



Grounding RRI Actions to Achieve Institutional Change in European Research Funding  
and Performing Organisations

**Grant Agreement** n. 824521

## **STATE-OF-THE-ART REVIEW OF DOCUMENTED EXPERIENCES**

*Document 1 – Collection of experiences on  
gender equality*

Prepared by



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## Introduction

In the framework of the Grounding RRI Actions to Achieve Institutional Change in European Research Funding and Performing Organisations (GRACE) project, under WP3 (Governance and Mutual Learning), a specific Task (T3.1) is focused on “the collection of experiences documenting RRI-documented institutional changes” and on “the elaboration of these experiences into a set of short guidance documents”.

The overall aim of the Task is that of **assisting the GRACE partners** engaged in embedding RRI in their own institute to design and implement a set of RRI-oriented Grounding Actions (GAs), to integrate these GAs with each other (developing a unitary governance system for them), to ensure their sustainability and to use them as a platform for developing a Roadmap towards RRI going beyond the GRACE project lifespan (overall 8 years).

In order to pursue this objective, a state-of-the-art of documented experiences on RRI has been developed, the results of which are presented in **seven autonomous documents**, although connected to each other, i.e.:

- Document 1 - Collection of experiences on gender equality
- Document 2 - Collection of experiences on citizen engagement
- Document 3 - Collection of experiences in science education
- Document 4 - Collection of experiences on research ethics and integrity
- Document 5 - Collection of experiences on open access
- Document 6 - Approaches to RRI implementation
- Document 7 - Basic scheme for self-assessment

All the documents have been developed by Knowledge & Innovation (K&I), which is the leader of WP3. In particular, this document has been developed by Luciano d’Andrea and Giovanna Declich (K&I). They are not formal deliverables and their circulation is restricted to the GRACE project consortium members.

## This document

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> document of the series, devoted to the **experiences related to gender equality in science**. Its aim is helping GRACE partners reflect on possible GAs to develop in this area during the project implementation period or in the framework of the 8-year Roadmap towards RRI. On the basis of the consulted literature, the document has been organised in **six sections**, respectively devoted to six main issues related to gender equality usually coped with in research organisations or in EC-funded projects.

These **sections** are respectively devoted to:

- Recruitment process
- Career development
- Work-life balance
- Working environment
- Gender dimension in science
- Governance structures for gender equality.



## **Section One – Recruitment process**



## 1. The issue

One of the main elements favouring gender equality in science is the establishment of fairer, more transparent and more accountable recruitment procedures, thus fostering the underrepresentation of women in scientific fields and particularly in senior positions.

Many factors, in fact, affect the fairness and transparency of the process, including gender bias influencing recruitment procedures in all phases (vacancies advertisements and development of the recruitment material, composition of the recruitment committees, the way in which the interviews are conducted, etc.), the regulations adopted (which do not take adequately into considerations aspects like the career breaks due to pregnancies or the unfair distribution of family duties among women and men), or the lack of recognition of the different attitudes of women and men towards their own career (usually, women tend to promote themselves less than men do and are less aggressive and competitive than their male colleagues).

## 2. Examples of action

Overall, three main complementary strategies are usually pursued:

- Enlarging the pool of women applicants
- Acting on the recruitment process so as to make it more gender-sensitive
- Creating targeted opportunities or positions for women.

### *a. Enlarging the pool of women applicants*

This strategy is aimed at reducing the gender gap in the pool of applicants. Examples of actions which can be developed in this regard are listed below.

- Making the **research organisation more attractive for women** through the institutional website, leaflets or other forms of institutional communication, e.g.: showing that the organisation is a gender-fair employer; describing opportunities, benefits and services provided by the organisation to favour work-life balance; making women and men equally visible and represented (for example, in the use of pictures and videos, in the authorship of the articles, etc.).
- Establishing special **search committees, groups or procedures** in order to find potential candidates for specific positions, by, e.g., preparing lists of potential female candidates, soliciting women to apply or putting special attention in circulating vacancies advertisements in a way that they can be potentially viewed by more women.
- Organising **gender-balanced meetings or other similar initiatives** aimed at advertising vacant positions in a way that could be also attractive for women so as to identify potential candidates of both genders.

### *b. Acting on the recruitment process*



This strategy is aimed at making the recruitment process fairer and more transparent. Examples of actions which can be developed in this regards are listed below.

- Adopting **recruitment guidelines** allowing to limit the impact of gender bias in all the phases of the process (job advertising, application management, assessment and shortlisting of the application, interviews of the candidates, contract offer and negotiation).
- Checking **job description and assessment criteria in the perspective of gender equality** in all their aspects (for example, use of language, presentation of assessment criteria, description of the personal skills required to candidates, etc.).
- Introducing **specific regulations** for ensuring a fair recruitment process, pertaining to, e.g., the presence of women in the recruitment committee or the cancellation of the recruitment process in case no women or an inadequate number of women apply as a candidate or are shortlisted for an interview.
- Organising a **training of recruitment committee members** on gender bias and on how making the process fairer.

### *c. Creating targeted opportunities or positions*

This strategy is aimed at **creating opportunities specifically for women** in order to partially balance the gender gap, mainly where this latter is particularly evident. This may include, e.g., the creation of specific high-profile tenure track positions for top female scientists, the creation of specific recruitment schemes encouraging women, or the establishment of research funding schemes targeted on women.

## 3. To know more

Some sources addressing the recruitment process are listed below.

- The EC report “Implicit gender biases during evaluations: how to raise awareness and change attitudes?”  
[https://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub\\_gender\\_equality/report\\_on\\_implicit\\_gender\\_biases\\_during\\_evaluations.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub_gender_equality/report_on_implicit_gender_biases_during_evaluations.pdf)
- The Guidelines on recruitment developed under the LIBRA project  
[https://www.eu-libra.eu/sites/default/files/article-files/libra\\_recruitment\\_guidelines\\_second\\_edition\\_0.pdf](https://www.eu-libra.eu/sites/default/files/article-files/libra_recruitment_guidelines_second_edition_0.pdf)
- The Handbook on Gender-sensitive Design of Criteria and Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Processes in Academia, developed under the FESTA project, showing the general logic of these processes in some universities  
[http://www.festa-europa.eu/sites/festa-europa.eu/files/PRINT\\_Handbook\\_FESTA.pdf](http://www.festa-europa.eu/sites/festa-europa.eu/files/PRINT_Handbook_FESTA.pdf)
- A literature review on unconscious bias developed by the Equality Challenge Unit (the entity in charge of the Athena SWAN Programme in  
[http://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/media\\_wysiwyg/University%20of%20Oxford%20-%20Public%20Engagement%20with%20Research%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf](http://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/media_wysiwyg/University%20of%20Oxford%20-%20Public%20Engagement%20with%20Research%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf))



<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/unconscious-bias-and-higher-education.pdf>

- The policy brief on recruitment and hiring developed by the University of Colorado under the NSF-funded ADVANCE Programme  
[https://www.colorado.edu/eer/sites/default/files/attached-files/5\\_inclusivehiringbrief123015.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/eer/sites/default/files/attached-files/5_inclusivehiringbrief123015.pdf)





## **Section Two – Career development**



## 1. The issue

An important aspect to be faced for promoting gender equality in science is maintaining women in the career track, to favour their career progression, and to redress vertical segregation mechanisms by sustaining women's access to leadership positions.

The factors influencing women's career are many, some of which similar to those mentioned in the previous section (gender biases, unfair distribution of family duties among women and men, etc.). However, other factors come also into play, more connected to the working environment, remarkably limiting the access of women to career opportunities and resources, such as research grants, visible tasks, participation in scientific conferences as main speakers, or the lack of role models for women.

## 2. Examples of action

Some action lines pertaining to career development can be identified:

- Modifying promotion rules and criteria
- Empowering women and staff
- Supporting internal networks
- Increasing women's visibility.

### *a. Modifying promotion rules and criteria*

This action line is aimed at increasing transparency, developing evaluation processes which take into consideration women's conditions, and opposing gender bias. Examples of actions which can be developed in this regard are listed below.

- Introducing **regulations in the promotion process** in order to maintain fairness in the assessment of candidates also by taking into consideration career breaks, maternity leaves, and part-time working.
- **Extending the tenure clock** (for example up to a year) to make tenure-track positions more attractive to women and to those with caring responsibilities or **extending the time for contract renewal** in case of women having a child during a period covered with a temporary contract.
- **Using a set of indicators** as objective and transparent as possible for analysing the career development of women and men applying for a new position.
- **Defining targets** to be reached in a given period of time about the presence of women in each career level, based on qualitative or quantitative analyses or **establishing quotas** when the access of women to senior positions is particularly limited.
- **Changing the workload models** by establishing clear reference standards for time allocation (among different activities, such as teaching, administrative work, communication, etc.) so that to give parity of esteem to different roles (for example, women tend to be often marginalised into teaching roles, which limit their careers opportunities in academia, since teaching is less esteemed than research activities).



- **Training managers and promotion committee members** about gender inequality dynamics affecting women's career.

### *b. Empowering women and staff*

This action line is based on the support of different kind given to women to help them keep on their career track. Some actions pertaining to this aspect are mentioned below.

- Organising **training programmes addressing women's researchers needs and priorities** related to career advancement and designed according to a gender perspective, even though they can be open to females and males.
- **Organising events** like seminars, interactive meetings, panel with guest speakers (e.g., senior women scientists, experts, etc.) and information sessions addressing women aimed at raising their awareness about problems and barriers to their career advancement as well as at increasing their motivations towards their own career.
- Developing and implementing **empowerment and training packages on inequality addressing all the staff** in order to create a more supportive and inclusive environment for all.
- Establishing an **officer in charge of reviewing the scientific and professional development training programme** for all staff, with a particular focus on the early career scientists, also in order to identify specific barriers for women.
- Developing specific **leadership programmes** supporting women interested in accessing leadership positions, providing them with specific skills and competencies increasing their career opportunities.
- Developing **mentoring and coaching schemes supporting women** in their career progression, simultaneously acting on different levels, including motivations, personal orientations, soft skills, professional skills, research competences and scientific knowledge.
- Creating **packages of measures and services helping women to return** to work after parental leaves.
- **Using virtual or more traditional communication tools or creating resource centres** in order to timely provide researchers and, especially women, with information about opportunities they might seize in professional terms or to raise awareness about gender equality.

### *c. Supporting internal networks*

Creating networks and promoting networking activities, both addressing all staff and targeting female researchers, may reveal a powerful tool for pursuing **multiple impacts** on women's careers.

This action line includes different possible actions, ranging from proactively favouring the creation of women's network through seeds funds, initiatives, or institutional support up to recognising and supporting the existing women's network or networks where gender-related issues are addressed.



Networks may serve different objectives such as increasing women's self-confidence, allowing women scientists to develop their personal contacts, favouring that critical issues in career development emerge and are discussed, putting gender-related issues in the organisation's agenda, sustaining training and empowering activities for women, or finding appropriate solutions to remove barriers to gender equality.

#### *d. Increasing women's visibility*

Women's careers in science can be also supported by increasing women's visibility and recognition within the organisation. This objective can be pursued in many ways. Some kinds of action are listed below.

- Establishing procedures (for example, guidelines or checklists) **ensuring the presence of women in different public circumstances** (e.g., as speakers in a scientific conference, spokespersons in press releases, lecturers in public events, members of bodies representing the research organisations, etc.).
- Organising specific **public events** (e.g., researchers' days) devoted to women scientists.
- Establishing **awards** or other **forms of recognition** for senior researchers either addressing women scientists or ensuring equal visibility of female and male scientists.
- Creating a **register of potential female speakers and session chairs** so as to ensure an equal representation of women in the event organised by the research organisation.
- Developing **publications or videos** celebrating the achievements of women in STEM.
- Organising **series of lectures** exclusively involving women lecturers and speakers.

### 3. To know more

Some sources pertaining to career development are listed below.

- The Gender Competent Leadership E-learning package, developed by the GENOVATE project <http://www.genovate.eu/modules/gender-competent-leadership/>
- Three policy briefs developed by GENPORT on women in decision making  
[https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource\\_pool/pb20\\_decisionmaking\\_inno.pdf](https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/pb20_decisionmaking_inno.pdf)  
[https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource\\_pool/pb18\\_decisionmaking\\_consolidate.pdf](https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/pb18_decisionmaking_consolidate.pdf)  
[https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource\\_pool/pb17\\_decisionmaking\\_start\\_0.pdf](https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/pb17_decisionmaking_start_0.pdf)
- The Part D of the PRAGES Guidelines developed by ASDO, devoted to women in leadership positions  
[https://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub\\_gender\\_equality/prages-guidelines\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub_gender_equality/prages-guidelines_en.pdf)
- A publication on mentoring developed by the Equality Challenge Unit



<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/mentoring-progressing-womens-careers-in-higher-education.pdf>

- The Handbook on mentoring good practice developed by the Birkbeck College, University of London under the TRIGGER Project

[http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TRIGGER-D\\_3-5\\_Mentoring-Handbook-of-Best-Practice.pdf](http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TRIGGER-D_3-5_Mentoring-Handbook-of-Best-Practice.pdf)



## **Section Three – Work-life balance**



## 1. The issue

Some of the most important career segments, in science as in other careers, coincide with the stage of one's personal biography when people usually "settle down" with a long-term partner and create a new family. This process traditionally hinders women's career more than men's, with different effects, including the diversion from highly valued career paths (typically from research to teaching or from research to administrative or supporting work), career breaks, part-time work up to abandoning the scientific career.

Hence the importance to address the many factors limiting women to reach a balance between professional and family life, taking into account that many of these factors are deeply rooted in the way in which the entire society is organised.

## 2. Examples of action

Some specific strategies pertaining to this area can be identified:

- Providing services, facilities and support
- Providing information about existing opportunities within and outside the research organisation
- Developing flexible working and time schemes compatible with family duties.

### *a. Providing services, facilities and support*

The first strategy is providing services, facilities and any kind of support allowing both female and male staff member to better combine working and family life. Some examples in this regard are listed below.

- Providing services and support aimed at **making the experience of the maternity leave as smooth as possible** for women, e.g. providing extended coverage, supporting the management of external grants, developing schemes allowing women to keep in touch with their own professional environment and their colleagues, extending the duration of grants in case of maternity leaves, or temporarily hiring someone covering the position of the researcher on leave.
- Developing **dual-career measures** or creating a **dual-career office** aimed at providing support and *opportunities to employees' partners (in case the employee comes from another town or country) in order to help him/her find a job together with specific forms of assistance (e.g., language courses, counselling in order to solve practical aspects such as renting an apartment, choosing the school for the children, or applying for residency change).*
- Developing **in-house childcare facilities** (e.g., kindergarten, lactation rooms, day care centres, and safe rooms for welcoming children).
- Helping women parents with specific **services** such as special childcare support grants, childcare vouchers to be spent in public or private childcare facilities, small grants for women with a baby participating in conferences as attendee or speaker so as to allow them to pay for a babysitting service, provision of counselling services through specific "parent-child offices".



### *b. Providing information on existing opportunities*

Another aspect playing an important role in promoting work-life balance is the provision of clear, complete and easily accessible information on services and policies developed by the research organisation or at a local level in this domain. Some examples are mentioned below.

- Developing **information packages** to be delivered to all new employees during the induction process providing all relevant information concerning services, opportunities, national regulations, and internal policies useful for balancing professional and family life.
- Organising short **events, information meetings** or **other initiatives** aimed at informing employees and sensitizing them on opportunities and services available pertaining to work-life balance.
- Using **booklets, publications** or dedicated **web pages** for informing the employees about these opportunities and services.
- Providing **information on demand** about relevant services (of any kind: childcare services, health services, etc.) available at the local level.

### *c. Developing flexible working and time schemes*

Work-life balance can be also facilitated through the adoption of flexible working schemes and a time management approach identifying a set of core hours within the working day where internal meetings and key internal activities can be organised so to allow all the staff to participate.

**Flexible working schemes** may include, for example:

- Formal part-time working
- Changing core hours to provide a better work-life balance
- Working from home
- Dependency leave and time off for personal appointments
- Job sharing solutions
- A wide range of working hours organisation on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis
- Extension of contract (for example, passing from a full-time to a part-time scheme)
- Special paid leave to respond to a personal emergency.

## **3. To know more**

Some resources focusing on work-life balance are listed below.

- A policy brief on flexible working arrangements and on family-friendly accommodations developed by the University of Colorado under the NSF-funded ADVANCE Programme  
[https://www.colorado.edu/eeer/sites/default/files/attached-files/8\\_flexibleworkarrangements123015.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/eeer/sites/default/files/attached-files/8_flexibleworkarrangements123015.pdf)
- A document “Mapping organisational work-life policies and practices “developed under the GARCIA project describing work-life balance policies in some European universities  
[http://garciaproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARCIA\\_report\\_wp4.pdf](http://garciaproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARCIA_report_wp4.pdf)





- The section devoted to work-life balance (“The rush hour in academia) in the EC document “Meta-analysis of gender and science research”  
[https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource\\_pool/meta\\_analysis\\_synthesis\\_report.pdf](https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/meta_analysis_synthesis_report.pdf)



## **Section Four – Working environment**



## 1. The issue

Another relevant area pertaining to gender equality in science is that of the quality of the working environment for women. This issue largely involves the overall management of research organisations, since the quality of the working environment does not affect only women but the staff as a whole. However, also a high-quality working environment may have specific dynamics and features which negatively impact on women (or other special groups, like ethnic minorities, members of the LGBT community, or disabled people).

This happens because inequality dynamics are often difficult to detect and even more difficult to eradicate, being them deeply rooted in the cultural and social patterns as well as in power relationships. It is not by chance that, when actions aimed at supporting gender equality are developed, many forms of resistance emerge, also among women.

## 2. Examples of action

With reference to this area, four main strategies can be identified:

- Documenting and disseminating data on gender inequality
- Promoting awareness raising and communication on gender equality
- Introducing a gender-neutral language in institutional communication
- Fighting bullying and harassment.

### *a. Documenting and disseminating data on gender inequality*

The use of techniques and tools for periodically collecting quantitative and qualitative data on organisational processes (e.g., recruitment, career advancement, tasks assignment, salaries, etc.) is largely widespread in research organisations in order to keep them under control, allowing internal monitoring and evaluation systems to appropriately work. In many research settings, gender-related dynamics are increasingly included among the organisational aspects to routinely take into consideration.

This is turning the collection and use of gendered data into a standard for research organisations. This change is particularly important since the tendency to see gender inequality as a problem only pertaining to “other’s organisations” but not the one’s own organisation (a sort of a “not-in-my-backyard syndrome”) is widespread. It is therefore equally important to circulate data on gender inequality within the organisation. Different kinds of action can be made. Some examples are given below.

- Developing a **set of guidelines** for ensuring the collection of gendered data for any relevant administrative process.
- Including **gender equality issues** as subject to be investigated in the already existing **internal surveys** (personnel survey, satisfaction survey, etc.).
- Organising **specific surveys or other initiatives for collecting data** (for example, focus groups) focused on women’s condition in the organisation or the internal climate.



- Developing periodically (annually, every 2 or 3 years, etc.) a **gender equality report**, documenting the condition of women in the organisation.
- Promoting studies focusing on **specific aspects connected to gender equality**, such as the mechanisms producing the gender pay-gap, the access of women to research grants, or the reasons why women leave the organisation (for example, through the adoption of exit questionnaire).
- **Communicating data and information** on gender inequality through any possible communication means, including the institutional website or intranet system, specific publications, leaflets, reports, or videos.

#### *b. Promoting awareness raising and communication on gender equality*

Another factor contributing to making the working environment more women friendly is an increasing awareness amongst the staff and managers on gender equality and diversity. Hence the importance of specific awareness raising and communication activities addressing them. In this regard, many types of action can be promoted. Some examples are provided below.

- Developing **training modules** addressing gender and diversity issues targeting different components of the organisation (such as the newcomers, researchers, students, managers, etc.).
- Producing a **gender equality toolkit** for employees and staff to be published or to be made available of the intranet of the organisation.
- Creating a **gender equality website** or **web pages** to present the gender equality efforts of the organisation and any relevant information about gender equality measures and policies.
- Promoting **reflection and debate** on equality within the organisation through events, conferences, blogs, theatrical events, and other forms of public initiative.

#### *c. Introducing a gender-neutral language in institutional communication*

Adopting a gender-neutral language is often considered as a marginal, if not an ideological, claim. On the contrary, it plays a pivotal role both directly (since language can be discriminatory in itself and may have serious discriminatory effects) and indirectly (since a gender-sensitive language is a powerful tool for promoting a gender equality culture in the organisation). Some examples of action addressing this problem are listed below.

- Developing specific procedures to **check for sexist language** in academic and administrative documents, including the establishment of a monitoring system or the organisation of specific studies on a sample of text to identify more recurring forms of sexist language and gender-biased terminology.
- Developing **handbooks, toolkits, guidelines or internal regulations** about the use of a gender-neutral language in the institutional communication (official documents, websites, advertisements of vacancies, newsletters, etc.).



- Organising **training courses on gender-sensitive language** for managers, researchers or the administrative staff.

#### *d. Fighting bullying and harassment*

All European national legislations include specific norms aiming to fight discrimination, bullying and harassment. However, in many cases, research organisations develop self-tailored policies in this domain, using different organisational tools. Some examples are given below.

- Organising **training initiatives** addressing bullying and harassment involving staff and students.
- Establishing **specific committees** in charge of preventing or evaluating cases of bullying and harassment within the organisation.
- Identifying and disseminating **protocols** and **guidelines** dealing with how to prevent, report and manage cases of bullying and harassment.
- Providing **psychological support** and **counselling** services to those who are exposed to cases of bullying and harassment.

### 3. To know more

Some sources addressing the working environment are listed below.

- A policy brief and a guide on sexual harassment respectively developed under the projects GENPORT and TRIGGER  
[https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource\\_pool/pb21\\_sexualharrasment.pdf](https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/pb21_sexualharrasment.pdf)  
[http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Deliverable\\_D5-2\\_GL\\_SEX\\_HARAS\\_UPM.pdf](http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Deliverable_D5-2_GL_SEX_HARAS_UPM.pdf)
- Two guidance-like publications to use a gender-sensitive language, respectively developed by the University of Reutlingen, the University of Pisa and  
[https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/reutlingen\\_university\\_guidelines\\_for\\_using\\_gender-sensitive\\_language.pdf](https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/reutlingen_university_guidelines_for_using_gender-sensitive_language.pdf)  
[http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/D1.7\\_Completo.pdf](http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/D1.7_Completo.pdf)
- A policy brief on the visibility of women and gender equality issues developed by the University of Colorado under the NSF-funded ADVANCE Programme  
[https://www.colorado.edu/eer/sites/default/files/attached-files/13\\_enhancedvisibilitybrief123115.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/eer/sites/default/files/attached-files/13_enhancedvisibilitybrief123115.pdf)
- A guide for enhancing the department climate developed by the Wisconsin University under the NSF-funded ADVANCE Programme  
<http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/ClimateBrochure.pdf>



## **Section Five – Gender dimension in science**



## 1. The issue

Sex and gender are two potentially critical factors of experimental design in many research fields, which have been for a long time overlooked or simply neglected. Recently, the relevance of the so-called “gendered science” (i.e., a science which considers sex and gender as scientific variables) started to be acknowledged in the academia, with the double effect of, on the one side, activating new research paths and encouraging the adoption of new research protocols and, on the other side, unveiling the impacts of gender-related dynamics on the research process and the image of science.

## 2. Examples of action

Two strategies are chiefly devised in this area:

- Promoting training and communication activities
- Testing a new research approach.

### *a. Promoting training and communication activities*

Training initiatives or communication activities are probably the main tools adopted by research organisations to incorporate gender and sex variables in research. Their objective is mainly that of demonstrating the potential or actual relevance of these variables in specific research sectors (for example, medical research, bioscience, chemistry, engineering, etc.) and showing how incorporating them in research has nothing to do with any ideological stance.

- Different kinds of **training activities** can be identified, including both formal training modules or PhD courses and less structured and shorter training initiatives, such as workshops, seminars and lectures. New university chairs dealing with gendered science-related issues can be also established. In some cases, the courses are integrated into the university curricula (especially those in medicine and biosciences).
- **Communication activities** may include articles on the institutional intranet or newsletters, videos or more structured communication initiatives (for example, exhibitions).

### *b. Testing new research approaches*

Research projects actually using sex and gender as research variables and testing their relevance in different research fields are also to highlight.

The testing process usually concerns the establishment of new **research protocols**, the development of new **experimental methods** or the identification of new **research questions**. In some cases, specific **research funds** are allocated to favour the testing of new gender-sensitive research approaches. Funding agencies increasingly include the consideration of gender and sex variables among the requirements for applying for research grants.

## 3. To know more



Some sources addressing the integration of gender dimension in research contents are mentioned below.

- The EC document “Gendered Innovations. How Gender Analysis Contributes to Research”  
[https://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document\\_library/pdf\\_06/gendered\\_innovations.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/gendered_innovations.pdf)
- The report of an EC-funded study on gendered research  
[http://www.eif.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/genderequality.nsf/0/7CE1FD0F091FAD76C22580F9002FBC4E/\\$file/Mainstreaming%20sex%20and%20gender%20analysis%20%20into%20basic%20and%20applied%20research.pdf](http://www.eif.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/genderequality.nsf/0/7CE1FD0F091FAD76C22580F9002FBC4E/$file/Mainstreaming%20sex%20and%20gender%20analysis%20%20into%20basic%20and%20applied%20research.pdf)
- A set of guidelines for integrating sex and gender analysis into research contents, developed under the GENDER-NET Project  
[https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/d3.11\\_manuals\\_with\\_guidelines\\_on\\_the\\_integration\\_of\\_sex\\_and\\_gender\\_analysis\\_into\\_research.pdf](https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/d3.11_manuals_with_guidelines_on_the_integration_of_sex_and_gender_analysis_into_research.pdf)
- The online tool including a set of recommendations on the integration of gender analysis in research, also in this case developed by the GENDER-NET Project  
<http://igar-tool.gender-net.eu/en>
- A report developed by the project GenPORT on gender in research content and knowledge production  
[https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource\\_pool/genport\\_rs4\\_knowledge\\_v3\\_13\\_jan.pdf](https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/genport_rs4_knowledge_v3_13_jan.pdf)





## **Section Six – Governance structures for gender equality**



## 1. The issue

Achieving gender equality in research organizations is a long-term goal, requiring continuity of action, monitoring mechanisms, a comprehensive vision of the problems to be addressed and an ability to change the types and intensity of the actions throughout the process, also reacting to unforeseen events (for example, a leadership turnover or an organizational reform) that could endanger the results already achieved.

There is, therefore, the need to create as far as possible stable governance structures able to drive the process, to keep gender equality issues in the agenda, to mobilise the internal actors and stakeholders, and to timely produce data and information about advancements, constraints, and critical steps towards gender equality.

## 2. Examples of action

Two main strategies can be identified:

- Establishing gender equality structures
- Developing gender equality plans.

### *a. Establishing gender equality structures*

Many research organisations have developed in the last decades specific institutional arrangements geared to give continuity and visibility to their efforts in support of gender equality. Such arrangements are usually tailored to the features and culture of the organisation. Some examples are given below.

- Creating new **formal organisational structures**, such as an equal opportunities officer, a responsible for equal opportunity policies within the Executive Committee, a gender equality office or unit as well as **entrusting an existing structure** (for example, a section of the Human Resources Department) to develop gender equality measures.
- Establishing **more flexible and operational structures** such as self-assessment teams, working groups, task groups, in charge of dealing with specific aspects or to accomplish specific tasks related to gender equality (for example, developing a set of guidelines, making a consultation or a survey, proposing a new regulation, etc.).
- Establishing an “**observatory**” or a **monitoring system** able to regularly provide updated information on gender equality in the organisation.

### *b. Gender equality plans*

Not rarely, research organisations activate gender equality plans with the aim of systematically introduce institutional arrangements in support of gender equality. The key underlying idea is that of using action plans for raising awareness amongst staff, triggering the process, identifying the problems, testing the most appropriate solutions, favouring institutional changes and creating the



conditions for adopting long-term policy measures to be institutionally incorporated in the organisation.

Contents and features of the plans are extremely variable and tailored to each specific institution. For such a reason, it is difficult to propose a typology of gender equality plans. However, some variables can be identified.

A variable is the **size of the plan**. In some cases, comprehensive and long-term plans are developed covering the organisation as a whole. In other cases, short-term small-sized set of plans are preferred.

Another variable is the **focus**. In many cases, the plans are exclusively focused on gender, but often they concern any form of inequality (including those grounded on, e.g., age, disabilities, nationality or the belonging to minority groups) or the diversity of staff in general.

A third variable is the **control over the plan**. Plans can be fully incorporated in the general programmes of the organisation and controlled by the leaderships. However, in other cases, the team or the unit in charge of the plan is relatively free to develop the plan and to modify it, only reporting its results to superiors. Not rarely, action plans are developed at a department level (for example, in a university department), involving managers and leaders of the organisation only for addressing specific problems which cannot be solved at a department level.

### 3. To know more

There are many publications and resources dealing especially dealing with **how to implement gender equality action plans**. A list of resources is given below.

- The toolkit developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)  
[file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/mh0716096enn\\_1.pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/mh0716096enn_1.pdf)
- The toolkit on how to design and implement gender equality plans in institutions working on ICT prepared by the EQUA-LIST project  
<https://equalist.dais.unive.it/public/docs/EQUAL-IST-710549-D3.5%20Toolkit%20for%20designing%20and%20implementing%20GEPs.V2.0.pdf>
- The Roadmap for the implementation of customized gender equality plans developed by the GENERA project  
[https://genera-project.com/portia\\_web/Roadmap\\_for\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_customized\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_Plans.pdf](https://genera-project.com/portia_web/Roadmap_for_the_implementation_of_customized_Gender_Equality_Plans.pdf)
- The guidelines on gender equality practices developed under the PRAGES project  
[https://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub\\_gender\\_equality/prages-guidelines\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub_gender_equality/prages-guidelines_en.pdf)
- The guidelines on structural transformation produced by the STAGES project  
[http://www.stages.unimi.it/upload/documents/Guidelines\\_STAGES\\_new.pdf](http://www.stages.unimi.it/upload/documents/Guidelines_STAGES_new.pdf)
- The guidelines developed under the TRIGGER project  
<http://triggerproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/TRIGGERING-PAGG-SINGOLE.pdf>



Other publications are focused on how **managing the impacts of action plans** or **how to measuring progress**. The following resources can be mentioned.

- Two publications developed by the Equality Challenge Units  
<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/measuring-progress-on-equality-qualitative-evidence.pdf>  
[http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-03-ECU\\_Research-and-data-briefing-5\\_final.pdf](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-03-ECU_Research-and-data-briefing-5_final.pdf)
- The evaluation framework developed under the EC-Funded EFFORTI project  
<https://www.efforti.eu/sites/default/files/2018-03/EFFORTI%20D3.3%20FINAL%20report%2027032018.pdf>
- A document developed by the GENDER-NET project on the use of qualitative indicators for monitoring gender equality  
[http://www.gender-net.eu/IMG/pdf/GENDER-NET\\_D4-15\\_Publish\\_first\\_joint\\_monitoring\\_report\\_on\\_gender\\_equality\\_indicators\\_MENESR\\_ECU\\_.pdf](http://www.gender-net.eu/IMG/pdf/GENDER-NET_D4-15_Publish_first_joint_monitoring_report_on_gender_equality_indicators_MENESR_ECU_.pdf)

The guidelines developed by the GENOVATE project on how evaluating gender equality action plans

[http://www.genovate.eu/media/genovate/docs/GENOVATE\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_evaluating\\_GEAPs\\_23.11.16.pdf](http://www.genovate.eu/media/genovate/docs/GENOVATE_Guidelines_for_evaluating_GEAPs_23.11.16.pdf)

