

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Step 2: Analysing and assessing the status quo in research funding bodies

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The best starting point for developing an effective set of measures is a thorough understanding of what your organisation is currently doing in terms of promoting gender equality, internally and with regard to external stakeholders, such as applicants and reviewers or panel/board members. After assessing the status quo of your organisation, you will have an overview of your organisation's strengths and weaknesses concerning gender equality. Based on these results, you will be able to develop clear objectives and a set of targeted measures for your gender equality plan (GEP) (step 3).

The comprehensiveness of this initial analysis will depend on the resources available and on the data you can collect already or plan to collect in the future. Make sure to assess the human and financial resources that you have access to in order to undertake this task. Identify internal supporters (e.g. gender experts, data providers), but consider other possible external resources as well, as suggested in step 1 ('Find support').

Before starting the analysis, locate potential areas where gender inequalities might be an issue in your organisation; check the overview of gender inequalities in the funding cycle [here](#).

Below you can find the main aspects that you need to consider in order to analyse and assess the gender equality status quo in your research funding body. Some details on how to perform the analysis are also provided. However, the specific methodological approach needs to be developed based on the available human and financial resources, the technical capacities and the available competences in your team, as well as the context of your organisation.

Decide who will carry out the analysis

When deciding who should be involved in performing the analysis, consider the following.

If your research funding body has a **person or body responsible for supporting gender equality** (e.g. gender equality office/unit), this person or body could take on the task of performing the initial assessment regarding gender equality in your organisation. Other relevant people or bodies are the office for managing funding data or the grant management office, as they might have relevant data for your status quo analysis (e.g. sociodemographic data on applicants). For more detailed information on which data should be collected, see the information below. (see paragraphs on Collect sex-/gender-disaggregated data about staff and external stakeholders (applicants, reviewers, panel/council members)

You can also involve (elected) representatives of staff or people from programme management. Do not forget to include gender experts working in the organisation, who can provide valuable insights and/or be involved in this exercise.

When such a person or body does not exist, or when they/it cannot take on this task, consider **putting together a small team** to undertake this status quo assessment. The team can be composed of members of the gender equality structure, data providers, members of the human resources department and the management.

Note that the **tasks of each team member** need to be agreed upon and made clear from the very beginning. You may also want to consider [who is involved in a GEP](#).

In any case, having an **explicit mandate from top management** to undertake a status quo assessment is essential for dedicating time, opening doors and obtaining cooperation.

Now that you know who can potentially do the status quo assessment, you can sit down with them and plan which data needs to be collected. A **standard approach** in this regard includes the following steps of analysis, with the final step providing ideas (options) for additional analyses.

Review relevant legislation and policies in your country

It is useful to know the general legislation and policies regarding gender equality and non-discrimination, as well as those that are specific to the fields of research and innovation (R & I). This will allow you to focus your status quo assessment on the relevant legal and policy requirements. It will also back up your rationale to support your measures. You may have already gathered some of this information in order to understand the context of your organisation (see step 1). This knowledge can also support some of the measures of the GEP you will set up. You should consider the following **regulatory frameworks**:

regulations at **EU level** and how they were adopted into the national law of your country; existing laws and policies related to the integration of gender equality in research and research funding **in your country, state or region**, including reflecting on how overarching national gender equality policy objectives can be translated into concrete measures taken by research funding bodies; • any regulations on privacy issues, in particular regulations on data processing and which data you are allowed to collect (with respect to race, sexual orientation, etc.).

What to look for when reviewing the policies.

Are there targets with respect to gender equality set at policy level (e.g. from national authorities)? What are they?

You can use these targets for orientation / as a starting point, but also in your argumentation for implementing measures (e.g. to convince senior management)


You can also use these targets to decide which data you need to analyse.

Are there funding opportunities for implementing gender equality measures?

Consider also whether there are funds for collecting data.

Are there initiatives in your country in response to these targets or otherwise focusing on gender equality?

Is it possible that your organisation could join an existing initiative?

Note that **in order to be eligible for Horizon Europe**, 'it is mandatory 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.' (see [Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans](#) , pp. 23–27).

Identify existing measures promoting gender equality

To start assessing the status quo in your organisation, take a look at existing gender equality measures within your organisation, addressing internal stakeholders (staff) and internal processes (staff career development), external stakeholders (applicants, research organisations/universities, reviewers) and core funding processes (application, evaluation of research proposals).

For this purpose, take the following steps:

map the existing measures for external stakeholders (applicants, reviewers, etc.) to sensitise about gender equality, to improve the assessment process, to attract more women to apply, etc.:

for this purpose, you can use the gender [audit questionnaire from Science Europe](#) (pp. 30–36) for inspiration;

map the existing internal measures to promote women, to sensitise about gender equality, to enhance work–life balance, etc.:

for this purpose, you can use the gender audit [questionnaire](#) provided by the EU-funded project ‘Systemic action for gender equality’ (SAGE) as a base for your mapping;

assess the implementation and results of these existing measures critically, maybe against the background of other research funding bodies, together with those involved, considering how their effectiveness can be enhanced.

If you need inspiration to conduct your own mapping, take a look at the [analysis report](#) produced by the GENDER-NET project.

Collect sex-disaggregated data about staff and external stakeholders (applicants, reviewers, panel/council members)

As you may have already guessed, data broken down by sex is needed to detect any gender differences. Analysing such data will provide crucial information for identifying the most pressing areas that require intervention. For example, when your analysis reveals that the gender balance is particularly distorted in certain areas, efforts may be directed to these. Or, when you notice that your major challenge is to attract more women applicants, you might put the focus of your GEP on that.

The first step is to **check which sex-disaggregated data is already available** and plan how to collect further relevant indicators.

Check what data is readily available

The human resources department may be helpful in providing data on the funding body's employment structure. Comprehensive data on applicants, universities or reviewers / panel members is collected by the R & I analysis department throughout the whole funding cycle.

In order to **collect data**, you may use questionnaires, conduct interviews, organise focus groups or carry out a gender audit, to list the most common options.

Regardless of what you decide to do, **get support** from within your organisation or outside, if you need additional expertise.

Analyse your data and assess which areas you should focus on.

In order to perform this assessment, **compare** your funding body with others by using statistics published by She Figures or other sources.

Critically **review existing measures** in your organisation and **plan your gender equality measures** according to your acquired knowledge. Adjust measures that were implemented in other organisations to your context and situation.

Consider that the status quo assessment is a good time to **reach out and involve co-workers and management** in the gender equality implementation process. This increases the visibility of your planned measures, and can help with mobilising and giving a voice to relevant stakeholders and with raising support for your plans. Note that the same stakeholders should also be involved in the ongoing monitoring process and evaluation of your GEP. It should be clear by now that the results of your gender equality audit (status quo assessment) not only tell you which areas to focus on, but also are the **starting point for monitoring of your GEP**.

As soon as you have access to the data you should carry out a statistical analysis. Note that in order to be eligible for **Horizon Europe**, the data should be **collected and published annually**, so think ahead and plan your **monitoring and evaluation process** now (see [step 5](#) for more details).

The **key indicators** you should consider for **external stakeholders** are as follows:

- budget allocated to different funding programmes and grants (how the funding budget can be allocated in a more gender-fair way is discussed in step 6, '[Gender budgeting](#)');
- shares of women and men among all students and all researchers (as this is the pool of potential applicants);
- shares of women and men among applicants and grantees in specific funding programmes / grants, differentiated by scientific field and academic position;
- shares of women and men among applicants with care duties / on parental leave;
- shares of women and men in funding decision-making positions (e.g. boards, panels, juries);
- shares of women and man in review panels, as panel members, as remote reviewers;
- share of projects (funded/rejected) addressing gender in research content (by funding programme, by discipline, by sex);
- number of awareness-raising and promotion activities (workshops/training for researchers, briefing of reviewers, etc.) to foster the integration of gender into research content;
- number of publications with gender in research content perspectives before and after the intervention started;
- number of researchers trained regarding gender in research content;
- number of publications with a gender in research content perspective.

The **key indicators** you should consider within your **research funding body** are as follows:

- number of gender awareness activities (workshops/training) for staff members (by funding programme, by sex);
- staff numbers by gender at all levels, functions (including administrative/support staff) and by contractual relation to the organisation;
- wage gaps by sex and job;

shares of women and men in management/decision-making positions;
shares of women and men candidates applying for specific job positions;
numbers of women and men having left the organisation in the preceding years, specifying the numbers of years spent in the organisation;
share of staff by sex applying for / taking parental leave, for how long they took leave and how many returned after taking the leave;
numbers of absence days taken by women and men, differentiated by absence motive (sick leave, care leave, etc.);
numbers of training hours/credits attended/received by women and men in general and regarding gender awareness;
shares of women and men on recruitment or promotion boards and as heads of recruitment or promotion boards, and shares of women and men in decision-making bodies, including by scientific field.

How to collect this data

First, decide who is responsible for data collection and for the later analysis of this data. Next, decide which of the data/indicators listed above are the most relevant and necessary for your next steps. It might be better to limit the scope of the data you collect to avoid overload.

In any case, check **which data is available** from entities within your organisation first.

Note that the data might not be available in the way that you need it, so you might have to let them know exactly what you need and give them enough time to prepare it. Check back what and how data can be provided due to the technical infrastructure in your organisation (e.g. is there an option to collect data on third sex or is only binary data collected?).

It might be helpful to provide them with a list (e.g. an Excel sheet) or questionnaire, where they can insert the data directly.

Otherwise, you may want to collect additional data using **questionnaires**.

For this purpose, the gender equality audit and monitoring ([GEAM](#)) tool [↗](#), developed in the course of the ACT project, provides some sample questionnaires and individual questions that can be adapted to and used for your research funding body.

The GEAM tool also provides guidance on how to prepare and distribute a LimeSurvey questionnaire and which issues (such as data protection) you need to consider in the [GEAM manual](#) [↗](#).

Considering that you will need to collect this data annually as part of your GEP monitoring process, you should try to **standardise your process** from the beginning. Remember: implementing gender equality is a circular process. For additional inspiration and guidance on how to collect the relevant data, check out the resources provided in the **tab 'Tools and resources'**.

Analyse the collected data

Once you have collected all the relevant data, start by producing **descriptive statistics** (absolute and relative frequencies, etc.) and take a look at the results. At the end, you need to **assess what the numbers** mean for your plan to implement gender equality measures.

In order to support this assessment, you should **compare the performance** of your organisation (with respect to the indicators you analysed) with that of similar organisations in your country or with country- or EU-level data. To do so, you may want to look at the most recent [She Figures](#) [↗](#), the main source of pan-European, comparable statistics on the state of gender equality in R & I. Another useful source can be the [gender statistics database](#) of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).


Again, consider the **context of your organisation**: do you operate in an area with a traditionally lower share of women (e.g. in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects)? Interpret the results accordingly and consider any targets for gender equality that you may have identified before.

Based on this assessment, you will be able to identify the key areas of intervention for your GEP. How to do this is described in [step 3](#).

Carry out additional analyses to increase internal support (optional)

Complementary to the standard approach, you can consider the following analyses.

Collect data and conduct an analysis that integrates **other dimensions**, such as age, race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or home institution of applicants. It is important to understand the **intersections** between sex/gender and other dimensions, as multiple discrimination can occur and needs to be tackled. However, be mindful of data protection issues when staff or external stakeholder numbers with particular intersectionalities are very small, leading to data leaking and disclosure issues (e.g. if there is only one black, lesbian, disabled woman).

Conduct a **survey among staff members (and if possible, among panel/board members as well)** to assess their knowledge of and experiences with gender (in)equality in the organisation, organisational practices promoting gender equality, sexist attitudes and behaviours, etc. This will give you a better understanding of the status quo in your working environment and which topics you need to address. You might want to use the [GEAM survey](#)  for this purpose.

Conduct **interviews or group discussions** with representatives of all levels of staff and external stakeholders. The interviews can cover some of the aspects mentioned above, but can also probe staff perceptions of the need for and level of acceptance of gender equality measures. Including these groups can also help to make your project and ambitions more visible and to gather support.

Review your communication materials and analyse the messages your organisation communicates internally and externally, and how they represent gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

For additional inspiration, take a look at the resources provided in the **tab 'Tools and resources'**.

In order to view videos and webinars or further tools and resources on the topics discussed in step 2, switch between the respective tabs. Otherwise, click below to continue to the next step and learn how to **set up your GEP**.