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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC	Associated Countries
CoP	Community of Practice
EC	European Commission
EGET	European Gender Equality Taskforce
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
GE	Gender equality
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
KIF	Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research
MS	EU Member States
NCP	National Contact Point
NPI	National Impact Plan
RFO	Research Funding Organisation
RHEI	Research and Higher Education Institution
R&I	Research & Innovation



RPO	Research Performing Organisation
SWG GRI	Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation
WEF	World Economic Forum
WP	Work Package



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides guidance for national authorities on how to establish an effective national system to monitor Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) developed by research performing organisations (RPOs), research funding organisations (RFOs) or other public bodies. The importance of monitoring at national level is central to evaluating and understanding the impact of GEPs as an instrument for institutional change. As defined by the European Commission (EC), a GEP is a “set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through institutional and cultural change” (European Commission, 2021a:11). Developing and maintaining a GEP is a necessary part of the eligibility criteria for Horizon Europe funding. The monitoring and evaluation of GEPs should therefore form an important part of Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) national gender equality policies relating to research and innovation (R&I)(European Commission, 2020a). The benchmarking analysis (Knapińska and Chrobak-Tatara, 2023) of monitoring and evaluation of GEPs carried out by GENDERACTIONplus provides the main input and background for this guidance document, in addition to definitions and requirements from the European Commission relating to GEPs. As highlighted in Deliverable 6.1, not all countries surveyed have mandatory GEPs or GEP monitoring systems in place (Knapińska and Chrobak-Tatara, 2023:47). Considering then, the different stages of national gender equality policy implementation across MS/AC, the advice from this set of guidelines encourages an adaptable system that meets the needs of MS/AC where GEPs are a mandatory requirement and where they are not. By providing different stages of monitoring, this guidance allows MS/AC to engage at their current level while allowing space to develop further. This guidance does not make recommendations for the monitoring of individual GEPs by RPOs or other institutions but focuses on advice for national bodies in establishing a national or regional level system of monitoring GEPs at scale. The flexible nature of the guidance and the consideration of intersectionality and inclusiveness is intended to be useful in providing support to MS/AC through long-term plans (European Commission, 2022e).



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 RFOs. The network is made up of a total of 22 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 R&I 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 (GBV)
- gender dimension in research and innovation
- monitoring and evaluating gender equality actions in ERA
- promoting institutional change through 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 R&I.
- Reduce geographic inequality by targeting less experienced/engaged countries and regions.

1.2 Structure of the Guidance Document

This document outlines recommendations for national authorities and the European Commission on GEP monitoring systems. It is divided into the following main parts:

- Firstly, definitions of monitoring and evaluation are provided, and their importance discussed, especially at national level.
- Secondly, the policy context is outlined with reference to the importance of the Pact on R&I in Europe, the four interlinked outcome deliverables of Action 5 of the ERA Policy Agenda, the Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation 2021 and the requirements for Horizon Europe funding.
- Thirdly, the benchmarking analysis of monitoring/evaluation of GEPs carried out by GENDERACTIONplus provides the context of the Evidence and Analysis as well as gaps and needs identified, which feed into the monitoring guidance (Knapińska and Chrobak-Tatara, 2023).
- Next, monitoring recommendations are proposed, aimed at national authorities and the EC with guidance on how to incorporate an adaptable system.
- Finally, the document concludes that it is vital to ensure that the importance of GEPs as a method of progressing Gender Equality is understood.



1.3 What is Monitoring?

The European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) defines monitoring as a process of systematic and continuous collecting, analysing and using [of] information for the purpose of management and decision-making (EIGE, 2024a). We also use the same definition highlighted in D5.1 by Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) that monitoring is “the planned, continuous and systematic collection and analysis of program information able to provide management and key stakeholders with an indication of the extent of progress in implementation, and in relation to program performance against stated objectives and expectations” (Wroblewski, 2023:17). While individual organisations monitor the progress of their individual GEP throughout its implementation, national level monitoring is proposed in order to understand the implementation of GEPs as an instrument for institutional change. Rather than focusing on monitoring and evaluations as aspects of compliance, they play a critical role in **long-term change management**, both of individual institutions and for a set of stakeholders within a national context, as well as **enhancing institutional sustainability for equality work**.

1.4 What is Evaluation?

As per EIGE’s guidance, evaluation “requires revisiting the aims, objectives, rationale, inputs and outputs of the programme and exploring the extent to which the initiative had the desired long-term impact” (EIGE, 2024b). GENDERACTIONplus task 6.3 focuses on an evaluation system for GEP impact. As such, this deliverable and guidance does not address evaluation directly, but focuses on monitoring the effects of process changes at national level, in order to enable the subsequent evaluation of impact. The data collected through national monitoring can be analysed and inform an evaluation which considers the changes that have occurred as a result of implementation. (EIGE, 2024a).



1.5 How can MS/AC use Monitoring at National Level?

Monitoring of GEP implementation and related data provides important feedback for national authorities who can use the data to communicate progress at national and European level (Knapińska and Chrobak-Tatara, 2023:31). Monitoring data can also be used for political decision making on R&I. Sample indicators for national level monitoring are provided as part of the guidance below, however, national authorities should tailor these to be appropriate for the relevant national context while also ensuring they align with the Horizon Europe eligibility criteria as a minimum.¹

¹ At Institutional/RPO level, various instruments are available for monitoring and evaluation such as GEAM tool with supporting materials such as the EIGE GEAR tool and the Guidance on GEPs from the European Commission. The EC also funded the Horizon 2020 project CASPER, a feasibility study to develop scenarios for a certification system for gender equality for RPO's between 2020 and 2022.



2. POLICY CONTEXT

The Council conclusions on the New European Research Area called on MS and EC to address main challenges to ensuring inclusiveness, in particular the gender imbalance in R+I, by utilising GEPs (Council of the European Union, 2020:19).

A New ERA for Research and Innovation highlighted that insufficient progress had been made in gender equality in R&I, despite policy intervention. (European Commission, 2020b). Proposal no. 11 recommended a roadmap of actions to promote a gender inclusive culture while proposal no. 12 specifically highlighted GEPs, in line with Horizon Europe programme objectives, as a means to promote gender equality in R+I.

The Pact on R&I in Europe underlines priorities for joint action in support of the European Research Area (ERA), including monitoring and evaluating national gender equality policies and plans in R&I (Council of the European Union, 2021b).

The four interlinked outcome deliverables of Action 5 of the **ERA Policy Agenda** reflect the key priorities of the Pact and Action 5 includes a deliverable to “develop a policy coordination mechanism to support all aspects of gender equality through inclusive Gender Equality Plans and policies, and a dedicated EU network on their implementation” (European Commission, 2021c:8).

Endorsing 2021 **the Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation** affirms EU commitment to advancing gender equality in the ERA. The declaration acknowledges the need to:

develop tools for the monitoring and evaluation of national gender equality policies in R&I and gender equality actions, including Gender Equality Plans. Such tools are essential to evaluate actions aimed at achieving institutional change, collect information on Gender Equality Plans uptake rates at national level, and consider intersectional data (Council of the European Union, 2021a).

The priority areas put forward by the Declaration include: “support active monitoring and evaluation to ensure continuous improvement.”

For organisations to be eligible to receive Horizon Europe funding, the EC has established mandatory requirements for GEPs (European Commission, 2022a:12). GEPs must:

1. Be a public document.



2. Have dedicated resources.
3. Include arrangements for data collection and monitoring.
4. Be supported by training and capacity building.

The EC have also encouraged consideration of the following thematic areas in GEPs (European Commission, 2020a):

- work-life balance and organisational culture,
- gender balance in leadership and decision making,
- gender equality in recruitment and career progression,
- integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content,
- measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.



3. EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

GENDERACTIONplus undertook a benchmarking survey amongst members of the consortium. The benchmarking analysis conducted within the framework of Work Package 6 depicts the current landscape for GEP requirements in R&I at national/regional level (Knapińska and Chrobak-Tatara, 2023). It provides an overview of the overall policy framework on GEP requirements concerning ERA stakeholders and presents relevant policy developments, mainly targeting national authorities. Responses to the questions relating to GEP monitoring and evaluation were received from national authorities from 16 countries. The benchmark report (Knapińska and Chrobak-Tatara, 2023:7) relating to GEPs highlighted a number of findings:

1. GEPs (in some form) are generally mandatory for public bodies. This is seen in the majority of countries surveyed and predominantly seen in the public sector. Out of 16 countries participating in the survey, 8 require GEPs at national level. 6 of these 8 indicate the presence of a national / regional system for GEP monitoring (Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Spain, and Sweden) while 10 do not have GEP monitoring systems in place.
2. The existence (or not) of national requirements for GEPs highlights a divide between the MS that joined the EU before and after 2004.
3. Based on the benchmark analysis, intersectionality appears to be a challenging concept and is not a common marker in GEPs. One challenge is the lack of understanding of the term and a lack of necessary resources to provide support or competence building. Not including or analysing other equality dimensions (race, age, socio-economic background, academic position, etc.) along with gender, may lead to an ineffective GEP, especially without mitigating factors against other grounds of inequality. Another challenge is ensuring the appropriate data is collected while adhering to GDPR and ensuring anonymity.
4. In analysing the existing monitoring systems in place, the data varies between countries. There seems to be a lack of evidence pointing to systematic monitoring systems in place. Some countries consider that national monitoring is established, while others do not, despite having similar legislative frameworks. Considering the role of GEPs as a priority instrument for the advancement of gender equality, there is a need to map how GEPs are being monitored, particularly in RPOs.



5. The GEP eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe funding has led to an increase in GEPs and related activities such as capacity building.
6. Incorporating Horizon Europe guidelines as mandatory and necessary baselines will form an effective part of monitoring guidelines.
7. Comparison across MS/AC is challenging as the data and information collected is different in each country and national authorities use different indicators in their monitoring.
8. Currently, it is difficult to have a unified model or guidance across MS/AC. A model that is flexible or has multiple levels may be required.

3.1 GAPS / NEEDS IDENTIFIED

The benchmarking analysis conducted within the framework of Work Package 6 (highlighted in previous section) outlines the overall policy framework on GEP requirements concerning ERA stakeholders and presents relevant policy developments, mainly targeting national authorities. 16 countries (national authorities) responded to the questionnaire. The benchmark report relating to GEPs highlighted a number of gaps and needs (Knapińska and Chrobak-Tatara, 2023):

1. Not all countries surveyed have mandatory GEPs or GEP monitoring systems in place. This highlights the need for this guidance document, especially for the MS/AC where GEPs are not an established practice.
2. Some MS/AC activities are grounded in laws/legislation, while others are based on policy. In some MS, RFOs played a role in the implementation of national GEP requirements and encouraged RPOs to adopt GEPs. There is a need for continued reflection and consideration of the role of RFOs in GEP implementation.
3. In the MS/AC that have GEPs and monitoring systems in place, the responsibility may lie with a number of different offices/bodies, each with a differing focus on gender equality. This may make reporting challenging and onerous with different and possibly inconsistent reporting



systems, siloing of information, a lack of mutual cooperation and a lack of smooth communication in relation to GEPs.

4. The Horizon Europe GEP process-related requirements and recommended areas can provide the minimum requirements for GEPs. Monitoring on the Horizon Europe requirements can inform on a baseline that can be used for annual reviews at national level.
5. There is a need, however, to move beyond the minimum of the Horizon Europe GEP compliance check in order to highlight the links between different areas e.g. gender dimension in research content and to move towards intersectional approaches to equality work. Moving beyond the minimum levels of compliance underlines the importance of driving change through more ambitious monitoring frameworks.
6. There is a gap between requirements for public and private institutions in relation to their obligations to develop a GEP, and differences in requirements for different sectors (higher education, government, NGOs etc).
7. In some countries, institutions are encouraged to implement gender equality activities, but this is often not a requirement. With the introduction of the GEP requirement in Horizon Europe, there is a need to move beyond encouragement and voluntary activities, which are often undertaken on top of existing work without adjustment of pay/workload.

Other areas of the GENDERACTIONplus benchmark analysis also highlighted that:

8. There is a lack of unified understanding around intersectionality and related terminology and concepts which may impact the design of inclusive and intersectional GEPs (Holt Zachariassen, Ghosh and Woods, 2023:10).
9. Similarly, there is uncertainty around how to understand and integrate the sex/gender dimension in research and innovation content (Korsvik, Gonzalez and Dvorackova, 2023: 54).
10. While it has long been an important mission, the lack of change in relation to gender-based violence (GBV) in ERA demonstrates that actions to address GBV should also be considered in GEP monitoring (Bondestam, Lundqvist and Young Håkansson, 2023:61).



11. As there is no requirement to have a national action plan (as in previous ERA period), there is only limited information available regarding MS/AC priorities, objectives and planned or implemented measures (Wroblewski, 2023:35).

As noted by the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI) (2021:4), a lack of requirements relating to GEPs, however, is not indicative of a lack of promising practices, noting that “progress has been achieved through softer measures or more bottom-up approaches, which may be related to differences between countries and the socio-cultural factors that affect gender equality policy design.”



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- Clear guidance should be issued for MS/AC on how compliance with the Horizon Europe GEP requirement should look and how this will be checked by the European Commission. This will ensure that national monitoring systems and standards can be aligned with the compliance requirements for Horizon Europe.
- The current thematic areas recommended for Horizon Europe GEPs should be included as mandatory requirements.
- Development of indicators for ERA-wide monitoring with questions adjusted to national contexts where relevant. ERA-level monitoring should consider an adaptable system for MS/AC that may have a lower GEP baseline than MS/AC where GEPs are more established.
- As outlined by GENDERACTIONplus Deliverable 5.1, there is a need for the European Commission to continue to sustain attention and policy dialogue with MS/AC, with the aim of strengthening the commitment to institutional and structural change through GEPs.²

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL/REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

The recommendations below are targeted at national authorities and have arisen from consideration of the GENDERACTIONplus benchmark results and draw on the experience and learnings of countries that have monitoring in place at national level. Feedback on these recommendations was received through consultation with ERA stakeholders, both internal and external to the GENDERACTIONplus project consortium.

² As outlined by Deliverable 5.1, “the GENDERACTIONplus benchmarking reports show that concepts are interpreted differently and policies or measures referring to the same concepts are comparable only to a limited extent. Furthermore, a monitoring of policy implementation allows to identify good practices at national level which supports exchange of experiences and mutual learning.” (p.36)



4.2.1. Establish a System

- It is recommended that MS/AC adopt a national or regional level monitoring system for GEPs; to understand the level of compliance with national and Horizon Europe GEP requirements, and to provide a basis on which an evaluation can be made, focusing on the impact of GEPs on gender equality in R&I. A separate set of guidelines will be developed by GENDERACTIONplus to support evaluation of the implementation of actions that respond to high-level ERA gender equality priorities.
- Each MS/AC should provide appropriate financial resources and personnel support to ensure success and sustainability of monitoring and evaluation at national level.
- An appropriate body with requisite expertise should be appointed with the task of monitoring GEPs. This body should provide support and ensure there are clear channels of communication and clear reporting lines with the relevant organisations implementing GEPs, and also with a responsible national authority (if the body is external to the national authority).
- When developing a monitoring system, monitoring bodies and national stakeholders should look to examples of emerging practice within the ERA that can be adapted for their national context, rather than 'reinventing the wheel'.
- It is recommended that MS/AC engage in consultation with relevant stakeholders in their region/country by undertaking a needs assessment in relation to GEP monitoring in different sectors.

4.2.2. Engage in ERA-wide cooperation

- To facilitate shared knowledge and understanding across the ERA, each monitoring body should work with stakeholders and other ERA countries participating in ERA Action 5 to develop common definitions and understandings of key terminology and indicators where relevant.



4.2.3. Define the monitoring objectives, areas and indicators

- It is recommended that MS/AC engage in consultation with relevant stakeholders in their region/country by undertaking a needs assessment in relation to GEP monitoring in different sectors.
- Monitoring bodies should clearly define the objectives of their gender equality work and clearly communicate the purpose of monitoring to stakeholders. This should include what the information collected will be used for and how the relevant data protection requirements will be met.
- Each monitoring body should communicate clear requirements relevant to the MS/AC as a baseline/minimum.
- The baseline level of monitoring should include the Horizon Europe GEP requirements and recommendations as a minimum and seek to advance monitoring systems beyond these parameters.
- When developing a monitoring system, monitoring bodies should identify a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators that are informed by and contextualised for the relevant national/regional context and assist in complying with the Horizon Europe GEP requirements and recommendations (European Commission, 2021a:9).
- Monitoring bodies should consider how questions on multiple dimensions, GBV and intersectional discrimination can be included in already established monitoring tools for HE R&I such as student and staff surveys, or national statistics on higher education (annual monitoring).
- Monitoring bodies should involve underrepresented groups when identifying goals and measures to ensure inclusivity and to ensure that a range of intersectional points are monitored and analysed. To avoid duplication of effort, monitoring bodies should consider existing national data collection and statutory reporting/monitoring that RPOs/MS/AC may already be contributing to in relation to national equality legislation or public sector duty as a starting point in relation to indicators.
- To avoid duplication of effort and to facilitate benchmarking, monitoring bodies should consider existing transnational data collection and monitoring that RPOs/MS/AC may already



be contributing to (e.g. She Figures, EIGE GE Index, UN SDGs) as a starting point for indicators.

4.2.4. Monitor, report and reflect

- Each monitoring body should establish a template to ensure consistency in data collection and develop a standardised approach to identifying, collecting and mining equality data to support all RPO reporting requirements in relation to gender equality.
- Templates should be developed in a manner to allow for multi-purpose use (e.g., demonstrating compliance with Horizon Europe requirements, national public sector duty obligations and other statutory reporting).
- Monitoring bodies should produce an annual report containing the aggregated progress of the relevant institutions against the relevant indicators, to assist organisations in benchmarking and to facilitate greater understanding of GEP implementation nationally, and across the ERA.
- Each monitoring body should engage in consultation with relevant stakeholders in their region/country to co-develop a monitoring and evaluation roadmap that is sustainable and can be further developed in line with future advancements related to gender equality in the ERA.

4.3 RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR MONITORING BY NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

This guidance is intended to assist national authorities to establish a system of monitoring GEPs at scale. Some MS/AC may be monitoring a small number of GEPs developed by RPOs/RFOs, whereas larger MS/AC may have much higher numbers to monitor. To allow for an adaptable system, three stages of monitoring are suggested below, with sample measures and indicators provided. The measures included are focused on process change at the institutional (RPO/RFO) level.

Each stage provides an opportunity for each MS/AC to consider where they are and what they can realistically meet. Stages are considered to be additive and form a systemic framework of interdependent parts (i.e. the requirements for starting stage are also expected to be addressed at the



intermediate stage). Areas of national capacity building are suggested in order to build progression from starting stage to intermediate stage and so on. National authorities should indicate to their stakeholders a timeframe for the advancement of national level monitoring.

MS/AC may wish to consider a relevant amount of time spent at each stage before more in-depth monitoring is expected at national level. For example, if institutional GEPs are of a 4-5 year duration, then 1-2 GEP cycles may be required before progress at national level can be evidenced across the majority of monitoring areas.³ However, it should be considered that more in-depth monitoring may assist in understanding challenges and barriers to progress.

4.3.1. Starting Stage – Compliance with Horizon Europe requirements and recommendations

The Starting Stage aims to provide a baseline level of monitoring, in line with Horizon Europe requirements and recommendations (European Commission, 2022a:12). As this is a minimal level of monitoring, suggested compliance measures are included rather than quantitative or qualitative indicators. In response to the Horizon Europe GEP requirements, we provide a set of suggested/example measures that national authorities would expect RPOs to have in place in order to meet this minimum level of monitoring/compliance which each MS/AC can use to build their own specific indicators. These suggested measures may require adjustment in the event that the European Commission issues guidance on compliance with Horizon Europe requirements and recommendations.

Horizon Europe GEP process-related requirement	Suggested compliance measure(s) for Starting Stage
Be a public document. The GEP should be a formal document signed by the top management. The document should demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them.	Signed GEP is visible to public and easy to access on the RPO website and integrated into strategic RPO documents.

³ Examples of national level monitoring can be found in our benchmarking report (Knapińska and Chrobak-Tatara, 2023).



<p>Include arrangements for data collection and monitoring: GEPs must be evidence-based and founded on sex or gender-disaggregated baseline data collected across all staff categories. This data should inform the GEP's objectives and targets, indicators, and ongoing evaluation of progress, and be reported on annually.</p>	<p>Confirmation that gender-disaggregated data is collected across all staff categories that is reported on annually.</p>
	<p>Provide link to any indicators/data published by the institution (e.g. She Figures, Athena Swan, public sector duty monitoring)</p>
	<p>Description of how the data informs GEP objectives, targets, indicators and evaluation of progress.</p>
	<p>Clear description of what mitigation strategies are in place if GEP is not progressing.</p>
<p>Have dedicated resources: Resources for the design, implementation, and monitoring of GEPs may include funding for specific positions such as Equality Officers or Gender Equality Teams as well as earmarked working time for academic, management and administrative staff.</p>	<p>Name of office/roles tasked with GEP design, implementation and monitoring publicly visible on institution website.</p>
	<p>Description of how working time is allocated for academic, management and administrative staff.</p>
<p>Be supported by training and capacity-building: Actions should address gender equality and unconscious gender biases and may include developing gender competence establishing working groups dedicated to specific topics and raising awareness through workshops and communication activities.</p>	<p>Confirmation that training and capacity building activities are offered towards sustaining the advancement of gender equality and greater understanding and awareness of other equality dimensions.</p>
	<p>Description of training and capacity building activities and topics covered.</p>

The thematic areas recommended by Horizon Europe for inclusion in GEPs are included as mandatory in the Starting Stage.



Horizon Europe GEP thematic area	Suggested compliance measure(s) for Starting Stage
Work-life balance and organisational culture	Promote work life balance from the top down; offer flexible work patterns and blended working options where possible (e.g. flexible working, flexi-time, family-friendly schemes, email policies). Support parents of all genders to take parental leave.
Gender balance in leadership and decision making	A minimum of 40% men and 40% women on all key organisational decision-making bodies, committees and working groups. Overall, these groups should also have gender balance among chairs.
Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Bias mitigation training for recruitment and promotion panel members, Inclusive and unbiased language used in recruitment and promotion materials.
	Engagement with the European Charter for Researchers
Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content	Clear policy/guidance available for all staff and students. Description of related training provided for all staff and students.
Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Publicly visible strategy to address GBV.

4.3.2. Moving from Starting Stage to Intermediate Stage

The advancement of gender equality is dependent on progress on a range of factors including race equality, precarious employment, family status and disability equalities. Accordingly, in order to move from Starting Stage to Intermediate, national authorities should consider how institutions can demonstrate a commitment to develop strategies, policies and action plans that seek to build capacity towards centralising an intersectional approach to equality issues.



Moving from Starting Stage to Intermediate Stage	Suggested activities
A commitment to develop strategies, policies and actions that seek to build capacity towards centralising an intersectional approach to equality issues.	Publicly stated commitment to develop strategies and policies that build capacity towards an intersectional approach. Training and capacity building activities to inform staff and students on intersectional approaches.
A commitment to develop strategies, policies and actions that improve work-life balance and organisational culture.	Develop appropriate supports and mitigations for the burden of caring on those staff with caring responsibilities, as brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic.
A commitment to develop measures to promote gender equality in recruitment and career progression.	Development of a strategy or actions to address the continued gender inequality at different levels of the staffing structure in both academic and professional streams. Measures to be addressed could include job design, workload allocation, career progression, reward and recognition, performance management and recruitment and promotion.
A commitment to integrate the gender dimension into research and teaching content.	Collect data on uptake of training in this area and conduct needs assessment to improve and refine training and policies.
Embedding of participatory measures	Identification of key consultation areas. Conduct regular staff and student consultation in relation to gender equality, in order to inform evidence-based actions and policy and to measure progress.
Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Undertake research into experiences of GBV in R&I at national level.



4.3.3. Intermediate Stage

Intermediate Stage monitoring should be an evolution of Starting Stage requirements and request more detailed evidence, in particular under the headings already recommended. Intermediate Stage is a useful place to monitor the human, financial and physical resources in place to allow for the advancement of gender equality, to assess policy development and review processes as part of standard practice, and to include the incorporation of equality impact assessment across the organisation. The requirement to capture and analyse data in a consistent manner will potentially require further development of centralised systems used by RPOs and accordingly, appropriate investment should be made in systems development to facilitate this.

Intermediate Stage requirement	Suggestions for development of indicator(s)
GEP should be a public, formal document which demonstrates a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them. Progress updates are communicated to all staff and students.	Basic annual report on GEP implementation and progress towards GEP goals published on institution website.
Data collection and monitoring	Data on all levels of the academic career pipeline (from student to Professor/Grade A) and including all staff categories (research, professional, administrative, technical), disaggregated by sex/gender.
	Targets are set towards a minimum representation of 40% men and women at each level of the pipeline and across each staff category, where achievable.
GEP has dedicated resources	GEP has dedicated leadership. A member of senior management who is a member of the organisation's Executive/Management team should have responsibility for gender equality and/or EDI. The information on this role should be available publicly on the institution's website.



	<p>Evidence that governing authorities/bodies and the institution President (or equivalent) are responsible and accountable for taking the lead in progressing gender equality within the organisation.</p>
	<p>The information on dedicated resources for GEP implementation (human resources, financial resources) is publicly available on the institution website.</p>
	<p>Workload is allocated for academic, management and administrative staff working on gender equality.</p>
GEP supported by training and capacity-building	<p>Data on uptake of training and capacity building provided, disaggregated by gender.</p>
Work-life balance and organisational culture	<p>Evidence that relevant policies are in place and operating (e.g. flexible working, flexi-time, family-friendly schemes).</p>
	<p>Evidence of appropriate supports and mitigations for the burden of caring on those staff with caring responsibilities, as brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
Gender balance in leadership and decision making	<p>Evidence that progress is being made towards targets for a minimum of 40% representation of men and women on decision-making committees and boards.</p>
Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	<p>Evidence that progress is being made towards targets for a minimum of 40% representation of men and women on recruitment/promotion committees and boards.</p>
	<p>Analyse data on uptake of training provided for recruitment/promotion panel members on gender</p>



	equality, mitigating bias and consideration of other equality dimensions.
	Evidence of a strategy or actions to address the continued gender inequality at different levels of the staffing structure in both academic and professional streams. Measures to be addressed could include job design, workload allocation, career progression, reward and recognition, performance management and recruitment and promotion.
Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content	Analyse data on uptake of training provided for all staff and students, disaggregated by sex/gender.
Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Publicly visible policy and procedures for preventing and addressing GBV. Put in place targeted capacity building programmes based on previous research. Establish national network for MLW.
	Evidence of adoption of recommendations/actions emerging from the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024
Intersectional approaches	Data on uptake of training and capacity building
Participatory measures	Evidence that staff and student consultation is carried out. Evidence of increased engagement in participatory measures and progress in key consultation areas identified.

4.3.4. Moving from Intermediate Stage to Advanced

To build on and conduct more in-depth monitoring beyond Intermediate Stage, an intersectional and inclusive approach should be a key cross-cutting principle in the design and implementation of gender equality actions.



Advanced Stage capacity building	Suggested activities
An intersectional approach should be a key cross-cutting principle in the design and implementation of gender equality actions.	Review equality data collected to identify additional areas of collection and build capacity and trust for collection of data on additional equality areas.
	Development of an appropriate systematic approach to the capture, analysis and reporting of data in relation to the relevant equality grounds specified under any national/regional equality legislation.
	Identification of GEP actions that are progressing well to consider how an intersectional approach can be adopted.
	Training and capacity building activities to inform staff and students on embedding intersectional approaches.
Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Development of a strategy or actions to tackle reliance on precarious forms of employment within RPOs, particularly in researcher careers.

4.3.5. Advanced monitoring

In addition to the areas under Starting Stage and Intermediate Stage, Advanced Stage monitoring should also consider progress and development relating to intersectionality, precarity and increased data capture, analysis and reporting. Under its priority areas for joint action, the Pact for R&I recommends to “support women’s wider participation in research and innovation and work to remove inequities “regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” to achieve gender equality, equal opportunities, and inclusiveness(European Commission,2021b:8). Advanced Stage monitoring should seek evidence that this is being addressed by GEPs.



Advanced requirement	Suggestions for development of indicator(s)
GEP should be a public, formal document which demonstrates a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them. Progress updates are communicated to all staff and students.	Detailed annual report on GEP implementation and progress towards GEP goals published on institution website.
Data collection and monitoring	Evidence of an appropriate systematic approach to the capture, analysis and reporting of data in relation to the relevant equality grounds specified under any national/regional equality legislation.
	Data on all levels of the academic career pipeline (from student to Professor/Grade A) and including all staff categories (research, professional, administrative, technical), disaggregated by gender and other equality categories.
	Progress towards targets for a minimum representation of men and women at each level of the pipeline and across each staff category are published/provided.
GEP has dedicated resources	Designated workload allocation policy for academic, management and administrative staff (outside of Equality Offices/Units) working on gender equality actions.
GEP supported by training and capacity-building	Data on uptake of training and capacity building provided, disaggregated by gender and intersectional indicators.
Work-life balance and organisational culture	Data on uptake of relevant policies (e.g. flexible working, flexi-time, family-friendly schemes).
	Responses from staff surveys/consultation on relevant topics, disaggregated by sex/gender.



	Evidence of the support and engagement of men in the process of change.
Gender balance in leadership and decision making	Data on membership and chairs of key decision-making committees by gender to evidence that there is progress towards a minimum of 40% men and 40% women on all key organisational decision-making bodies, committees and working groups and that these groups also have gender balance among chairs
Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Data in relation to the interaction of the individual equality grounds and gender should be captured in relation to: (i) recruitment and promotion across grades and staff categories; (ii) gaining of other rewards and recognition (internal grants, roles of responsibility, leadership, awards, etc.); and (iii) status of employment (hourly paid, short-term contract, permanent appointment, etc.).
	Data on uptake of training provided (and disaggregated by sex/gender) for recruitment/promotion panel members.
	Regular analysis of gender pay gap.
	Updated recruitment and promotion policies are in place. Evidence of gender balance/representation on interview panels and boards. Job advertisements to include the institution's commitment to gender equality and inclusiveness.
	Evidence of a strategy or actions to tackle reliance on precarious forms of employment within RPOs, particularly in researcher careers.
Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content	Evidence that gender equality is embedded in quality marks/processes, including institutional quality enhancement processes.



	Consideration of gender equality should be included in assessment of research institutions (e.g. research excellence frameworks) and in research assessment (e.g. DORA/CoARA principles).
Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Publicly visible policy and procedures for preventing and addressing GBV, in addition to information on relevant contact persons, services and supports in the institution.
	Evidence of adoption of recommendations/actions emerging from the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024



5. CONCLUSION

Monitoring at national level is central to understanding the impact of GEPs as an instrument for institutional change, and as a step towards effective evaluation practices. With variance in GEP implementation across MS/AC, it is vital to ensure that the role of GEPs as a key tool for progressing gender equality is understood. Without continuous and active monitoring, GEPs can be ineffective. A lack of monitoring may then fail to capture ineffective practices and poor implementation of gender equality policies. Conversely, effective monitoring at national level can highlight good practices, identify common challenges and provide opportunities for mutual learning. This document aims to provide a set of guidelines to assist national authorities in establishing a system of monitoring that can engage effectively with GEP maintenance and progression. As the GEP requirement for Horizon Europe eligibility has been in place since 2022 many national authorities may already be working with these baselines and further developing existing national monitoring systems to incorporate the GEP requirement. The adaptable and flexible stages outlined in these guidelines allow MS/AC to assess what best fits their institutional and national contexts, in a way that will support progress and avoid regression. Embedding efficient monitoring systems at national authority level will help to ensure the continuous successful promotion of gender equality and inclusion in the ERA and promote GEPs as a tool for institutional and structural change.



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