

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Step 6: What comes after the Gender Equality Plan?

Main Section Videos and webinars Tools and resources

A gender equality plan (GEP) will be concluded at some point. However, this is not 'the end' of promoting gender equality in your organisation. It is important to understand that a GEP is also a quality assurance model in the organisational change process. This further development of the organisation in the direction of gender equality is never finished.

You are entering a new cycle now. Based on the findings from the evaluation of the GEP, it is possible to draw conclusions regarding the progress made towards achieving gender equality in the organisation. During the development and implementation of the GEP, the course should already have been set for a sustainable anchoring of gender equality work in your organisation. You should have assigned those responsible for gender equality work and anchored gender equality in the budget of your organisation by now. It is likely that the sustainability of some measures and procedures is already ensured, while others may still require further action.

Be aware that structural and cultural change is a long-term process that requires continuous and repetitive efforts and measures to avoid a throwback to former practices and behaviour. Some measures and activities will need to be implemented throughout several GEP cycles – of course you should consider improving these measures based on your monitoring and evaluation results.

In addition, the final evaluation may have identified new areas that require attention. Moreover, it may be necessary to respond to changes that have come about since the last GEP cycle outside (at the political level) and within the organisation. There may be other important issues on the agenda that can stimulate or hinder gender equality work. This is the point where you decide how to continue the efforts undertaken so far and what a new GEP should address.

Take into consideration the lessons learnt from the previous experience(s).

Revisit the results of the status quo assessment conducted in step 2. Which issues were identified but not addressed in the GEP because other issues were more important? Is it relevant to include them in the next GEP?

Revisit the results of the monitoring and evaluation. What further need for action do they indicate? Does the evaluation cover all possible fields of action or should further data be collected?

Benchmark what other organisations have done or are currently doing (and adapt their measures to your own context).

Discuss with the management and the implementation team whether the framework conditions in your organisation have changed and whether there is a need for new action. Consult external stakeholders regarding policy changes and relevant issues that may need to be addressed.

Continue to engage (new) stakeholders.

Think about how to make your measures sustainable.

Take the opportunity to make your work and the progress visible throughout your organisation.

You might also want to think about new topics in which to integrate gender equality in your organisation, and strategies to do so. At this point, we want to give you information about two strategies that have been implemented (so far mainly by organisations that have been working in the field of gender equality for a longer period of time): gender budgeting and intersectionality.

Gender budgeting

Why think about gender in a budgeting process?

The budget is not a neutral instrument; rather, it reflects the existing distribution of power in society between women and men. Budget cycles and procedures were designed mainly by men in the past, when women did not have access to public institutions, education systems or research organisations, and are thus an expression of the male scale of values, principles, main issues and priorities. Decisions that affect people's education, careers, jobs and lives need adequate resources to be implemented. Money is the most important factor for turning decisions into reality. In this respect, money is also a good indicator of the true intentions of decision-makers. For more insights, see the gender auditing and gender budgeting methodology report compiled by the EU-funded project 'Leading towards sustainable gender equality plans in research performing organisations' (LeTSGEPs) in 2021.

Gender budgeting is about identifying ways to redistribute resources to make management and financial decisions gender responsive, ensuring equal opportunities for all members of the organisation, regardless of their gender. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) gender budgeting toolkit, gender budgeting involves conducting a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process, and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. In short, gender budgeting is a strategy and a process with the long-term aim of achieving gender equality goals.

Good to know

Gender budgeting allows for a more targeted and efficient allocation of financial resources.

Gender budgeting requires the participation of a broader range of stakeholders.

It leads to a closer analysis of the revenue and expenditure side of budgets.

The result is a win-win situation: a transparently and efficiently managed organisation that simultaneously promotes gender equality through a gender-sensitive budget.

The [gender budgeting in academia toolkit](#), developed in 2016 by the EU-funded project 'Gendering the academy and research: combating career instability and asymmetries' (GARCIA), recommends the following steps.

Map the activities of the research organisation. It can be good to have an overview of possible activities for gender budgeting. This method can provide a starting point for the project.

Examine equality initiatives. What has been done regarding equality work? What was the outcome of that work? Was it successful? If so, identify what worked well and what could be useful in further equality work. If it was not successful, identify the setbacks.

Consider the activities of the research organisation in more detail. What activities might contain gender inequality traps in raising and allocating resources? Speak informally to people in different ranks to see what they perceive as the weak spots within the system. Where might gender inequality be created and maintained?

Set out the project. Choose which activities to examine further. Draft an action plan with objectives and the process of the gender budgeting work. What does the research organisation need to do to organise its gender budgeting?

If you want to learn more about how to implement gender budgeting in your organisation, visit the [toolkit](#) directly: it provides seven steps on how to apply gender budgeting.

Intersectionality

GEPs also include a wider perspective, related not only to sex or gender but also to other characteristics. For instance, it is important that objectives include further disaggregation within the broad categories of 'women' and 'men', considering additional sociodemographic attributes such as age, socioeconomic background, poverty, race, ethnicity, location (rural/urban), disability, sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and others) and religion. Moreover, all thematic priorities should, ideally, consider an approach that pays attention to intersectionality (i.e. the intersectional characteristics of individuals, and how these interact or intersect to influence gender inequalities).

If GEPs are to address this, they need an intersectional approach.

EIGE defines intersectionality as an 'analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination.' Intersectional analysis thus aims to show the diversity of identities and the different types of discrimination that occur as a result of the intersection of gender and other social characteristics.

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) position paper *[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Universities: The power of a systemic approach](#)* outlines four key steps for building an equal, diverse and inclusive university, which are also important for other research organisations.

Familiarise yourself with the key findings that have emerged from the extensive research on privilege and the impact of bias, which highlight the extent of the problems faced by under-represented staff (and students). By taking the time to look at these findings, you will be better placed to identify effective interventions. In doing so, you send a clear signal to the whole organisation that you are aware of the problems faced by underprivileged groups and are willing to seek solutions.

Monitor and measure the present situation and the impact of programmes introduced to bring about change. It is crucial to understand the particularity of the issues in your

organisation, using both quantitative data and qualitative information from surveys and individual testimonials. Being empathetic, being open and listening to experiences shared in a safe and respectful environment provide the crucial human dimension to complement the monitoring data, and enrich the narrative drive towards the desired organisational culture.

Develop a formal strategy that can ensure tailored solutions for the various issues and groups, as well as a holistic, synergistic and sustainable approach to inequality and lack of inclusion in university culture.

Communicate the need for change and the potential benefits to the entire organisation of increased equality, diversity and inclusion from the highest levels of leadership. Build a narrative that fits the institutional goals in terms of organisational culture and academic outcomes, one that is compelling and motivating for all.

Of the most recent EU-funded structural change projects, some have addressed intersectionality (e.g. 'Redesigning equality and scientific excellence together' ([RESET](#)), [CALIPER](#), 'Communities for sciences' (C4S)). Experiences from these projects and evidence of effective intersectional approaches can be used for your own work.

In order to view **videos and webinars** or further **tools and resources** on the topics discussed in step 6, switch between the respective tabs.

Click below to go back to the previous step. You can also [download a short guide](#) summarising the steps involved in setting up a GEP.