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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Meaning
AC	Associated Countries
CA	Consortium Agreement
CoP	Community of Practice
DG RTD	Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
DLR	German Aerospace Center
ERA	European Research Area
FECYT	Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology
GE	Gender Equality
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
HE	Horizon Europe
ISAS	Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences
MS	EU Member States
NCP	National Contact Point
Q&A	Questions and Answers
RFO	Research Funding Organisation
R&I	Research & Innovation
WP	Work Package



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender dimension in R&I is one of the thematic Work Packages of the GENDERACTIONplus project whose aim is to advance the understanding of the gender dimension in R&I from an intersectional perspective and within the framework of policy coordination across the ERA. What kind of strategies can be put in place to achieve this objective? Which actors should be involved in this objective? What are the most effective actions to reach different targets? These are some of the questions that the project has addressed in relation to the gender dimension in R&I and which this report seeks to answer.

The national expertise mobilized to support National Contact Points (NCPs) is one of the main objectives of this thematic Work Package i.e. to support capacity-building among NCPs regarding the integration of sex/gender analysis and intersectionality in the context of R&I proposals. The activities conducted have ranged from the establishment of a network of NCPs interested in the gender dimension in R&I in Horizon Europe (hereafter the NCP network) to the design of an online course on the topic available on the NCP Virtual Campus platform.

The set up of an online course through the NCP Virtual Campus, with the cooperation of the Horizon Academy¹, has generated a positive reception from the community of National Contact Points. The course performance should continue to be monitored until the end of Horizon Europe. Moreover, this has involved collective work by several partners including members of the consortium, external experts and EU funded project participants. Several lessons have been learned during the process that may be useful for the design of future training activities to support the implementation of measures on the gender dimension in R&I in the upcoming Framework Programme. This report outlines the achievements and critical reflections of Task 4.2 (mobilisation of national expertise to support NCPs).

¹ Horizon Academy: Connecting and Training NCPs Towards a Unified Support System (NCP4HE) is an EU project funded under Grant Agreement no. 101118823. Project website: <https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/>



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. About the project

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

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

Specifically, the GENDERACTIONplus project aims to:

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

Thematically, the project focuses on:

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

GENDERACTIONplus aims to achieve the following impacts:

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



1.2. Objectives of the report

WP4 addresses the need to produce new knowledge and strategic advice on how to consider the gender dimension in R&I from an intersectional perspective in the whole research cycle. Specifically, the aim of Task 4.2. is to support capacity-building among NCPs regarding the integration of sex/gender analysis and intersectionality in the context of research and innovation proposals. Thus, Task 4.2 contributes to fulfil the following WP4 objectives:

- Leverage the content produced on sex/gender analysis across MS and AC
- Enhance capacities of NCPs regarding sex/gender analysis in the content of research proposals
- Increase citizen's and stakeholders' awareness on the gender dimension in R&I as a research quality issue

Deliverable 4.2. takes stock of the national expertise mobilized to support NCPs as one of the main objectives of Task 4.2 that has been developed by FECYT (Spain) and DLR (Germany). In order to include enough information on the progress of the online course, an extension of the Deliverable was requested so that it could be submitted during the first months of Reporting Period 3. However, both Task 4.2 and the online course on the gender dimension in R&I will be running until the end of the project, so new developments and results will be reported in the project final review.

This report builds on the work conducted under Task 4.1. *Benchmarking analysis of guidelines on the gender dimension in R&I*. One of the recommendations of [Deliverable report 4.1.](#) is to develop clear guidelines and definitions for RFOs in the field of the gender dimension in R&I and to develop specific capacity-building activities. In a sense, GENDERACTIONplus has followed this recommendation and provided a tool for the Framework Programme supporting the role of the EC as research funder. [Position paper n° 3, 2024](#), on the role of NCPs for better results on inclusive gender analysis in R&I in Horizon Europe, was developed under Task 4.3. This strategic policy advice asked NCP networks to encourage NCPs to follow the online course on the gender dimension in R&I to be developed by GENDERACTIONplus as a way to strengthen capacities.

This deliverable report, in turn, is strongly linked to two other work packages in the project and thus, it contributes to their aims and impacts:

- *WP7 Building capacities, competencies and expertise* - the online course on the gender dimension in R&I is aimed at building capacities, competence and expertise for gender equality and mainstreaming in R&I, specifically the gender dimension in R&I, facilitating access to different agents from countries with a less comprehensive policy.
- *WP 8 Creating impact through policy transfer and citizen engagement* – the procedure towards Task 4.2 has started with the establishment of a network of NCPs interested in the gender dimension in R&I and will end with continuous engagement and support as trainers of the online course at the NCP Virtual Campus², thus acknowledging the importance of stakeholder engagement to advance the field of the gender dimension in R&I.

The report comprises three main parts corresponding to three important steps in the development of the task: (i) - the process followed to mobilise NCPs; (ii) – the design of the online course; (iii) – the

² The NCP Virtual Campus offers access to the available online courses related to Horizon Europe. Although it is intended for NCPs, everyone can create an account through: <https://courses.horizoneuropencppportal.eu/login/index.php>



performance of the online course at the time of writing this report. The conclusions include lessons learned from the process, recommendations to continue mobilising expertise and increasing the capacity of NCPs in preparation for the upcoming Framework Programme. This report may therefore be useful for the following stakeholders:

- The Gender Sector of the DG RTD
- Research Funding Organisations
- EU funded projects on gender & science (sister projects)
- National NCP structures

2. THE PROCEDURE TOWARDS TASK 4.2

2.1. Target groups

The point of departure for this task is the recognition that NCPs need greater expertise to help them provide better advice for researchers regarding the sex/gender analysis and intersectionality in the content of research and innovation proposals. NCPs have been identified as key stakeholders in assisting to improve the performance of the Framework Programme, in close cooperation with both the European Commission and researchers in each country. Indeed, NCPs provide information on Horizon Europe requirements – including gender equality and gender dimension ones - and support the successful participation of their respective R&I communities in the successive Framework Programmes. This builds on long-standing discussions on the role of NCPs within the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI), as stated in a [position paper n°3, February 2024](#), produced under WP4: *Supporting Gender Expertise among NCPs for better results on Inclusive Gender Analysis in R&I in Horizon Europe*.

This position paper recommended national NCP structures to reinforce the system by nominating NCPs with gender expertise to address gender issues. It also suggested the role “gender NCPs” would have at national level and the activities to be performed, as summarised below:

- Raising awareness among researchers of the importance of integrating a gender dimension in Horizon Europe proposals as an R&I quality requirement [...]
- Raising awareness among thematic NCPs on the gender-related requirements in Horizon Europe [...]
- Offering institutions guidance on the design and requirements of gender equality plans [...]
- Promoting gender balance at all levels of Horizon Europe proposals [...]
- Disseminating information, materials, and news regarding the gender dimension in R&I [...]
- Joining European networks of gender NCPs for mutual learning and exchange.
- Providing data on the type and number of activities conducted at the national level [...].
- Participating as national experts in different committees involved in the decision-making on ERA policy [...]



- Supporting national initiatives for amplifying the gender perspective in the R&I system³

Capacity-building and training activities should be given to NCPs to ensure their expertise in delivering this range of activities. Member States and Associated Countries were asked to encourage all NCPs in their countries to participate in the online course on the gender dimension in R&I developed by GENDERACTIONplus through the NCP Virtual Campus. Therefore, both outputs of WP4, the position paper and the online course, are mutually reinforcing and ensure the consistency of the project when targeting NCPs as key stakeholders.

Although the main target group of Task 4.2 are NCPs, given the role they develop in their respective countries, our activities targeting NCPs place researchers as the ultimate goal in a “train the trainer” approach. Moreover, researchers themselves are allowed to create an account in the NCP Virtual Campus and participate in the online courses available.

2.2. Clarification of concepts

Task 4.2 and this related deliverable report are embedded in a complex process of revisiting the field of the gender dimension in R&I in light of the most recent discussions, both from the academic and the policy side, in recent years. The “Gender dimension in R&I” and “Sex/gender analysis” have been used as synonyms in the EU framework for gender & science since the 8th Framework Programme. Both the former GENDERACTION project and the GENDERACTIONplus proposal used the term “gender dimension in R&I” for the description of the respective tasks and work packages.

However, for the past year, the GENDERACTIONplus project has echoed the academic debates on terminology related to this field of gender and science policies as well as the attempts propose a new term that could better express the need to consider this as an analytical task beyond the mere sex/gender approach. Several new terms have recently emerged in the North American context aiming to stress the necessary intersectional perspective, such as “sex, gender and diversity analysis (SG&DA)” (Hunt et al, 2022)⁴ and “Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research)⁵.

At EC level, one of the most important developments relating to the gender dimension in R&I in the last years has been the integration of an intersectional perspective in R&I content. This has posed a challenge in relation to terminology that considers an intersectional approach. As such, common terms that are used as synonymous in the ERA context such as “gender dimension in R&I” and “sex/gender analysis” had to be reconsidered.

In this context, and in line with the policy advice provided by GENDERACTIONplus to the ERA Forum Subgroup on Inclusive Gender Analysis in this topic, one of the terms being explored is “Inclusive gender analysis in R&I” which comprises the following aspects:

- Sex/gender analysis in the content of R&I throughout the whole R&I project

³ https://genderaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Position-Paper_Support-gender-expertise-among-NCPs.pdf

⁴ Hunt, L., M. W. Nielsen & L. Schiebinger (2022). A framework for sex, gender, and diversity analysis in research. Science vol. 377, no. 6614: 1492-1495.

⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-analysis-plus.html>



- Other Intersectional factors of inequality that may be intersecting with sex/gender in a given object of study
- Including diverse target groups and end-users in co-creation methods and innovation projects including all steps and techniques of the innovation process, as well as engaging diverse patients in health research

Thus, in order to avoid confusion among NCPs, national NCP coordinators and thematic NCP networks, the title of the online course at the NCP Virtual Campus has preserved the term “gender dimension in R&I”. However, given that the discussion related to intersectionality in research and innovation content is introduced in the online course, at times the contents of the course and sections of this report refer to an “inclusive gender analysis in R&I”. Rather than being interpreted as an inconsistency, this terminology reflects that gender & science is a rich, complex and constantly evolving field.

3. MOBILISING NCPS TO SUPPORT R&I SYSTEMS

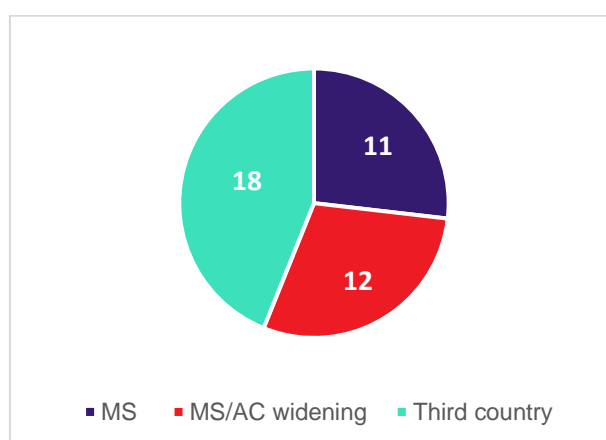
The most important output of Task 4.2 is the development of an online course on the gender dimension in R&I targeting Horizon Europe NCPs. For this purpose, the process has followed several phases that required coordination with different stakeholders:

3.1. Setting up a network of NCPs

The first activity developed in this task was to create a database of NCPs interested in the GENDERACTIONplus training on the gender dimension in the content of Horizon Europe proposals. Thanks to the distribution through national NCP coordinators in 2023, more than 40 NCPs from MS and AC joined our network.

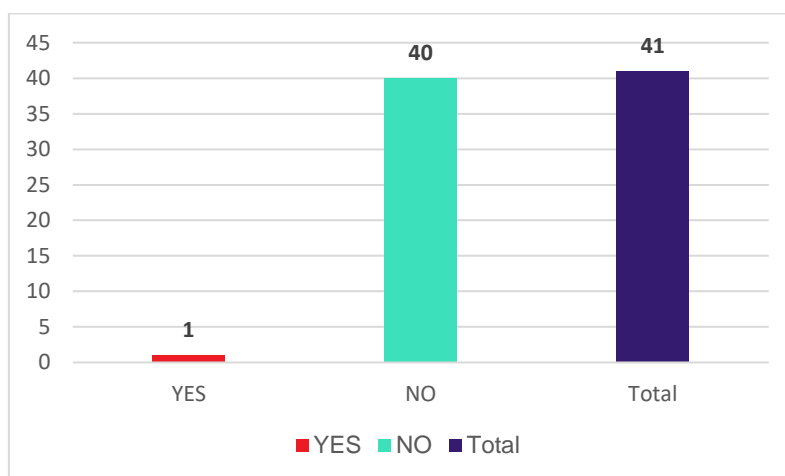
This network is composed of 41 NCPs covering different parts of the Horizon Europe programme, of which 29% represent widening countries and 43% belong to third countries (mostly due to the interest from the Latin American network of NCPs):

Graph 1. Task 4.2 database: country representation



The vast majority of the participants in the network are not gender NCPs, but rather NCPs covering different Clusters and parts of Horizon Europe. They have expressed interest in the GENDERACTIONplus training on the gender dimension in R&I in order to provide better advice on this evaluation element to applicants. Only three gender NCPs are included in the network, from Germany, Spain and Estonia. (As task leaders of the initiative, gender NCPs from Germany and Spain did not respond to the survey and, as such, are not included in the data presented below).

Graph 2. Task 4.2 database: Gender NCPs



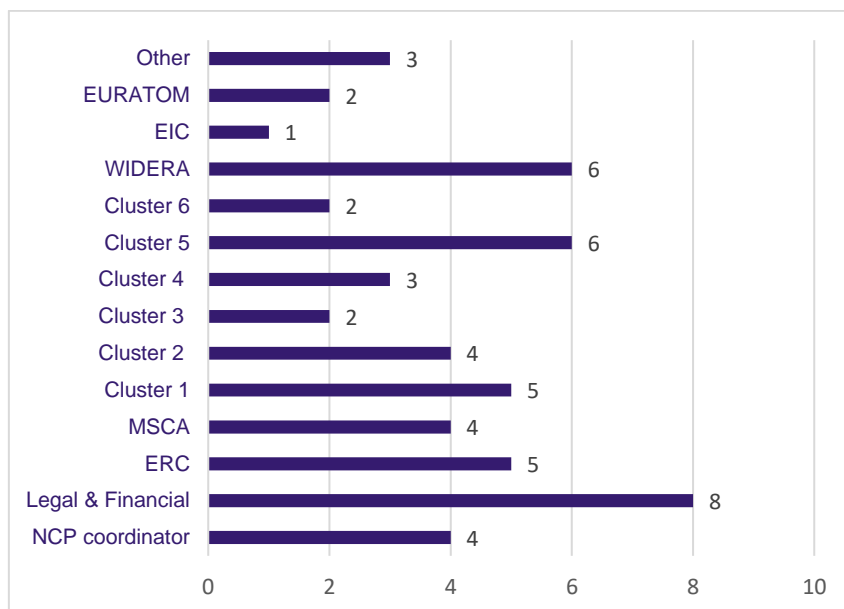
On the assumption that the NCPs interested in this network will be a relevant target group enrolled in the online training, their interests and needs have been considered in the development of tailored, “made to measure” contents and materials.

3.2. Needs assessment

A training needs assessment exercise was distributed among this database (around 40 NCPs from MS/AC and third countries interested in the training on the gender dimension in R&I) during the summer of 2023 through an online survey. The response rate was 66%. The respondents covered a variety of areas of Horizon Europe, usually combining several programmes/clusters. Almost the whole spectrum of Horizon Europe is represented in our sample of NCPs as follows:



Graph 3. Needs assessment survey: Parts of Horizon Europe covered



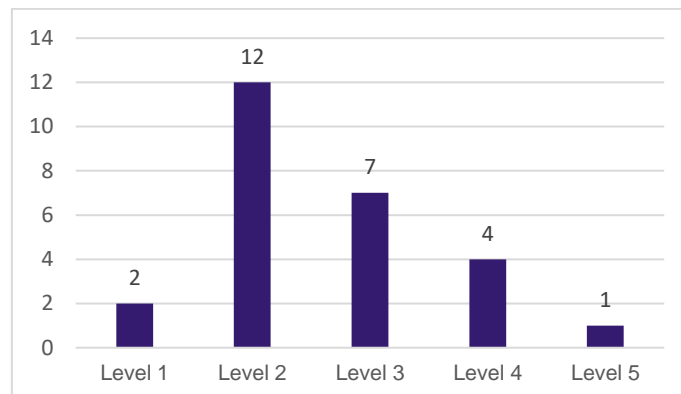
Most of the respondents were not gender NCPs (70%). However, 7 respondents considered themselves to be gender NCPs through their role in consultations about the GEP requirement, the gender dimension in the content of the proposals and specific gender topics. It can be hypothesized that even if they were not formally nominated as gender NCPs, they considered themselves as such because they address the research community's questions regarding this crosscutting issue. All the "gender NCP respondents" also covered additional areas within Horizon Europe.

71% of the sample addressed questions regarding the gender dimension in the content of the proposals, even if they were not nominated as "gender NCPs", which indicates the need for support on this topic. The number of questions received by NCPs may be indicative of the increased attention to gender issues and increased need for expert support that has arisen among researchers participating in Horizon Europe and the lack of response to this demand by countries of the ERA, where gender expert NCPs are scarce. This was consistent with previous GENDERACTIONplus reports that showed an increase in the volume of requests received by the NCPs in many countries as a consequence of the new gender-related requirements in Horizon Europe⁶. Indeed, when asked about their level of knowledge on the topic of gender dimension in R&I content, most respondents self-assessed their level of knowledge on this issue as low (scale of 1 to 5):

⁶ GENDERACTIONplus Deliverable 6.1 [Benchmarking analysis of monitoring/evaluation of GEPs](#)



Graph 4. Needs assessment survey: Knowledge on gender dimension in R&I



The results supported the need for the training proposed by the GENDERACTIONplus project to assist NCPs to increase their knowledge and self-confidence on these issues. Moreover, the responses provided useful insight into the appropriate entry level for the online course.

Many of the respondents expressed their concern on their ability to support their clients regarding sex/gender analysis in the content of R&I so that their advice on proposals could be accurate. This concern, which also indicates the high level of commitment among NCPs to develop their work with the highest standards, can be exemplified by the following answers:

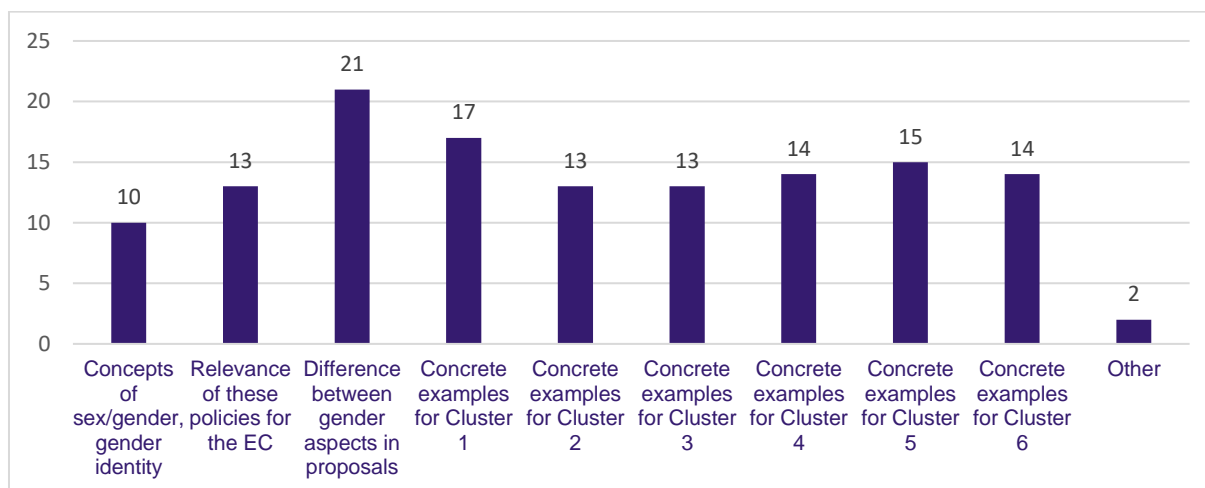
“Our clients inquire about it and ask practical questions. I do not have any practical experience.”

“This is an urgent subject to approach, especially in Latin America. Training would enable me to detect opportunities and help researchers properly include this dimension in their documents [...]”

“During my interactions with researchers and my NCP colleagues I would like to be able to provide some concrete examples.”

NCPs were also asked about the **content** that should be developed in the online training. Topics from a given list were prioritized as follows:

Graph 5. Needs assessment survey: Preferred topics for the online training



Additional content was suggested twice (see “Other” in the graph above) and, in both cases, referred to the evaluation criteria of the proposals. In particular, how gender equality aspects are evaluated in proposals and the need to understand how (and where) to incorporate gender equality aspects into a proposal. Critically, the responses indicated the need for coordinators of the online training to keep in mind the common confusion between and conflation of gender equality/balance in research teams and the gender dimension in R&I content. This was also one of the key issues identified by Task 4.1 benchmarking analysis on gender dimension in R&I policies⁷. Some respondents expressed the hope that the online training would help them to advise clients on the development of gender equality plans, to increase women’s participation in Horizon Europe and to have an impact on the gender gap. The confusion around these gender terms was also expressed by one of the respondents:

“The gender equality, gender dimension and general gender aspect terms are sometimes not very clear. It would be nice to have a training to have a better understanding - with examples - to help our stakeholders to write better proposals.”

Not surprisingly, the item “Difference between gender equality aspects in the proposals: gender equality plan, gender balance, gender dimension in R&I” received the highest number of votes (21). As such, the contents of the online training should devote time to clarifying gender concepts and criteria in the framework of Horizon Europe, in order to tackle confusion among NCPs and lead to better quality approach to gender issues in proposals.

In addition to the general materials for the different teaching units, coordinators of the course had foreseen that **additional materials** should be made available for NCPs. In order to identify the most useful materials for the work of NCPs, the following list was ranked in order of priority by the respondents:

- Academic papers on the gender dimension in R&I

⁷ GENDERACTIONplus, 2022. GENDERACTIONplus D4.1: Benchmarking and assessment report on guidelines for sex/gender analysis. <https://zenodo.org/records/12795890>



- Policy briefs on the gender dimension in R&I
- Webinars produced by gender & science projects
- Examples of research projects that successfully integrate sex/gender in social sciences/humanities and STEM fields
- Examples of research projects that successfully integrate sex/gender by Cluster

Graph 6. Needs assessment survey: Additional materials needed (points awarded)

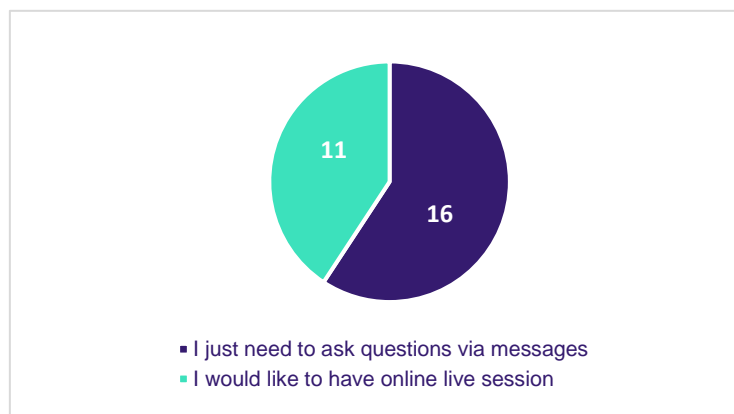


Academic papers were considered to be the least useful materials for NCPs followed by policy briefs on the gender dimension in R&I. Webinars produced by other “sister projects” were considered quite useful by the majority of the respondents. Examples of research projects that successfully integrate sex/gender analysis were viewed as quite or even very helpful, ideally differentiated by field of research or, more specifically, Horizon Europe Clusters.

Moreover, live interaction among the participants and trainers could be offered by the Task 4.2 team if required by the NCPs. The survey did not provide a clear result in this respect: 59% of the respondents would like the possibility to ask questions via messages while 41% of the respondents would like to have a live online session together with other participants and trainers, even if this meant a greater time commitment.



Graph 7. Needs assessment survey: Desired interaction with participants and trainers



Finally, respondents' expectations regarding the online course referred to two main ideas. Firstly, the expectation of increased knowledge on the gender dimension in R&I through examples of inspiring projects: *"I expect to learn more successful studies and research projects on gender equality."* Secondly, the expectation of creating an impact at national level as a result of the knowledge acquired, which aligns with the spirit of the task: *"To have new knowledge that I can transfer to other NCPs from my country and the region, as well as to the researchers."* Respondents also noted the need to have the material available for further consultation and to know the person(s) who can be contacted for any questions. These points were taken into account by the Task 4.2 team, in opting for an online platform that allows for the permanent availability of the materials and direct contact with the trainers. The following word cloud reflects the terms that were expressed in this regard:



3.3. Capacity-building and continuous engagement

In developing the online course through the NCP Virtual Campus, the GENDERACTIONplus team involved in Task 4.2 considered the results of the needs assessment survey and the needs expressed by the NCPs. In particular:

- The importance of designing training content adapted to the varying levels of knowledge. One of the objectives of the training activity was to tackle the confusion that still exists about gender terms among NCPs. Future EU funded actions could develop more advanced, academic content to address different profiles.
- While efforts have been made by the EC and “sister projects” to collect best practices and promote inspiring projects that integrate the gender dimension in R&I, there is a need for learning materials based on practical examples in different areas of knowledge. The GENDERACTIONplus consortium could cooperate with newly funded projects at national/EU level and diverse researchers to further progress the development of these materials.
- Linked to the above, examples of research projects that successfully consider sex/gender analysis together with webinars on the gender dimension in R&I. Based on the needs assessment, these should be prioritised over academic papers and policy briefs as additional materials.
- There is a need to offer live interaction among participants and trainers without disadvantaging those who cannot dedicate so much time to the online training.

To ensure continued engagement with the main stakeholders, the results of the survey were circulated and presented at a first meeting with members of the network of NCPs interested in the gender dimension in R&I organised on 20 November 2023. The necessary permanent contact with the Horizon Academy project was also established by the course coordinators.

4. DESIGN OF TRAINING ON THE GENDER DIMENSION IN R&I

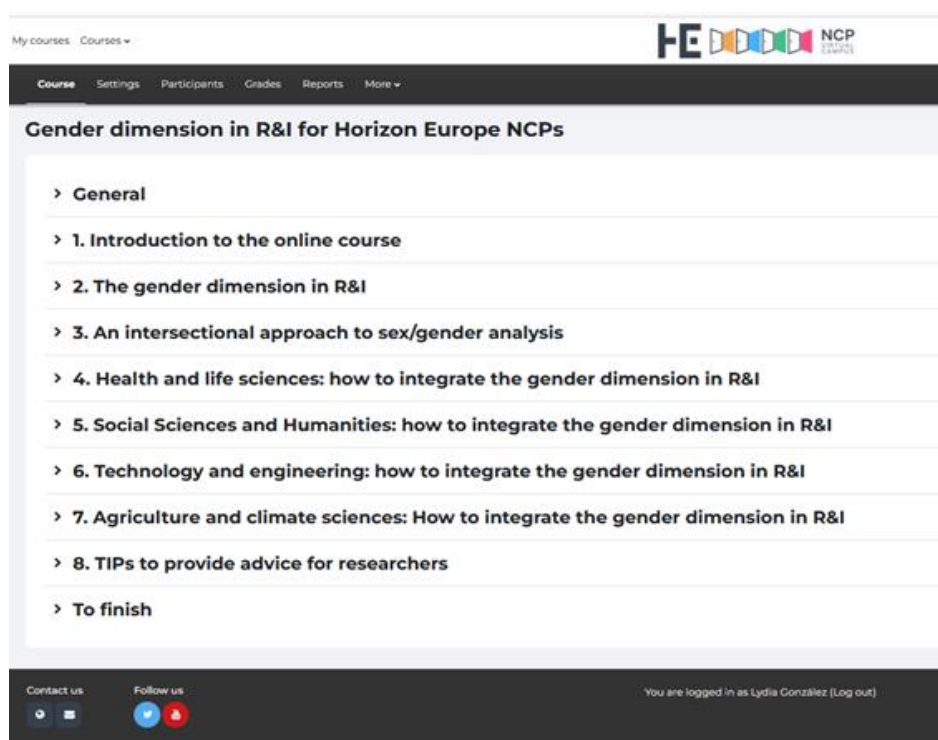
4.1. Design of a teaching programme

At the end of 2023, a teaching programme for the online course was agreed between WP4 and the Horizon Academy project who are responsible for the NCP Virtual Campus and the broader training programme for NCPs. The teaching programme consisted of 8 units composed of videos and materials, quizzes, a repository with additional materials and an evaluation questionnaire for the course. While Units 2 and 3 develop the basics of sex/gender concepts, gender criteria in Horizon Europe and intersectionality, Units 4 to 7 address different research fields (health and life sciences, social sciences and humanities, technology and engineering, agriculture and climate change) through examples of research projects that integrate a gender dimension in their content. Unit 8 closes the course with some tips for NCPs on providing advice to researchers.

The main sources of information included in the teaching units build on official documents and guidelines from the EC and Horizon Europe work programmes, academic references and related content



developed by European projects on gender & science, while keeping in mind that the baseline level of the course is introductory.



4.2. Selection of R&I projects

The selection of R&I projects to be presented in Units 4 to 7 (thematic units by field of research) was made based on examples provided by the GENDERACTIONplus consortium. A database with different items and criteria was distributed in December 2023 and completed by partners in January 2024. As a result of this common exercise, more than 80 R&I projects were identified that integrate sex/gender analysis. Innovation was one of the crosscutting issues considered in the request for inspiring examples. The items included in the database for each project were as follows:

- Research field
- Intersectional perspective included (Yes/No)
- Innovation project (Yes/No)
- Scope (national/international)
- Project lifetime (active/terminated)
- Gender of the Principal Investigator/researcher
- Country of the Principal Investigator/researcher

After reviewing all the R&I projects proposed, the Task 4.2 team (FECYT, DLR) selected 12 projects ensuring that three examples were provided per research field, diverse countries were represented and there was a gender balance of speakers included in the videos. A reserve list was established and was



used on several occasions during the process due to lack of response, unsuitable dates/deadlines and cancellation of participation.

4.3. Coordination of contents and materials

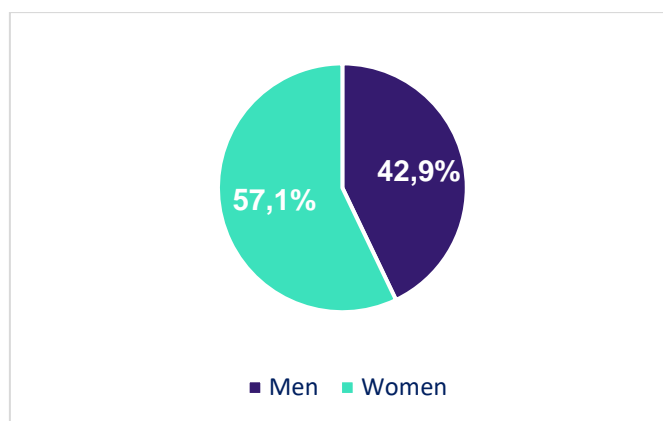
In order to collect the corresponding materials for each unit, common instructions were developed in line with Horizon Academy requirements for videos. A common visual identity in line with GENDERACTIONplus outputs was also developed. Each presentation should last 5-6 minutes maximum and addresses the following three questions:

- What is your project is about?
- In which aspects/phases of the project are sex/gender considered and how?
 - (if applicable) What other axes of intersecting discrimination have you considered?
- What has this analysis revealed about your object of study?

The process of inviting participants and the provision of support to the participants took place over several months of 2024. At the same time, the Task 4.2 team produced original materials for all the units plus the corresponding quizzes. In summary, the online course was developed with the generous contributions of:

- the GENDERACTIONplus consortium members, including the project coordinator and one of the Advisory Board members
- the Gender Sector of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
- External consultants (Yellow Window)
- More than a dozen Principal Investigators and researchers from different research fields and countries (Austria, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK) while ensuring a gender balanced representation (57% women; 43% men).

Graph 8. Gender balance among speakers of the online course



A data protection form was agreed with Horizon Academy and distributed to every participant for their corresponding informed consent. The “trainers” of the online course, i.e., the Task 4.2 team, were



requested to complete additional consent forms in order to access data from participants enrolled during the lifetime of the GENDERACTIONplus project.

4.4. Uploading to the NCP Virtual Campus, finetuning and testing

During May and June 2024, the contents of the online course were uploaded to the NCP Virtual Campus online platform. Several adjustments in terms of format, visual identity, quizzes, etc. were implemented following the instructions of the course coordinators. Subsequently, in line with Horizon Academy requirements for all courses, a final phase of testing took place with external users who had not been involved in the design of the course. This final testing was conducted by the WP8 communication team at ISAS.

4.5. Dissemination phase

At the beginning of Reporting Period 3, with support from the GENDERACTIONplus consortium and Horizon Academy, a dissemination plan was put in place to address the following stakeholders:

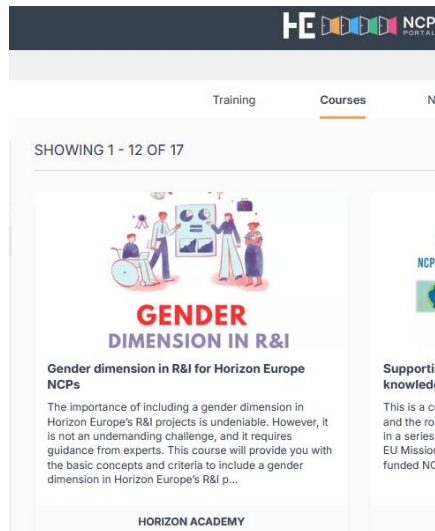
- Contributors to the online course - through a letter sent by the coordinators of the course (Task 4.2 partners)
- Network of NCPs - through a letter sent by the coordinators of the course (Task 4.2 partners)
- GENDERACTIONplus consortium - through a letter sent by the coordinator of the GENDERACTIONplus project
- NCP National Coordinators - through a letter sent by the coordinator of the Horizon Academy project
- NCP thematic networks - through a monthly newsletter distributed from the Horizon Academy coordination (to be sent in October 2024)

Each of the funded projects involved, GENDERACTIONplus and Horizon Academy, disseminated the launch of the online course through their respective websites and social media accounts:

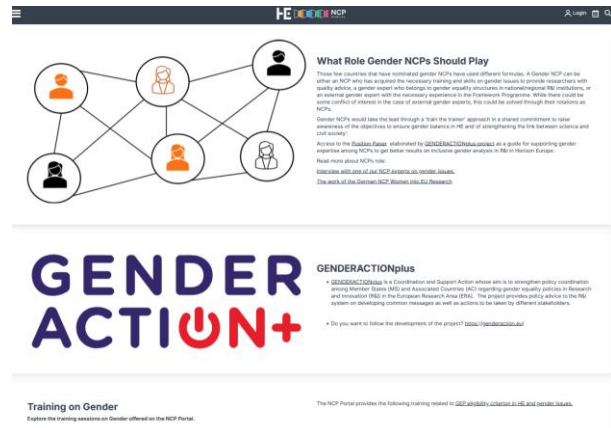
[Horizon Europe NCP Portal announcing a new e-learning course available:](#)



Online course opened:



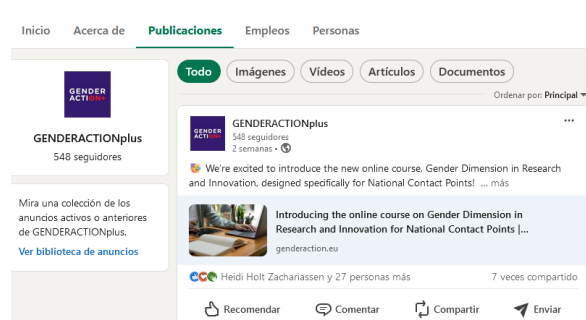
Web tag on gender at the NCP Portal:



GENDERACTIONplus website announcing the online course:



GENDERACTIONplus LinkedIn announcing the online course:



Dissemination at national level, as part of the National Impact Plans of the GENDERACTIONplus partners, will be a critical ongoing task. Dissemination by the Spanish and German partners in the project has demonstrated impact, as seen below in the numbers of participants enrolled in the course. To give three examples: DLR disseminated the online course through several newsletters reaching thousands of recipients; ISAS addressed the Head of the NCP structure in the Czech Republic; and FECYT published an entry on the Spanish Portal of Horizon Europe.



Post in social media by DLR:

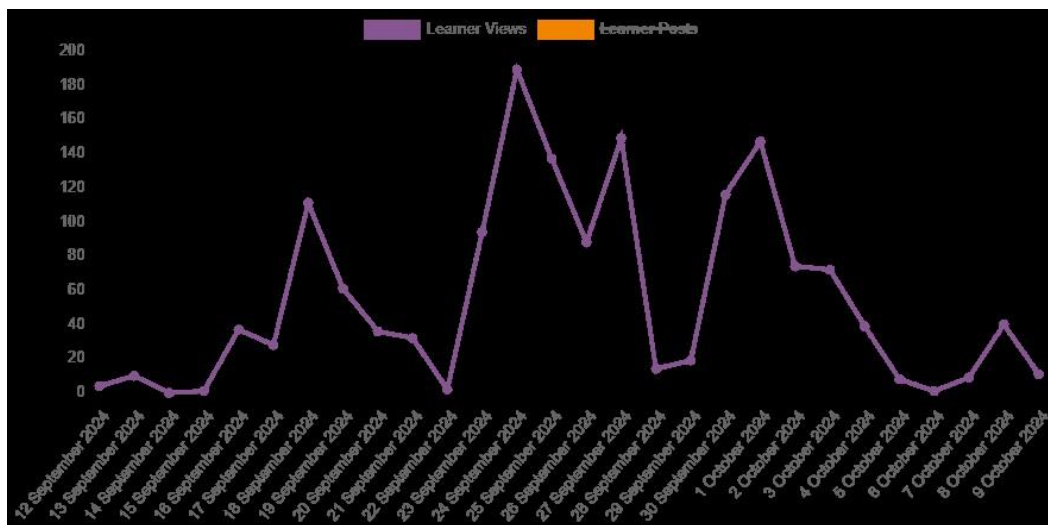


Web entry at the Spanish Portal of HE:



Finally, a graph representing the number of visitors to the online course from September until the first week of October has been kindly provided by Horizon Academy:

Number of visitors to the online course (12 September – 9 October 2024)



5. THE ONLINE COURSE AT THE NCP VIRTUAL CAMPUS

5.1. Contents of the online course




Following common standards for all NCP Virtual Campus courses, the online course on the gender dimension in R&I begins with some “**General**” information for the participants where the following aspects are addressed:

- Why this course?
- How this course works
- Course overview
- Badges

Given the extension of the online course as its design developed and the fact that NCPs may be interested in a specific area of knowledge related to the Horizon Europe clusters/programmes they cover, Horizon Academy and GENDERACTIONplus agreed that a completion badge could be obtained without the need to complete all thematic units. Thus, there are three possible badge options:

- Basic badge: all mandatory units completed + 1 thematic module (50% of correct answers minimum in all quizzes)
- Silver badge: all mandatory units completed + 1 thematic module (70% of correct answers minimum in all thematic and mandatory quizzes)
- Gold badge: once all the silver badges are achieved, an extra activity must be completed (50% of correct answers minimum in the extra activity)

Moreover, the “**General**” section of the online course includes three different forums with the aim of stimulating participation and engagement among the NCPs enrolled in the course:

	Forum Gender dimension in R&I for Horizon Europe NCPs
	Announcements
	Q&A

The forum *Gender dimension in R&I for Horizon Europe NCPs* gives participants the opportunity for mutual exchange, thus recognising the knowledge they have in the field and their experience gained as NCPs. This forum is therefore not led by the trainers, but it is intended to work in a collaborative way. To break the ice, a presentation of the trainers and their own reflections are included as a first contribution to the forum.



The forum for *Announcements* invites all NCPs enrolled in the online course to attend a live Q&A session organized by the GENDERACTIONplus trainers (the Task 4.2. team) on 5 November 2024. This session is aimed at providing some synchronous exchange with the trainers who will be addressing queries from participants. After reviewing the contents of the course, participants will pose their questions in a dedicated Q&A forum at the Virtual Campus. Another objective of setting up this session in November was to encourage participants to complete all the units of the online course before that date so that they can take advantage of the live session. New announcements may be added during the lifetime of the GENDERACTIONplus project if required.

The “**Introduction to the online course**” is addressed through two different videos, one provided by Marcela Linková to present GENDERACTIONplus and one provided by FECYT to offer an insight into the need for the course, the starting level, and a summary of the contents and materials uploaded to the Virtual Campus.



Units 2 and 3 are part of the compulsory units to be completed by the participants and provide the foundations on the gender dimension in R&I policies.

“**Unit 2 The gender dimension in R&I**” comprises three main parts, as explained in the introductory video developed by DLR:

- The EU policy framework, by Hana Tenglerová, from the Gender Sector of DG RTD, covering the main messages from the European Commission in support of these policies.
- Gender criteria in Horizon Europe, i.e., gender equality plans as an eligibility criterion, gender dimension in R&I content as an award criterion by default, and gender balance as a tie-breaking criterion. The longstanding confusion between gender balance and the gender dimension in R&I is highlighted with the aim of ending this confusion in Horizon Europe.
- Main concepts related to sex/gender analysis, developed by DLR. In this video, GENDERACTIONplus WP4 took the opportunity to highlight the complexities that the terms sex and gender entail, in line with the EC approach as stated in the GENDEREDINNOVATIONS2 report⁸. NCPs are encouraged to go beyond the binary when talking about sex and gender and also to acknowledge the multidimensional character of “gender”.

⁸ European Commission, 2020. [GenderedInnovations2](#)



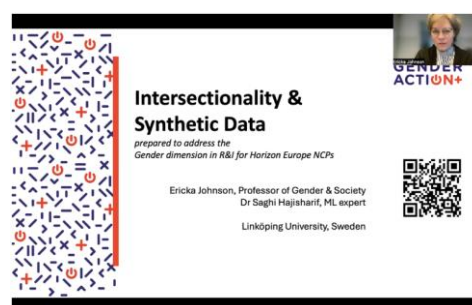
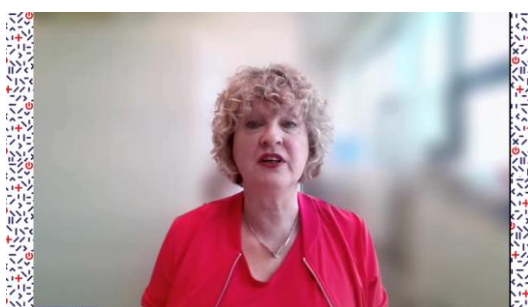


Unit 2 offers two additional materials for participants:

- A glossary developed by GENDERACTIONplus during the benchmarking phase of the project (Reporting Period 1) to facilitate a common understanding of the project benchmarking exercises among project partners and respondents.
- A video kindly produced by Vasia Madesi (Yellow Window) on “How to integrate a gender dimension into all phases of an R&I project”.

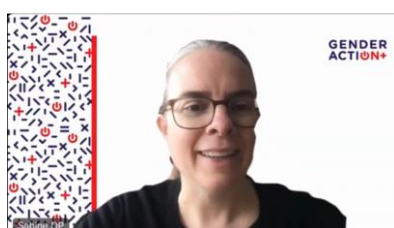


With the foundations on gender dimension in R&I policies and sex/gender analysis established, recent developments related to the intersectional approach are covered in **Unit 3. An intersectional approach to sex/gender analysis**. This unit consists of written material as an introduction to the topic and a video developed by Yvonne Benschop (a member of the GENDERACTIONplus Advisory Board), on the concept of intersectionality. The written presentation developed by GENDERACTIONplus as an introduction to the topic aims at guiding participants through the following aspects: the EU policy framework for intersectionality; the concept of intersectionality; and how intersectionality is evaluated in Horizon Europe. Moreover, an example of research that explores intersectional factors is provided by Ericka Johnson in the video “Intersectionality & Synthetic Data”.



Units 4 to 7 develop the integration of sex/gender analysis in the different research fields through examples of R&I projects. Each thematic unit follows a similar structure, as follows: written material that provides an introduction to the field and includes information on basic research questions from a gender perspective; examples of sentences related to sex/gender that appear in the most recent HE Work Programmes; and three examples in the area of knowledge. The Task 4.2 team tried to collect examples different from those provided in the GENDEREDINNOVATIONS2 report.

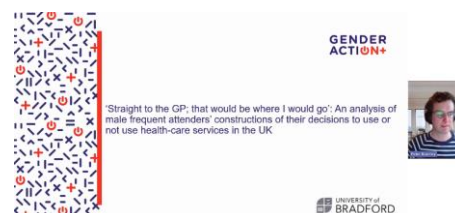
Unit 4. Health and life sciences



Example 1: Video on Gender & Health, by Sabine Oertelt-Prigione



Example 2: Video on Juno+ Project, by Trinidad Herrero



Example 3: Video on Health Care Services, by Peter Branney

Unit 5. Social sciences and humanities



Example 1: Video on CRAEFT project, by Xenophon Zabulis



Example 2: Video on “The financial language of gender” project, by Andrzej Cwynar



Example 3: Video on “Gender, consumption and sustainability” project, by Rosa Ferrer



Unit 6. Technology and engineering



Example 1: Video on AMIGA Project, by Lucas Paletta



Example 2: Video on FairCom Project, by Sybille Reidl



Example 3: Video on Renewable Energies Project, by Jens Lowitzsch

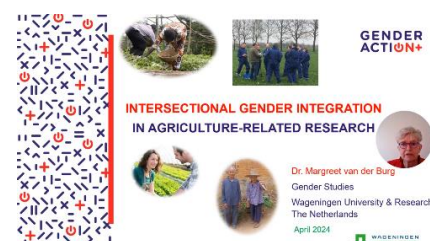
Unit 7. Agriculture and climate sciences



Example 1: Video on SALBIA Project, by Miguel Cañedo, Núria Catalán and Pablo Rodríguez



Example 2: Video on SEQUAL Project, by Federica Ravera



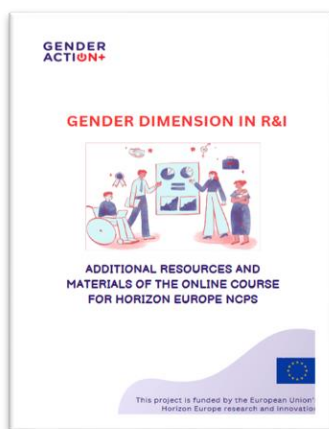
Example 3: Video on “Intersectional gender integration in agriculture-related research”, by Margreet van der Burg

The final Unit of the course, which is also compulsory for any modality chosen by the participants, is **Unit 8 Tips for NCPs**. This unit offers recommendations for how to communicate on the topic as well as guidance on how to provide advice to their respective research communities.

From Unit 2 onwards, all units have a corresponding quiz that must be completed in order to pass the course. Quizzes may consist of True/False questions and matching exercises. A maximum of 5 questions was kept in all cases. For those NCPs willing to obtain the “gold badge” of the online course, after completing all the units for the silver badge, an additional activity is required. Keeping in mind that this additional activity needs to be available after the GENDERACTIONplus project ends, a True/False quiz has been designed by the trainers. The objective of this additional activity is for NCPs to become familiar with the [Gendered Innovations 2](#) report so that they can use it in their activities related to the topic.

After completing Unit 8, course participants will find two “**Additional materials**” that are not compulsory, but complementary. First, a video kindly provided by the researcher Margreet van der Burg and that complements her insights on Unit 6 with more generic recommendations for researchers when integrating sex/gender analysis. Second, a repository developed by the Task 4.2 team with a brief selection of resources for gaining further knowledge and which mostly come from sister projects on gender and science.





Finally, the course cannot be completed and the corresponding badge requested until participants complete a feedback questionnaire. For those enrolled in the online course after May 2025, a generic evaluation survey will be provided by Horizon Academy. For those completing the course before May 2025, during the lifetime of GENDERACTIONplus, a more comprehensive survey will be available with the aim of collecting data to be analysed by the Task 4.2. team and to learn from this first experience of a sister project collaboration for the NCP Virtual Campus. Apart from some general data on the role of NCP, participants are asked about their level of knowledge on the gender dimension in R&I before they enrolled in the course in order to then check whether they have acquired new knowledge and whether they feel more comfortable giving advice on the topic of gender dimension in R&I in Horizon Europe proposals as a result of completing the course. Moreover, several questions related to the design of the course and the materials provided are included. This **Feedback** exercise comprises 12 items in total plus two open, non-compulsory questions about what they liked the most and least.

Feedback
Gender-R&I > Feedback

Feedback

View
Submit feedback

Closes: Saturday, 31 May 2025, 12:28 PM

The aim of this evaluation questionnaire is to know your opinion on the contents developed for the course and get feedback on the course performance in order to keep this information in mind in future training activities on the gender dimension in R&I for NCPs.

Please consider that this questionnaire is anonymous and is composed of only 14 questions, so it should take about **5 minutes to complete**.

Filling in this questionnaire is a prerequisite for getting the certificate of the course.

Thanks for your collaboration.

FECYT and DLR, on behalf of the GENDERACTIONplus project

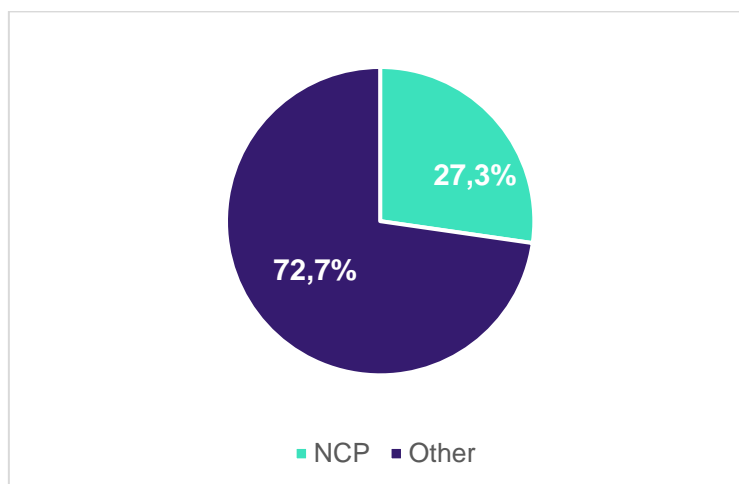


5.2. Operation of the start-up of the course

The online course on the gender dimension in R&I for NCPs was formally opened to the public on the NCP Virtual Campus on 13 September 2024. At the time of writing this report, almost 100 users have joined the online course. The participant data collected through the NCP Virtual Campus platform is the same for all the courses available and considers only “country”, name and email. “Gender” was added to the database of participants as means to address this shortcoming (the name has been used as a proxy, with awareness of its limitations as an indicator of gender) and by the authors manually selecting the role of “NCP”. As a result, it can be claimed that, at the time of writing this report:

- The majority of the participants enrolled have other profiles different from NCPs (presumably, researchers and research managers). Nominated NCPs are only 27% of the current participants.

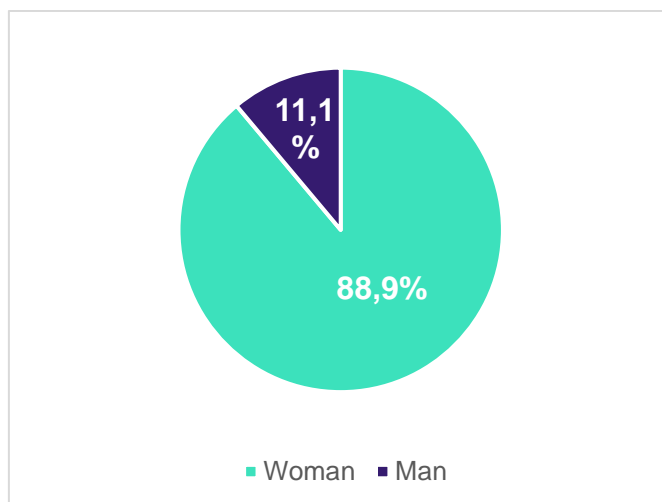
Graph 9. NCPs among enrolled participants



- There is an overrepresentation of women among participants (89%), far from the gender balance. However, this is in line with women being the majority of NCP personnel, too.

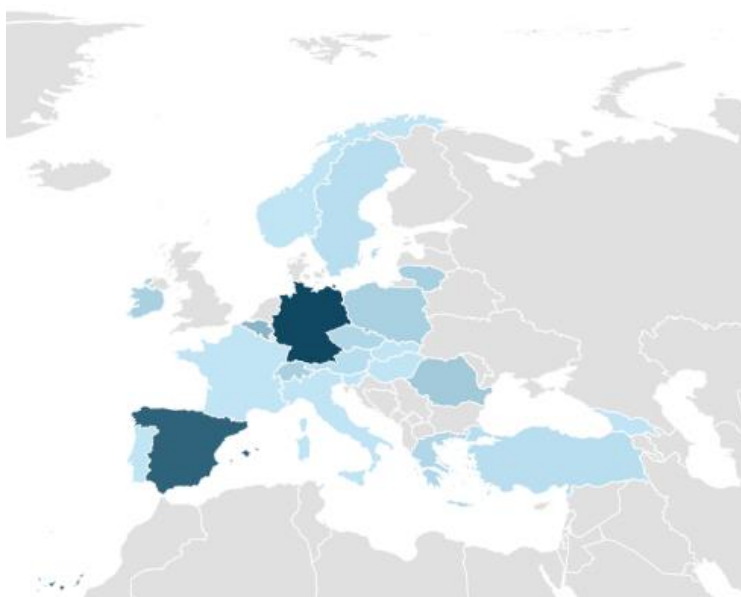


Graph 10. Gender balance among enrolled participants



- The online course has reached an audience from 23 different countries, most of them MS/AC countries. There are participants from 11 widening countries.

Graph 11. Countries of the enrolled participants



Currently, four participants have completed the online course; of these, two have completed the additional activity and obtained the gold badge. A live session involving participants and GENDERACTIONplus trainers will take place on 5 November 2024. Participation in this session is on a voluntary basis and will provide an opportunity to have a direct exchange with the trainers of the course.



Finally, course participants can send requests related to technical issues to a dedicated email address during the lifetime of the course: feedback@horizoneuropencppportal.eu.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Previous policy coordination projects have not commonly targeted NCPs or developed online training for wider audiences. However, this has been an effective way of addressing key target groups to spread the message of the project related to the gender dimension in R&I policies while at the same time supporting the implementation of gender equality measures in the Framework Programme. There have been a number of reflections and lessons learned throughout the process, the most important of which are as follows:

- Synergies between different EU funded projects may be extremely useful and impactful, but such collaboration needs to be planned well in advance to ensure the quality of the planned output. To give two examples: (i) on the Horizon Academy side, the planning of training activities and the new online platform for the courses were not ready when the design of the online course on the gender dimension in R&I was due to start according to the GENDERACTIONplus timeline; and (ii) the data to be collected through the online platform was decided well in advance without the possibility of input from GENDERACTIONplus, resulting in a lack of gender-disaggregated data.
- The task was greatly strengthened by the diversity of voices and external experts contributing to the online course. However, this entails challenges for the consistency and coherence of the entire course in terms of framing the message, communication style and visual identity. Such collaborations in the design of training activities on the topic of the gender dimension in R&I should be promoted as an added value for the participants, yet the financial resources and time required for meaningful and professional participation by external experts should be foreseen in the Work Package planning.
- Related to the above, the planning of the design, implementation and monitoring of an online course should be more realistic, especially when kind contributions from external experts are needed. The design and set up of the online course required several extra months than expected what led to the need of requesting an extension of the Deliverable report that would describe the process and the result of the task. In this sense, it would have been more appropriate to report on the performance of the course at the end of the project.
- While online, asynchronous training is well appreciated by different agents of the R&I system and can reach wider audiences, this kind of training has limitations if we are to develop consistent and comprehensive knowledge on the gender dimension in R&I from an intersectional perspective. The characteristics of the online platform available – based on short videos, brief written materials and quizzes - prevent participants from acquiring more advanced knowledge. Thus, while this format is optimal for an introduction to gender issues and inclusive gender analysis in R&I (which was the baseline level of the NCPs surveyed), the NCP Virtual Campus should also be complemented with other training activities for NCPs.



- Having an online, asynchronous training in place is also a way of guaranteeing the sustainability of the training actions and of the Work Package messages after the lifetime of the project. However, this format has several shortcomings, including the fact that there will not be trainer support for the course once the GENDERACTIONplus project ends and that Horizon Academy will need to assess the validity of the contents of the course once the next Framework Programme starts.
- Unexpectedly, the online course on the gender dimension in R&I at the NCP Virtual Campus has attracted more attention among other agents within the R&I systems than among nominated NCPs. While it is too early to draw conclusions, this needs to be analysed by the WP4 partners in the project. Greater efforts are needed to increase the demand for the course from NCPs across the ERA and in third countries.
- Finally, the development of the online course on the gender dimension in R&I for NCPs has also been a learning exercise for the partners involved. While partners are accustomed to framing the message in the form of policy briefs for policymakers and the EC, FECYT and DLR had to adapt the message to a different audience composed of experts on the Framework Programmes but with a lack of knowledge on gender issues. Such an exercise has helped the partners involved to put into practice some of the recommendations made by WP4 targeting other agents: develop clear guidelines, clarify concepts, disseminate promising examples, and help eradicate the confusion between gender balance and the gender dimension in R&I.

The follow-up activities in relation to the online course and the NCP network established will continue after the submission of this report. The [GENDERACTIONplus website](#) will continue disseminating progress related to WP4 on the Gender dimension in R&I.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WP 4 related institutions are very grateful for the generous contributions provided by researchers and experts in the development of the online course. Moreover, the needs assessment exercise could not have been completed without the commitment of the NCPs involved in our network. The contributions from R&I projects and Principal Investigators assisted in achieving a diversity of approaches to the course design.

FECYT is particularly grateful to Astrid Schwarzenberger and Christin Raue (DLR) for their dedicated contribution to the design of the online course on the gender dimension in R&I, and to Virginia Rodríguez (FECYT) for technical support relating to the NCP Virtual Campus and the data collection required for this report.

