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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC	Associated Countries
BMM	Bimonthly meeting
CoP	Community of Practice
EC	European Commission
EGET	European Gender Equality Taskforce
ERA	European Research Area
GE	Gender equality
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GBV	Gender-based violence
GiRI	Gender Dimension in Research and Innovation
KIF	Norwegian Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research
IHS	Institute for Advanced Studies Vienna
JR	Joanneum Research
MLW	Mutual learning workshop
MS	EU Member States
ISAS CR	Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences
NIP	National Impact Plan
RFO	Research Funding Organisation
R&I	Research & Innovation
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
SDU	University of Southern Denmark
UEFISCDI	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research and Innovation Funding in Romania
WP	Work Package



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current report provides an overview of the capacity building activities planned and implemented in the first year of the GENDERACTIONplus project, as well as of the approaches, instruments and working modalities used in the implementation. The report builds on the results of the needs assessment elaborated as part of task 7.1, data from the internal reports for the capacity building events (MLWs) organised as part of task 7.2 - *All partners capacity building and mutual learning*, and on inputs from partners responsible with the organization of workshops and BMM.

All capacity building activities foreseen for year 1 were correlated with the findings from the needs assessment survey carried out by UEFISCDI as part of Task 7.1. The results of the survey revealed key areas of knowledge in which both CoPs are highly interested in (Intersectionality and gender+ approaches, Gender dimension in research and innovation), as well as themes/topics specific to each of the CoPs (e.g., f or RFOs – Role of RFOs in gender equality, for policy makers – Building a national gender equality discourse).

Two types of capacity building activities were carried out: mutual learning workshops (MLWs) and bimonthly meetings (BMM). The combination of MLW and BMM formed a complete action learning cycle with the members' own practice and the project outputs in the forefront. Both MLWs and BMMs were carefully designed to provide an effective learning environment for the CoP members. To this end, three main approaches were used: content delivery (e.g., lectures and presentations of practical examples delivered by internal and external experts), development of practical strategies and skills (e.g., stakeholder engagement, building a national gender equality discourse), and (3) peer support and mentoring (during MLWs, but especially as part of BMMs).

Overall, 4 (four) mutual learning events were delivered in year 1 – 3 online and one physical – on the following topics:

- Stakeholders and citizen engagement (online, 17 January 2023)
- Building a national gender equality discourse (online, 25 April 2023)
- Gender dimension in Research and Innovation (GiRI) (online, 26 April 2023)
- Intersectionality (onsite, 22-24 May 2023 in Vienna)

Capacity building actions in year 1 targeted three main groups: policy makers (Policy CoP), research funding organisations (RFO CoP) and supporting organisations. Bimonthly meetings (BMM) were organised for each of the two CoPs. Moreover, out of the 4 (four) capacity building events, one was addressed primarily to the RFO CoP (GiRI), while the other three were addressed to all project partners, regardless of the CoP they were associated with.

In order to assess the perceived utility of the capacity building activities, an online survey was designed and distributed to consortium members. Over the course of ten days (27 September – 8 October 2023), the survey was filled in by 15 respondents, representing the three types of organisations involved in the project: policy makers / national authorities (5 persons), RFOs (7 persons) and supporting organisations appointed for GENDERACTIONplus (3 persons). Overall, the feedback was positive, with the majority of respondents agreeing that the capacity building activities enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the topics addressed. Following the workshops, 14 out of the 15 respondents envisioned some actions or initiatives to be implemented in their daily work or organizations.



However, less than half respondents feel empowered or strongly empowered to implement the ideas discussed in the workshops in their work and organisations. Moreover, the survey also revealed recommendations for topics and areas to be covered in future capacity building activities: gender dimension from the perspective of evaluators, monitoring, and evaluation of GE activities, including the identification of relevant KPIs, dealing with resistance, inclusive research careers, certification of GEPs and audits.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. About the project

Building on the Horizon 2020 project GENDERACTION, the overall goal of GENDERACTIONplus is to contribute to the coordination of the gender equality and inclusiveness objectives of the new European Research Area (ERA) through the development of two communities of practice (CoPs), one consisting of representatives of national authorities and the second consisting of representatives of Research Funding Organisations. The network is made up of a total of 22 EU Member States (MS) and 3 Associated Countries (AC), as well as 26 project partners and 14 Associated partners.

Adding the plus sign to the title of the previous GENDERACTION project not only indicates that it is a follow-up project but also makes it explicit that this project also addresses diversity and intersectionality (the gender+ approach).

Specifically, the GENDERACTIONplus project aims to:

- Develop strategic policy advice on existing and emerging policy solutions;
- Enhance the policy-making process by engaging with stakeholders, civil society organisations, and citizens;
- Build capacities, competence, and expertise for gender equality and mainstreaming in Research & Innovation among the policy and RFO community members, with special attention to countries with a less comprehensive policy;
- Create an impact through communication, dissemination, and exploitation.

Thematically, the project focuses on:

- Intersectionality and inclusiveness
- Gender-based violence
- The gender dimension in research and innovation
- Monitoring and evaluating gender equality actions in the European Research Area (ERA)
- Promoting institutional change through Gender Equality Plans (GEPs)

GENDERACTIONplus aims to achieve the following impacts:

- Advance policy coordination among MS and AC countries and through stakeholder and citizen engagement.
- Improve research careers and working conditions in European R&I, by developing policy dialogue and solutions on inclusion and intersectionality, combating gender-based violence, and promoting institutional changes through GEPs.
- Improve research quality and the social responsibility of knowledge by integrating the gender dimension into research and innovation (R&I).



- Reduce geographic inequality by targeting less experienced/engaged countries and regions.

1.2. Objectives of the report

The aim of this report is to analyse and assess the degree to which the mutual learning workshops (MLWs) developed and delivered in year 1 have been effective in building capacities for partners involved in the project.

To this aim, the report looks into:

- The degree to which the MLWs met the knowledge and skills needs identified in the needs assessment report;
- The degree to which participants indicate that they have acquired knowledge and that the workshops impacted their understanding of the topics addressed;
- The degree to which participants in the MLW feel empowered to implement the ideas discussed in the workshops in their work and organization;
- The degree to which the knowledge gained during the workshops has been helpful in the development of the National Impact Plans (NIPs)

1.3. The relationship of this report to other tasks and work packages

Collaboration among consortium members from different work packages is crucial to ensure synergies within GENDERACTIONplus, as it allows for the integration of diverse perspectives, expertise, and experiences, ultimately leading to a comprehensive and holistic approach towards achieving the project's goals.

The current report builds both on the results of the needs assessment elaborated as part of task 7.1, as well as on the results of the capacity building events (MLWs) that were organised as part of task 7.2 - *All partners capacity building and mutual learning*. While the organization of the mutual learning workshops was coordinated by the WP7 leader (UEFISCDI), the content of the events was developed by the coordinators of thematic WPs. Moreover, thematic WP leads were also actively involved in the actual delivery of the workshops, i.e.:

- VA (Public & Science, the national expert hub for public engagement, citizen science and science communication in Sweden was responsible for the delivery of the workshop on *Stakeholder and citizen engagement* workshop;
- JR, as the responsible partner for Capacity building in the RFO CoP, coordinated the delivery of the GiRi workshop, together with Vinnova;
- KIF coordinated the delivery of *Intersectionality* MLW in Vienna, while consortium members from various WPs supported UEFISCDI in organizing the event;
- IHS coordinated the delivery of the MLW on the *Relevance of a National Gender Equality Discourse in Research and Innovation*.

Input was also collected from partners responsible with the organization of BMM: SDU and ISAS CR for the policy CoP and JR and IHS for the RFO CoP.



2. APPROACH TO CAPACITY BUILDING

2.1. Needs assessment

In line with the GENDERACTIONplus Grant Agreement, a needs assessment was carried out by UEFISCDI as part of Task 7.1, to define needs, priority actions and additional topics for the design of capacity building and mutual learning actions in both the two CoPs (policy makers and RFOs) as well as in supporting organisations.

The needs assessment revealed that all three respondent groups (policy makers, RFOs and supporting organisations) are highly interested in broadening their knowledge on **intersectionality and gender+ approaches**. **Gender dimension in research** is also a relevant topic for all three groups, while respondents in the RFO CoP also show interest in the role of RFOs in gender equality, including the role of RFOs in GEP implementation. In terms of skills, the most relevant needs are those related to **dealing with resistance, building a national gender equality discourse with other policy makers and civil servants, and communication and delivering arguments for gender equality**. Knowledge and skills needs are also reflected in the respondents' preferences for face-to-face events, as most survey participants mentioned **intersectionality and dealing with resistance among the most relevant topics preferred for face-to-face events**.

Slight differences were observed among the needs and preferences of the three respondent groups. RFOs are naturally interested in their role in gender equality. The policy CoP appears to be more interested in the gender dimension in research and institutional/structural change and GEPs compared to the other two respondent groups. At the same time, supporting organisations regard topics such as gender bias and mitigation and involving men in gender equality work as relevant. However, **intersectionality and dealing with resistance stand out as points of common interest for all three respondent groups**.

With regard to the format preferences, policy makers seemed to prefer formats which are less interactive (collection of best practices, toolkits), while respondents from RFOs and supporting organisations were more interested in interactive formats, either online (online facilitated discussions and exchanges, online trainings, online webinar with a facilitator) or onsite (onsite mutual learning workshop, onsite conference or workshop).

Based on the results of the needs assessment, four major topics were selected for the capacity building events in year 1.

Stakeholder and citizen engagement

The needs assessment survey showed that topics such as *Stakeholder engagement, Participatory methods and techniques, Communication and delivering arguments for gender equality* are regarded as important by both CoPs, despite them not being in the „top three” knowledge and skills needs. As foreseen in the project plan, these topics are essential to establishing a common ground for understanding gender equality and equipping partners in the consortium with policy impact building activities. It was therefore decided that stakeholder and citizen engagement would be the topic of the first capacity building workshop.



Building a national gender equality discourse

Policy CoP: While the scores received from the Policy CoP indicated that practical soft skills related to gender equality are needed, the survey results revealed that that policy makers / national authorities perceive Building a national gender equality discourse as one of the most relevant and urgent skill needs. In fact, *Building a national gender equality discourse* and *Communicating and delivering arguments for gender equality* were indicated by respondents in the Policy CoP as the most important skill needs (from a selection of 11 predefined skill needs), followed by *Dealing with resistance*.

RFO CoP: The skills self-assessment revealed that representatives of the RFOs CoP score relatively high in terms of soft skills, such as *Communication, Participatory methods and techniques, Stakeholder engagement, and Dealing with resistance*. However, *Building a national gender equality discourse* received an average score below 3, indicating a skill gap that could be addressed through mutual learning workshops. In terms of the *skills needs*, the survey results indicate that the top needs of respondents in the RFO CoP are *Dealing with resistance*, followed by *Communicating and delivering arguments for gender equality* and *Building a national gender equality discourse*. In fact, Building a national gender equality discourse was identified as the top skill need by respondents with over 5 years of professional experience in gender equality work. This may indicate that the topic remains largely uncovered in the training (both formal and informal) of GE professionals.

Thus, building a national gender equality discourse is a relevant skill need for members of both the Policy CoP as well as of the RFO CoP. These findings paved the way for the development and delivery of a webinar on building a national gender equality discourse, addressed primarily to the Policy CoP but also open to the RFO CoP.

Gender dimension in Research and Innovation (GiRI)

The needs assessment indicated that gender dimension in research and innovation (GiRI) is one of the most relevant and urgent needs for people in the RFO CoP, and survey participants indicated that they prefer to address their knowledge needs through highly interactive formats, such as onsite mutual learning workshops, online facilitated discussions and exchanges and online trainings. These findings paved the way for the development and delivery of a dedicated webinar on GiRI, designed for and addressed mainly to members of the RFO CoP.

Intersectionality

The needs assessment revealed that Intersectionality and gender+ approaches is the topic identified as the most relevant by the survey participants in the Policy CoP (regardless of their level of experience in GE), and the second most relevant by survey participants in the RFO CoP (more relevant for highly experiences professionals than those with little experience in GE). Furthermore, respondents from both CoPs identified Intersectionality and gender+ approaches as the most relevant knowledge need to be covered in face-to-face events.



2.2. Types of capacities under development

The mutual learning workshops organised in year 1 were developed in line with the results of the needs assessment and focus on the delivery of knowledge and skills relevant to the following capacities:

- 1) Capacity for stakeholder and citizen engagement, addressed to all partners and communities of practice
 - enhance knowledge of key principles and concepts of effective stakeholder and citizen engagement
 - understand how to design a successful engagement activity
 - become acquainted with different types of engagement methods and techniques
 - become able to apply stakeholder and citizen engagement to GENDERACTIONplus
- 2) Capacity to develop a national policy discourse for the successful implementation of gender equality policies in R&I, addressed to all partners and communities of practice
 - become familiar with what is meant by a gender equality discourse and what are central elements of a gender equality discourse
 - become aware of the relevance of a comprehensive national policy discourse for a successful implementation of gender equality policies in R&I at national level
 - acknowledge the responsibility of national authorities for pursuing a national gender equality discourse and build capacities to develop their national impact plan
 - acknowledge the responsibility of RFOs to establish a gender equality discourse within their institutions and to actively contribute within the framework of their remit to the national gender equality discourse
 - reflect on possible starting points or supporting factors for developing a gender equality discourse.
- 3) Capacity to integrate Gender dimension in Research and Innovation (GiRI), addressed primarily to RFOs, addressed to all partners and communities of practice
 - increase awareness on how sex and gender impacts research and innovation
 - get a better understanding of the concrete measures that RFOs can implement to support applicants and reviewers to integrate GiRI in their work
 - be able to share experiences and to learn from other RFOs
- 4) Capacity to better understand intersectionality and how to integrate it in Research and Innovation, addressed to all partners and communities of practice
 - understand what is meant by intersectionality – which dimensions are addressed and which are relevant to the two Communities of Practice
 - better understand how to address intersectionality in terms of policy
 - better understand how to address intersectionality in terms of the funding cycle
 - become familiar with emerging practices & be able to reflect on potential next steps

An individual workshop was organised to address each capacity. Overall, 4 (four) mutual learning events were delivered in year 1 – 3 online and one physical.



2.3. Target groups

Capacity building actions in year 1 targeted three main groups: policy makers (Policy CoP), research funding organisations (RFO CoP) and supporting organisations. Bimonthly meetings (BMM) were organised for each of the two CoPs. Moreover, out of the 4 (four) capacity building events, one was addressed primarily to the RFO CoP (GiRI), while the other three were addressed to all project partners, regardless of the CoP they were associated with.

2.3.1. Policy Community of Practice

Members of the Policy CoP have been keen to participate both in the needs assessment (18 of the respondents to the needs assessment survey are members of the Policy CoP) as well as in the capacity building events:

- 14 members of the Policy CoP attended the Stakeholder and citizen engagement workshop (17 January 2023)
- 13 members of the Policy CoP attended the workshop on Building a national gender equality discourse (25 April 2023)
- 4 members of the Policy CoP attended the GiRI workshop (26 April 2023)
- 22 people from the Policy CoP attended the physical workshop on Intersectionality (22-24 May 2023)

The learning activities designed for the Policy CoP were based on the following assumptions (also aligned with the findings of the needs assessment):

- policy makers' need to enhance their understanding and knowledge of gender equality issues, especially on topics such as intersectionality and gender+ approaches, and gender dimension in research. By equipping policy makers with the necessary knowledge and tools, the capacity building events should empower them to effectively promote gender equality within their policy development and implementation processes
- policy dialogue and collaboration should be fostered among members of the Policy CoP. To this aim, capacity building activities need to include interactive sessions, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and networking events, in order to facilitate the sharing of best practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches.

Overall, the GENDERACTIONplus project aims to empower policy makers within the Policy CoP to drive positive change, advance gender equality, and create more inclusive and equitable research and policy environments.

2.3.2. RFO Community of Practice

The building of capacities in the RFO CoP was based on a series of guiding ideas, curated by JR as the responsible partner for Capacity building in the RFO CoP:

- All participants are experts in their work, RFO members as well as other stakeholders and researchers: all questions can be raised, from the most theoretical to the most practical ones. By combining different forms of experiences and knowledge, awareness and understanding can be expanded. It helps transforming research findings into practical knowledge.



- As cross-cutting issue in all activities, focus should be put on strengthening the gender knowledge of RFO participants, as a certain level of gender knowledge / awareness is supporting the implementation of gender policies in practice. By gender knowledge we mean the “explicit and implicit representations concerning the differences between the sexes and the relations between them, the origins and normative significance of these, the rationale and evidence underpinning them and their material form” (Cavaghan 2017: 71)¹. GENDERACTIONplus aims to go beyond the focus on ‘sexes’ and address all different genders and have policies in place that are inclusive for all.
- Time of RFO members is scarce, so meetings should not be too long, but highly beneficial for the participants. They should provide inputs as well as space for sharing experiences and exploring new approaches, arguments, skills etc. Exchange between members in small groups (break out rooms) is crucial to learn from each other.
- It takes time for the group to get used to working together and sharing experiences. Different forms of peer learning can be offered, starting from mutual learning exercises in breakout rooms to establishing buddy-tandems in which advanced CoP members collaborate with CoP members just starting their gender activities (in various specific topics, like gender in research, gender bias etc.).
- It is suggested that in RFO CoP meetings some de-briefing takes place, providing space for reflection and discussing how to bring the learnings back to RFO structure (how to involve the top/middle management, next steps etc.).

Overall, the RFO CoP showed a strong interest in the four workshops:

- 16 members of the RFO CoP attended the Stakeholder and citizen engagement workshop (17 January 2023)
- 12 members of the RFO CoP attended the workshop on Building a national gender equality discourse (25 April 2023)
- 16 members of the RFO CoP attended the GiRI workshop (26 April 2023)
- 27 people from the RFO CoP attended the physical workshop on Intersectionality (22-24 May 2023)

2.4. CoP working modalities and capacity building instruments

The capacity building activities envisaged for year 1 focused on enhancing the understanding, knowledge, and skills of partners in the GENDERACTIONplus consortium and included (1) **mutual learning workshops (MLW)** and (2) **bimonthly meetings (BMM)**, serving distinct but complementary purposes:

MLWs are primary events for input and training on specified project topics (WPs) with input from both internal and external trainers and based on participatory and interactive methods. MLWs thus provide CoP members with inputs-based training in a collaborative learning environment with exchange of best practices and skills development among participants, taking incoming and / or new knowledge into

¹ Cavaghan, Rosalind (2017): *Making Gender Equality Happen. Knowledge, Change and Resistance in EU Gender Mainstreaming*. New York: Routledge.



account. The MLW are planned as half-day or full-day events; four MLWs were organised in year 1: three online and one on-site.

BMM are regular online meetings of 2 to 2.5-hour duration that are primarily based on exchange and exploration of CoP members' own practices, such as the progress of their NIPs, and collective reflection on this practice. To focus these exchanges and reflections, BMM are centred on specific topics and themes that align with the project's overall progress, outputs, and milestones.

2.4.1. Approaches used in building capacities

Both MLWs and BMMs were carefully designed to provide an effective learning environment for the CoP members. To this end, the following approaches were used:

Content delivery: as part of the MLWs, targeted content was provided to address participants' knowledge needs in gender equality. This content was delivered through presentations/lectures held by internal project partners (e.g., leaders of thematic work packages within GENDERACTIONplus) and external experts (e.g., EC representatives).

Development of practical strategies and skills: Beside the fundamental theoretical knowledge, participants were provided with practical strategies and skills for implementing gender equality policies (e.g., stakeholder engagement, building a national gender equality discourse).

Peer support and mentoring (during MLWs, but especially as part of BMMs), to enable the members of both CoPs to engage in knowledge exchange, share challenges and successes, and receive guidance from peers who have expertise in specific areas.

2.4.2. Specific capacity building instruments

The capacity building and mutual learning programme in the GENDERACTIONplus project was implemented through the application of various instruments, designed to enrich the learning experience and enhance the skills and knowledge of participants from the two CoPs and supporting organisations. These instruments have been carefully curated to provide diverse perspectives, practical insights, and opportunities for collaborative learning.

Presentations from Work Package (WP) Experts: Both MLWs and BMMs included inputs from experts within the GENDERACTIONplus consortium specialised in various thematic areas. These inputs provided participants with valuable insights and up-to-date information on specific topics, enabling them to gain new perspectives and deepen their understanding of gender equality.

External Guest Presentations: Inviting external experts to deliver lectures during MLWs significantly enriched the capacity building programme. These experts brought diverse perspectives, shares promising practices, and provided insights from their own experiences and research. By incorporating inputs from external experts, MLWs provided participants with the opportunity to widen their range of expertise and gain exposure to different approaches and strategies for promoting gender equality.

Sharing of promising and/or emerging practices: During MLWs and BMM, members of both CoPs had the opportunity to present successful gender equality initiatives, case studies, or practical examples. These inputs allowed participants to learn from each other, exchange ideas, and identify effective strategies that can be applied in their own organisation or national context.



Interactive exercises: All MLWs included practical exercises and/or group discussions. These sessions allowed participants to practically apply the information they have learned, critically reflect on its relevance to their own work, and collectively develop a shared understanding of gender equality issues. By providing a space to discuss barriers, challenges, and practical implementation strategies, these inputs foster a supportive and collaborative learning environment and create a link between new knowledge, personal (private and professional) experiences and potential next steps in CoP members' own organisations.

Homework: was used in the RFO CoP in order to deepen and reflect on the new content. RFO CoP members were asked to complete homework between the GiRI MLW and the following CoP meeting in order to reflect on the topic of the MLW and think about ways of transfer it into daily work practices. The homework was not designed as a burden for the CoP members but rather as a way to support them in transferring the content of the workshop to the RFO and start a discussion in the organisation.

2.5. Overview of capacity building events

Four capacity building events were organized in year 1 as part of the project: three online and one physical/onsite.

2.5.1. Stakeholder and citizen engagement (online, 17 January 2023)

The workshop was designed to provide partners with a common understanding and increased knowledge and inspiration about how to undertake stakeholder and citizen engagement to enable them to start planning and undertaking engagement activities throughout the project. The workshop was addressed to both CoPs, in line with the results of the needs assessment survey.

The workshop was developed and delivered by VA, the national expert hub for public engagement, citizen science and science communication in Sweden with many years' experience of running engagement activities both within EU-funded and national projects. The programme was designed to be a combination of presented material combined with interactive group exercises. Interactions were planned throughout the workshop to practically demonstrate different methodologies and exercises that can be used in online workshops to engage participants. A Miro board was also prepared in advance, on which participants could input ideas and suggestions in a series of exercises, some performed individually and others together in breakout groups. In addition, VA collated a wide range of additional resources and guidance for partners' use during the project.

The workshop was attended by 25 participants. Overall, the majority of participants were very satisfied or satisfied with the event delivery and indicated that they had learnt about new tools, methods, approaches that would be applicable to their work. Some participants expressed the need for tailored engagement activities especially designed and targeted for the project needs. Participants would have ideally liked more time for discussions and exchange, which was slightly limited by the length of the workshop and the online nature of its delivery.

2.5.2. Building a national gender equality discourse (online, 25 April 2023)

The mutual learning workshop was delivered by IHS and was aimed at discussing the relevance of a national policy discourse for the successful implementation of gender equality policies in R&I. The workshop provided an opportunity to reflect on the need for and advantages of embedding the national gender equality discourse in the European discourse, and the ways in which the EU and national levels can support developments in each.



Three main types of methods were used to facilitate learning and foster awareness: (1) Inputs from experts, (2) Practice inputs (good practices), and (3) Discussion in breakout groups.

Presentations were prepared and held by experts within the project consortium (Angela Wroblewski from IHS) as well as by external experts (Petra Kurtovic, Policy Officer at European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights). These inputs focused on providing answers to questions such as:

- What is a policy discourse?
- What could the active role of national policy makers look like?
- Illustrate the relevance of a national discourse for gender equality in R&I in the context of anti-gender movements
- Who should be involved in the policy discourse (e.g., European stakeholders, national stakeholders like RFOs)?

Moreover, inputs were provided on **instruments supporting a policy discourse**: steering instruments, monitoring and indicators, common exchange formats and platforms.

In terms of practice inputs, the workshop included the presentation of two good practice examples of a policy discourse at national level (Ireland and Austria). Speakers (Ross Woods - Senior Manager Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Higher Education Authority in Ireland; Gerald RAUCH, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research in Austria) were asked to give a presentation on the discourse in their countries, who is involved, how relevant actors have been involved (concrete role, tasks) and factors that supported the discourse.

The workshop was attended by 30 participants. Feedback was largely positive and the level of satisfaction reported by participants was relatively high, with the average score above 4 (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 - very unsatisfied -> 5 - very satisfied) for most dimensions included in the evaluation form (overall satisfaction, content, speakers' performance, event delivery, discussions in the breakout rooms etc.). Thus, the presentations and practices showcased as part of the workshop provided a good and comprehensive picture of how to build a national gender equality discourse.

2.5.3. *Gender dimension in Research and Innovation (GiRI) (online, 26 April 2023)*

The mutual learning workshop was delivered by Joanneum Research and Vinnova. The main aim of this webinar was to get a clear(er) picture about the GiRI approach. Therefore, the EC concept as well as various approaches from RFOs were presented and reflected. The potential agency of RFOs along the funding cycle was highlighted to get a better understanding of the concrete measures that RFOs can implement to support applicants and reviewers to integrate GiRI in their work. Participants were encouraged to share experiences and to learn from other RFOs in small group discussions.

The webinar was designed and addressed to RFO CoP members, but all other GENDERACTIONplus partners were welcomed as well.

Overall, the webinar provided an overview on:

- Where is GiRI addressed in funding cycle? In which way?
- Which GiRI policies are already in place in RFO CoP members (report on the benchmarking results, best-practices from RFOs)?
- What are challenges when implementing GiRI in practice?

A Miro board was used to structure ideas shared in the small group discussions and further report/present them to the wider audience.



The results of the evaluation survey distributed to participants following the workshop shows that they were largely satisfied with the content of the workshop and that presentations provided a good and comprehensive picture of GiRI chances and challenges. The average score regarding the content delivered and the performance of speakers was 4 on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 - very unsatisfied -> 5 - very satisfied). However, satisfaction with the event delivery was slightly lower and a number of participants pointed out that the programme was too packed and left little time for discussions, both in breakout rooms as well as in the plenary. Learnings from the webinar will be further integrated in the development of a follow-up workshop. Moreover, feedback from participants was used by VA to prepare a document with tips and tricks to be used in the organization of future webinars (planning and running).

2.5.4. Intersectionality (physical, 22-24 May 2023 in Vienna)

The mutual learning workshop was jointly organized by UEFISCDI with the help of a dedicated task force composed by consortium members from various WPs and delivered by KIF. The workshop was organised on-site in Vienna on 24-25/05/2023, back-to-back with the consortium meeting.

The workshop was highly interactive and several methods were used to facilitate learning and foster awareness:

- Inputs from experts (e.g., Anne Pépin, Senior Policy Officer, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission; Yvonne Benschop from Radboud University)
- Inputs from consortium members on project activities (i.e. overview of benchmark results by Heidi Holt Zachariassen and Ella Ghosh, Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research)
- Practice inputs (good practices) - presentation of two examples from GENDERACTIONplus consortium (Ireland and the Netherlands)
- Discussion in breakout groups, with each session focusing on one of the two CoPs and taking place in separate venues.

The workshop on Intersectionality was positively received and reviewed by participants. In fact, the average score on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 - very unsatisfied -> 5 - very satisfied) was more than 4 for all the aspects covered by the evaluation questionnaire distributed to participants (e.g., content of the workshop – 4.43, speakers' performance – 4.64, keynote intervention – 4.71, practices showcased – 4.33, moderation/facilitation – 4.53 etc.).

The workshop highlighted the pressing need to approach intersectionality as a fundamental framework in research organizations. By incorporating intersectionality into research agendas, organizations can uncover nuanced and multifaceted insights, ensuring that policies, interventions, and funding initiatives are more inclusive, equitable, and effective.

Another key conclusion from the workshop was the importance of recognising and valuing diverse perspectives and expertise. One of the key conclusions from the workshop was the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives and expertise. Intersectionality demands that research organizations move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach and engage diverse voices, particularly those from marginalized communities, in the research process. By embracing and amplifying underrepresented voices, organizations can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by different groups.

The event also emphasized the need for collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches within research organizations to effectively address intersectionality. The complexities of intersecting identities and social structures require multidimensional analyses that draw on diverse disciplines, methodologies, and



data sources. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, research organizations can generate insights that transcend disciplinary boundaries and provide more holistic understandings of social issues. Policy makers and funding organizations must support and incentivize interdisciplinary research, encouraging researchers to work across fields and promoting collaboration between institutions. This approach will enable a comprehensive understanding of intersecting identities and inform the development of policies and interventions that address systemic inequalities.

Lastly, the workshop underscored the importance of building capacity and providing training on intersectionality within research organizations. Intersectional analysis requires a nuanced understanding of power dynamics, social structures, and the ways in which various identities intersect and shape individuals' experiences. Research funding organizations and policy makers should invest in training programs that equip them with the necessary tools and knowledge to incorporate intersectionality into their work. This includes providing resources for learning about intersectional theory, research methodologies, and ethical considerations.



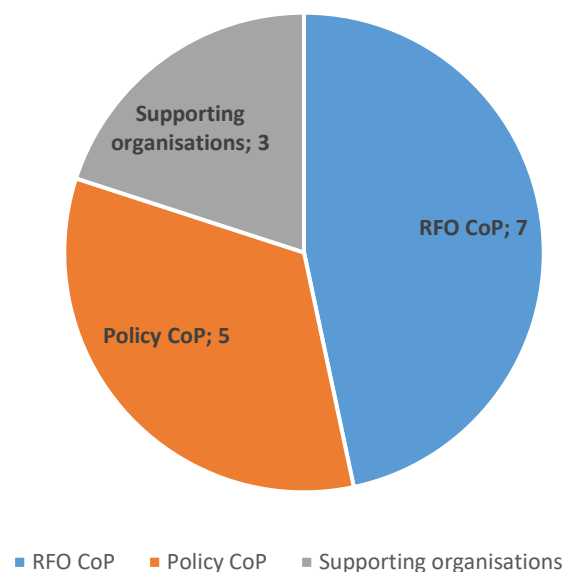
3. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' PERCEIVED UTILITY REGARDING CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1. Data collection methodology

The data for the mid-term evaluation were collected primarily through an online survey, intended for the beneficiaries and Associated Partners of the GENDERACTIONplus project, both policy-makers and representatives of Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) and their supporting organisations.

The survey instrument was designed by UEFISCDI building on the instruments and formats used in the evaluation of individual capacity building events. The survey was launched on 27 September and was closed on 8 October 2023. Over the course of ten days, the survey was filled in by 15 respondents, representing the three types of organisations involved in the project: policy makers / national authorities (5 persons), RFOs (7 persons) and supporting organisations appointed for GENDERACTIONplus (3 people).

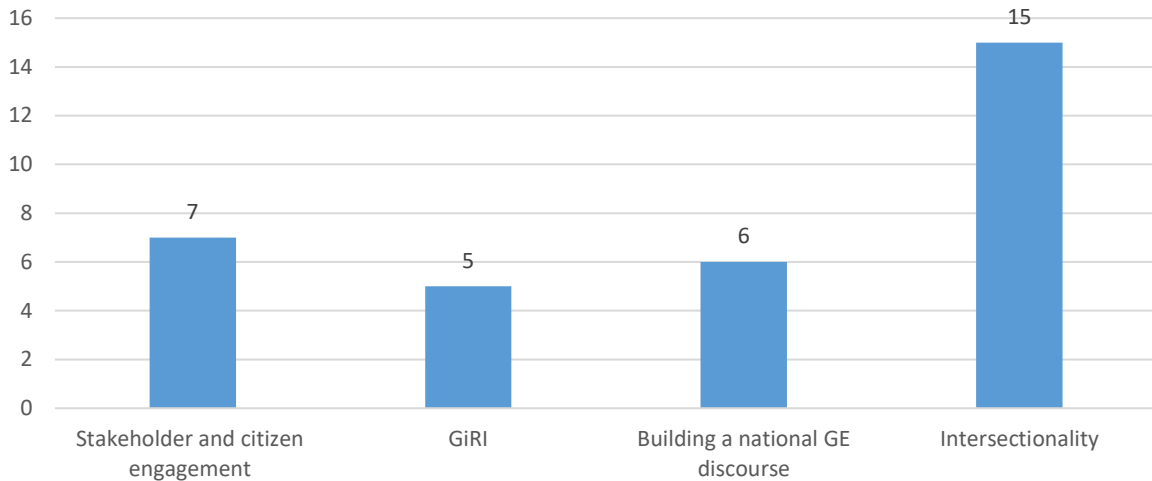
Figure 1 - Distribution of respondents on CoPs



All of the 15 respondents to the evaluation questionnaire had taken part in the physical MLW on *Intersectionality*. 7 of them had also taken part in the *Stakeholder and citizen engagement* workshop, 6 in the *Building a national gender equality discourse* workshop, and 5 in the *GiRI* workshop.



Figure 2 - No. of respondents participating in the capacity building events



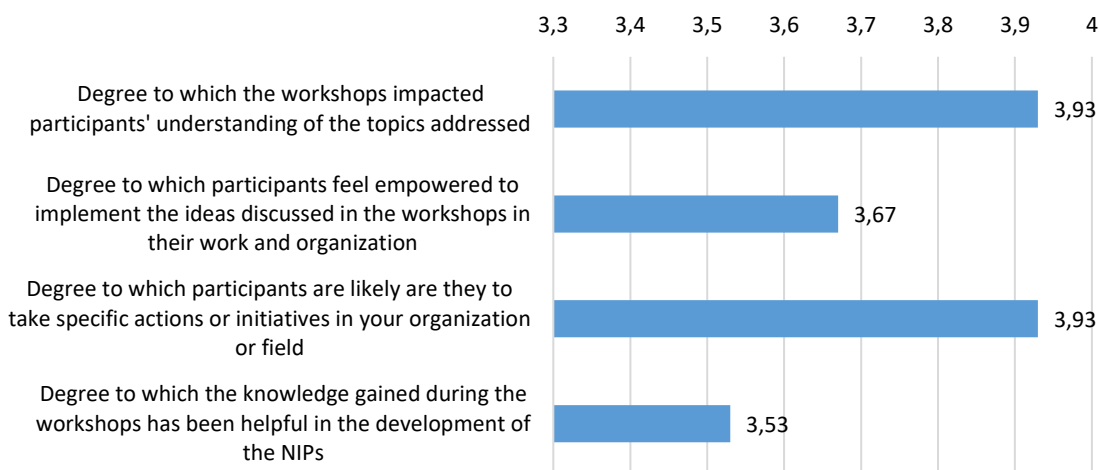
Data collected was analysed to identify the degree to which capacity building activities carried out in year 1 enhanced partners’ skills and knowledge and empowered them to implement actions or initiatives targeting gender equality.

3.2. Exit questionnaire analysis

Feedback on the impact of capacity building events

Respondents were asked to rate the degree their perception of the workshops – in terms of impact on their understanding and potential to apply the knowledge gained through the workshop in their work context – on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 – no impact and 5 – very high impact).

Figure 3 – Respondents’ perception of the impact of capacity building activities (1 – no impact; 5 – very high impact)



Overall, the feedback was positive, with the majority of respondents agreeing that the capacity building activities enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the topics addressed. In fact, 14 out of the 15 respondents envisioned some actions or initiatives to be implemented in their daily work or organizations, such as:

- thematic workshops (e.g., intersectionality)
- enriching existing documents with knowledge gained in the MLWs
- ways to better integrate gender dimension in calls for projects
- strengthening work on intersectionality and inclusion
- making online-formats more interactive
- implementation of an internal working group on intersectionality
- introducing a section on intersectionality in the data reports prepared (e.g., intersections of gender, age, citizenship)
- new policy recommendations
- sharing knowledge gained through the workshops with the team/organisation
- collecting data on intersectionality
- organizing trainings for project evaluators

However, not everyone feels empowered to act on this knowledge; only eight respondents feel empowered or strongly empowered to implement the ideas discussed in the workshops in their work and organisations. In fact, some respondents mentioned one or several challenges in applying the content of the workshops in their work context, such as:

- resistance at management/decision-making level, especially in what regards expanding the agenda beyond gender (i.e. to include intersectionality)
- financial constraints
- lack of research and data
- lack of understanding/awareness of GE issues in the team/organisation

With regard to the national impact plans, the majority of respondents feel that the capacity building events have been helpful in the development of their NIPs. Respondents were very keen on describing how their participation in the workshops has impacted the development of their NIP:

- By facilitating the inclusion of intersectionality in the NIP (how to collect data and raise awareness about intersectional perspective, better understanding of terminology);
- By increasing the understanding of how to collaborate on national level in terms of developing a common NIP;
- By providing greater clarity on how to involve other stakeholders;
- By raising awareness of the need for support to strengthen organisations' current setup at national and institutional level;
- By increasing awareness of the need to disseminate information/findings to strengthen impact.

Moreover, the survey also revealed recommendations for topics and areas to be covered in future capacity building activities:

- gender dimension from the perspective of evaluators
- monitoring and evaluation of GE activities, including the identification of relevant KPIs
- resistance – how to fight it
- inclusive research careers
- certification of GEPs and audits



CONCLUSIONS

The content delivered through the mutual learning workshops organised in year 1 was complemented by discussions in bimonthly meetings. The combination of MLWs and BMMs thus formed a complete action learning cycle with the members' own practice and the project outputs in the forefront. All the topics of the capacity building events have been chosen to address the knowledge and skills needs identified following the needs assessment survey. The topic of resistance, which was also perceived as relevant and important by both CoPs (as revealed by the needs assessment) will be taken up in the next physical MLW.

The results of the evaluation questionnaires (both mid-term evaluation questionnaire as well as of the surveys designed and distributed at the end of each capacity building event in year 1) show that capacity building activities have been successful in equipping consortium members with new knowledge and skills and that participants' perception of these activities is largely positive.

Lessons learned from designing and organizing capacity building activities – mutual learning workshops and bimonthly meetings – and feedback collected from participants will be taken up by CoPs and integrated into the design and delivery of the next round of workshops.

