

Association for Socio-Economic Development and Promotion

A.D.P.S.E. CATALACTICA

Strategy and Plan on Gender Equality

for the period 2022–2026

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List of abbreviations

ACS – Scientific Research Assistant

ADPSE CATALACTICA – Association for Socio-Economic Development and Promotion
CATALACTICA

CS – Scientific Researcher

GEG – Gender Equality Working Group

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

GEO - Gender Equality Officer

PEG - Gender Equality Plan

SEG - Gender Equality Strategy

UEFISCDI – Executive Unit for the Funding of Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation

1. Introduction

The Association for Socio-Economic Development and Promotion CATALACTICA (A.D.P.S.E. CATALACTICA) was established on 12 February 2001 in Bucharest, continuing and expanding the programmes of the ECHOSOC Foundation initiated in 1996. The organisation is a Romanian legal entity, apolitical, non-governmental and non-profit, registered with the District Court of Sector 2, Bucharest.

CATALACTICA carries out research and development activities in the field of social sciences and humanities (CAEN Code 7220), with the following main thematic areas: the labour market and employment, social inclusion and poverty reduction, the social economy and social entrepreneurship, employment and professional reintegration policies, education and lifelong learning, health services and quality of life, social innovation and community development, and public policies for people with disabilities and marginalised populations.

In addition to its applied scientific research activities, CATALACTICA takes on the responsibility of actively contributing to the development of Romanian society, particularly through involvement in social inclusion programmes, the preparation of studies and reports for public policy, and vocational training.

In the context of its work, CATALACTICA has drawn up this Strategy (SEG) and the corresponding Gender Equality Plan (PEG) for the period 2022–2026, following consultation with the organisation's staff, taking into account the interests of all its employees – research and administrative staff – regardless of gender. Following the monitoring and evaluation process, the plan will be reviewed and improved, if necessary, annually or whenever required.

The SEG and PEG have been drawn up in line with the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers 2015–2019, 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 EU Strategy on Gender Equality (2020–2025), with the aim of achieving a Union of Equality. The main objectives are: to eliminate gender-based violence; to eliminate gender stereotypes; to reduce gender gaps in the labour market; to achieve equal participation across different sectors of the economy; to reduce pay and pension gaps; and to reduce the gender gap and achieve gender balance in decision-making and politics.

Furthermore, 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 set out under Goal 5 and includes targets related to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, ensuring the full and effective participation of women, and equal opportunities for women in leadership positions at all levels of decision-making.

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

CATALACTICA's Gender Equality Plan for the period 2022–2026 includes a series of objectives and measures, as well as indicators to measure progress in implementation. By implementing the SEG/PEG, CATALACTICA ensures and promotes equality and diversity in knowledge and skills acquisition for all its employees.

2. Current situation: review of requirements, policies and case studies

In developing this strategy and the associated plan, CATALACTICA's management appointed a group of researchers to review existing requirements, policies, recommendations, examples and case studies relating 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 main reference documents that formed the basis for the development of the SEG/PEG CATALACTICA include:

- The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2015–2019)
- The European Union Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025
- National regulations on equal opportunities (Law No. 202/2002 and subsequent amendments)
- National Strategy on Equality of Opportunity between Women and Men for the period 2021–2027
- Similar plans of partner research institutes (ICCV, IPE – Romanian Academy)
- European Commission recommendations on institutional gender equality plans

3. Diagnosis

At CATALACTICA, between 2020 and 2024, an average of around 37 employees were active (according to data from the 2024 balance sheet), with annual fluctuations determined by project cycles. Of the total workforce, research and development staff formed a stable core of 2 full-time equivalents with higher education qualifications, one of whom holds a scientific degree (CS).

The gender analysis at CATALACTICA reveals the following:

- Of the three members of the management team (Executive Board, President, Coordinator), two are women (Dr Corina Cace – Coordinator, Anton Nicoleta Andreia – President of the Teleorman branch) and one is a man (Dr Sorin Cace – President/Legal Representative), which indicates a significant presence of women in leadership.
- The research staff is predominantly female, a consistent trend in the social sciences at national and European level.
- CATALACTICA does not currently hold detailed statistics on the number of men and women on parental leave in recent years, nor on the exact distribution by academic rank according to gender, an issue that will be addressed through the implementation of this plan.
- The SWOT analysis carried out as part of the 2021–2026 strategic planning process did not include gender as an explicit variable, an aspect identified as a weakness that partly motivates the development of this plan.

The key conclusions of the assessment can be structured on two levels:

- The gender distribution of positions at CATALACTICA does not reveal any obvious discrimination, with a notable presence of women in management and cutting-edge research roles. In future, it would be useful to conduct a comparative analysis of performance and individual career development goals by gender, in order to identify whether discrimination and inequalities exist.
- It would be useful for future SWOT analyses to 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.

4. Gender Strategy and Plan 2022–2026

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

By approving this Gender Equality Strategy and the associated plan, A.D.P.S.E. CATALACTICA has decided to create a Gender Equality Officer (GEO) position within the organisation. The role of the Gender Officer will be to actively monitor the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan, to report any difficulties in its implementation to the organisation’s management, and to collate proposals for improving the plan. The GEO will monitor developments in national and European legislation, with a duty to report any necessary adjustments to the SEG/PEG to CATALACTICA’s management. The Gender Officer will be appointed by the management for a period of four years.

At the institutional level, a Gender Equality Working Group (GEG) has been established within CATALACTICA, comprising 3–4 employees in different roles, reflecting the gender distribution within the organisation. The GEG will become a permanent structure within CATALACTICA, with the role of facilitating and monitoring, together with the OEG, the implementation of the PEG 2022–2026. Members are elected directly, by vote, by the organisation’s employees who have expressed a desire to be part of the group, for a period of 4 years (2022–2026).

4.1. Gender Strategy 2022–2026

SEG CATALACTICA is structured around five major areas of intervention, each with several associated objectives.

Area of intervention	Objective
1. Work-life balance and organisational culture at CATALACTICA	Supporting the coherent integration of career and private life
	Promoting gender equality in CATALACTICA’s institutional culture
2. Promoting gender equality in management structures and decision-making processes	Promoting gender equality in institutional promotion and decision-making processes and practices within CATALACTICA

3. Promoting gender equality in recruitment and throughout careers	Promoting gender equality in the recruitment of scientific and administrative staff within CATALACTICA
4. Integrating the gender dimension into research	Strengthening the integration of the gender dimension into CATALACTICA's research activities
5. Preventing and combating gender-based violence and sexual harassment	Raising awareness of the importance of gender equality and strengthening a positive attitude towards diversity among CATALACTICA staff

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

4.2. Gender Plan

CATALACTICA's gender equality plan, presented below and drawn up in accordance with the guidelines provided by the European Commission and UEFISCDI, specifies the areas of intervention, the objectives and the measures proposed to achieve them, the indicators facilitating the monitoring of implementation, and those responsible for each measure.

Area of intervention	Objective	Measure	Indicator	Person responsible
1. Work-life balance and organisational culture	Supporting the coherent integration of career and private life	Use of electronic tools to increase flexibility in work and the scheduling of work meetings (Teams, Zoom, Skype)	Procedure developed regarding the use of electronic tools at work	Management CATALACTICA; OEG; GEG
		Supporting a flexible working schedule, including the option of part-time or remote work	Procedure drawn up regarding flexible working arrangements	Management CATALACTICA; OEG; GEG; Human Resources Manager
		Development and implementation of procedures regarding support for employees returning from parental or extended sick leave	Procedure for reintegration after parental/sick leave developed and communicated to employees	CATALACTICA Management; OEG; GEG
	Promoting gender equality within CATALACTICA's	Establishment of the position of Gender Equality	Functional institutional structure	CATALACTICA Management

	organisational culture	Officer (GEO) and the GEG Working Group within CATALACTICA	established regarding gender equality (GE Officer; GEG)	
		Activities on the occasion of special events: International Women's Day, International Day of Women and Girls in Science	Press releases/public analyses published on the catalactica.org.ro website to mark these events	OEG; GEG; Communications Department
		Integration of the gender dimension into annual organisational analyses (SWOT)	CATALACTICA's annual activity reports include the gender dimension as part of the analysis	Institutional SWOT programme; OEG; GEG
2. Promoting gender equality in management structures and decision-making processes	Promoting gender equality in institutional promotion/decision-making processes and practices within CATALACTICA	Reviewing/revising CATALACTICA's internal promotion procedures to clearly include the principle of gender equality	Number of procedures revised; procedures approved and communicated to staff	CATALACTICA Management; OEG; GEG; Human Resources
		Entering information regarding the number and age of children, and parental leave (subject to employee consent) into the CATALACTICA employee database	Employee database completed and analysed as part of annual reports; compliance with GDPR	CATALACTICA Management; OEG; GEG; Human Resources
		Annual collection of CATALACTICA employees' views on possible measures to improve compliance with the principle of gender equality	Annual internal surveys/research; results are discussed at GEG meetings and incorporated into annual planning	CATALACTICA Management; OEG; GEG; Institutional SWOT Programme
		Alignment of the Gender Equality Plan with the Strategic Development Plan 2026–2030 and	Periodic reviews of CATALACTICA's strategic documents include references to the GEP/GEP	CATALACTICA Management; OEG; GEG

		other strategic documents of the organisation		
3. Promoting gender equality in recruitment and throughout careers	Promoting gender equality in the recruitment of scientific and administrative staff within CATALACTICA	Reviewing/revising recruitment procedures to clearly incorporate the principle of gender equality; job advertisements will avoid discriminatory language	Number of procedures revised; gender-neutral job advertisement template developed and used	CATALACTICA management; OEG; GEG; Human Resources
		Promotion of courses and training on gender equality; new employees receive information on CATALACTICA's gender equality culture upon joining and are informed about SEG/PEG	Number of participants in courses and training on gender equality; existence of a welcome pack for new employees that includes SEG/PEG	OEG; GEG; CATALACTICA members
4. Integrating the gender dimension into research activities	Strengthening the integration of the gender dimension into CATALACTICA's research activities	Organisation of internal debates on the use of the gender perspective in research, including in projects on the labour market, social inclusion, poverty and social policies	Number of participants in the organised debates; minutes of meetings; number of projects including gender analysis	OEG; GEG; CATALACTICA members; Research and Development Department
		Promotion of research projects on gender equality or those incorporating gender equality as a key dimension; publication of articles and studies integrating a gender perspective in the Journal of Positive Community Practices (JPPC) and the Romanian Journal of Labour	Number of projects submitted/awarded with a gender component; number of articles published in the JPPC/RJLSS with an integrated gender perspective	OEG; GEG; CATALACTICA members

		and Social Studies (RJLSS)		
5. Preventing and combating gender-based violence and sexual harassment	Raising awareness of the importance of gender equality and strengthening a positive attitude towards diversity among CATALACTICA employees	Organising debates on the following topics: discrimination; violence; harassment (including sexual harassment); mechanisms for reporting and resolving cases	Number of participants in the organised debates; existence of a documented mechanism for reporting and resolving cases of harassment	OEG; GEG; CATALACTICA members
		Reviewing/revising CATALACTICA's Code of Ethics, Integrity and Professional Conduct from the perspective of combating sexual discrimination, gender-based violence and sexual harassment	Report on the Code of Ethics from the perspective of sexual discrimination, gender-based violence and sexual harassment; updated and approved code	OEG; GEG; CATALACTICA Management
		Promoting inter-institutional collaboration with partner organisations (ICCV, IPE-Romanian Academy, ASE, SNSPA, partner universities in the CATALACTICA network) with similar plans regarding gender equality, for the joint promotion of gender equality as a cross-cutting objective	Biennial report on joint actions with other institutions regarding the promotion of gender equality; collaboration documents with partners within Erasmus+, Interreg projects, etc.	OEG; GEG; CATALACTICA Management; International Cooperation Department

5. Monitoring and evaluation of the PEG

This Gender Equality Plan of A.D.P.S.E. CATALACTICA will be implemented over the next 4 years (2022–2026). The OEG and GEG have active roles in implementing the plan and will work closely with CATALACTICA management to identify and mobilise resources to achieve the PEG objectives.

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

The GEG's annual reports will be distributed/presented at CATALACTICA Board of Directors meetings and communicated to staff via internal communication channels (email, Intranet, Teams). When analysing personal data, all GEG members with access to this information undertake to respect confidentiality and to process the data in such a way that the individual identity of employees cannot be identified, in accordance with the provisions of the GDPR.

The CATALACTICA SEG/PEG will be posted on the institutional website (catalactica.org.ro) and updated periodically, in line with relevant legislative and institutional developments.

6. References

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Approved by the Board of Directors of A.D.P.S.E. CATALACTICA

Date of approval: _____

Dr Sorin Cace, President of A.D.P.S.E. CATALACTICA

Signature: _____

Gender Equality Officer (GEO): _____

Signature: _____