

## Impact Story Gender Equality / Action Plan

**Impact story**  
Gender equality action plan

### Intervention Definition

Research has demonstrated that despite various policy initiatives and support at the EU level for gender equality in science and research, women still face persistent barriers in pursuing careers and reaching decision-making positions even when they are well represented at entry level (Caprile et al. 2012). There is consensus that "organisational hierarchies, procedures and formal and informal rules informing the ordinary functioning of the institution hinder the recruitment and promotion of women" (Kalpazidou Schmidt and Cacace, 2017, 5). Gender equality plans have been promoted by the European Commission as the main tool to effect systematic institutional change particularly in RPOs but also in RFOs. The GARCIA project defines a gender equality plan as follows: "a planning document that promotes gender equality within an organisation. It aims to fulfil sets of actions and to achieve structural changes based on each specific situation and context. It is important for a Gender Action Plan to be self-tailored to the specific organisational context." (Bozzon et al. 2016, 4). The GENERA project has developed a useful typology of the different measures that can be implemented in a GEP classified by field of action and sub-field of action (Oetke et al. 2016). The TARGET project builds on this typology as a basic framework for ordering possible actions/measures and includes a fourth strand of general or transversal measures. The following table provides an overview of this framework.

Dimension	Field of Action	Sub-field of action
HR Management	Gender-inclusive organisational culture	Gender awareness and bias Non-discrimination
	Presence	Recruitment Retention and attrition Advancement
	Flexibility, time and work life	Work-life balance Care & family life
Decision-making	Addressing gender bias in decision-making	
Gender dimension	Gender dimension in education	
	Gender dimension in research content	
Transversal measures	Top management commitment - Leadership accountability	
	Community of practice - Gender equality structure	
	Data collection - monitoring	

Examples of measures that can be included in a GEP under these sub-fields of action are the following:

**Gender Awareness and Bias:** Unconscious bias training; Gender Equality Office

**Non-discrimination:** Zero-tolerance Sexual Harassment Policies; fair and transparent workload balance across all areas (teaching, research, administration);

**Recruitment:** Transparency of selection process; gender gender-trained hiring committee;

**Retention & Attrition:** training for career development; monitoring of attrition and retention

**Advancement:** Balanced women's representation in promotion pools; gender as a criterion for ranking applications; mentoring

**Work-Life Balance:** Reasonable working hours; telework; flexible schedules;

**Care & Family Life:** support the 'dual earner' family model; non-discrimination of parents;

<p><b>Decision-making:</b> Introducing gender quotas; ensuring that all bodies are gender aware</p> <p><b>Gender dimension in education:</b> Mainstreaming gender awareness in all curricula; including methods of sex and gender analysis and related knowledge in all curricula;</p> <p><b>Gender dimension in research content:</b> Asking research applications to address 'how sex and gender analysis is taken into account in the project's content'</p>
<p><b>Intervention Definition Short</b></p> <p>"A Gender Action Plan is a planning document that promotes gender equality within an organisation. It aims to fulfil sets of actions and to achieve structural changes based on each specific situation and context. It is important for a Gender Action Plan to be self-tailored to the specific organisational context." (Bozzon et al. 2016, 4)</p>
<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Increase the number of women in R&amp;I positions</li> <li>(2) Improve working conditions/ Work-life balance</li> <li>(3) Boost professional capabilities of women to pursue promotion</li> <li>(4) Implement gender-fair organisational structures</li> <li>(5) Integrate the gender dimension in research and teaching</li> </ol>
<p><b>Output</b></p> <p>At the institutional level, the main output of a GEP is the actual adoption of the GEP and the activities involved in the implementation of the planned measures, as EFFORTI Case Study 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan for equality between women and men in the National Research Agency shows. These may include training sessions, policies, revision of policies and guidelines, specific funding (i.e. grants for early career development), rewards and incentives and the establishment of institutional support and various measures (including those that focus on the work environment/ practise and the renegotiation of workload). According to the EFFORTI Case Study 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan for equality between women and men in the National Research Agency, outputs for recruitment may include panels that have been provided with general recommendations on fair staff evaluation and for advancement – training on gender equality has been included in the leadership skills course amongst others. GEPs vary in terms of the specific measures that they detail – therefore, outputs depend on the specific activities that these institutions decide to undertake. For example, if a specific GEP is concerned with revising the recruitment process, 'revised recruitment process' may be a GEP output. Another action might be unconscious bias training for recruitment panels or Human Resource Managers – in this case, the output would be the conduct of training sessions delivered to members of the recruitment panels or Human Resource Managers and the number of participants on these training courses.<sup>1</sup></p>

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<sup>1</sup> A GEP is not only a 'measure' or intervention that produces outputs; an analysis of a country's proportion of RPOs with a GEP in place is also indicative of the pro-activeness of a country's research institutions in challenging gender inequality and, therefore, the GEP can also be conceived as an 'input' (Wroblewski et al. 2015, 63). For example, the ERA (2014) survey used the following indicators: proportion of RPOs that adopted gender equality plans, and proportion of R&D personnel working in organisations that adopted gender equality plans. The first indicator represents a first step towards understanding how widespread the adoption of such plans is within the European Research Area. The second indicator "represents a first step towards understanding how common it is for R&D personnel to work in RPOs that have adopted such plans and thus made a formal commitment to gender equality. It provides an insight into the working conditions within the European Research Area (in the respondent RPOs)" (European Commission 2016c, 112).

**Output Short**

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**Output indicators**

- 2.1.1 Range of institutional support (child-care; partner/ spousal hiring; health accommodations; career planning; etc.)
- 2.2.3 Measures on work environment/work practices
- 2.2.4. Measures led to renegotiation of workload
- 2.2.4 Guidelines on how to a release from one kind of activity (for example teaching) to focus on research
- 2.3.2 Existence of rewards and incentives
- 2.4.1 Study of actual space allocation of faculty at organisational level (access to the lab, square footage, proximity to electrical power, since last renovation, services)
- 3.3.1 Share of staff/researchers who have received training on IGAR
- 3.1.1 Implementation of leadership development programme
- 4.2.1 Adoption of GE plans
- 4.2.1 Adaptations in guidelines, employee rights, spousal appointments
- 4.4.1 Grants for early career development

**Outcome**

The main outcomes of GEPs include those related to implemented measures to create an institution free from bias and therefore a more attractive work environment that will benefit both women and men. EIGE (2016) states the following outcomes for a GEP: compliance with domestic and EU regulations; creating better work environment; attracting and retaining talent; economic benefits; excellence and research quality; effectiveness and efficiency of the research, and a leverage for organisational change.

Important indicators of an institutional awareness and commitment to gender diversity include institutional structural characteristics, which can be evaluated by examining the budget allocated to GE monitoring and whether or not there is a dedicated person/department/team in charge of GE monitoring.

The establishment of institutional data gathering as an outcome of a GEP aids the monitoring process. For example in the EFFORTI Case Study 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan for equality between women and men in the National Research Agency data collection has been vastly improved and a greater understanding of remuneration inequalities in this case study as well as more in-depth knowledge of women's representation in different scientific areas and at different levels of the organisation has been achieved.

GEP outcomes related to an increased institutional awareness of and commitment to gender diversity may also be measured through examining the effect of data gathering on the application process, and the inclusion of the gender dimension in teaching/curricula. Another major outcome of the successful implementation of a GEP is a decrease of gender equality barriers, which can be determined through examining whether or not a policy change has been enacted. For example in the EFFORTI Case Study 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan for equality between women and men in the National Research Agency a regulation on variable payment linked to "productivity" has been modified so that paternity / paternity leaves do not affect retribution. Organisational and cultural change is the main outcome of a GEP which can be identified through examining the perceived extent and pace of cultural change on the organisational level as well as an assessment of the general organisational consciousness and an impact assessment of measures enacted, i.e. has the data collected in the application process lead to a change / revision of the process and what effect has this had on a more gender-balanced recruitment. The assessment of effectiveness of existing equal opportunity / anti-discrimination legislation measures is another indicator of decreasing gender equality barriers.

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#### **Outcome indicators**

- 2.1.1 Range of institutional support (child-care, Partner/spousal hiring; health accommodations; career planning etc.
- 3.3.1 Effect of data collection on application process
- 3.3.1 Inclusion of the gender dimension in teaching/curricula
- 3.3.1 Institution's commitment to promote equality and diversity
- 3.3.1 Establishment of institutional data-gathering
- 3.3.1 Budget allocated to GE monitoring
- 3.3.1 Dedicated person/ department/ team in charge of GE monitoring
- 3.4.1 Integration of GE in KPIs
- 4.1.1 Enacting of policy change
- 4.2.1 Perceived extent and pace of cultural change on organisational level
- 4.2.1 General organisational consciousness and messages with symbolic value
- 4.2.1 Assessment of the effectiveness of existing equal opportunity/ anti-discrimination legislation/ measures

**Impact**

The direct impact of GEP implementation should be a gender fair institution where institutional barriers preventing more women in research in critical disciplines (i.e. in those disciplines in which they are particularly underrepresented) and at the higher echelons of the academic career ladder are overcome. The impact of a GEP should therefore minimise horizontal and vertical segregation across a range of disciplines and positions.

The increase of women in leadership positions can be measured by examining the take up of leadership positions such as rector, associate professor, dean/associate dean, centre director, head of department or leader of research. For example in the EFFORTI Case Study ES\_2 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan for equality between women and men in the National Research Agency - women's presence in leadership positions, especially in management has increased in recent years. Impact can also be rewarded, for example the University of Copenhagen through its plan has set up a central bonus pool offering additional rewards for each of the faculties which has increased the ratio of newly hired female professors by five percentage points in comparison to the year prior to the plan (Nielsen 2017).

Regarding decision-making, the composition of boards or committees is a useful indicator. Fairness of evaluation can be measured through data gathering on the application process (and subsequent actions), unconscious bias training for evaluators and a more transparent promotion system. The success ratio of women and men in recruitment and promotion can be analysed and disseminated in the plan, as the EFFORTI Case Study 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan for equality between women and men in the National Research Agency shows. One main impact of a successful gender equality plan is a greater gender awareness, which can be linked to the scale of the organisation's commitment to gender diversity – measured through regulations, contract's reformulation and the founding of new initiatives. The decrease of gender equality barriers can also be gaged through the level of sustainability of gender equality initiatives as well as the perceived extent and pace of cultural change on the organisational level. One major impact of a successfully implemented GEP is the retention of talent, particularly female talent – thereby bolstering the diversity of the workforce and increasing innovative research projects and publications. EIGE (2016) also points out regarding the impacts of GEPs how integrating the gender dimension in research content, "improves the overall quality of research design, hypotheses, protocols and outputs in an ample variety of fields." In this instance, a key indicator is Research quality: integration of a gender dimension /perspective in research and content in research projects, patents and agreements.

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**Impact indicators**

- 1.1.1 Rate of change in composition of faculty
- 1.1.1 Taken up leadership positions such as rector, associate professor, dean/ associate dean, centre director, head of department, leader of research
- 1.1.2 Composition of boards or committees
- 1.2.1 Fairness of evaluation
- 2.2.1 Transparent promotion system
- 3.3.1 Scale of organisational commitment to gender diversity (measurement through regulations, contract's reformulation, founding of new initiatives)
- 4.1.1 Sustainability of gender equality initiatives
- 4.2.1 Perceived extent and pace of cultural change on organisational level

<p>2.4.1 Equal workspace/facilities allocation</p> <p>5.4.2 Research quality: integration of a gender dimension/ perspective in research and content in research projects, patents, and agreements</p>
<p><b>Policy Context</b></p> <p>The European Commission plays a key role in the promotion of GEPs throughout Member States and Associated countries. Gender equality is a key priority set throughout the European Research Area and research funding and performing organisations and universities are invited to implement institutional change through Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). The Council conclusions of 1/12/2015 recognised the contribution of gender equality to the quality of research and innovation. It reaffirmed the need for sustainable cultural and institutional change along the three following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Removing barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers;</li> <li>2. Addressing gender imbalances in decision making processes;</li> <li>3. Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation content.</li> </ol> <p>The GEAR tool developed by the European Commission and EIGE presents the state of the art knowledge and practices on institutional change and provides a systematic guide on how to set up and implement GEPs.</p>
<p><b>Organisational Context</b></p> <p>EIGE (2016, 8) highlights that the scope of a GEP depends on the type of research performing organisation, the institutional context in which it is implemented, the disciplines addressed, and the type of gender biases identified in the audit process.</p> <p>Whilst GEPs are recognised as an essential tool for structural change, an EC-commissioned report acknowledges that a plan itself is not sufficient – it identifies three essential conditions that need to be met to achieve institutional change (European Commission 2012).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing the institution – collecting baseline data at the institutional level;</li> <li>• Securing top-level support as a crucial component of effective implementation of institutional change; and</li> <li>• Generating effective management practices – raising awareness and building gender competence of key decision-makers and human resource managers to understand how apparently gender-neutral processes like recruitment and advancement may disadvantage women and how subtle gender bias may be effectively counteracted.</li> </ul> <p>Kalpazidou Schmidt and Cacace (2018) highlight "the need for strategies integrated at multiple levels to achieve organisational transformation, as well as the need to focus on the dynamics of the involvement of different stakeholders, in the framework of an approach taking complexity as its frame of reference."</p> <p>Despite the need to demonstrate the impact of GEPs, institutional change is a slow process and until now has been difficult to document. For example, Sansonetti et al. (2017, 10) note that the lack of a detailed monitoring and evaluation process often makes assessing the effective impact of GEPs a difficult process.</p>
<p><b>Sources</b></p> <p>Bozzon, Rosella., Murgia, Annalisa. and Poggio, Barbara. (eds.) (2016). Supporting Early Career Researchers through Gender Action Plans. A Design and Methodological Toolkit, GARCIA working paper n. 9, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-682-5);</p> <p>Cacace, Marina., Balahur, Doina., Bleijenbergh, Inge., Falcinelli, Daniela., Friedrich, Micheala., Kalpazidou Schmidt, Evanthia. (2015). Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science. Guidelines, STAGES project,</p>

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GEAR Tool supports the research community with a practical steps-by-steps guide, an action toolbox as well as with many arguments, background information and good practices to develop tailor made Gender Equality Plans for universities and research organisations. <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/GEAR>

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