal data provided by the RIQL's human resources manager, all GEG members who have access to this information undertake to respect the confidentiality of the information provided and to process it in such a way that the individual identity of RIQL staff can't be identified.

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