

Project acronym:

GENDERACTIONplus

Project title:

Gender Equality Network to Develop ERA Communities To coordinate Inclusive and sustainable policy implementation

Grant agreement No: 101058093

Start date of project: 1 June 2022

Duration: 36 months

Deliverable 3.2

Baseline document on current and future RFO preventive measures on GBV and SH

Due date of the deliverable	31.12.2023
Submission date	21.12.2023
File name	D3.2 – Baseline document on current and future RFO preventive measures on GBV and SH
Organisation responsible for the deliverable	UGOT
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Status	Final
Dissemination level	PU



GENDERACTIONplus is funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101058093.

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DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY

Revision History			
Version	Date	Modified by	Comments
0.1	15.11.2023	Fredrik Bondestam, Maja Lundqvist, Susanna Young Håkansson	First draft
0.2	20.11.2023	Marcela Linkova	Comments on the first draft
0.3	03.12.2023	Fredrik Bondestam, Maja Lundqvist, Susanna Young Håkansson	Implementation of the comments, including additional information
0.4	08.12.2023	Jennie Rothwell	Comments by Quality Editor
0.5	10.12.2023	Fredrik Bondestam, Maja Lundqvist, Susanna Young Håkansson	Implementation of the comments, including additional information
1.0	11.12.2023		Version 2 shared with the Consortium
2.0	18.12.2023	Fredrik Bondestam, Maja Lundqvist, Susanna Young Håkansson	All comments integrated and deliverable sent to coordinator
3.0	21.12.2023	Martina Fucimanova	Document submission



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Meaning
AC	Associated Countries
CoP	Community of Practice
DOI	Digital Object Identifier
EC	European Commission
ERA	European Research Area
ERC	European Research Council
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GRC	Global Research Council
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
MLW	Mutual Learning Workshop
MS	EU Member States
NIP	National Impact Plan
NSF	National Science Foundation
PI	Principal Investigator
RFO	Research Funding Organisation
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
R&I	Research & Innovation
WP	Work Package



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main objective of the report is to develop knowledge and recommendations, beyond the results of the GENDERACTIONplus D3.1, on Research Funding Organisations (RFO) engagement in, and possible strategies for, ending Gender Based Violence (GBV) in R&I in the European Research Area (ERA).

Methods used in developing a baseline document for this objective consists of revisiting the overall ERA policy framework on GBV, analysing benchmark survey results focusing on RFOs, discussing the results of the research review from task 3.1, engaging with key RFO stakeholders, formulating a RELIEF model for RFOs mitigating GBV, and finally conducting a Mutual Learning Workshop (MLW) on GBV with RFOs.

Overall results are discussed in each section and two core arguments are developed from this work as to why RFOs are instrumental in engaging in mitigating GBV in the ERA:

- *Meritocracy as the leading principle for quality in research, as ensured through assessing and rewarding the best researchers and applications, is undermined by the existence of GBV in research and education.*
- *Ethical research conduct is dependent on zero-tolerance to and the non-existence of GBV in research and education.*

Several important conclusions follow from the work done, pinpointing concrete strategies and activities proposed for RFOs:

- **Develop core procedures within RFOs**

Work with a RELIEF model – described in detail in the report – as a baseline starting point for an institutional framework for implementing concrete measures. This work should include thinking through each key area in more depth to develop the importance and relevance of the model for a particular RFO, develop concrete measures for each part of the model, and identify and include dilemmas and risks in working with the model. Introduce and/or develop new policies on GBV targeting the actual problems defined through working with the RELIEF model in more detail. Use the UniSAFE 7P model and other ERA policy framework developments to move the agenda on ending GBV in RPOs forward.

- **Build strong partnerships with other stakeholders**

Create partnerships between RFOs within and across national contexts. Develop partnerships between RFOs, RPOs, national authorities, and other relevant stakeholders. Establish both formal and informal networks and continued mutual learning using expert knowledge and competencies on GBV.

- **Ensure continuous knowledge and awareness raising**

Compile a digital course based on up-to-date and relevant research on GBV in RPO, targeting RFOs. Compile digital material with knowledge and practice from RFOs on how to work with the issue of GBV in relation to RPOs applying for funding. Turn the RELIEF model and the UniSAFE 7P model into an online portal, hosted by, for example, Global Research Council (GRC) or Science Europe, where stakeholders can contribute with concrete examples of policy developments, strategies, activities and networks. Develop training sessions on GBV targeting potential and actual grant holders.



- **Establish long-term funding of research on GBV**

To-the-point research, with results and recommendations for policy development in RFOs, is needed to develop the existing policy framework on GBV in ERA. Both national authorities, national RFOs and the European Commission (EC) should fund research and research programmes focusing on RFOs as an important stakeholder in the work against GBV in RPOs.

- **Further progress necessary for policy development on GBV**

Include GBV as a mandatory requirement in GEPs, as one way of engaging RFOs in mitigating GBV. Propose an overarching ERA Code of Conduct as a crucial guide for RFOs as to why and how to take on the work of ending GBV.

Finally, the report also envisages the need to further develop policy frameworks as part of an overarching ERA infrastructure for mitigating GBV, targeting RFO engagement. The proposed ERA infrastructure for RFOs is already described in detail in D3.1. The RELIEF model and the UniSAFE 7Ps recommendations for RFOs – as described in this deliverable – are instrumental in setting both an institutional framework and a systematic logic for relevant actions. A mandatory GEP requirement on GBV is a vital component in this holistic approach, without which it will be difficult to achieve commitment among RFOs, as well as possibilities for systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress in ending GBV in ERA.



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 (GE) and inclusiveness objectives of the new ERA through the development of two communities of practice (CoPs), one consisting of representatives of national authorities and the second consisting of representatives of RFOs. 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 GE and mainstreaming in Research & Innovation among the policy and RFO community members, with special attention to countries with less comprehensive policies;
- Create impact through communication, dissemination, and exploitation.

Thematically, the project focuses on:

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

GENDERACTIONplus aims to achieve the following impacts:

- Advance policy coordination among MS and AC countries 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, combatting 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

Past and current policy development in ERA and in RFOs and RPOs on ending GBV is still in its infancy. The overall ERA framework on GBV is slowly gaining influence, albeit not as a generic or integrated form of knowledge or set of practices in core processes and frameworks, such as EU framework programmes. This situation on the EU and the national policy level unfortunately amplifies an involuntary ignorance among relevant stakeholders, especially for RFOs; without knowledge and measures on mitigating GBV in place, research funding is at risk of financing GBV.

A prerequisite for ending GBV in RPOs is an overall agreement among relevant stakeholders on the why, how and who. This is also the starting point for this reports' attempt to develop a baseline for RFO commitment and action. The main objective is to develop knowledge and recommendations, beyond the results of the GENDERACTIONplus D3.1, on RFO engagement in, and possible strategies for, ending GBV in R&I in the ERA. This report includes results not analysed previously from both the WP3 research review on research targeting RFOs and the RFO CoP responses on the GENDERACTIONplus benchmark survey. Furthermore, the objectives are also to create new insights through interacting with the GENDERACTIONplus RFO CoP in dialogues especially focusing on tacit knowledge on how to take on the responsibility as ERA stakeholders. Finally, an important objective is to develop recommendations for structural and institutional change, targeting RFOs as key ERA stakeholders for ending GBV in RPOs.

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

This report furthers the understanding of the results of the benchmark survey performed in GENDERACTIONplus project, as described and analysed in the WP3 D3.1 benchmark report on GBV. There is a direct relationship to the work on GEP implementation and monitoring in WP6, as D3.2 suggest GBV to be a mandatory requirement in GEPs. There are also overall interlinkages with WP2 and WP7, through incorporating intersectional analysis and bringing knowledge on GBV to capacity building in WP7. Experiences and ideas on ending GBV as RFOs will also have an impact on the development of National Impact Plans (NIPs) and an EU impact plan through the work in WP8. Also, there is an indirect linkage with WP4 on policy development on the gender dimension in research, as several aspects of RFOs strategies for ending GBV in research are of relevance for policy advice in this respect.

1.4. Structure of the report

The report starts with section 2 and a short description of methods used for data collection and analysis in WP3. A more thorough description of methods and data collected can be found in WP3 D3.1.¹

Section 3 briefly describes the work done in WP3 task 3.2 during 2023, all summing up to a set of concluding recommendations. Firstly, the policy framework for RFOs mitigating GBV is described briefly. Further, key results, not previously analysed, from the GENDERACTIONplus benchmark survey and the WP3 research review on GBV are discussed. This is followed by a description and analysis of one of the main policy recommendations on GBV for RFOs in later years, i.e., the UniSAFE RFO recommendations.² Building on these insights, the idea and work on a tentative model for an institutional framework for RFOs mitigating GBV – the RELIEF-model – is described in detail. Finally, the input to

¹ https://genderaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/101058093_GENDERACTIONplus_D3.1_Benchmarking-report-on-GBV-and-SH-targeting-national-authorities-and-RFOs.pdf

² For information on the UniSAFE project, please visit the website: <https://unisafe-gbv.eu/>



and output from a MLW on GBV with the GENDERACTIONplus project RFO CoP is described at length, as it served to test concrete ideas and models for ending GBV.

Section 4 provides a conclusive summary of the outputs from the work done in WP3 T3.2 on developing a baseline for RFOs on mitigating GBV, followed by a set of concrete structural and institutional recommendations targeting RFOs in the ERA.

In the final parts of the report, references (section 5) as well as appendixes (section 6) can be found.

The concept of GBV in this report is inclusive, meaning SH is seen as one of many specific forms of gendered violence included in the umbrella concept of GBV.³

³ This is in line with the UniSAFE state-of-the-art conceptual understanding of GBV:
https://zenodo.org/records/7333232#.Y3e_V33MJPY



2. METHODS FOR CREATING A BASELINE DOCUMENT

This section summarizes the methods used for data collection and analysis in D3.2.

- **Revisiting results in the research review from task 3.1, focusing on RFOs**

The result from the research review in task 3.1 focusing on RFOs is important information when formulating a baseline document and hence is analysed in relation to other empirical data. This baseline document is informed by the results of the research review conducted in Task 3.1, which are analysed here in relation to other empirical data.

- **Analysing benchmark survey result focusing on RFOs**

Analysing the detailed responses on specific measures and strategies as reported by participating RFOs in the GENDERACTIONplus benchmark survey responses, which was not presented in D3.1.

- **Engaging stakeholders**

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to create a baseline document relevant for RFOs mitigating GBV. To ensure stakeholder engagement, WP3 has worked with the RFO CoP in GENDERACTIONplus through participating in several meetings and discussions. Further, during the work with D3.2 several other stakeholder dialogues have taken place, foremost with RFOs external to the GENDERACTIONplus CoP such as the (National Science Foundation) NSF, GRC, European Research Council (ERC), and the Swedish RFOs Formas and Forte.

- **Formulation of the RELIEF model**

In cooperation with stakeholders, WP3 has formulated a draft model for RFOs work to mitigate GBV in R&I - the RELIEF model. The model builds on input and experiences of supporting RFOs on gender mainstreaming in Sweden during 2013-2023. Further to this, it is the outcome of developing measures and strategies for eradicating GBV in RPOs in the context of different past and ongoing EU-funded projects. It is also a result of trying to map and analyse the lack of policies and research in and on ERA RFOs through the WP3 benchmark report in the GENDERACTIONplus project, Ideas for developing this model have emerged from years of international cooperation on RFOs work on gender equality with stakeholders in the EU and globally.

- **MLW on GBV with RFOs**

The MLW was held on the 14th and 15th of Sep 2023 in Milan. The aim of this MLW was to improve the understanding and knowledge on GBV prevention among participants from different RFOs. Further, the aim was also to develop practices based on case studies and a discussion on the RELIEF model, as well as discussion and development of the UniSAFE draft fact sheet recommendations for RFOs in eradicating GBV based on the 7P model. The MLW was designed as an interactive forum to exchange knowledge and co-create strategies and new solutions for how RFOs can contribute to eradicating GBV in the ERA. All RFO CoP members were invited to the MLW, together with the NSF, a visiting partner from the US. After the workshop, the RFO CoP held an online workshop, inspired by the MLW and based on the same material, to also further the knowledge to those RFO members which were not able to participate in person in Milan. 23 participants from 10 RFOs and several other policy-making organisations involved in the GENDERACTIONplus project attended the workshop.



3. DEVELOPING A BASELINE FOR RFOs

3.1. Policy framework

An ERA-wide RFO commitment to ending GBV is firmly set in the context of an overall strategic policy framework, as already described and analysed in detail in the ongoing GENDERACTIONplus project WP3 deliverable report 3.1. It stretches from developing the guiding principles in the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2014),⁴ over the EU Gender Equality Strategy (2020),⁵ to recent calls for action on ending GBV and achieving gender equality in the ERA under the Slovenian (2021)⁶ and Czech (2022)⁷ presidencies of the Council of the EU.

Especially relevant in this context is the need to develop more directed actions for different stakeholders to enhance their engagement in the issue of ending GBV in ERA. Therefore, several Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects have been financed by the EC to achieve this purpose, of which the UniSAFE project (no 101006261), the GENDERACTIONplus project (no. 101058093), and the GenderSAFE project (no. 101130898) are recent examples of policy analysis and development on GBV being developed, including targeted measures and strategies to be adopted by RFOs.

Additionally, recent developments at the ERA level instigated by the EC will have implications for moving the agenda on ending GBV forward. This includes, for example, the recent accession of the EU to the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, which was one of the achievements of the SE EU presidency (2022). Also, the setup of an ERA Forum subgroup on ERA Action 5 in March 2023, and a dedicated taskforce on GBV in October 2023, is an important step in prioritizing the issue further. The taskforce has a responsibility to develop an "EU baseline strategic document on gender-based violence in R&I". This deliverable report can function as one of several important contributions to the EU baseline strategic document as it especially targets the RFOs as a relevant stakeholder for ending GBV in the ERA.

3.2. Benchmark survey results

An important background to developing a baseline document for RFOs is the current state of policy development among ERA RFOs, especially in terms of concrete measures and strategies used or under development. As already described in the WP3 benchmark survey report on GBV in GENDERACTIONplus, only a small number of responding RFOs have existing policies and/or measures in place aimed at mitigating GBV.⁸

3.2.1. RFO measures and sanctions on GBV

In this section, the focus is detailed analysis of the responses on specific measures and strategies reported by participating RFOs in the GENDERACTIONplus project, beyond the findings already presented in the D3.1 benchmark survey report. This report highlights responses to specific questions

⁴ Council of Europe 2014.

⁵ EC 2020.

⁶ Ljubljana Declaration 2021.

⁷ Call for Action 2022.

⁸ Cf section 3.3 in the benchmark report on GBV: https://genderaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/101058093_GENDERACTIONplus_D3.1_Benchmarking-report-on-GBV-and-SH-targeting-national-authorities-and-RFOs.pdf. RFOs participating in the GENDERACTIONplus project, and responding to the benchmark survey, are listed in table 6 on page 40 in the report.



on whether there has been any recent policy development targeting **applicants for funding**, the **safety for researchers**, and **funding initiatives**.

3.2.1.1. RFO policy development targeting applicants for funding

The Irish Research Council (IRC) is the only RFO out of 20 responding RFOs which describes an existing measure targeting applicants for funding, in this case on the aspect of guaranteeing safety: “Applicants must self-certify at the application stage that they do not hold an active sanction against them for matters of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment. If they do, then a risk assessment must be carried out by the host institution to ensure it is safe and appropriate for the applicant to be leading junior members of the team and/or taking on a supervisor/mentorship role.”

One RFO also indicated that measures in this realm will be developed in the future. **The Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)** in Portugal foresees a “targeted working group to elaborate a new Integrity Code/Code of Conduct, addressing the integrity culture in the institution, in all aspects, which is expected to deliver in the short run. Despite the lack of specific dispositions in FCT regulations in this regard, good practices are safeguarded through legal mechanisms, such [as] the institution’s replies to complaints filed with the Deputy Ombudsman for Research. FCT is also explicitly committed with these procedures whenever considered in the regulations of international calls.”

3.2.1.2. RFO policy development targeting the safety for researchers

Only two out of 20 RFOs responding to the GENDERACTIONplus survey describe recent policy developments targeting the safety of researchers. Responses are from Ireland and Portugal also in this instance, where the **IRC** noted the following: “As IRC awards are made on an individual basis we allow for freedom of mobility. This means awardees are allowed to change institution during the lifetime of the award without penalty. Likewise for early career researchers they are allowed to change institution and/or supervisor or mentor during the award.”

The **FCT** has provided the following information: “FCT does not have a generic statutory system, and a new Code of Conduct, more comprehensive than the previous, is still under way, as mentioned before. However, there are praxis and procedures that intend to counteract/handle misconducts, which have a general scope and are not specific to gender-based violence. These procedures occur just when there is a complaint, and clear impacts on the execution of the project are expected. If this is the case, FCT promotes the confrontation of the involved parties, including the complainant, the hosting institutions, and the prevaricator (Principal investigator, thesis supervisor, other). When projects are developed under a consortium, ethical/integrity issues must be addressed in a Protocol. If divergencies are not likely to be solved, the minimum basic conditions of the funding support must be reassessed and, at the limit, the suspension/cancellation of funding may be considered.”

Thus, in both examples, the RFOs rely on existing internal and external procedures and protocols on mobility, ethics, and research misconduct. Though, as can be seen in the first example, the IRC also has a specific measure targeting the safety of researchers. The same two RFOs have also stated in their responses that there are procedures for information to responsible RPOs on GBV misconduct by PIs or researchers (including procedures for sanctions).

The IRC use the same self-assessment criteria for applicants also in this instance and adds that on “each application the [RPO] is asked to endorse the applicant and their application, verifying to the best of their ability that all information provided is correct.” The FCT refers to the previously described protocol and measures, but also mentions that “refinements and formalisation of these procedures are to be developed in the future, in order to follow the best international practices, and contributing to a high quality of research developed in Portugal and of the national scientific and technological system.”



Yet another RFO – **Forte** in Sweden – answered this question in the benchmark survey with “Yes”, but according to the detailed answer it was coded as “No”. While the detailed response is relevant in this context, as Forte claim to have a measure, albeit only “indirectly as a part of the general contract between us as a RFO and the HEI receiving funding for researchers employed. Deviations from the contract should be reported to Forte. The contract does not specify anything concerning GBV, but there is a clausula listing grounds for decision to terminate payment of funds. One reads: ‘the project leader, through other actions, is clearly shown to be an inappropriate recipient of funding from Forte’. In theory GBV could be a deviation from the contract that should be reported to Forte, but there are no indications that it has been done.” In other words, Forte relies on existing internal routines, by using the contract between them and an RPO, as a measure to safeguard researchers and tackle possible research misconduct pertaining to experiences of GBV.

Another important aspect of creating safety is discussed by the IRC. If research misconduct takes place, or if an issue is not resolved within a RPO and information on this is shared with the IRC, the following procedure for sanctioning perpetrators can take place: “Where any of the self-certification declarations are found to be false, the IRC reserves the right to take escalating actions regarding the termination of the award (in the case of awardees) or to require the individual’s replacement (in the case of academic or other supervisors/mentors).” To what extent the IRC has the mandate to influence RPOs employer liability in the latter sense is not discussed further in the response. Though, the inhibition of grants when research misconduct is established is a common measure used in ERA RFOs already, albeit as is evident from the RFO responses in this context, not necessarily used/thought of as strategies on the topic of GBV, as Forte writes in their reply on this issue above.

3.2.1.3. RFO policy development targeting funding initiatives

Finally, it is worth addressing the responses to the benchmark survey regarding the current funding initiatives taken by RFOs, on enhancing the knowledge on GBV, both in terms of general research output on the issue and to develop knowledge on policy development on GBV for relevant stakeholders in R&I. Two out of 20 RFOs participating in the GENDERACTIONplus survey have indicated funding priorities in GBV. The **IRC** responded there is funding through some “of the IRC’s programmes partner with Civic society bodies who work on various aspects of equality and diversity. These programmes fund partnerships between these bodies and researchers who wish to pursue a relevant topic of research” but does not explicitly describe funding on GBV and R&I in the response. **The Research Council of Norway (RCN)** states a funding initiative is in place as part of an “ERA co-fund: GenderNet Plus”, but it is unclear if this targets GBV in R&I especially. Overall, according to the responses from the GENDERACTIONplus participating RFOs there is a clear lack of ERA funding initiatives on GBV and research institutions, and thus also a lack of research output which is discussed in more detail in the section 3.3 below.

3.2.2. Why RFO measures and sanctions on GBV are not in place

In this section we analyse in detail the explanations given by RFOs as to why policies, measures, sanctions, funding, and other strategies are not yet in place. This was a follow-up question in the GENDERACTIONplus benchmark survey. The answers from respondents to these questions provide insights into what is needed to move forward with engaging more RFOs in mitigating GBV.

Overall, the 14 responses from 20 participating RFOs can be sorted in five different categories:

1. A non-existent or uninformed situation on why and how to address GBV at all as an RFO.



2. A statement or approach to the issue claiming it is not the responsibility of an RFO, and/or arguing it is the sole responsibility of RPOs to counteract GBV among researchers.
3. A description of a situation where the interest in the subject area, or actual need for taking some form of responsibility for mitigating GBV as an RFO, has been initiated or is planned.
4. Other responses indicated that the current Horizon Europe recommendation to include measures to tackle GBV in GEPs could be used for potential policy development. At minimum, the recommendation to include measures against GBV in GEPs puts this on an organisation's internal agenda. However, as including measures against GBV is not mandatory, this is not leading to concrete action.
5. A final set of responses are concerned with the lack of funding on GBV and R&I, where main responses mention either the fact that RFOs can seldom go beyond national research politics (and its budget and priorities), or that GBV as a topic is not of relevance for the RFO funding schemes.

In sum, it seems as if there is still a lack of both awareness and formal requirements to enhance the engagement of RFOs on working towards ending GBV through their own commitment and development of potential strategies. This, in turn, demonstrates a need for further policy development on the ERA level, which is also articulated in the RFO responses, for example moving forward with GBV as a mandatory requirement in GEPs and the need for an overarching ERA Code of Conduct. The latter is pinpointed as crucial to guide RFOs in why and how to take on the work of ending GBV. Yet another important driving force could be to-the-point research, with results and recommendations for policy development in RFOs.

3.3. Research review results

In the research review on GBV in HE performed in D3.1, the role of RFOs in tackling GBV emerged as a clear knowledge gap. A specific search procedure was performed screening for articles containing the keywords: RFO; research funding organisations/organizations; research funding agencies, in combination with GBV in HE. The search resulted in one publication mentioning RFOs⁹. The article which examines the Irish context, highlights several multi-level state interventions, and look at their gendered impact on HEI in Ireland, with RFOs as one of them. It mainly discusses the RFO's general GE initiatives and measures to include a gender dimension in research. GBV and different multi-level institution initiatives to tackle GBV and SH specifically are discussed, but no measures taken by RFOs are described.

The research landscape on GBV foremost targets HE and often includes focus on campus services, training, policy development, and bystander programs, also pointing to different actors, such as RPOs, National Authorities or the EC. Considering the central role RFOs play in the funding of research and researchers, in combination with what is known about prevalence and consequences of GBV, there is a need for research highlighting RFOs as important actors in the building of study and work environments in RPOs and HEIs.

The literature search described above has its limitations regarding timeframe (2017-2022) and language (only articles in English were included), but apart from this it is safe to say that there is a lack of research on RFOs regarding GBV in HE. This is an important result, showing the need for both RFOs and the EC to take responsibility to fund research and research programs on RFOs role and possible measures to

⁹ See [Appendix 1](#) for full reference.



mitigate GBV in research and HE. This is also one of the main messages and conclusions regarding RFOs in the research review from the WP3 benchmark report.

3.4. UniSAFE recommendations

The UniSAFE project aims at providing up-to-date, robust, and reliable quantitative and qualitative data on GBV, including newly emerging forms of violence, for ERA stakeholders. Results are translated into policy recommendations and a toolbox. A starting point for the UniSAFE project is the idea that RPOs are mainly responsible for addressing GBV targeting staff and students, both in their role as employers and as providers of education. At the same time, we know from recent policy mapping in the GENDERACTIONplus project¹⁰, as well as other EU Horizon2020 projects and reports from the former Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation¹¹, as well as several national studies in the European Research Area¹², that there are few examples, if any, of RPOs successfully addressing the current pandemic of ongoing GBV.

Instead, what has been analysed and made clear in all these projects and reports is a lack of institutional frameworks for eradicating violence: a lack of necessary resources, budgets, experts, engagement, strategies, and measures. Furthermore, there is a continuing lack of awareness and understanding of the vast consequences of not addressing violations and abuse – for individuals, for institutions, and for the quality of research and education. One conclusion to be drawn from this lack of developments is the need for broad stakeholder engagement throughout ERA, which also was one of the main conclusions from the WP3 benchmark report in the GENDERACTIONplus project. One of these stakeholders – which may play a decisive role in setting a better stage for RPOs responsibilities to end GBV – is the ERA RFO community at large.

As a result of the UniSAFE project, several stakeholder fact sheets with recommendations have been developed and published. The UniSAFE fact sheets for different stakeholders emanate from extensive research efforts and policy analysis on the current state in the European Research Area, in national contexts and in institutions. They also build on solid survey data on prevalence and consequences of GBV among staff and students, including in-depth case studies and interviews. Further, an important background to the recommendations provided, is the high-level expertise, competencies, and experiences in the UniSAFE consortium. The collaborative efforts with the recommendations have resulted in detailed, to the point, useable, and effective measures and strategies for ending GBV.

Before describing the logic and content of the UniSAFE RFO recommendations, it is relevant to give a brief introduction to the RPO factsheet and its recommendations. This way, it can become clear how and why RFOs can create valuable partnerships with RPOs, striving towards ending GBV, but it can also enable insights on further needs for developing RFO engagement in ending GBV in RPOs.

3.4.1. RPO recommendations in brief

In addition to different specific measures for each of the 7Ps¹³, the UniSAFE RPO recommendations¹⁴, underline the need for an **institutional framework**. This is intended to set a solid

¹⁰ https://genderaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/101058093_GENDERACTIONplus_D3.1_Benchmarking-report-on-GBV-and-SH-targeting-national-authorities-and-RFOs.pdf

¹¹ https://h2020.genderaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SWGGR1_Sexual-Harassment-in-the-Research-Higher-Ed.-National-Policies-Measures.pdf

¹² <https://ki.se/media/247264/download>; <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2021/04/Full-report-Staff-Jan-2022.pdf>

¹³ [The 7P Framework - UniSAFE Toolkit \(unisafe-toolkit.eu\)](https://unisafe-toolkit.eu)

¹⁴ <https://zenodo.org/records/8383063>



standard, which would be favorable to also use for any future mandatory requirement of GEPs to include measures to tackle GBV. An institutional framework, in short, is a set of mechanisms needed in an institution to make it possible to implement strategies and measures for ending GBV. The various components of a solid institutional framework are, in short,

- A **code of conduct**, with clear definitions of GBV, including all forms of violence, using an intersectional perspective, pinpointing unwanted behaviour, and preferably also declaring sanctions against perpetrators of GBV.
- A **survivor-centred** approach, that is, all policies and measures addressing GBV should be consistently survivor- and victim-centred, with trauma-informed knowledge in their design, implementation, and evaluation. Taking survivor experiences as the point of departure is important, as to really ensure effective measures for repatriation in all aspects of the work on eradicating GBV.
- Ensure **knowledge and expertise** on GBV is part of designing, implementing, and evaluating measures and policies. Thus, when implementing policies, or taking steps for collecting data and monitoring, when giving training sessions, and so forth, it is of utmost importance to invest heavily in expertise emanating from research-based knowledge on GBV, unequal power relations and abuse of power, intersectionality, and other related strands of knowledge. Put another way, this is to fully understand the urgent need for investing in different feminist strands of knowledge, acknowledging feminist epistemologies as core perspectives for changing academic cultures (thereby counteracting current epistemic injustices in this sense). This is also true for the urgent need for different strands of feminist and anti-racist activism, as a vital part of a culture of change in our academic institutions.

Finally, an institutional framework will need to

- focus on a strong and enduring **leadership commitment** throughout an institution,
- create solid, long-term sustained **structures** for collecting data for monitoring and evaluation,
- and continuously **communicate** information, knowledge and results from different studies and experiences made, to all staff and students.

The UniSAFE recommendations for RPOs, arguing for an institutional framework as described above, will imply a shift in the level of engagement by RPO management, and clearly imply a challenge for RPOs in national contexts where the level of development in terms of gender equality at large in the R&I-system is in its infancy. Additionally, setting up an institutional framework might face several forms of organizational and individual resistances, both passive and active, and it will indeed cost a lot in terms of funding and resources. This, though, must be understood in relation to the enormous costs of ongoing GBV to individuals, work groups, organisations, and the quality of research and education in ERA RPOs.

Finally, implementing an institutional framework in an RPO will also imply a challenge for the institutional culture as such, as the need for an institutional framework point at a huge, often not recognized, problem of GBV. Claiming the need to eradicate GBV is a taboo in several national contexts, as it is not yet accepted as a problem and challenge of truly endemic dimensions, or even agreed upon as an existing experience among a majority of managers, staff, and students in many institutions.

From a critical and feminist research perspective, RPOs can be described as organisations with several characteristics enabling GBV and perpetrator behaviours. As part of an historically male-dominated subdomain in societies, RPOs are still built on asymmetric power relations, multiple hierarchical



dependencies, a devastating hyper competition among researchers, destructive and hegemonic academic masculinities as normative ideals for researchers, and at the same time, mainly offer short-term and insecure employments for staff. This is truly a toxic situation, and thus a context in which the UniSAFE recommendations for ending GBV in RPOs are proposed to be set to work. In other words, the current situation for policy enactment on ending GBV in RPOs is at risk, and the proposed UniSAFE recommendations only come into full function when simultaneous structural and institutional change is promoted, targeting all aspects of academic cultures and processes enabling perpetrators of GBV. This is also the main reason that RFOs can play a vital role in ending GBV in strong partnerships with RPOs.

3.4.2. RFO recommendations in brief

The UniSAFE recommendations for RFOs in the ERA are solely built on the 7P model concept and suggest one to two core strategies or measures per each P to be adopted. The overall arguments put forward by the UniSAFE project, as to why RFOs are important stakeholders, are that they can play “a crucial role in addressing and tackling GBV in academia by enforcing policies and procedures, implementing targeted actions and mechanisms, and defining their own organisational culture and practices more broadly”. Further, it is also argued that RFOs can fund research on GBV and connect it with criteria for funding enhancing gender equality in RPOs in different respects. Particularly, RFOs can “also enforce accountability by requiring institutions to report incidents and holding perpetrators accountable”.¹⁵

These more concrete strategies and measures proposed for under the 7P framework include, for example:

- Require applicants to provide proof of institutional policies and mechanisms in place addressing GBV, as part of GEPs or separately (**Policy**)
- Ask for evidence that institutions publish regular data about cases of GBV. Such a requirement can be an eligibility criterion for institutions applying for grants (**Prevalence**).
- Create a mechanism that allows the transfer of grant funding in case of allegations or an ongoing investigation of any of the team members of the granted team. (**Prevention**).
- Consider establishing a whistle-blowing function for researchers, funded by RFOs, who experience GBV, to alert the funded RPOs about ongoing violence and abuse (**Protection**).
- Consider the suspension of relevant grant(s) for a limited period until the RPO has actively addressed reported cases of GBV (**Prosecution**).
- Include information on GBV when publishing funding schemes and when sending out preparatory information to applicants (**Provision of services**).
- Facilitate sharing of knowledge and good practices among RFOs, including through the actions of umbrella organisations such as Science Europe (**Partnerships**).

Overall, the UniSAFE recommendations cover several relevant actions to be taken by RFOs and propose new and innovative ways for RFOs to be an active and engaged stakeholder in partnerships with RPOs and their liability to end GBV among staff and students.

¹⁵ <https://zenodo.org/records/8383082>



3.4.3. Moving beyond the 7Ps?

What is interesting when reading the UniSAFE RPO and RFO factsheets with recommendations, is that the actions suggested for RFOs *are not set within an institutional framework*, as was the case with the RPO recommendations described above. Instead, the RFO factsheet is a collection of diverse strategies and measures following an external logic (the 7Ps model) and without a common institutional framework as the moderating ground for implementation and a sustained organisation. Additionally, the suggested measures and strategies under the 7Ps almost exclusively propose *actions beyond the existing protocols, routines, and procedures* already in place within ERA RFOs. That is, the UniSAFE RFO recommendations are foremost promoting measures on “the outside” of the organisation, and not utilising the already existing core processes of RFOs, including for example the guidelines, policies and actions related to ethics and research misconduct, quality assurance, legal supervision, and monitoring of efficiency.

These important conclusions informed our work of developing a model concept for RFOs, to pinpoint the internal procedures and mechanisms and their potential relevance for combating GBV. This work is summed up in the next section 3.5, where a potential “RELIEF”-model for RFOs is described. The conclusions from rereading the UniSAFE outputs also spurred an interest in reflecting on different perspectives and measures in the GENDERACTIONplus RFO CoP itself, in a mutual learning context for the benefit of all participants. Thus, a mutual learning workshop with the GENDERACTIONplus RFO CoP was set up for these reasons, which is presented in more detail in section 3.6.

3.5. A “RELIEF” model for RFOs in ERA

3.5.1. Background

In this section, the development of a new model for internal organisation and implementation of strategies mitigating GBV as an RFO is presented. It is developed from several important insights from the UGOT team resulting from cooperation with RFOs in GE and gender mainstreaming in different contexts for several years. A major experience is the understanding of RFOs general inability to stretch beyond the given legal national (and international) context. Further, the resources allocated to RFOs and competencies on eradicating GBV in RFOs are often scarce and seldom allow for elaborating on new perspectives and challenges. What is also striking is the widespread idea that RFOs are unable to engage with incidents of GBV in RPOs, because the latter are employers and thus responsible for staff and students experiencing violence and abuse.

These different examples – also collected from interactions with several stakeholders during the GENDERACTIONplus project (such as the ERC, GRC, NSF, and others) – to some extent explain why there is a strong tendency among several RFOs to try to “cope” with the issue of GBV in RPOs through “hiding behind” their existing policies and different organisational structures and routines. Instead of arguing against this situation, and call for (a profound) change, it might be more fruitful to adhere to it. That is, by turning what seems to be limitations into advantages. Therefore, a model defining RFOs liability and importance for ending GBV in RPOs, solely *building on existing internal procedures of RFOs*, is suggested in this section.

The model primarily emanates from experiences of supporting RFOs on gender mainstreaming in SE during 2013-2023. Further, it is the outcome of developing measures and strategies for eradicating GBV in RPOs in the context of different past and ongoing EU-funded projects. It is also a result of trying to map and analyse the lack of policies and research in and on ERA RFOs through the WP3 benchmark report in the GENDERACTIONplus project, as described in section 3.2 in this report. Ideas for



developing this model also has its origin in years of international cooperation with stakeholders in EU and globally on RFOs work on gender equality.

3.5.2. Objective of the RELIEF model

The main objective is to develop an understanding of how existing RFO policies and procedures can be used as an institutional framework for eradicating GBV in RPOs. To some extent, the RELIEF model aims at establishing an institutional framework for implementing concrete measures, as for example suggested for RPOs in the ongoing EU H2020 UniSAFE project. It also aims to support RFOs in developing other measures for eradicating GBV, if possible.

3.5.3. RELIEF – main constituents

The RELIEF model, suggested in this context, defines six key areas through which RFOs, using their ordinary internal procedures and practices, can become a vital part of a landscape of stakeholders engaged in eradicating GBV in RPOs. The model is also well suited as a baseline starting point for an institutional framework, as described above. Thinking through each key area in more depth will be needed to develop the importance and relevance of the model for RFOs, and to take notice of contextual differences. Further, it is of interest to further develop concrete measures for each part of the model, well-grounded in the reality of RFOs daily work, with the aim of making it a useful tool for RFOs to work against GBV. In this specific instance, it is also helpful to include and/or align with the UniSAFE recommendations for RFOs abilities to mitigate GBV. Finally, there are some preliminary ideas on turning the model into an online portal hosted by for example GRC or Science Europe. This way, it can be continually updated by the RFO community, with relevant measures and procedures, and function as an ERA-wide common resource of relevance for overall monitoring as well (in line with the ERA infrastructure proposed by WP3 benchmark report recommendations).

The **RELIEF** model defines six key areas:

Role clarity. The task is to redefine the RFO, as not only part of the national research (political) landscape in general, especially in relation to RPOs as employers, but as a key actor which run the risk of funding violence and abuse if not actively promoting work against GBV.

Ethical governance. Existing ethical frameworks for research and research funding could be used for knowledge building on GBV. Learnings from the concept of (and policies on) research misconduct can be used to develop and define targeted measures, for example, inhibiting perpetrator behaviour and cultures in RPOs.

Legal framework. Bearing in mind that RFOs are not the employer of researchers, and do not impose juridical sanctions, expanding the definition of what RFOs can be responsible for would open channels to develop other effective measures (e.g., withdrawing funding, setting up whistleblowing and independent investigative functions on formal reports, building support structures, giving targeted provision of services outside the RPO context, etc.)

Internal procedures. Developing calls for funding and templates for applications, conducting leading peer-review processes, processing applications for funding in other ways, etc. are instances where an RFO can change their practices, for example on how to demand of applicants and/or RPOs to declare and/or guarantee there are no ongoing processes or cases of GBV in the name of the applicant and/or within the RPO.

Evaluation and monitoring. RFOs have already set up evaluation and monitoring mechanisms through the funding system, and there is no reason why these procedures cannot incorporate standards for



implementing measures ending GBV in RPOs. For example, RFOs could withhold research funding if RPOs do not follow demands of compliance with a targeted policy or code of conduct on eradicating GBV.

Funding. RFOs could take a proactive approach to prioritising research funding on GBV as a research subject. This can be done by setting up dialogues with national stakeholders and the research community on research needs in the field of GBV, as opposed to being reactive and waiting for politics or policy to demand this.

In all these key areas described above, dilemmas emerge which will have to be developed further. One such dilemma is the potential conflict between RFOs combatting GBV in RPOs and the risk of impeding on academic and institutional freedom. Another is the possible negative consequences for RPOs and/or individual researchers/research careers when/if withdrawing research funding because of non-compliance with set standards. These dilemmas, together with the RELIEF model and the UniSAFE RFO recommendations, were considered during the MLW in Milan with the GENDERACTIONplus RFO CoP and other relevant stakeholders, as described below.

3.6. Workshop with RFO CoP in Milan 14-15 September 2023

Apart from the reasons for the MLW stated above, clear evidence emerged from the research review in WP3 D3.1 which indicated the need to set up the MLW. Because of the lack of research on RFOs work to mitigate GBV, our research-based knowledge on the topic is limited. At the same time, we know that practitioners working at RFOs have knowledge, experiences and needs regarding this kind of work. Gathering this knowledge can contribute to activities and strategies with the aim to end GBV.

The MLW was held on the 14th and 15th of Sep 2023 in Milan. The aim of this MLW was to improve the understanding and knowledge on GBV prevention among participants from different RFOs. Further, the aim was also to develop practices based on case studies and a discussion on the RELIEF model, as well as discussion and development of the UniSAFE draft fact sheet recommendations for RFOs eradicating GBV based on the 7P model.

The MLW was designed a forum to exchange knowledge and co-create strategies and new solutions for how RFOs can contribute to eradicating GBV in ERA. All RFO CoP members were invited to the MLW, together with The National Science Foundation (NSF), our visiting partner from the US. After the workshop, the RFO CoP held an online workshop, inspired by the MLW and based on the same material, to also further the knowledge to those RFO members which were not able to participate in person in Milan. 23 participants from 10 RFOs and a small number of other policy-making organisations involved in the GENDERACTIONplus project attended the workshop.

3.6.1. MLW Structure and Contents

The workshop consisted of three main parts, all aiming to explore and develop strategies for how RFOs can work to mitigate GBV in ERA in different ways. The full agenda for the Milan MLW is attached in Appendix B.

3.6.1.1. Case studies

Before the MLW, the participants were asked to read four cases provided by the organisers which pointed out dilemmas and challenges that someone working at an RFO might face regarding GBV. The cases were all inspired by real-life experiences and assembled to highlight challenges and possibilities for RFOs. Discussion questions about the cases were also provided. During the MLW, the different



cases were then discussed in groups of 4-5 persons. Possible interpretations, practices and solutions were processed. See Appendix C for all cases and questions.

3.6.1.2. UniSAFE recommendations and the 7P model

One part of the workshop focused on formulating strategies for change through the UniSAFE 7P model and incorporating the UniSAFE recommendations. In smaller groups, the participants worked on what can be done under the 7Ps from a RFO perspective, and which of the 7Ps make most sense to work with for RFOs. The UniSAFE RFO recommendations are discussed in further detail in section 3.4.

3.6.1.3. Testing the RELIEF model

A main aspect of the MLW was testing out the ideas and logic of the RELIEF model, as it defines six key areas in which RFOs, through their existing policies, procedures, and practices, can become a vital part of a landscape of stakeholders engaged in eradicating GBV in RPOs. To some extent, the model aims at setting an institutional framework for implementing concrete measures suggested in the EU H2020 UniSAFE project, as well as support RFOs in developing other measures for eradicating GBV. During the workshop, the RELIEF-model was discussed in both smaller groups and in plenum.

3.6.2. Outcome and evaluation of the MLW

The mutual learning and sharing of good practices from other RFOs were important outcomes of the workshop for most participants. Several participants also stated that continued partnerships between their RFOs regarding GBV were an important measure to keep discussing the matter as well as learning from each other. When the workshop participants were asked in an evaluation what new knowledge they took with them, a few answers reoccurred:

- New and better knowledge and understanding of how different RFOs and RPOs in different countries approach GBV in HE, what steps have been taken and how these steps were carried out.
- The need to reposition RFOs as important actors in tackling GBV in RPOs.

New insights into concrete practices in different RFOs.

- Ideas and knowledge to create a plan for the next steps in their organisation.
- Knowledge on how to understand and work with the UniSAFE 7P and the RELIEF model.

Some other concrete measures and next steps brought up by participants were:

- Develop training sessions for grant holders.
- Initiate discussions with legal departments based on new knowledge on how legal frameworks are interpreted differently in different countries.
- Introduce new policies regarding GBV, where these are not in place.

3.6.3. Key takeaways

From our perspective on the work done in WP3 T3.2, as experts on GBV but not on RFOs, a few topics stood out as important to develop further. These can be summarised as: RFOs role in mitigating GBV, Partnerships, Legal frameworks, and the RELIEF model as an example of mainstreaming.

3.6.3.1. RFOs role in mitigating GBV



Overall, the role of RFOs in mitigating GBV is interpreted in different ways by different actors, in terms of what an RFO's role is supposed to be, but also in terms of what is possible for an RFO to do. This can partly be explained by differences in legal frameworks, policies, and tasks in different national contexts between the different RFOs. During the workshop, however, it also became clear that RFOs with very similar conditions have different interpretations of what room for manoeuvre they have within existing structures, for instance in terms of differences in how the legal framework was interpreted.

RFOs are not employers of the researchers they fund, and are not responsible for work environments in RPOs, yet RPOs must fulfil ethical obligations set out in the grant agreement, which can be argued fails if cases of GBV are not handled. The ethical approach is already a term that exists and directs awardees to set such an approach through RPO owned procedures.

The current role of RFOs can be described as ambivalent, where two positions can be identified, especially in relation to RPOs. Sometimes representatives tend to position their role as only a service to the RPOs, almost understating their role in relation to the researchers that receive funding. This can be illustrated by statements such as 'we already require a lot from the researchers, we cannot add any extra burden, their workload is already heavy'. In contrast, sometimes RFO representatives instead see their own position as one of power, where they are in a power position because they are in control of the sought-after funds. One statement that illustrates this position is 'we can simply halt the process until the investigation is finished if we learned about GBV accusations during a funding process'. Most would probably agree that a third way would be beneficial, where RFOs and RPOs are seen as equal actors that communicate and cooperate on equal grounds on these issues. Yet it does not seem to be in place today, at least not fully.

3.6.3.2. Partnerships

Partnerships were highlighted as a crucial measure to move forward in the work to mitigate GBV in HE. Partnerships between RFOs were brought up, as well as partnerships between RFOs and RPOs. It was clear that the Mutual Learning Workshop was an appreciated platform for sharing practices and learning more about how other RFOs approach and work with the issue of GBV, this was also something that reoccurred frequently in the evaluation. Concrete steps to create RFO partnerships were asked for and this has also been planned for to some extent. Since different RFOs have done different sorts of work and since progress is different between the organisations, close partnerships, formal and informal networks and continued mutual learning seem like very important and sought-after measures.

3.6.3.3. Legal frameworks

Discussions about legal frameworks reoccurred during the different parts of the workshop. Many of the participants brought up legal frameworks and how that not only is different in different countries and RFOs, but also interpreted differently. After speaking with one another, several participants pointed at the need for arranging meetings with their respective legal offices to discuss possible next steps.

3.6.3.4. The RELIEF model as an example of mainstreaming

During the workshop, especially when working on the RELIEF model, it became clear that quite a lot can be done using existing RFO procedures, and some RFOs are already using these ordinary procedures in their work to mitigate GBV.

An important insight from cooperating with RFOs in gender equality and gender mainstreaming in several contexts, is the organisation's general inability to stretch beyond the given legal national (and international) context. Further, the internal resources and competencies on eradicating GBV in RFOs are often scarce and seldom allow for elaborating on new perspectives and challenges. What is also



striking is the widespread idea of RFOs not being able to engage with incidents of GBV in RPOs, because the latter are employers and thus responsible for staff (and students) experiencing violence and abuse.

During the workshop, the RELIEF model and its six key areas were further developed and discussed based on the knowledge of the representatives from RFOs in different national contexts. Further, it is of interest to develop additional concrete measures for each part of the model, well-grounded in the reality of RFOs daily work, with the aim of making it a useful tool for RFOs to work against GBV. Finally, there are some preliminary ideas on turning the model into an online portal hosted by for example GRC or Science Europe. This way, it can be continually updated by the RFO community, with relevant measures and procedures, and function as an ERA common resource of relevance for overall monitoring as well.



4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Overall conclusions

In this section, two aspects are concluded: objectives for RFOs to engage in mitigating GBV and core elements of this engagement in terms of potential strategies and activities.

4.1.1. Objectives for RFO engagement in mitigating GBV in the ERA

Several analytical conclusions from the work done in D3.2 targets the overall incentives for RFOs to engage in mitigating GBV in RPOs:

- *Meritocracy as the leading principle for quality in research, as ensured through assessing and rewarding the best researchers and applications, is undermined by the existence of GBV in research and education.*

The existence of GBV affects people's possibilities of working in research and HEI, disproportionately affecting women and minorities. If researchers are hindered in their careers and/or opportunities are denied because of the existence and/or consequences of GBV, the meritocracy principle to achieving the best quality in research is undermined.

- *Ethical research conduct is dependent on zero-tolerance to and the non-existence of GBV in research and education.*

Quality in research is not only assessed based on study design, research question, innovation, methodological, theoretical and empirical questions and results, and so forth. It also includes and is assessed on issues of ethical governance and of (potential) research misconduct. The existence of GBV in HE in general, and in funded research specifically, is an issue for RFOs that is of equal importance as other forms of ethical and/or research misconduct.

There are also examples of research and knowledge on GBV in RPOs that is of relevance for, and should be incorporated into, the work of RFOs. For example:

- Nearly two of three respondents in the UniSAFE¹⁶ survey have reported experiences of some form of GBV since entering an institution, with severe consequences related to health, work, and studies. If not actively working against GBV, there is a great risk RFOs will involuntarily finance GBV through their funding schemes.
- GBV tends to increase in research environments with unsecure employment conditions, and doctoral students are at higher risk of GBV¹⁷; opportunities to attain research positions at RPOs are, to a great extent, dependent on research applications and the funding of research through RFOs.
- Strong informal hierarchies and power differentials between different groups at a workplace corresponds to higher prevalence of GBV¹⁸; the importance of RFOs ability to monitor the role and responsibility of the funded PI and RPO is thus evident.

¹⁶ [UniSAFE D6.1: Report on the multi-level analysis and integrated dataset \(zenodo.org\)](#)

¹⁷ [ki.se/media/246914/download](#)

¹⁸ McDonald 2012



- Negative consequences of GBV, such as sick leave, depression and anxiety and absence from work, negatively affects the quality of research and education¹⁹; RFOs have a great interest in quality in research and well-functioning research environments to ensure they do not fund GBV.

4.1.2. RFO potential strategies and activities when mitigating GBV in ERA

Through the work with this baseline document, one identified challenge for RFOs partaking in mitigating GBV in RPOs is that RFOs are seldom seen, by themselves and others, as a proactive partner in the work against GBV in RPOs. What role RFOs should have, how the internal procedures of RFOs can be made relevant, and how the specific expertise and assignments in RFOs can align with the work against GBV in RPOs are all crucial aspects for an overall agreement among all relevant stakeholders in the ERA. Hence, in the following paragraphs we conclude all identified, potential strategies and activities from the work done in developing the baseline.

Develop core procedures within RFOs

- Work with the RELIEF model as a baseline starting point for an institutional framework for implementing concrete measures. This work should include:
 - Thinking through each key area in more depth to develop the importance and relevance of the model for the RFO.
 - Develop concrete measures for each part of the model.
 - Identify and include dilemmas and risks in working with the model.
- Introduce and/or develop new policies on GBV targeting the actual problems defined through working with defining the RELIEF model in more detail.
- Use the UniSAFE 7P model and other ERA policy framework developments to move the agenda on ending GBV in RPOs forward.

Build strong partnerships with other stakeholders

- Create partnerships between RFOs within and between national contexts.
- Develop partnerships between RFOs and RPOs and other relevant stakeholders.
- Establish formal and informal networks and continued mutual learning using expert knowledge and competencies on GBV.

Ensure continuous learning and awareness raising

- Compile a digital course based on up-to-date and relevant research on GBV in RPO, targeting RFOs.
- Compile digital material with knowledge and practice from RFOs on how to work with the issue of GBV in RPOs.
- Turn the RELIEF model and the UniSAFE 7P model into an online portal, hosted by for example GRC or Science Europe, where stakeholders can contribute with concrete examples of policy developments, strategies, activities and networks.
- Develop training sessions on GBV targeting potential and actual grant holders.

Establish long-term funding of research on GBV

- State-of-the-art research, with results and recommendations for policy development in RFOs, is needed to develop the existing policy framework on GBV in the ERA.

¹⁹ Bondestam & Lundqvist 2020.



- National authorities, national RFOs and the EC should fund research and research programmes focusing on RFOs as an important stakeholder in the work against GBV in RPOs.

Further progress necessary policy development on GBV

- Include GBV as a mandatory requirement in GEPs, for both internal and external strategies and activities, as one way of engaging RFOs in mitigating GBV.
- Propose an overarching ERA Code of Conduct as a crucial guide for RFOs as to why and how to take on the work of ending GBV.

4.2. Recommendations

Beyond the conclusions suggested in 4.1, a set of interlinked recommendations follow from the process of developing a baseline on RFO responsibilities and possibilities to work against GBV in ERA RPOs. It is formulated as a holistic approach identifying several levels and frameworks needed to enhance RFO engagement and relevance as key stakeholders. The recommendations are aligned with current and possible future policy developments on ending GBV. Setting the upcoming ERA Code of Conduct and a much asked for mandatory requirement in GEPs as a baseline, the recommendations suggest RFOs to incorporate three different “logics” when developing their engagement as stakeholders ending GBV: an ERA infrastructure, the RELIEF model, and the UniSAFE 7Ps framework. These are understood as core guiding frameworks enabling RFO commitment, independent of current engagement or differing national contexts in ERA. The recommendations contribute with a new logic through the RELIEF model, as it includes the institutions’ already existing internal procedures on, for instance, ethics and research misconduct. Our recommendations suggested for RFOs in ERA are summarized in Figure 1 below.

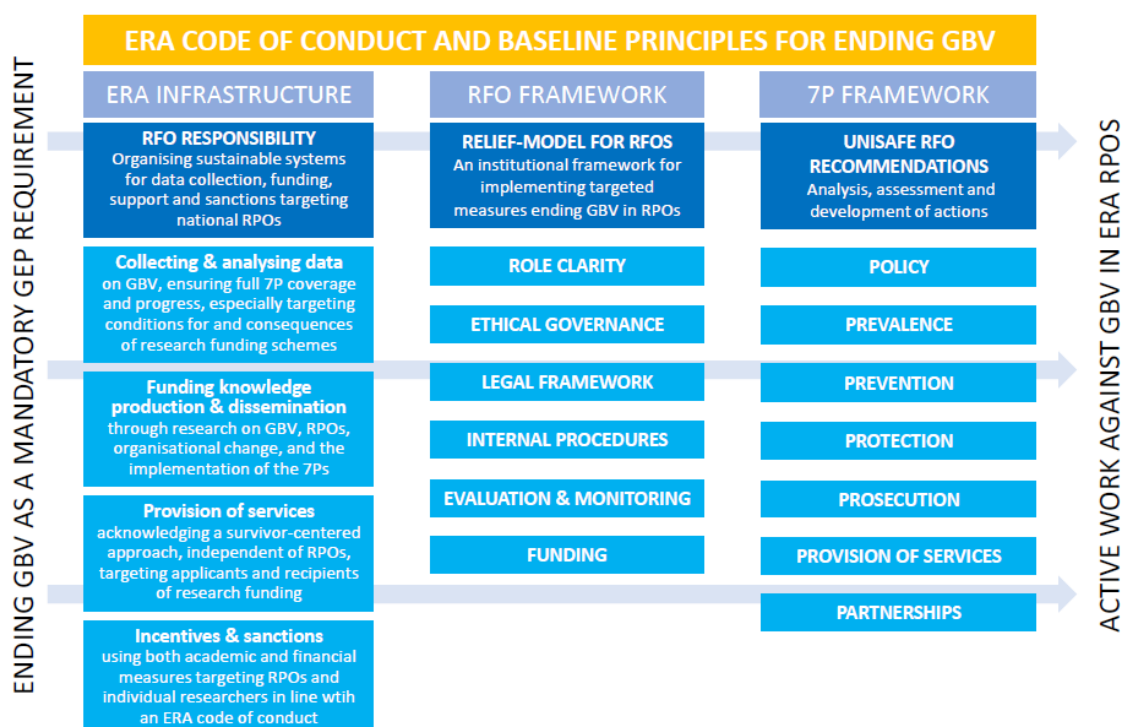


Figure 1. RFO recommendations, a holistic approach, including a GEP mandatory requirement, an ERA code of conduct and infrastructure, an institutional framework for RFOs, and a systematic approach to actions ending GBV.



An ERA Code of Conduct and baseline principles are under development in parallel to the finalisation of D3.2, through the current work in the ERA Action 5 subgroup Task Force on GBV. It will be a set of baseline principles – preferably adopted by the EC as well as EU MS and AC – on the logic and relevance of informed action on GBV by all relevant stakeholders in ERA. The proposed ERA infrastructure for RFOs is already described in detail in D3.1. The RELIEF model and the UniSAFE 7Ps recommendations for RFOs – as described in this deliverable – are instrumental in setting both an institutional framework and a systematic logic for relevant actions. A mandatory GEP requirement on GBV is a vital component in this holistic approach, without which it will be difficult to achieve commitment among RFOs, as well as possibilities for systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress in ending GBV in ERA.



5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all partners in the GENDERACTIONplus project for co-creating the benchmark survey, sharing your knowledge and experiences on GBV and policy development, and being strong partners in the project as such. Also, many thanks to Jennie Rothwell for a thorough quality review of a draft version of the report. Finally, our heartfelt thanks to Marcela Linkova for her continuous support, and for being an inspirational advocate for eradicating GBV in ERA.



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ANNEXES

Appendix A – Articles on RFOs, 2017-2022

Reference	Country	Method	Abstract	Keywords
<p>O'Connor, P. and Irvine, G. (2020) "Multi-level state interventions and gender equality in higher education institutions: The Irish case," <i>Administrative Sciences</i>, 10(4), p. 98.</p> <p>Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci10040098</p>	Ireland	Qualitative	<p>Much of the work on gender equality in higher educational institutions (HEIs) has concentrated on the organizational level. The original contribution of this article lies in its focus on state policy developments and interventions. We focus on Ireland as a specific national context, highlighting multi-level state interventions and looking at their impact on HEIs. Using secondary data analysis (including documentary analysis) and focusing particularly on the period since 2014, state initiatives to tackle the problem of gender inequality from various angles are outlined. They include the introduction of Athena SWAN; the Expert Group Review; the Gender Equality Taskforce; the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative; research funding agency initiatives and those around sexual harassment. In evaluating their impact, we look at the gender pay gap, the gender profile of the professoriate and senior management as well as other indicators of cultural change in HEIs. The article concludes that the best possibility of leveraging change arises when it is driven at the state (macro); the HEI (meso) and the situational (micro) level simultaneously, by gender competent leaders willing to tackle the historically male dominated, masculinist criteria, procedures, processes and micropolitical practices that are "normalized" in HEIs.</p>	<p><i>state; gender equality; higher educational institutions; interventions; multi-level; gender pay gap; gender parity; Irish; professoriate; Athena SWAN</i></p>



GENDERACTIONplus is funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101058093.

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Appendix B – Milan RFO MLW, agenda



RFO CoP

MLW on mitigating GBV

**Piazza Città di Lombardia, 1, 20124 Milano
MI, Italia**



MLW on the role of RFO mitigating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in ERA.

Objectives:

- Mutual learning and practises based on case studies run by the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, University of Gothenburg.
- Co-create strategies and new solutions for how RFOs can contribute to mitigating GBV in ERA.
- Strengthen collaboration between RFO CoP members and the National Science Foundation, USA.
- Opportunity to discuss and reflect sensitive subjects face to face.
- Leverage on task 7.4 based on work in task 3.1 and 3.2.



PROGRAMME

14 September 2023 / Day 1 / RFO CoP MLW, Milan

10:00 – 10:10

Welcome and Opening

Paola Bello, FRRB (IT)
Helene Schiffbaenker, Joanneum (AT)
Sophia Ivarsson, Vinnova (SE)
Moa Persdotter, Vinnova (SE)
Fredrik Bondestam, UGOT (SE)

10:10 – 10:20

Presentation of agenda and expected outcomes

Fredrik Bondestam, UGOT (SE)
Presents agenda and workshop plan.

10:20 – 11:00

State of the art – GBV

Maja Lundqvist, **Susanna Young Håkansson**,
Fredrik Bondestam, UGOT (SE)
Presents results from the UniSAFE report and
benchmarking results from GENDERACTIONplus
project with relevance for RFOs.

11:00 – 11:20

--- Coffee break ---



11:20 – 12:00

State of the art – stakeholder experiences

Rhonda J Davis, NSF (US, tbc)

Presents how NSF as an RFO has worked on mitigating gender-based violence.

12:00 – 12:30

Presentation of logics and cases – workshop preparations

Maja Lundqvist & Susanna Young Håkansson
UGOT (SE)

Presents logics for RFO responsibility and concrete cases to process in the workshop.

12:30 – 13:30

--- Lunch ---

13:30 – 14:50

Workshop on logic of RFO responsibility and concrete cases of GBV

Maja Lundqvist & Susanna Young Håkansson
UGOT (SE)

Based on suggested logic of RFO responsibility and concrete cases of GBV, as experienced by different



RFOs in ERA, we process possible interpretations, practices, and solutions.

Facilitators: UGOT, Joanneum & Vinnova

14:50 – 15:10

--- Coffee break ---

15:10 – 16:30

Workshop on logic for RFO responsibility and concrete cases of GBV, continued

Maja Lundqvist & Susanna Young Håkansson
UGOT (SE)

Facilitators: UGOT, Joanneum & Vinnova

16:30 – 16:50

Summary of workshop results Day 1

Fredrik Bondestam, UGOT (SE)

Presents workshop results and how to continue the work on day 2.

16:50 – 17:00

Closing remarks



Paola Bello, FRRB (IT)
Helene, Schiffbaenker, Joanneum (AT)
End of day 1.

15 September 2023 / Day 2 / RFO CoP MLW, Milan

09:00 – 09:15

Welcome and Opening

Fredrik Bondestam, Maja Lundqvist & Susanna Young Håkansson, UGOT (SE)

Reflections on workshop results from day 1.

09:15 – 10:15

Workshop on formulating strategies for change, incorporating UniSAFE recommendations

Fredrik Bondestam, Maja Lundqvist & Susanna Young Håkansson, UGOT (SE)

Building on results from Day 1, including the UniSAFE 7P model recommendations for RFOs, we develop core principles for how ERA RFOs can eradicate GBV.



Facilitators: UGOT, Joanneum & Vinnova

10:15 – 10:30

--- Coffee break ---

10:30 – 11:20

Workshop on formulating strategies for change, incorporating UniSAFE recommendations, continued

11:20 – 11:50

The way forward – GEP development

Fredrik Bondestam, UGOT (SE)

Paola Bello, FRRB (IT)

How can the results from the workshop be translated into GEPs?

11:50 – 12:00

Wrap up and closing remarks

Helene, Schiffbaenker, Joanneum (AT)

Fredrik Bondestam, UGOT (SE)

Paola Bello, FRRB (IT)





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Appendix C – Milan RFO MLW, case description

Below are four cases pointing out dilemmas and challenges that you, working at an RFO, might face regarding GBV. These cases are all inspired from real life experiences and assembled to highlight challenges and possibilities for RFOs. Due to differences in practice, legal frameworks, policies, and tasks in different national contexts and RFOs, some cases might feel more accurate to you than others, but we ask you to read and reflect upon all of them before the workshop in Milan. If you wish, use the questions at the end of the document to get started. Then choose one of the cases that you would like to discuss further. When we meet at the MLW in Milan on the 14-15th of September, we will work in smaller groups, and each group will have to agree on which case to focus on.

Case 1

A case manager at a RFO becomes aware informally that one of the researchers being funded has been reported for sexual harassment at the RFO. This is reported to the management of the RFO after a couple of months. The accused researcher is a professor and leads a research group with postdocs and doctoral students, is internationally successful, and has received several large project grants in the past. The currently granted research project is for three years, of which six months remain of the project period.

Problem/dilemma: Formal reports versus informal information, does this affect the case manager and RFOs room to manoeuvre, if so, in what ways? The case manager is informally informed, in what ways does this affect possibilities and challenges? There is a short period left of the project period.

Case 2

During a meeting in a preparation group for funding in a RFO, an expert share that one of the applicants in a project application has a long history of having started sexual relations with doctoral students. Because the application describes a project partly dealing with GBV, the expert feels it would be highly inappropriate to propose the project for funding, even though it has been ranked as one of the best by all the experts in the preparation group.

Problem/dilemma: Experts knowledge/hearsay/previous experiences of applicants, should not affect the review, but it might still do, how does this relate to questions of quality in research and ideas about meritocracy? To start sexual relations with doctoral students might not be illegal, but unethical, and it touches on questions about research misconduct and the role of RFOs in mitigating this.

Case 3

The EC has decided that work to prevent GBV is a mandatory part of a GEP. A group of employees at a RFO is tasked with preparing concrete proposals for aims and measures to counter GBV. They suggest primarily to clarify how the RFO can set standards to guarantee compliance, on a code of conduct on GBV, from RFOs applying for funding. The board of the RFO decides to not move forward with a draft proposal from the group, arguing it is not legally possible to force RFOs to comply with policies on GBV.

Problem/dilemma: Internal resistance against mitigating GBV at the RFO, including legal arguments.



Case 4

An employee at a RFO receives information from a PhD candidate in a large research project funded by the RFO. The information contains descriptions of a destructive work environment in the research group, including examples of sexual harassment. The responsible RPO has been informed three months earlier, but no actions or measures have been taken from their side. The situation has gotten worse, and the PhD candidate shares that she, and two others are thinking of leaving the project due to the bad working environment. The project has been running for 18 months, with 24 months remaining.

Problem/dilemma: RFOs versus RPOs responsibilities for work environment, the role of RFOs in the research- and PhD-education infrastructure.

Questions to use for discussion

- What exactly is the problem?
- What responsibility does the RFO and RPO have?
- What is appropriate to do as a RFO?
- What are the risks with different ways of handling the situation?
- How could the resulting situation have been prevented?
- Are there policies and/or procedures to be used in this situation?
- What formal policies and/or procedures would you need?
- What informal networks and procedures do you have? How could they be used?

