



June 2021



"I am determined to step up our efforts on gender equality and support more talented women in research and innovation. I am committed to ensuring that the gender dimension is fully integrated into research and innovation supported by Horizon Europe, and that it is fully acknowledged in the European Research Area."

Mariya Gabriel Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth



GENDER EQUALITY

A STRENGTHENED COMMITMENT IN HORIZON EUROPE

What is the challenge?

Despite progress achieved on gender equality in research and innovation under the [Horizon 2020](#) research and innovation programme, we still need better implementation of EU gender equality objectives by research and innovation organisations across the EU, notably:

- More women participating in research and innovation programmes
- Better integration of the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation projects
- More participation of EU widening countries in actions dedicated to gender equality in research and innovation organisations
- Broadening gender equality policies in research and innovation to intersections with other potential grounds for discrimination such as ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation

The Commission is taking concrete steps to address these challenges through [Horizon Europe](#), in line with the Communication [A New ERA for Research and Innovation](#) and the new [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#).

How we will tackle it and for whom

- Horizon Europe sets **gender equality as a crosscutting principle** and aims to **eliminate gender inequality and intersecting socio-economic inequalities** throughout research and innovation systems, including by addressing unconscious bias and systemic structural barriers.
- Main novelties include the following:



A **new eligibility** criterion to get access to Horizon Europe funding: public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments **will be required**, starting in 2022, **to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place**. This will ensure sustainable institutional change.



The **integration of the gender dimension into research and innovation content** (i.e. sex and gender analysis) **becomes a requirement by default across the whole programme** (for more information see the '[Gendered Innovations](#)' policy report).



Specific funding will be made available for actions supporting the development of **inclusive gender equality plans** in research and innovation organisations across Member States and associated countries under the "**Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area**" part of the Programme. Specific **funding** will be allocated **for gender studies and intersectional research**, in particular in Pillar II Cluster 2 - Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society.



Particular attention will be paid to ensuring **gender balance** in evaluation panels and in other relevant advisory bodies, such as boards and expert groups. Gender balance among researchers involved in projects will be strongly encouraged and will be taken into account for equally ranked proposals.



Flagship measures and activities promoting gender equality under the **European Innovation Council** (EIC), including a target of 40% women-led companies invited to **pitch their projects**, a target of 50% women among members of advisory structures, a prize for women innovators and a dedicated initiative to support women-led start-ups.

How will it work together?

Provisions supporting gender equality through Horizon Europe are complementary to those from other Programmes, such as **ERASMUS+**, with strong synergies with the transformative agenda for higher education institutions and the **European Universities alliances**, as well as with the **Cohesion Policy Funds**, and the **Rights and Values Programme**.



Expected impacts and results

All provisions for gender equality in research and innovation under Horizon Europe will contribute directly to the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 5](#) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and to all SDGs, as gender equality is a necessary foundation across SDGs.

Overview

Gender equality, and the opening to inclusiveness issues, are priorities in Horizon Europe, in line with the new ERA framework, and the [Union of Equality](#) sought for by the European Commission.

GENDER EQUALITY PLANS

AN ELIGIBILITY CRITERION FOR HORIZON EUROPE

Under [Horizon Europe](#), having a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) will be an eligibility criterion for certain categories of legal entities (i.e. public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments) from EU Member States and Associated Countries. This requirement will apply to all calls for proposals with a deadline in 2022 onwards.

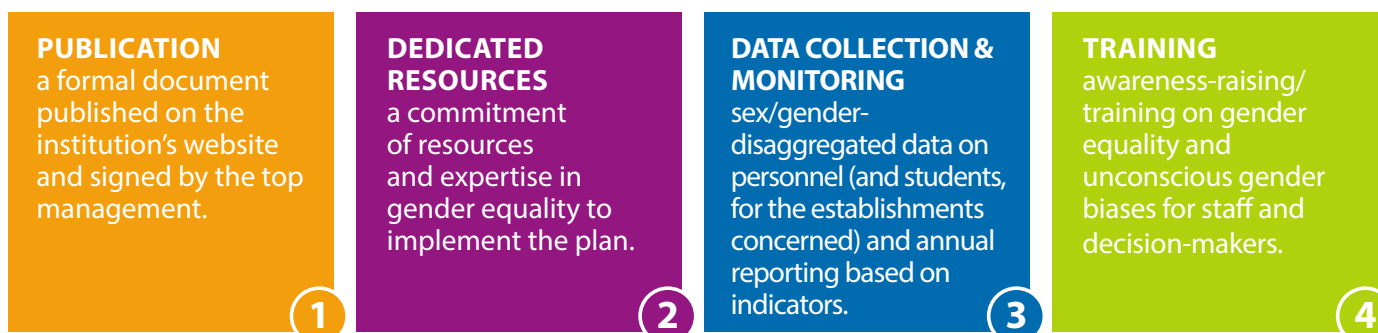
What is a GEP?

A GEP is a set of actions that aim to promote gender equality through institutional and cultural change in research and innovation (R&I) organisations.

What does the GEP eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe entail?

In co-design with a wide array of national and institutional research stakeholders and gender equality experts, and building on the experience gathered through FP7 and Horizon 2020 related projects, the European Commission has identified **a set of essential elements – or ‘building blocks’**– for effective GEPs.

To meet the eligibility criterion, a GEP **must** fulfil **4 mandatory process-related requirements**:



In terms of the content, it is **recommended** that a GEP addresses the following **5 thematic areas**, using concrete measures and targets:

1. **Work-life balance** and **organisational culture**.
2. Gender balance in **leadership** and **decision-making**.
3. Gender equality in **recruitment** and **career progression**.
4. Integration of the gender dimension into **research** and **teaching content**.
5. Measures against **gender-based violence**, including sexual harassment.



What are the key tips for developing a GEP?

- Ensure the GEP is **relevant** for your organisation, and **accounts for national laws and regulations, and funder requirements**. A GEP should be **tailored** to each organisation's mission, history, and context.
- Identify a **clear senior lead** with responsibility for developing and implementing the GEP.
- Consider undertaking an **internal audit of gender equality** as a first step, including a review of organisational data, existing policies and practices and feedback.
- Establish a **model of change** for the GEP by considering the relationship between the causes of gender inequalities, the aims, and the actions required to achieve them.
- **Engage the whole organisation** in its development and implementation. A GEP needs the support of leadership and the engagement of all staff, as well as the wider community, including students and other stakeholders.
- **Ongoing monitoring and review** are essential. A GEP should be part of an ongoing process that improves the way the organisation works.

What support and resources are available?

Extensive knowledge and resources on the development of GEPs in R&I organisations is already available, including the following projects and initiatives supported by the European Commission:

The **GEAR tool** provides step-by-step guidance and a variety of online resources and good practice examples.

GE Academy offers capacity-building trainings and webinars on gender equality in research, innovation and higher education.

ACT is supporting the development of Communities of Practice to advance knowledge, collaborative learning and institutional change through GEPs.

Over 200 research performing and research funding organisations have been supported to implement GEPs, through 30 collaborative projects, under FP7 and the Horizon 2020 Science with and for society (SwafS) work programme, and have produced a wealth of knowledge, good practices and innovative measures, resources and tools.

Examples of such projects now fully completed or nearing completion:

LIBRA: Unifying innovative efforts of European research centres in the life sciences to achieve gender equality

EQUAL-IST: Gender equality in information science and technology

GENERA: Gender Equality Plans of Research Institutions and Organisations in the physics research field

BALTIC GENDER: Baltic Consortium on Promoting Gender Equality in Marine Research Organisations

PLOTINA: promoting gender balance and inclusion in research, innovation and training

TARGET: Gender Equality Innovating Institutions in the Mediterranean basin

SAGE: Systematic action for gender equality in higher education and research

GEECCO: Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment

More GEP projects are **ongoing** and links to all GEP-related projects funded under Horizon 2020 or under FP7, are accessible through **CORDIS**.

MORE INFORMATION

- [Gender equality in research and innovation](#)
- [Gender equality plans in Horizon Europe](#)
- [List of FAQs](#) on GEPs, also available on the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#)
- [Gendered Innovations: How Inclusive Analysis Contributes to Research and Innovation](#)

[#GenderEquality](#)

[#UnionOfEquality](#)

[#HorizonEU](#)

[#EURResearchArea](#)

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