

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Step 2: Analysing and assessing the state-of-play in the institution

The best starting-point for developing an effective set of actions is to have a thorough understanding about how your organisation is doing regarding the promotion of gender equality. After assessing the state-of-play of your institution, you will know which measures need to be implemented.

The comprehensiveness of this initial analysis will depend on the resources available. Make sure to assess the human and financial resources that you have access to in order to undertake this task. Identify internal assets (e.g. gender experts), but consider other possible external resources as well (e.g. funding, local partnerships).

You can find here the main aspects that you need to look into to analyse and assess the gender equality state-of-play in your institution. Indications on how to undertake the analysis are also provided. The methodological approach to be followed will need to fit the available human and financial resources.

The **standard approach** that can be followed includes:

Reviewing relevant legislation and policies in your country

It is useful to know the general legislation and policies pertaining to gender equality and non-discrimination, as well as those that are specific for the fields of research and/or higher education.

Reviewing the legal and policy frameworks will allow understanding where your organisation stands. It will back up your rationale to support your actions. This knowledge can also support some of the measures of the Gender Equality Plan you will set up.

For example:

- When your country sets targets at policy level, this may provide you with arguments to convince your colleagues and senior management that measures are needed in your organisation.
- It may be that your institution can join an existing initiative, like a Girls in Science Day.

Learn more.

Do you want to know how EU rules on gender equality are transposed into the national law of your country? →

Do you want to learn more about the existing laws and policies related to the integration of gender equality in research and higher education in your country? →

Analysing sex-disaggregated data about staff and students

Data broken down by sex is needed to detect any gender differences.

This analysis will provide crucial information to identify the most pressing areas requiring intervention.

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For example, when your analysis reveals that the gender balance is particularly distorted in certain disciplines, efforts may be directed to attract the underrepresented sex to these areas.

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The first step is to check which data are readily available. If such data do not yet exist in your organisation, efforts to collect them need to be made. As soon as you have access to the data, you need to carry out a statistical analysis.

Data to be analysed include (not limited to):

- staff numbers by 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);
- wage gaps by gender and job;
- numbers of women and men in academic and administrative decision-making positions (e.g. boards, committees, juries);
- number 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 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 according to absence motive;
- number of training hours/credits attended by women and men;
- number of female and male students at all levels and for all disciplines.

Need inspiration?

- 'She Figures' is the main source of pan-European, comparable statistics on the state of gender equality in research and innovation. You can look at the same dimensions covered in order to compare how your organisation is doing in relation to your country and to the EU. 'She Figures' is published every three years. [Check here the most recent publication.](#) The accompanying [Handbook of She Figures](#) provides methodological guidance on the calculation of indicators included in the She Figures 2015 publication.
- The EU-funded structural change project EGERA compiled the '[First Gender Equality Report](#)'. This report aimed at understanding the state of affairs related to gender equality and equality matters in the participating institutions by examining available data, information and policies in partner institutions. The following areas were covered: (i) human resources and career management, including employment and promotion, (ii) work-life balance and work conditions, (iii) gender-based offenses and violence, including gender-based mobbing and harassment, and (iv) gender in research and curricula.

- The EU-funded structural change project [INTEGER](#) provides some practical tips to get to know your institution through the collection of data and by carrying out surveys. For instance, how to organise methods, surveys, site visits and/or focus group discussions; how to collect that (e.g. several units can be contacted to enquire about available sex-disaggregated data); and who can be involved in this assignment (e.g. think about the human resources unit, the quality assurance unit, and also the research evaluation unit).
 - The University of Beira Interior has been consistently assessing the same indicators since the initial assessment of the state-of-play of the institution (from 2011 until the present). Consult the approach followed and the indicators used [here](#).
 - [More examples](#).
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Identifying the existing measures promoting gender equality

The existing measures to promote women, to sensitise about gender equality, to enhance work-life balance, etc. will need to be inventoried and mapped.

The implementation and results of the existing measures will need to be critically assessed, together with those involved, seeking how their effectiveness can be enhanced.

Need inspiration?

- A mapping of relevant measures in a range of institutions was undertaken by the GenderNet consortium. [Have a look at it here](#).
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Complementary to the standard approach, you can consider carrying out:

- A data analysis that integrates other dimensions, such as age, race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and religion. It is important to understand the intersections between sex and other dimensions as multiple discrimination can occur and needs to be tackled. However, be mindful of data protection issues when staff numbers with particular

intersectionalities are very small, leading to data linking and disclosure issues (i.e. if there is only one black, lesbian, disabled, Muslim woman on staff for example).

- A literature review about gender equality in research, teaching and higher education. The purpose of reviewing existing literature at European and international levels is to, amongst others, learn about gender stereotypes in research and teaching, current inequalities in research and higher education settings, and measures or actions to tackle such problems. Have a look at some [key resources](#).
- A survey among staff members to assess their knowledge about and experiences of gender (in)equality in the institution, organisational practices promoting gender equality, sexist attitudes and behaviours, etc.
- Interviews or group discussions with representatives of all levels of staff and/or covering different disciplines. The interviews can cover some of the aspects mentioned above, but can also probe the staff's perception about the need and level of acceptance of gender equality measures.

Need inspiration?

- See how the [University of Beira Interior](#) carried out their initial analysis.
- Check also the [Guidelines for Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science](#) (pp. 29-34). The EU-funded project STAGES shared their experiences regarding data collection in universities and research institutions.
- [More examples](#).

Who can do this analysis?

In case your organisation has a [structure](#) whose mandate includes responsibilities in support of gender equality (e.g. gender equality office/unit), the staff members of this structure could take on the task of performing the initial assessment of the gender equality state-of-play of your organisation. You can also involve (elected) representatives of staff. Do not forget to involve gender experts working in the institution. They can provide valuable insights and/or be involved in this exercise.

When such structure does not exist, or when it cannot take on this task, you can consider putting together a small team to undertake this baseline assessment. The team can be composed of members from the gender equality structure, teaching and/or research staff, as well as members from the human resources department.

In both above mentioned cases, having an explicit mandate from top management to undertake a baseline assessment is essential to dedicate time, open doors and obtain cooperation.

The tasks of each team member need to be agreed on and made clear from the very beginning. Sufficient (human and financial) resources are key to successfully analyse and assess the state-of-play regarding gender equality in your organisation. Furthermore, having an explicit mandate from top management to undertake a baseline assessment will help open doors and obtain cooperation. At this stage, it is already worth having an idea about the [staff members that may be involved in a Gender Equality Plan](#).

Click below to continue to the next step and learn how to set up your Gender Equality Plan. You can also go back to the previous step.