

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Step 4: Implementing a Gender Equality Plan

Ready, set, go!

Having [set up the Gender Equality Plan](#), you are ready to start implementing it. Put the measures of the Gender Equality Plan in motion according to the defined timeline. Try to embed and institutionalise as many measures/actions as possible in order to ensure their [sustainability](#).

Organise regular meetings with the team responsible for the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan. These meetings are not only important to design and plan activities in a participatory way, but also to discuss the progress, main achievements and aspects that can be improved. This will allow identifying possible problems and acting proactively upon them.

Plan meetings with senior management and leadership, human resources staff, or other co-workers you consider relevant. This will help:

- Creating ownership of the Gender Equality Plan.
- Motivating the staff involved.
- Strengthening the potential of the Plan.
- Maximising the impact of the Plan's actions.

You may consider organising an initial training session for the team responsible for implementing the Plan, and for other targeted audiences directly involved (e.g. managers, human resources staff). Continuous awareness-raising and competence-building efforts will maximise chances for success and institutionalisation.

For example, during the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan, you can provide personalised coaching, organise additional awareness-raising sessions, run campaigns on selected topics or plan workshops to build specific competences.

Continue [engaging stakeholders](#) on an on-going basis. Explain the [benefits of gender equality in research organisations](#). Always adapt your [discourse](#) according to the profile you are addressing. Do not forget to keep in touch with stakeholders you engaged in a previous phase. This will also provide you insights about the measures implemented or on how to improve the actions to be carried out.

To keep in mind:

- While the start can be modest, the scope and spectrum of activities may gradually expand over time. At the same time, the circle of allies and engaged stakeholders may also grow.

Give visibility to the Gender Equality Plan

Inform the organisation about the existence of the Gender Equality Plan. Use different channels to communicate about the Plan, its main areas of interventions and timeframe. It is paramount that the Gender Equality Plan is made available and easily accessible to the whole community on the institutional website. It can furthermore be useful to organise a public session to present the Gender Equality Plan to the organisation's community.

The participation of senior management and leadership posts in this initial presentation can support the implementation of the Plan's measures. Communication actions are crucial to give constant visibility to the Gender Equality Plan:

- Develop key messages tailored to different target groups.
- Advertise activities in advance using adequate channels in order to ensure good participation rates.
- Instigate the whole community to take action by suggesting how others can contribute.
- Promote external events (e.g. conferences) or interesting information from beyond the organisation about integrating gender equality in research institutions and universities.
- Report about the progress towards gender equality in the institution on a regular basis (according to the monitoring moments established in the Plan). The monitoring exercises will provide insightful information about the progress achieved by the organisation. Share key messages about these findings to the organisation's community and provide online access to the full reporting publications and/or data.

Need inspiration to develop and share key messages about the Plan and its achievements?

- The EU-funded structural change project INTEGER shared some insights and

examples about developing and disseminating key messages during the structural change process. [Check them out!](#)

- The University Alexander Ioan Cuza (UAIC, Iasi, Romania) was a partner of the EU-funded structural change project STAGES. A [team of communication specialists](#) was put together to increase the public visibility of the scientific performances of women researchers and to publicise and disseminate gender equality actions promoted at UAIC. Check also the [main external communication activities and the top 10 communications products at UAIC](#).
 - In the context of various EU-funded structural change projects, websites and Facebook accounts have been set up. Active use of other social media channels is also made (like Twitter and LinkedIn, where groups can be created). Have a look, for example, at the social media channels mobilised by the EU-funded [Garcia](#) project.
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Consider involving the communications department of your organisation in this task. They can actually have an important role in gender equality structural change. They can:

- Ensure the use of gender neutral language in internal and external communication.
 - Ensure the use of non-stereotypical and non-sexist images in internal and external communication.
 - Mobilise the available communication channels to promote the actions undertaken within the framework of the Gender Equality Plan.
 - Communicate about the progress of the organisation towards gender equality on a regular basis.
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Need inspiration?

- The [Guidelines for gender-sensitive communication](#) developed by the EU-funded SUPERA project (2020) consider the main factors influencing the development of an academic institution's communication strategy through the lenses of gender-sensitivity, with three main aims:
 - Raising awareness on the pervasive role of communication and language in academia and its function in contributing to institutional change towards gender equality.

- Introducing a deeper awareness of the gender biases and stereotypes that affect daily communication.
- Providing advice and guidance in adopting a gender-sensitive approach in the communication strategies and practices of an academic institution.
- Check [UNESCO's Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language](#)
- The EU-funded project STAGES shared its experiences regarding communication and visibility. The [Guidelines for Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science](#) (pp. 51-54) provide some relevant insights:
 - Carry out a preliminary mapping of communication resources (e.g. website, social media, newsletter, networks and associations, national and local media, partners' communication channels, or internal and public events).
 - Define a communication plan (extensively adopting internet-based communication tools, as well as face-to-face interactions to reach certain target audiences).
 - Develop attractive messages.
 - Consider setting up a specific communication group (e.g. Communication Group on Women and Science).
 - Devise a promotion campaign at internal, local and/or national level about the organisation's Gender Equality Plan in order to instigate the public and political debate about gender equality.
 - Make women's contributions (more) visible.
- Have a look at the European Commission's (archived) campaign website '[Science it's a girl thing](#)', as well as at the EU-funded project [Hypatia](#) and at its very active [Facebook® page](#).

Be aware that adaptations to the Plan may be needed

The Gender Equality Plan is not static or immutable. Several circumstances may require modifications to the Plan, such as changes in the structure of the organisation (e.g. due the appointment of new senior managers), or the introduction of new legislation or policies that apply to research organisations and/or universities.

In addition, the priorities of the organisation may also change during the Plan's timeframe. Follow closely such events and discuss with your team whether and how the Gender Equality Plan can be adapted.

Despite the efforts undertaken to develop a robust Plan, other pressing issues may arise in the organisation during its implementation. Try to understand the reasons why certain measures are not being implemented and make adjustments if needed. Keep up-to-date with innovative actions that were used in other organisations.

Need inspiration?

- Check the [most common and innovative practices in selected institutions](#) mapped by Gender-Net (p. 59).
- The Wheel Toolkit designed by the EU-funded SAGE project (2017) aims to assist organisations to effect and sustain change in cycles. At each cycle, the organisation should re-assess itself and carry out changes towards gender equality. It includes a comprehensive 3-phase approach to GEPs and institutional changes.
- [More examples](#).

Be prepared to face [obstacles or resistances](#) when implementing certain measures and act upon them.

Do not forget to [follow up](#) the implementation of the measures of the Gender Equality Plan. There may be important lessons to be learnt from the regular monitoring exercises. Listen to the feedback of those organising or participating in particular activities (e.g. through exit questionnaires). This will give pertinent hints on how to improve operational and/or content-related issues of the activities or the Plan.

Click below to continue to the next step and learn about monitoring and evaluating your Gender Equality Plan. You can also go back to the previous step.