

The research organisations are required to implement a Gender Equality Plan

As of January 2022, all Public bodies, such as research funding bodies, national ministries, or other public authorities, including public-for-profit organisations, higher education establishments, public and private, and Research organisations (public and private) from the EU must conform to the European Commission's Gender Equality Plan (GEP) eligibility criterion of Horizon Europe. In short, A GEP is a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through a process of structural change.

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union and is one of the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs). Gender equality in research and learning ensures that Research & Innovation (R&I) systems support democratic and equal societies. In this aspect, a correlation between the innovation capacity of a country and the gender equality index in that country has also been observed. The benefits of an equal distribution of gender within an organization include: improvement in the quality and impact of research and innovation by helping to ensure it is reflective of and relevant to the whole of society, better working environments that enable good quality research and learning and help maximise the potential and talents of all staff and students, attraction and retain of talent by ensuring that all staff can be confident that their abilities will be valued and recognised fairly and appropriately.

Although progress has been made during the past years within European R&I organisations and national institutions, there is still room for lots of improvement throughout certain aspects that constitute these organisations' functioning systems. Thus, all legal entities from Member States and Associated Countries that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments (including private research organisations and higher education establishments) must have a gender equality plan, covering the following minimum process-related requirements:

- publication: a formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management;
- dedicated resources: commitment of resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan;
- data collection and monitoring: sex and/or gender disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) and annual reporting based on indicators;
- training: awareness-raising/training on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.

When building an effective GEP, it is best to keep in mind that, although the implementation happens at an executive level, the entirety of the organisation should be included in the process. Inclusion is one of the essential principles of the European Union, and it is especially important when developing a plan that ensures the equality of gender within the workplace. While various R&I organisations have different structures (and thus the GEP should be tailored accordingly), there are 3 universal building blocks of a functional GEP:

- Organisational structure: for example, to establish the most appropriate arrangements for senior support and leadership, engaging with external stakeholders and delegation to departments or directorates;
- Size: for example, to determine the appropriate approach to resourcing a GEP, including ensuring there is sufficient internal or external expertise and capacity, as well

as establishing proportionate and effective approaches to the collection and monitoring of data;

- Existing activity: for example, developing training and development initiatives that achieve the right breadth and depth of engagement across the organisation, and building on existing gender knowledge and expertise, policy and initiatives that may already be underway.

The Horizon Europe eligibility criterion requires that the GEP be a formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management. As part of this requirement, GEPs should be published on the organisation's public website, be signed by the senior leadership, be actively communicated within the institution, and be accompanied by regular progress reports. Furthermore, organisations are required to have dedicated resources for the development and implementation of the GEP should be appropriate to the size and needs of the organisation and its GEP, such as a dedicated gender equality function or gender budgeting.

Another aspect of the eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe is that organisations collect and publish disaggregated data on the sex and/or gender of personnel (and students, where relevant) and carry out annual reporting based on indicators. The data an organisation collects should enable scrutiny of the differences between men and women in different roles, directorates and at different levels of the organisation. The scope of data that is collected should also reflect the mission of the organisation and its activities, whilst also being proportionate to its size.

Box 8: Data and metrics for a GEP

Relevant data on gender equality for all organisations can include:

- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by disciplines, function (including administrative / support staff) and by contractual relation to the organisation;
- Average numbers of years needed for women and men to make career advancements (per grade and by discipline);
- Wage gaps by sex/gender and job;
- Numbers of women and men in academic and administrative decision-making positions (e.g. top management team, boards, committees, recruitment and promotion panels);
- Numbers of female and male candidates applying for distinct job positions;
- Numbers of women and men having left the organisation in past years, specifying the numbers of years spent in the organisation;
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave;
- Number of absence days taken by women and men and according to absence motive;
- Number of training hours/credits attended by women and men;

Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), 4.3 Data collection and monitoring

The last main requirement for financial eligibility from Horizon Europe is the training of the staff within the organization. All staff, leaders and decision-makers have a role to play in identifying practices, cultures and unconscious gender biases that cause disadvantage to

women and in implementing more inclusive approaches. Awareness-raising and training are tools and strategies to increase people's sensitivity to gender equality whilst also giving them the knowledge and skills to enable them to engage with the goal of gender equality.

Some activities that could be included in the training are:

- Unconscious bias training for all staff and leaders.
- Communications and engagement activities with all staff.
- Training for researchers and academics on how to include the gender dimension into research design and teaching curricula and training for RFOs on incorporating the gender dimension into their funding programmes.
- Other gender equality training activities that focus on specific topics or address specific target groups

A detailed guide on the recommended content-related (thematic) GEP building blocks is available in the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) official document, via the European Commission's website.



The source and more information:

[Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euro-iss/what-we-do/our-work/our-work-areas/gender-equality/gender-equality-plans/guidance-on-gender-equality-plans)