

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Step 4: Implementing a Gender Equality Plan

Main Section Videos and webinars Tools and resources

Ready, steady, go!

Having set up the gender equality plan (GEP) (see [step 3](#)), you are ready to start implementing it. Gather the team that is going to be involved in the implementation of the GEP that you identified in step 3. Together, form a task force to put the measures of the GEP in motion according to the established timeline. Try to embed and institutionalise as many measures as possible in order to ensure their sustainability.

Organise regular meetings with the team responsible for the implementation of the GEP. These meetings are important not only 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 for identifying possible problems and acting proactively on them.

You may consider organising an initial training session for the team responsible for implementing the GEP, and for other targeted audiences directly involved (e.g. managers, human resources staff). Continuous awareness-raising and capacity-building efforts will maximise chances for success and institutionalisation. As highlighted in the 'Gender equality network in the European research area' (GENERA) project recommendations, the implementation team should possess knowledge of the following:

- driving organisational change;
- dealing with resistance;
- building support networks;
- the gender aspect of research careers, decision-making and content of research and teaching;
- self-assessment, monitoring, and data gathering and analysis;
- the specifics and functioning of one's own institution.

If the team is lacking specific skills, consider who else could be involved or which member should be trained. Moreover, during the implementation of the GEP, you can provide personalised coaching, organise additional awareness-raising sessions, run campaigns on selected topics or plan workshops to build specific competences. It is also helpful to involve people in the wider GEP group (gender equality committee, hub, etc.) who can provide skills or knowledge that are not directly available to the core team.

In the course of implementing your plan, be aware that structural change towards gender equality is not only about implementing the GEP you have developed. It is about looking for windows of opportunities for change (such as renegotiating or drafting a statutory document, strategic plan, etc.) and transforming existing processes, schemes and bodies, as much as it is about institutionalising GEP measures. You might encounter resistance on your way; if so, consult the toolkit from the 'Supporting the promotion of equality in research and academia' (SUPERA) project entitled [Resistances to Structural Change in Gender Equality](#) .

Involve relevant and interested stakeholders

Plan meetings with the GEP support structures you established in step 3 (e.g. gender equality board, hub or gender laboratories) to involve top management and leadership, human resources staff, or other co-workers you consider relevant but who are not part of the implementation team. This will help to:

- create ownership of the GEP;
- motivate the staff involved;
- strengthen the potential of the GEP;
- maximise the impact of the GEP's measures.

Continue engaging internal and external stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Explain the [benefits of gender equality in research organisations](#) in general and according to the progress you have already made within the GEP. Always frame the provided information and incentives strategically 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 with insights about the measures implemented or on how to improve the measures to be carried out.

You might also form a network or community of practice within your organisation to bring all people active and interested in gender equality work together to deepen knowledge, exchange experiences and expertise in gender equality, and support each other in their activities. The [ACT community of practice co-creation toolkit](#) might support you in setting up meetings of such a network in a participatory way.

If you are also thinking of forming a network with other organisations active in fostering gender equality, you can find more information on the 'Systemic action for gender equality' (SAGE) [website](#) about how to do that.

Keep in mind that, while the start can be slow, the scope and range of activities may gradually be extended 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 whole organisation about the existence of the GEP. Use different channels to communicate about the plan, its main areas of intervention and its time frame. Make the GEP available and easily accessible to the whole community on the organisation's website, mainly to inform the community, but also to fulfil the **Horizon Europe eligibility criterion**. It can also be useful to organise a public session to present the GEP to the organisation's community.

The participation of senior management and those in leadership posts in this initial presentation can support the implementation of the measures set out in your GEP.

Communication measures are crucial to giving constant visibility to the GEP and include:

- developing key messages tailored to different target groups;
- advertising activities in advance using appropriate channels in order to ensure good participation rates;
- prompting the whole community to take action by suggesting how others can contribute;
- promoting external events (e.g. conferences) or interesting information from beyond the organisation about integrating gender equality in funding organisations.

Report about the progress towards gender equality in your organisation on a regular basis (according to the monitoring moments established in the GEP). The monitoring exercises will provide insightful information about the progress achieved by the organisation. Share key messages about these findings with the organisation's community and provide online access to the full reporting publications and/or data (see [step 5](#) for details on monitoring and evaluation).

Consider involving the communications department of your organisation in this task. It can actually have an important role in gender equality structural change. The communications department can do the following.

Ensure the use of gender-neutral and generally inclusive language in internal and external communications.

Ensure the use of non-stereotypical and non-sexist images in internal and external communications. The use of inclusive images enables you to show the diversity of your organisation.

Mobilise the available communication channels to promote the measures undertaken within the framework of the GEP.

Communicate about the progress of the organisation towards gender equality on a regular basis: small changes and steps are relevant and should be highlighted.

Be aware that adaptations to the gender equality plan may be needed

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

In addition, the priorities of the organisation may also change during the GEP's time frame. Follow such events closely and discuss with your team whether and how the GEP can be adapted. In addition, advanced gender awareness (of the people responsible) may bring new insights that result in adjustments.

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 (successfully) implemented and make adjustments if needed. Keep up to date with innovative measures that were used in other organisations. Be prepared to face **challenges or resistance** when implementing certain measures and act on them.

Do not forget to follow up on the implementation of the measures of the GEP. There may be important lessons to be learnt from the regular monitoring exercises (see **step 5**). Listen to the feedback of those organising or participating in particular activities (e.g. through exit questionnaires). This will give relevant hints on how to improve operational and/or content-related issues of the activities or the GEP.

In order to view **videos and webinars** or further **tools and resources** on the topics discussed in step 4, switch between the respective tabs. Otherwise, click below to continue to the next step and learn about monitoring and evaluating your GEP.