



# Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together





Redesigning  
Equality and  
Scientific  
Excellence  
Together

## Project Information

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RESET aims to address the challenge of Gender Equality in Research Institutions in a diversity perspective, with the objective to design and implement a user-centered, impact-driven and inclusive vision of scientific excellence.

## Consortium partners



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# Checklist for GEP monitoring and evaluation

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## Abbreviations

<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ERA</b>	European Research Area
<b>ERAC SWG</b>	European Research Area Committee's Standing Working Group
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU-MS</b>	European Union's Members States
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>GEP</b>	Gender Equality Plan
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>RESET</b>	Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together
<b>R&amp;I</b>	Research and Innovation
<b>RFO</b>	Research Funding Organization
<b>RPO</b>	Research Performing Organization
<b>WP</b>	Work Package

## Executive Summary

This *Checklist for monitoring and evaluation* (D.2.2) is submitted by Sciences Po as part of Work Package 2 – Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The purpose of WP2 is to design and implement a comprehensive M&E approach and its instruments, enabling RESET partners implementing a Gender Equality Plan, to self-assess their performance, providing impartial assessment and supporting GEPs' sustainability beyond the lifetime of RESET. The primary objective of this WP is to impartially assess whether the project as a whole and the respective GEPs are delivering the promised activities and changes. This first requires providing RESET partners with a sound framework and relevant capacities for self-evaluation, while impartially monitoring the organization and delivery of the project's activities both at consortium and partners' level.

This deliverable is an output of Task 2.2 – *Building indicators for the operationalisation of GEPs* by which a set of indicators is to be designed and further tailored to partners' needs, as they will engage in designing and implementing their own GEPs. This checklist elaborates on the cumulative experience gained by EU-funded initiatives in providing guidance, monitoring and evaluation to support and assess the design and implementation of fully-fledged gender equality plans in research and higher education organizations. This is why it pays attention to: a) stakeholders' involvement in the process of change from its early stage, b) the resources available to advancing gender equality and the gender dimension (in terms of staff, knowledge, skills and time), c) the mechanisms put in place to ensure accountability towards the set objectives, d) the support secured from the top management and e) the sustainability of implemented measures and their long-term impact on organizational practices and cultures.

As this deliverable intends to provide GEP implementing partners with a valid instrument for self-assessment and guidance to be further tailored to their specific contexts, objectives and needs, it also elaborates upon: a) the specificities of the RESET project – such as the intensive use of co-design methodologies or the focus on intersecting inequalities and b) the participatory capacity-building activities delivered under WP9 (Task 9.2), namely the session on Building capacities for sustainable change and self-monitoring held in June, 2021, and the workshop devoted to Redesigning scientific excellence held in November, 2021 under WP6.

Due to its resubmission at a later stage of the project (July, 2022), this deliverable also takes stock of the progress achieved by RESET partners, and of the achievement of milestone two, the adoption of fully-fledged GEPs by the four implementing partners.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Context for the development of the checklist

### 1.1.1 Context of RESET

As set out in D2.1 – *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan*, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach adopted for RESET relies upon two bodies of knowledge: the one accumulated in the field of program and policy evaluation and the one gained by the evaluating partner through conducting and evaluating structural change for integrating gender equality and the gender dimension in research organizations<sup>1</sup>.

In the context of RESET, the first dictates that M&E is a condition and resource for successful program or policy implementation, insisting on the dual dimension of evaluation, which is both *formative* and *summative*. While formative evaluation notably entails self-assessment and monitoring throughout the lifecycle of a project, programme or policy, the purpose of a *summative* evaluation is to assess ex-post its performance in terms of outcomes, impact and outreach. The checklist proposed in this deliverable primarily serves the purpose of *formative*, continuous evaluation and monitoring. Yet, it can also be mobilized for assessing if the GEP ultimately delivered the promised activities and changes, and is intended to contribute to:

- a) Increasing the quality of **GEP design**, by better informing *ex-ante* the conception and planning of project's activities and the definition of its objectives
- b) Increasing the quality of **GEP implementation**, by providing real-time information about its (un)effective implementation and management, identifying gaps and strategies for adaptation, factors of success or hindrances/resistances`
- c) Increasing **GEP sustainability**, highlighting the most efficient use of resources, as well as focusing on factors that conditions sustainability, such as a valid gender audit, the collection of relevant data, stakeholders' mobilization or the institutionalization of relevant activities beyond the project's timeframe.

The second body of knowledge, derived from carrying out and evaluating EU-funded initiatives to advance gender equality and the gender dimension in research, highlights that GEPs, unlike research programmes or projects, are intended to bring about *cultural* and *organizational* changes that involve structures and individuals, processes and "way of doing things". Therefore, specific attention is to be paid to the domestic, legal and policy environment of each GEP, their relation to other strategic or programmatic documents adopted at the level of the organizations, and to the way each objective and action held in the plan, articulates with the other, with view to deliver intended changes and to achieve its overarching goals to transform structures.

The checklist presented in this deliverable, also responds to several of the methodological principles set out in RESET Monitoring and Evaluation plan: 1) As mentioned above, it is both **formative and summative**; 2) it is **participatory** as it is also meant to be a tool for stakeholders' participation, continuously enriched by mutual learning and learning from practice and even more

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<sup>1</sup> Sciences Po, the partner in charge of the Monitoring and Evaluation of RESET, was coordinator of the EGERA project (FP7) and is currently the evaluating partner of the SUPERA project (Horizon 2020). Sciences Po team members were also involved in the evaluation of the EQUAL-IST project, and providing expertise to the Gender Smart and Gearing Roles project, also under Horizon 2020.

importantly, 3) it is **supportive**, meaning that it aims at supporting implementing partners in achieving their goals by enhancing their capabilities and self-assessment skills, but also by elaborating on 4) the **cumulative** experience of mainstreaming gender in research and the academia and more specifically the one gained through EU-funded initiatives.

Above mentioned principles are also underpinned by the **theory of change**<sup>2</sup> approach adopted for monitoring and evaluating RESET, by which partners are invited to draw their impact pathway to change. This checklist is thus also a complement to the capacity-building session delivered on the theory of change in May 2021 and a valid instrument for RESET partners to define their impact pathways, through evidencing the preconditions and supporting measures for each action to deliver its full potential of change and for the GEP to achieve its goals.

Referring more specifically to **cumulativeness**, it is important to stress that this checklist, by contrast to other M&E instruments to be developed by Sciences Po for RESET – such as evaluation experiments, is *not* primarily intended to be innovative. Instead, it takes stock of the design and experimentation of a first *Checklist for GEPs Evaluation* under the SUPERA project (2018-2022), which largely served as a basis for developing the one included to the present deliverable. Nevertheless, based on the specificities of the RESET project and consortium, several amendments were brought to make it more tailored and actionable. First, an additional section was added, devoted to inclusion and intersectionality, as RESET partners intend to address intersecting and multiple discriminations, and to foster greater inclusiveness beyond the sole remit of gender. Second, the section on stakeholders' engagement was refocused on fostering participation, acknowledging the specific use of co-design to be made by RESET, and elaborating upon the experience of participatory methods in SUPERA. Other sections undergone minor revisions in the formulation of the rationale and/or potential indicators, with view to facilitate their appropriation. Taking the opportunity of the deliverable re-submission by late July 2022, further revisions were brought to reflect the stage of GEP implementation reached by RESET partners upon the completion of milestone 2 (submission of the GEPs) by mid-July 2022. Those consists in: a) additional items in most sections, aimed at capturing and monitoring the specificities of RESET GEPs, thus also adding learning value for newcomers to GEP implementation within and beyond the consortium and b) a brief assessment of the adopted GEPs based on the bodies of knowledge mobilized for devising the checklist, as a further guidance instruments for monitoring.

As checklists have become relatively common place in gender mainstreaming literature in general, and lately in mainstreaming gender in research and the academia, a preliminary step to designing this checklist and to its adaptation to RESET, was to conduct for D2.1 – *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan*, a review of those made available by EU initiatives such as the GEAR tool and various EU-funded GEP projects. From this benchmark exercise, it resulted that most available checklists are integrated in broader guidelines or toolkits for GEP design and implementation<sup>3</sup>. Those are intended to provide step-by-step guidance, placing the emphasis on processes and interactions (how to design a GEP?), rather than content (what to put in the GEP, in terms of

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<sup>2</sup> A theory of change “consists of a set of statements that describe a particular program, explain why, how, and under what conditions the program effects occur, predict the outcomes of the program, and specify the requirements necessary to bring about the desired program effects” (Sharpe, 2011: 72). The use of the theory of change in RESET is outlined in D2.1 – Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance specific GEP projects' outputs [www.genovate.eu/resources/contextualised-guidelines/](http://www.genovate.eu/resources/contextualised-guidelines/) <http://integer-tools-for-action.eu> or the GEAR tool by the EC and EIGE: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/action-toolbox>

actions or indicators). Insightful to understand the overall processes of gender mainstreaming and institutional change, building common quality standards for gender mainstreaming in research and the academia, and ultimately to identify and address resistances to change (Lombardo and Mergaert, 2016), these instruments are not necessarily equally actionable to monitor and evaluate a GEP and the process of change it is meant to trigger.

### 1.1.2 Policy context

Whereas most checklists available to date have been developed as the result of EU projects or initiatives, guidance is increasingly requested also at national level, since GEPs have become a legal requirement in 13 EU Member States (EU MS) and associate countries (ERAC SWG GRI, 2021). In those countries, the proportion of research performing organizations (RPOs) having a GEP in place ranges from 75% to 90%, whereas it ranges from 25% to 50% where those are not yet a legal requirement (Wroblewski, 2020). The Ljubljana Declaration adopted in 2021 under the Slovenian EU Presidency, promotes GEPs as a transformative tool “to achieve long-term and sustainable advancement towards Gender equality in R&I” and the necessity for EU MS and associate countries to develop a “common understanding of GEPs as a policy instrument” and to provide “support and resources for their development and implementation at all levels”.

While some national and regional research authorities have already provided guidelines to their research and higher education organizations to comply with a GEP mandate<sup>4</sup> and/or to integrate the gender dimension in research, additional support is to be brought from the EU level, in form of the new version of the GEAR tool, released in March, 2022, of a Gender Equality Certification Scheme for Research and Innovation organizations, for which different scenarios are being explored by the CASPER project<sup>5</sup>, and of the European Centre of Excellence on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation to be set up in the nearest future. Therefore, the checklist presented in this *public* deliverable should also be read in light of these policy developments, as another relevant tool directed to all GEP implementing organizations of the European Research Area, and especially targeted to those for which little guidance and resources are available at national level, as it is the case in several lower research intensive – “widening”- countries as those represented in RESET<sup>6</sup>. To fulfil this purpose, and to respond to each implementation context, the checklist will also be based on a short, updated account of the policy environment for GEP implementation in Greece, France, Poland and Portugal - that is for each of the countries of RESET partners implementing their first GEPs within the framework of this project, as well as for the two mentors based in Finland and Germany. These accounts will be presented in section two of the deliverable.

As from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, having a GEP in place, has become an eligibility criterion for Research Performing and Research Funding Organizations to access EU research funding. Horizon Europe thus generates new standards for such documents, which are expected to be institutionally approved and publicly available, elaborated upon sufficient data and evidence, monitored as to report progress on specific indicators on an annual basis, supported by human, technical and financial resources, and including capacity-building. This new standard enjoins RPOs and RFOs

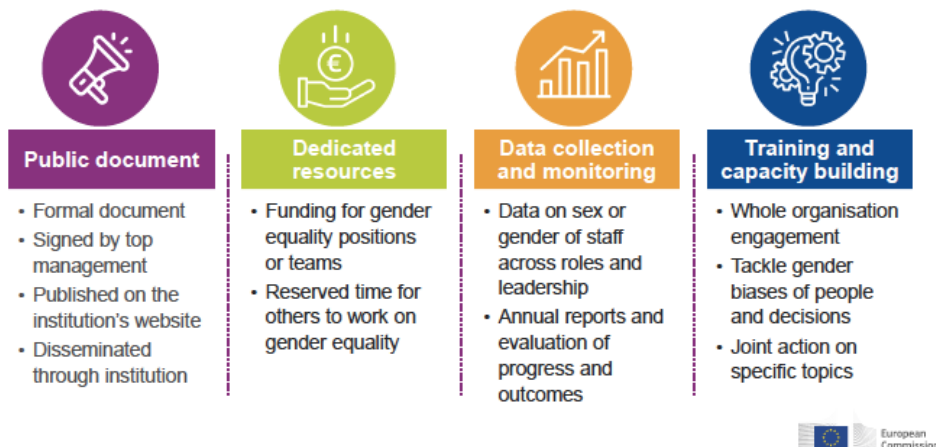
<sup>4</sup> See for instance, the [Guidelines for Action plans for gender equality in the workplace](#) issued by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research in 2021 or the [checklist for integrating gender in research issued by the Valencian Community in Spain](#).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.caspergender.eu/>

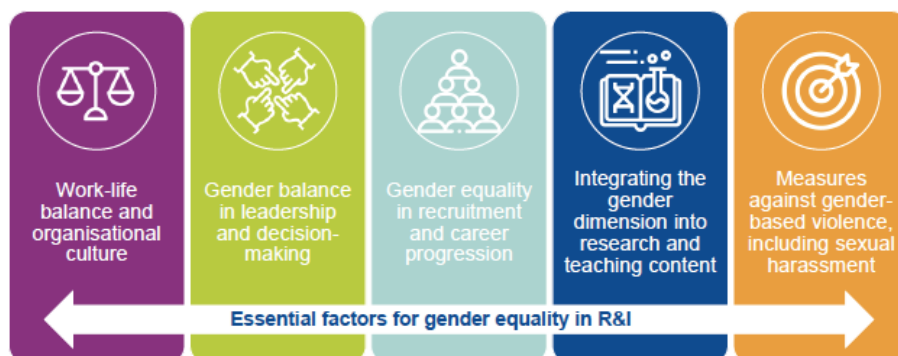
<sup>6</sup> Namely : Poland and Portugal

to adopt a holistic approach to address work-life balance and organizational culture; gender-balance in leadership and decision-making; gender equality in recruitment and career progression; integrating the gender dimension in research and teaching contents; and sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

**Fig. 1 Required process for GEPs (EC, 2021)**



**Fig. 2 Recommended areas of action for GEPs (EC, 2021)**



Initiated by the evolutions of the European Research Area since 2012, this agenda has also been backed by EU Member States, as evidenced in the European Council Conclusions of November 2015 or the Ljubljana Declaration adopted in 2021 under Slovenian Presidency of the European Council, which considers GEPs a transformative tool “to achieve long-term and sustainable advancement towards Gender equality in R&I”. At national and regional level as well, it is increasingly supported through legal requirements for RPOs and RFOs to adopt GEPs, in place in 13 EU member states and associated countries in 2022, and other supporting provisions such as gender quotas for the governing bodies of public research organizations, or the requirement to publish annual gender equality reports. These efforts are underpinned by the EU Strategy for gender equality 2020-2025, and by the first LGBTQ Rights Strategy adopted by the EU in 2021, which highlights the need for developing research on intersecting inequalities.

These evolutions altogether constitute a paradigmatic shift, by which RPOs and RFOs are bound to review their governing processes and structures from a gender responsive perspective. This

task necessitates increasing policy guidance, to capitalize upon the practices and knowledge available, notably from the perspective of monitoring and evaluating GEPs. Not only the threshold has considerably increased, for defining what a GEP is and what it is not, but now that hundreds more of RPOs are bound to conform with Horizon Europe criteria.

## 1.2 Objectives, content, and use of the checklist

As underscored in RESET Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, this checklist is not another step-by-step guide for GEP design and implementation, nor a *vademecum* of actions to be potentially implemented, provided that policy, institutional and disciplinary contexts matter, and that GEP actions can only be effectively devised on the basis of comprehensive, participatory gender audits as the ones carried out by RESET partners prior to initiating the design of their plans<sup>7</sup>. Its purpose is thus limited to the following objectives:

- To provide guidance with regards to the fundamental resources to be mobilized for a successful GEP implementation, as evidenced from practice and abundantly commented in the literature about mainstreaming gender in research and the academia.
- To offer practical recommendations with respect to key aspects such as securing top-leadership support, involving stakeholders through active participation, and building indicators for the monitoring of planned measures.
- To highlight the necessity to plan and implement actions aiming at sustainable changes, notably through impacting statutory or strategic documents, institutionalized processes, routines, and ways of doing things, while strengthening accountability.
- To highlight the importance of legal and policy frameworks for GEP implementation – either as facilitating factors or hindrances, underscoring ways for institutionally designed GEPs to inspire and support positive policy developments at regional and/or national level.

This is to be achieved through reflecting four distinctive features of the RESET project:

- 1) The intention, encapsulated in the project's acronym, to effectively redesign the notions of scientific and academic excellences towards greater gender sensitivity and inclusiveness, with a view to foster unbiased research and innovation. Whereas this goal is to be pursued primarily at consortium level – for instance through the joint statement for equality, diversity and excellence adopted in March 2022 by RESET partners, GEPs adopted as part of the project are also meant to contribute to foster an open, biased-free notion of excellence.
- 2) The extensive use of co-design methods, referring to “collective creativity as it is applied across the whole span of a design process” (Sanders and Stappers 2008, 6, quoted in D9.2 – *Co-Design Starter Kit*). Theoretically grounded in the Scandinavian participatory design

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<sup>7</sup> In the context of RESET, gender audits have been carried out in form of extensive data collection surveys undertaken as part of WP1 – Design, implement and mainstream GEPs. Result were delivered in individual institutional reports covering key recommended areas of actions, and complemented by a comparative analysis and the qualitative information gained through the analysis of training and capacity-building needs of partners under WP4 - Train communities towards equality and settle new standards

tradition, the approach to co-design to be implemented by the RESET community applies to all GEP development stages and intends to bring about the following benefits:

- ✓ Fostering collective creativity and the use and engagement of the versatile expertise available at RESET organizations
  - ✓ Contributing to enhancing more inclusive and democratic practices in the workplace, and the empowerment of those otherwise marginalised
  - ✓ Increasing the quality of design solutions (new practices, policies, tools), thanks to involving a large number of stakeholders with diverse expertise, interests and needs
  - ✓ Enhancing the acceptability, ownership, and adoption of the designed solutions through involving stakeholders at every stage of their development
- 3) The attention to be brought to intersecting inequalities such as gender, age, ethnicity, origin or citizenship status, sexual orientation, or abilities, to design inclusive measures, addressing the needs of particularly disadvantaged or marginalised groups and adopting a finer-grained lens to tackle issues at stake.
- 4) The use of Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) as a method for integrating the gender dimension in research contents, to be operationalized using specific guidelines and a checklist, an establishing an ad-hoc protocol for GIA at partner level, as presented in D7.2 – *GIA Guidelines, checklist and protocol*.

Following a brief account of the legal and policy contexts in which RESET partners operate (section 2), the checklist (section 3) first introduces guiding evaluation questions for steps 3, 4 and 5 of the GEP process set out in the GEAR tool, namely its design (setting-up), implementation and final assessment, with a specific focus on sustainability drivers. These questions constitute a first benchmarking element, which is further complemented by a rationale, probes and a list of potential indicators for each of the following GEP dimensions defined for RESET:

- ➔ Available resources, in terms of staff, financial support, knowledge and skills
- ➔ Stakeholders' engagement and participation through co-design
- ➔ Leadership's endorsement and support
- ➔ Visibility and accountability
- ➔ Inclusiveness and intersectionality
- ➔ Sustainability and institutionalization

This checklist is intended to be mobilized throughout the lifecycle of a GEP. It has been primarily designed for the GEP-implementing partners of the RESET project, by whom it should be used in articulation with other Monitoring and Evaluation instruments such as GEP impact pathways. Based on the experience of RESET partners with designing and implementing their GEPs, this checklist, intended to be a living document, will be continuously tailored and enhanced by WP2 leader. This resubmitted version, dated July 2022, thus contains significant updates, drawing upon the assessment of the Equality Plans adopted by RESET partners as of June, 2022.



While being rooted in the specific context of this EU-funded initiative, the checklist can be used as a stand-alone instrument by any other research performing or higher education organization, since it elaborates on lessons learnt and prior tools, and due to RESET taking stock of the advanced practices and standards in advancing gender equality and the gender dimension in research, implemented under Horizon Europe.

## 2. Updated review of policy environments for GEP implementation

The task of designing and implementing a Gender Equality Plan is necessarily framed within specific domestic legal and policy contexts, by which institutional grounds may exist to sustain the objectives of gender equality and of mainstreaming the gender dimension in research. Over the past decade, these policy frameworks have considerably evolved, following – and occasionally, anticipating above-mentioned developments at EU level. RESET partners are thus placed in different positions with regards to their respective institutional environments. Drawing upon the extensive policy update that underpinned the release of the new version of the GEAR tool in March 2022, and considering ulterior policy evolutions, we provide below a brief outline of the domestic environments in which RESET partners are implementing their GEPs, four of which submitting either their first or Horizon Europe enhanced GEPs. These environments are presented by alphabetical order.

Although **Finland** has no specific legal provisions to promote gender equality in research, the Act on Equality between Men and Women (1986) on achieving gender equality in teaching and education explicitly refers to research and stipulates that institutions shall prevent gender-based discrimination, foster the promotion of equality between women and men and the improvement of work conditions. The Act also requires educational institutions including universities and (public) research organisations to adopt GEPs covering decision-making, career management, work-life reconciliation, teaching, as well as gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment. The Finnish Gender Equality Action Plan 2020-2023 also explicitly covers higher education and research, further supporting this GEP mandate.

About a decade ago, **France** also moved forward to enshrine specific provisions in the legislation on higher education and research, and to mainstream principles stated in the broader gender equality legislation in this area. In 2013, the Charter for Gender Equality in Higher Education was published, encouraging universities to adopt broad gender equality measures. It was followed the same year by the Act on Higher Education and Research and shortly by The Act on Effective Equality between Men and Women (2014), thus providing a consistent legislative framework for mainstreaming gender equality in research and higher education institutions. The former imposes gender parity for elections to all governing bodies of research organisations and the nomination of Gender Officers in all universities and research organisations. In 2020, a governmental order (*circulaire*) reinforced the enforcement of this policy framework, requiring GEP to be adopted by all public higher education institutions before March 2020. Those are intended to cover primarily work-life balance, career management issues and sexual harassment, as detailed in a template annexed to the *Roadmap for effective equality* released in 2020, thus offering guidance for GEP design and enforcement.

In **Germany**, the Framework Act for Higher Education of 2007 requires universities to promote the accomplishment of gender equality - in particular in relation to access to decision-making and makes it a criterion to access public funding. The Introduction of gender quota for boards of listed companies in Germany, which stipulates that at least 30% of board members must be women, has received a lot of attention. Furthermore, in 2021, a new Federal Equality Foundation was established to strengthen gender equality work through connecting different actors and by providing knowledge and service for practitioners. Additionally, the Federal Equality Law also features the obligation to develop a GEP for public organizations such as universities. These provisions are detailed and further reinforced by specific pieces of legislations and policies at the *Länder* level, especially as higher education is primarily a sub-national competency in Germany.

In **Greece**, general gender equality legislation partly covers higher education and research. As established by laws adopted in 2008 and 2016, all decision-making bodies in public organizations - including universities and research organisations, are required to enforce a 33% gender quota for the under-represented sex. According to two pieces of legislation approved in 2007 and 2019, higher education institutions are bound to contribute to achieving gender equality and fighting gender-based violence, and are since also encouraged to integrate the gender dimension in teaching and research activities and to set-up Gender Equality Committees (GECs) at all universities. GECs, to be enforced at Senate and department levels, had been established by most Greek HEIs as of mid-2022.

Although equality and non-discrimination are embedded in the Constitution, the Labour Code, the Equality Act and the Act on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions of the Republic of **Poland**, the Polish legal and policy framework on gender equality is known to have experienced a series of major setbacks over the past few years. Once the first country in former socialist Europe (1987) to set-up a gender equality mechanism to comply with the CEDAW that is had been also among the first countries worldwide to ratify (1980), Poland progressively stalled the anti-discrimination policy agenda developed after the fall of communism and during EU accession, before it was simply reversed by the majority ruling since 2015. Gender Equality is thus scarcely mentioned in the laws adopted since. The Act on Higher Education and Science (2018) does not address gender equality as a goal or value for HEIs and research organisations, and only contains measures aimed at supporting pregnancy and parenthood, complementing a programme implemented since 2011 by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy, offering financial support for childcare centres. The National Action Plan adopted in response to the ERA roadmap was deemed little substantiated, lacking definitions, actions and enforcement mechanisms (ERAC, 2021).

**Portugal** has followed an opposite trajectory. Also a pioneering country in establishing gender mainstreaming mechanisms (the Commission for Gender Equality and Citizenship (CIG) was set up in the early 1990s), Portugal has recently reinforced its equality and anti-discrimination agenda. Although there has been little reference to gender equality in the policy and legal framework regulating higher education and research, as of 2019, a gender quota of 40% is enforced for statutory bodies and top management in public organizations, including universities. Although GEPs have not been legislated in Portugal, they are nonetheless promoted by the National strategy for equality and non-discrimination for 2018-2030 (ENIND for its acronym in Portuguese). The sector is also bound to facilitate advanced training on gender and intersecting



inequalities, and GEP are expected to tackle gender-based violence and to address discriminations on the ground of gender identity and sexual orientation. The overall strategy is overseen by the National Commission for Gender Equality and Citizenship. According to EIGE (2022), Portugal is on the path of becoming an innovation leader when it comes to gender equality policies.

If GEP supporting legal and policy provisions only exist in nine EU Member States<sup>8</sup>, four of them (Germany, Finland, France and Portugal) are represented in RESET. Hence, although placed in different conditions to design and implement comprehensive gender equality plans, RESET partners reflect the current state of the play in Europe. Therefore, paying attention to the opportunities and limitations brought to this endeavour by their respective domestic policy frameworks, will be relevant to their overall performance, and to their capacity to support positive policy developments at national levels through innovation, effectiveness and delivering additional guidance and resources to other research-performing and higher education institutions.

**Tab. 1 Policy environments at national level** (Source: EIGE, 2022, modified)

Country	GE legal and policy provisions for Research & Higher Education	GEP provisions and policies
DE	Yes (Federal / Länder)	Yes (Federal for R&I / Länder for HEIs)
GR	Yes	No
FI	No	Yes
FR	Yes	Yes
PL	No	No
PT	No	Yes (for HEIs)

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<sup>8</sup> AT, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, PT and SE

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### 3. Checklist for GEP monitoring and evaluation

#### 3.1 Guiding M&E questions for GEP design, implementation and sustainability

Hereafter, guiding evaluation questions are intended to provide the ground for adopting a monitoring and evaluation perspective ex-ante (GEP design), during (GEP implementation) and after (GEP sustainability). Those, initially designed for the SUPERA project, have been updated to reflect RESET specificities and development, following the adoption of four GEPs as of July 2022.

#### Guiding evaluation questions for GEP design

- Is the design of the GEP based on an in-depth gender analysis of the organization, for which sufficient quantitative and qualitative data have been harvested, and were potential data gaps identified to be remedied through the GEP, as it has been ensured for RESET?
- Is the GEP based on a clear and context-specific strategic framing of the problems it intends to solve, to be reflected in the preamble or supporting rationale of the plan, but also in clearly defined objectives, and does this strategic framing refers to the inclusive excellence?
- Does the GEP carefully consider the legal and policy environment for its design and implementation, taking into account domestic (sub-national and/or national), EU and international legal and policy frameworks?
- Does the GEP design process formally involve the active participation of a diverse group of stakeholders, for instance using co-design and other participatory methods as those mobilized for RESET, with sufficient time and space for them to provide inputs and express concerns?
- Is the GEP design process sufficiently transparent, with relevant information being timely communicated to different categories of stakeholders, including social partners, students' organizations, consultative and decision-making bodies?
- Is the GEP holistic, adequately covering the 5 areas of actions defined for Horizon Europe, with due attention to the specificities of implementing organizations, based on their missions and statutes, distinguishing for instance Research Performing Organizations from Research Funding Organizations and universities from RPOs without a teaching mandate.
- Does the GEP address both people (through awareness-raising, training, support or mentoring) and structures (through targeting institutional decision-making and agenda-setting processes, regulatory frameworks, methods, communication and culture)?
- Is the GEP sufficiently inclusive, considering potential intersecting inequalities and the situation of disadvantaged or marginalized groups in devising solutions?
- Does the GEP rely upon clearly defined actions, for which responsibilities and timeline are clearly communicated, and reflected in a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators monitoring outputs, outcomes but also processes and impact?

## Guiding evaluation questions for GEP implementation

- Has the GEP been endorsed through a formal approval procedure meeting usual decision-making and endorsement requirements for strategic, organization-wide documents?
- Have any applicable legal requirements for the adoption of a GEP been met and have those led to any limitation in the scope of the GEP actions, with regard to the recommended areas of actions under Horizon Europe?
- Is the GEP an official, publicly communicated document of the organization?
- Does the implementation of the GEP rely upon sufficient stakeholders' mobilization, notably through their participation in formally established GEP support bodies (such as the Gender Equality Boards established by RESET partners)?
- Are the GEP support bodies and other enforcement mechanisms, as the Gender Equality Boards established under RESET, working efficiently?
- Is there sufficient accountability from the services or bodies to whom responsibilities for GEP implementation have been ascribed?
- Does the GEP benefit from continuous, explicit and public support from top management?
- Does the implementation of the GEP involve the regular participation of various groups of stakeholders and users, for which relevant methods such as co-design are mobilized?
- Are the targeted audiences being engaged with, both quantitatively and qualitatively?
- Are there any differences in degree or outreach, in the way the different areas of action are being covered during implementation, and are those differences addressed?
- Is the GEP responsive both to windows of opportunity for change, and to encountered resistances, and are they effectively addressed?

### Guiding evaluation questions for GEP sustainability

- Does the GEP rely upon a sustainable use of the (financial, time and human) resources devoted to its implementation?
- Is the GEP framed and/or referred to in other strategic documents of the organization, such as statutes, mission statements, strategic plans, communication strategies or training plans?
- Are the GEP implementing structures either institutionalized - for instance, a Gender Equality Office(r) or directly associated with permanent structures or bodies of the organization?
- Is there a balance between: a) temporary, targeted or ad hoc actions and b) actions aimed at durably impacting structures, procedures, ways of doing things and organizational culture?
- Does the GEP strive towards the sustainability of most structural actions, ensuring their institutionalization and/or incorporation into existing practices, procedures or structures?
- Is there evidence of the GEP to positively impact other organizations or (research) policy levels, through benchmark, policy transfers or replication and upscaling?
- Is there evidence that the GEP and its dissemination contributed to further strengthening the existing framework for GEPs at regional/national level and/or to positively impact this framework?
- Have GEP actions led to a positive reframing of the notion of scientific excellence, and is it possible to bring actual evidence of this development?
- Have GEP actions paved the way for a more inclusive and diversity-sensitive approach to gender equality, embarking other intersecting inequalities such as age, disability, gender identity, ethnicity or origin?

## 3.2 Checklist for use

### 3.2.1 Note about indicators

It is important to carefully design the set of indicators to be used, as those should help answer the evaluation questions posed at the start of the intervention. Indicators are first required for monitoring the planning phase, with view to check that all required components of the project are in place – for instance, that GEP design appropriately cover the four areas of action of RESET. **Performance indicators** will be further used to monitor project and GEP implementation:

- Quantitative indicators related to implementation will focus on volumes, such as the number of trainees in a session or participants in a co-design workshop, the overall number of activities carried out in respective areas of action, the level of interaction on an online platform or the number of people reached for each target group.
- Qualitative indicators will particularly target how activities are being carried out in terms of timing, preparation, communication, stakeholders' involvement and with regards to their very objective. Qualitative indicators are also meant to focus on people's experiences and perceptions. They are particularly important to measure attitudinal and organizational resistances or support to the project's objectives.

Provided the nature of RESET, performance indicators on project's outcomes and impact, should primarily aim at measuring institutional change, for which both quantitative and qualitative indicators are required. Due to the specificities of structural change and the fact that it usually takes more time than the one allowed by project's funding, quantitative indicators should be used and selected wisely, so that they can capture key areas of change and document the achievement of RESET's intermediate and long terms goals, and a broader set of *qualitative* indicators and data collection methods should be adopted, to understand how change happens, and how far it goes.

Concluding remarks to this document provide a glimpse of the typology of indicators adopted in the first version of the GEPs adopted by RESET partners.

**Tab. 2. Typology of indicators**

<b>Outputs indicators</b> help you to monitor whether you are doing what you planned (outputs). For example, number of capacity building training organised, number of participants, etc. However, they do not give you an idea of the effects brought about by these outputs.	<b>Impact Indicators</b> are indicators that measure the long-term impact of a project. For example, the increase proportion of women in decision-making positions, or the integration of a Gender+ approach considering other inequality factors in career management policies.
<b>Outcome Indicators</b> measure the medium impacts of a project. For example, number of participants to a capacity building training seminar that are applying their new knowledge	<b>Process indicators</b> are those indicators that are used to measure project processes or activities. For example, the number of people appointed in different department as gender focal persons.

### 3.2.2 Checklist per item

#### About resources

##### Why it matters

Setting-up and implementing a GEP requires both qualitatively and quantitatively sufficient resources to be mobilized. Those include dedicated staff, (gender) expertise, time, knowledge about organizational practices and arrangements, facilitation, training, self-assessment as well as negotiation skills. A wise management of these resources is also required. Experience of gender mainstreaming has been widely documented in a number of sectors, and tells that staff mobilized on GEP implementation can experience difficulties when dealing with resistances, obstructions or isolation and that their contribution to put the organization in motion, is not always fully acknowledged.

An ex-ante assessment of the availability, scarcity, or absence of requested capacities for change, as the one carried out for RESET partners, allows for identifying gaps and defining needs in terms of resources. Lacking some of the resources to be put into GEP design and implementation should of course not prevent from action but lead to develop and use them carefully. This checklist offers support to wisely use and mobilize them.

This is especially important for projects which, like RESET, are short-lived, resource intensive and primarily draw upon EU-funding, but applies to any GEP implementing organization, where resources for gender equality work are likely to be scarce, irregular and/or context-dependant.

##### → How to proceed?

- ✓ Assess and further monitor the availability of knowledge and skills for structural change among your core and extended groups of change agents: the core team devoted to GEP design and implementation, but also the group of stakeholders to be regularly mobilized for (co)designing the GEP and overseeing its implementation. This assessment can include a screening of attitudes towards facilitating structural change for gender equality, and should be regularly updated to ensure that necessary knowledge and skills remain available and are further enhanced.
- ✓ Monitor whether the financial resources – either external or internal - made available for the GEP are wisely and consistently used with respect to your (project's and) GEP's objectives and timelines: underspending can reflect that opportunities for action or for increasing knowledge and skills are being missed. Overspending can indicate that your effort might not be sustained over the full duration of the (project and) GEP. A differential consumption of financial resources on respective areas of action should draw attention over your priority agenda, with which must be consistent. Securing long-term resources for GEP implementation should be a key sustainability objective, for which resources available also at regional or national level, should be duly identified.

- ✓ Human resources are key: ensure that responsibilities for GEP implementation and monitoring are well distributed among people (functions) and services, and can be sustainably exerted over its life cycle (and the life cycle of the supporting project as RESET, where applicable).
- ✓ Make sure that the contribution of all those involved in GEP implementation is duly acknowledged, not only within the GEP core team and gender mainstreaming structure(s) – such as RESET Gender Equality Boards, but also towards the whole organization, and that their experience in driving structural change is valued in terms of professional trajectory and work opportunities.
- ✓ Provide regular opportunities for staff and other involved stakeholders (which may include students or external experts) to exert self-reflexivity and creativity, and to share about encountered difficulties, and ensure that their experience is considered to support GEP implementation. All involved people should have the opportunity to raise concerns or encountered resistances, and to benefit from mutual learning and support.
- ✓ Along with human resources, time is also key: ensure that for each GEP related task, time is made available, especially for the involvement of permanent staff exerting other responsibilities, so as to sustain their motivation and contribution.
- ✓ Use GEP supporting structures, as the Gender Equality Boards established for the RESET project, to discuss resources allocation, raise concerns and explore additional internal and/or external resources that can be made available to GEP implementation, notably as part of policy initiatives undertaken at regional or national level.

## → Potential indicators?

### Knowledge/skills

- The regular monitoring of available resources indicates that those are growing steadily and that a broader spectrum of knowledge and skills is covered over GEP implementations years
- Internal/external opportunities for capacity building are actively pursued and used
- Activities are being carried out internally to disseminate knowledge relevant to GEP implementation

### Financial resources

- Funding resources are spent consistently with the intensiveness of GEP related activities
- Funding resources are distributed accordingly to the priority agenda set in the GEP
- Significant deviations with respect to planned use are reported to project management
- Opportunities for sustainable (internal or external) funding of the GEP are actively pursued

### Human resources

- Tasks and responsibilities are clearly ascribed and well distributed among team members, functions and services within the university.
- GEP implementation does not exclusively falls upon staff contracted on a project's payroll
- Senior, permanent staff is involved in the daily implementation of the GEP



- Fora are created – such as co-design sessions or focus groups, to share about GEP implementation and exert self-reflexivity
- The contribution of each team member is explicitly valued within and outside the team

### *About stakeholders' engagement and participation*

#### **Why it matters**

It is certainly the most widely shared impact driver or factor of success for effective structural change: all relevant categories of stakeholders (depending on context), such as senior and middle management; supporting, administrative and research staff, students, are to be engaged with GEP design and implementation.

Involving stakeholders in an inclusive way, can help lowering resistances to adopted measures, increase participation to planned activities and enhance ownership and accountability. At the design phase, it is key to reflect their experience of gender imbalances, biases or discrimination but also their conception about their own work. During implementation, it is crucial for activities to reach their targeted audiences, for measures to deliver their full impact and for data and information to be collected in order to monitor the GEP and inform potential changes.

Participation is not only about representation, but also about co-design: bringing together people with different views and experiences can help designing better solutions, identify neglected issues and anticipate on potential deviations. It also leads to increase creativity and contribute to build and expand a true community of practices around the common goal of achieving structural change.

RESET intends to be methodologically innovative with regards to stakeholders' participation: Co-design workshops are to be used as shorter-lived co-creative spots through which specific problems and solutions can be worked out, with the participation of a variety of stakeholders, for which a Co-design starter guide was developed.

#### **→ How to proceed?**

- ✓ Ensure that stakeholders with a rich knowledge of the organization and how it actually works, are engaged in the process: those can help identify hidden mechanisms and save time. They can also assist in adequately (re)framing solutions.
- ✓ Identify the appropriate communication channel for each stakeholders' category you wish to engage as there is probably no one fit for all. Usually, the most appropriate are those actually being used by a specific category for its daily practice or communication, such as newsletter, mailing lists or social media account.

- ✓ Deliver tailor-made messages, which are both consistent with the overall GEP's objectives and adapted to their targets. Some problems highlighted in your initial gender audit, survey or analysis, are more likely to draw their attention than others. Once involved, a broader picture of the situation with regards to gender (in)equalities and bias can be delivered.
- ✓ Use participatory techniques to the greatest possible extent. Co-design techniques are adequate to enhance participation, lowering (and dealing with) resistances and create ownership. Co-design workshops have been devised as an innovative forum to apply such techniques under RESET. Although there is some learning cost attached to their facilitation, they also constitute a true opportunity for involving stakeholders<sup>9</sup>.
- ✓ Ensure that the use of co-design is not limited to the design phase, but is also mobilized to support effective implementation, address resistances and challenges, and monitor and evaluate progress. Participation and engagement are important throughout the GEP lifecycle.
- ✓ Make the most of what exists: stakeholders should also be engaged through existing platforms, such as on-the-job training schemes, regular executive meetings or during routine consultation with social partners. Identifying those platforms is one of the best ways to ensure that targeted groups are reached, and that appropriate inputs are received from them.
- ✓ Creating new platforms, such as a network of gender focal persons, can also be relevant for both GEP implementation and sustainability. Such platforms can be rather flexible, and supported by dedicated communication channels, such as a gender equality newsletter or their own social media account<sup>10</sup>.
- ✓ Inclusiveness does not only mean to engage with constituted groups such as those determined by their functions. It also refers to address all relevant categories of users of the organizations, including those on temporary/external contracts or belonging to less visible groups. Adopting an intersectional focus or agenda is thus important to prevent other biases in the adopted measures (see: About inclusiveness and intersectionality).

## → Potential indicators?

### Ensuring that knowledge about the organizations is on board

- Stakeholders representing core departments or units are regularly involved through GEP-implementing and other Gender Mainstreaming support structures such as RESET GEBs, including HRM, central executive services, study supervision (schooling dept., for instance).
- Targeted groups are reached via tailor made communication, and engaged via the appropriate platforms, as evidenced by response or participation rates.
- The loss of organizational knowledge is prevented by ensuring that departing stakeholders are replaced by people with a similar organizational background, and by transferring knowledge to the GEP implementation team and/or Gender mainstreaming support structure (GEB).

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<sup>9</sup> Their adoption has also been made less costly by their more systematic use as part of EU-funded initiatives. For instance, the recently completed [GE Academy project](#), which consisted in the design and roll-out of various participatory capacity-building formats for advancing gender equality in research and higher education, has left a compilation of open source, easily replicable formats.

<sup>10</sup> As the decentralisation of gender mainstreaming work is deemed a condition for it to succeed, latest generations of EU-funded GEP projects as RESET, put a strong emphasis on developing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming support structures such as Gender Equality Hubs or Gender Equality Boards, as well as networks of focal persons at the level of faculties or research units.

## Participation

- Stakeholders are engaged both through ad-hoc, issue-specific fora (such as Co-design workshops or Fab Labs<sup>11</sup>) and more institutionalized ones (departmental meetings/on-the-job training schemes...)
- Participation techniques used are experience-based, so that stakeholders' individual experience is valued and that they also learn through experience
- On a topical level, research and other stakeholders' categories are engaged with an inclusive definition of academic excellence and their awareness of intersecting inequalities is challenged and enhanced through participatory activities, as commanded by RESET project.
- Stakeholders' participation is monitored quantitatively and qualitatively, through internal ex-ante/ex-post surveys or questionnaires

## Stakeholders' inclusiveness

- The circle of involved stakeholders significantly broadens along the project, as evidenced by participation records and qualitative assessment of the participation
- It is made sure that all voices can be heard, including those from less institutionalized (or more fluid) groups such as staff under temporary contract or external students
- Communication about the GEP and related activities is inclusive in terms of written and visual languages, targeted audiences and delivered messages (see also: about Inclusiveness and intersectionality).

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<sup>11</sup> Inspired from their use in ICTs, Fab Labs are also short-lived, thematic, and problem-solving structures through which solutions are co-designed, prototyped and tested by a group of stakeholders. This group can either be ad-hoc (created for the purpose of one particular Fab Lab) or pre-exists, provided that sufficient knowledge and skills are involved. For an account of their use for GEP design, see: [www.superaproject.eu](http://www.superaproject.eu)

## About (top) leadership endorsement and support

### Why it matters

Support from the top leadership usually ranks first among success factors for effective structural change. This is certainly only partially true, as change can also be driven bottom-up or externally, and support for a GEP should not depend exclusively from top-leadership support as the latter can eventually be withdrawn, due to changes in priorities or democratic turnover (elections). Yet, it remains a powerful impact driver, as it can leverage greater support from the mid-management level, and place gender equality high on the strategic agenda of the organization.

Two characteristics at least are to be met for this support to deliver its promises: it shall be explicit and long-lasting. Explicit support entails that it is made publicly, and through channels that are those usually used for communicating strategic decisions or commitments. Long-lasting entails that it is reiterated on different occasions and translated into support to adopted measures.

To prevent the risk of lip service, cultivating this support and making the most of it, are two important strategic goals to support GEP implementation. Carefully analysing top-leadership's motivations and priorities so as to build the case for gender equality, creating channels to access top-leadership on a regular basis to report about GEP challenges and success, will thus be key to securing enduring support.

The RESET project yet add another, far reaching layer to the issue of leadership endorsement and support: aiming at redesigning scientific excellence to embrace unbiased patterns and practices of research and innovations, it does not only intend to strategically secure support, but also, if not foremost, triggering a paradigmatic shift in the way university leaders conceive the very notions of merit and excellence.

### → How to proceed?

- ✓ A careful analysis of the core challenges endorsed by the top management as those defining the future of the organization, can be useful to craft a message on gender equality and the gender perspective in science as (similarly) strategic goals. In the context of the RESET project, this entails addressing how top leadership frames the issue of scientific excellence, and the underlying norm of meritocracy.
- ✓ Regularly report to the top leadership of the organization about the GEP, from its design to its implementation, so that core orientations and measures are known and explicitly endorsed, specifically accounting of GEP progresses with regard to achieving RESET defining priorities.
- ✓ Involve top management in some co-creation activities, to increase the participation of mid-management and enhance ownership among all categories of participants. Showcasing that

a GEP is about innovation and an institution in motion, can be a powerful argument to ensure top-management support.

- ✓ Generate accountability, notably with regards to GEPs' overarching goals, by making the GEP itself publicly endorsed by the top-leadership and management<sup>12</sup>, thus making its objectives the ones of the whole community.
- ✓ Identify communication opportunities: there are certainly key venues and events, both internally and externally, for your top leadership and management to express support to the GEP. Being informed in due time about it and preparing ready-made communication, can help making the most of these opportunities.
- ✓ Incorporate regular communication on the GEP status in the communication agenda of the top leadership and management, and ensure reiterated public references to the Joint statement for equality, diversity and excellence through a number of fora.
- ✓ Due to regular elections or appointment processes, but also possibly to externally driven or internal crises, changes can occur in top leadership and management over the GEP implementation period: anticipating potential risks or opportunities driven by these changes is thus important.

### → Potential indicators?

#### Generate accountability

- Regular briefs about GEP design and implementation are held, and the broader community is informed about this reporting activity.
- The GEP is officially endorsed by the top leadership and this endorsement is made public.
- Communication about the GEP is part of the communication agenda of the top leadership.
- Key GEP-related documents are regularly referred to by top leadership.

#### Make the most of windows of opportunity

- Key messages are crafted around GEP objectives and core measures, so that they can serve the strategic communication of the organization, both internally and externally.
- Changes in leadership are anticipated, so that they can be converted into opportunities, or that risks for GEP implementation can be mitigated.

#### Ensure that support is long-lasting

- Successes (in outreach, participation or impact) are highlighted, to increase awareness about changes being brought.
- Windows of opportunity are used to ensure that core measures of the GEP are integrated into framework documents such as mission statements or statute.

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<sup>12</sup> Top leadership refers for instance to the level of Rectors, Vice-Rectors and Directors, while top management refers to the level of Deans, Vice-Deans or research unit leaders, both being crucial to GEP successful design and delivery.

## About GEP visibility and accountability

### Why it matters

The experience of EU-funded GEP projects tells that even with a strong implementation mandate and external resources, GEPs adopted were not always officially endorsed nor made public (EIGE, 2015), which seriously undermined their status of internal policy document and considerably limits accountability. This led to making GEP official endorsement and publication a mandatory process requirement under Horizon Europe.

Publicly communicating about a GEP and the process that leads to its adoption, is crucial for building a shared awareness about the challenges of the organization with regards to gender equality and integrating the gender perspective in research, but also to make it a valid reference for all categories of staff and stakeholders. Public commitments can serve as a support for greater accountability, increase the knowledge of the community about the GEP, encourage certain categories of stakeholders to articulate new claims and broaden the scope of structural changes being carried out.

Publicly communicating about the GEP also enhances transparency about the diagnosis and the process that led to adopting certain solutions, thus lowering potential resistances. Hence, the visibility of the GEP shall be ensured early enough in the process of its adoption and endorsement, and throughout its implementation.

Enhancing accountability will also be achieved through ensuring that key objectives of the GEP – such as promoting an inclusive notion of excellence or addressing intersectionality, are progressively publicly endorsed by the whole organization!

### → How to proceed?

- ✓ Ensure to communicate widely about the participatory process leading to GEP design and adoption, and to inform the community about the expected steps/timelines of the process.
- ✓ Provide regular information about GEP related activities, beyond their targeted audiences and through appropriate channels such as social media or internal communication platforms.
- ✓ Engage with the audiences on social media and through other channels to further interact with all categories of users.

- ✓ As made mandatory under Horizon Europe, make sure that once adopted, the GEP is posted online in a reader-friendly version on the official website of the organization, so that it can be referred to at any moment by any interested staff/student.
- ✓ Location on the website is deemed important, as it also evidence the official character of the document and its ranking in terms of priority and should therefore be carefully devised. Multiple access (for instance from the Intranet) is recommended.
- ✓ Beyond the GEP itself, make sure to design professionally edited communication and dissemination material, such as podcasts, social media campaigns or institutional videos, highlighting its key objectives, areas of action and messages.
- ✓ These contents should be part of a broader effort to ensure the visibility of the GEP beyond the limits of the institution, engaging with relevant policy networks at regional and national levels, professional associations, the media and the broader audience.

#### → Potential indicators?

- A communication roadmap/plan for GEP design, adoption and implementation is adopted, and regularly updated.
- Regular briefs about GEP related activities are provided and communicated widely.
- Impressions of and engagement with posts on social media and other contents posted online (such as podcasts or videos) regarding the GEP.
- GEP-dedicated events are held internally for various categories of staff and users.
- Evidence (such as external requests for information) shows that the GEP is known beyond the limits of the organization, especially among “natural” institutional or private partners of the organization, which in return contributes to increase ownership internally.
- GEP publicly available from the website of the organization and via the intranet.
- GEP referred to in other official documents issued by the organization, such as annual reports, mission statements, pluriannual strategies...

### About GEP inclusiveness and intersectionality<sup>13</sup>

#### Why it matters

To address diversity and promote inclusiveness, RESET adopted an intersectional focus, by which GEP implementing partners intend to address gender in intersection with other inequality or discrimination grounds. This approach draws upon the concept of intersectionality coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) for collective action and theorised for instance by Ange-Marie Hancock (2007) for policy analysis and policy action, which acknowledge that intersecting inequalities do not only arise frequently but generate substantially different experiences of inequality and discrimination.

Whereas the reality of intersectionality and how it shapes people's experiences is widely acknowledged, there is so far very little guidance available for implementing an intersectional approach when designing a gender equality strategy or plan, and limited evidences of intersectionality in practice.

Therefore, GEP implementing organizations are here invited to be innovative, by adopting an intersectional lens from the data analysis phase, throughout GEP design and implementation, to its evaluation, so as to design inclusive actions, to ensure that those are reaching out their targeted audiences and to tackle situations of multiple discrimination. In the context of RESET, all partners devised actions to address multiple, intersecting discriminations and inequalities, notably through additional data collection or inclusive communication. These innovations contribute to enhance the standard for more inclusive GEPs, and will provide a valid benchmark for future initiatives. Although the road to intersectionality is challenging, it is worth the trip.

#### ➔ How to proceed?

- ✓ Whereas sex disaggregated data are at least partly available to support the baseline gender audit or survey to be first carried out, make sure to collect additional information about other inequality/diversity streams that may intersect with gender, such as age, abilities, type of contract, number of children...
- ✓ Whereas information about staff and students' origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity are rarely collected by research and higher education organizations both due to ethical and legal constraints<sup>14</sup>, it is yet important to document cumulative

<sup>13</sup> Inclusiveness is literally the ability to be inclusive, in other terms, to make organizations prone to proactively promote, acknowledge and value diversity, and to provide necessary changes

<sup>14</sup> INVITED Project Report (2019) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in European Higher Education Institutions: EUA.



experiences of discrimination through more qualitative means. Items can thus be included in organization-wide surveys which fully respect national GDPR standards and legal provisions.

- ✓ Involve persons from particularly disadvantaged, marginalized and invisibilized groups from the GEP preparation phase and throughout its life cycle, so that problems can be analysed from different standpoints and experiences, that designed solutions and actions are inclusive of different experiences of inequality and discrimination and that impact is monitored in an inclusive way, paying attention to potential implementation bias or gaps.
- ✓ When using co-design and other participatory methods, specifically address and engage with intersecting inequalities, both in terms of facilitation (how people are engaged with the activity) and contents (which topics and issues are to be covered).
- ✓ When providing capacity-building, make sure that methods and contents proposed are diversity sensitive, and that interactions make space for participants to safely express different standpoints and experiences, and document their experience through exit surveys.
- ✓ Include the mandate to adopt diversity sensitive communication practices to the GEP, and make sure to adopt a similar standard for communicating about the GEP itself towards different audiences of the organization.
- ✓ Mainstream an intersectional focus in the content of the GEP and its monitoring, through defining problems, target groups, solutions and indicators.

#### → Potential indicators?

- Data and information are collected during the baseline audit, survey or analysis about different streams of diversity and potential intersecting inequalities, and information gaps are identified and covered by the GEP where appropriate.
- The objectives of the GEP are defined in an inclusive way, making reference to the situation of different groups or categories of staff and users.
- The composition of GEP-supporting structures also aims at diversity in terms of positions, professional situation, origin or abilities, and other potential streams of diversity are internally valued and acknowledged.
- GEP actions tackle intersecting inequalities and address different groups or categories among staff, students and other users' categories.
- Communication about the GEP and GEP-related activities is diversity sensitive in terms of contents, channels and targeted audiences and diversity sensitive communication is made part of the plan itself.
- Specific output, outcome and impact indicators are adopted to reflect GEP objectives in terms of inclusiveness.

## About GEP sustainability and institutionalization

### Why it matters

Sustainability largely derives from above-addressed aspects. Appropriately used resources, stakeholders' engagement, top-leadership support and visibility, as well as the ability of the GEP to foster inclusion, do largely contribute, altogether, to its sustainability and the one of the commitments that underpin it.

However, from an institutionalist perspective that is, a perspective that takes institutions seriously, other steps can be taken to ensure that the efforts put into the design and implementation of a GEP will be long lasting, just as the impact of the adopted measures. Although there is no one best way to sustainability - as context and opportunity structures matter, paying attention at every step to incorporate core actions to a) existing regulation, decision making or training frameworks and b) to daily routines and practices, can enhance the resilience of the actions contained in the GEP.

Sustainability can be pursued through institutionalization (of a gender equality office, of part of the mechanisms and solutions adopted under the GEP, of its funding...). It can also be achieved by incorporating gender equality and the gender perspective in research to the mission statement of the organization or to the core messages it delivers about itself. It can also be pursued through establishing long-lasting mechanisms for data collection, stakeholders' consultation on gender issues and making gender expertise more readily available throughout the organization. In all cases, it should be pursued at every stage to ensure that the GEP will deliver its full potential for structural change.

In the context of RESET, specific attention should be paid to diverse legal and policy implementation contexts, and their potential evolutions throughout the project's duration. Key sustainability aspects will also include the capacity of partners to redesign the notion of scientific excellence towards greater inclusiveness.

### → How to proceed?

- ✓ Carefully review and appropriately address the domestic (regional and/or national) policy framework for GEP implementation, identifying facilitating as well as hindering factors, and anticipating on potential evolutions.
- ✓ For each contemplated measure, consider which framework document could possibly accommodate the proposed solution, and what would be the process to incorporate it.
- ✓ Make the most of opportunity structures: carefully monitor review processes meant to lead to the update or drafting of relevant documents (such as statuses, strategic plans,

mission statements, internal regulations, or processes...) and get gender expertise involved. Opportunity structures should not only be addressed at the organizational level, but also within the broader policy and regulatory framework within which the organization operates.

- ✓ Although one-shot actions might be occasionally necessary, foresee planned measures to be integrated to regular procedures or routines, with appropriate capacity building activities for those agents in charge of implementing them.
- ✓ Ensure that one-shot actions are reported about so that they can be inspiring and possibly duplicated or institutionalized – both within the organization and beyond.
- ✓ Actively pursue other longer term internal or external funding opportunities for GEP.
- ✓ Ensure that in-house gender expertise and knowledge is being built, and will be transferred internally, to avoid losing track of challenges and progress, and proceed cumulatively in the longer term.

#### → Potential indicators?

- Gender training to be incorporated to on-the-job training scheme of the organization.
- Gender equality mechanisms reinforced at the institutional level, in terms of mandate, staff and resources (for instance, the setting-up of a gender equality office).
- Gender mainstreaming instruments – such as data collection or gender auditing systems, a network of focal person or dedicated communication channel, are put in place.
- Gender knowledge disseminate within the organization, for instance through resources centres, on-the-job training modules, new courses or curricula.
- A process of drafting and adoption for a new GEP is initiated or planned prior to the completion of the RESET project.
- The existence of a GEP, its period of validity and ideally, its process of adoption, are enacted in a formal institutional document.
- The GEP is annexed to the statutes, mission statement or any other regulatory or planning doc.
- The GEP reveals to be inspiring to other similar (and different) organizations, to level up the standard of compliance with both national and Horizon Europe requirements.
- There is evidences of GEP-driven policy transfers outside the realm of research and the academia in your country.
- There is evidence that the organization – and possibly, others, do subscribe to an informed, biased-free and inclusive notion of scientific excellence.

## 4. Concluding remarks

Following the submission of four Gender Equality Plans by the first GEP implementing partners of RESET, and following up on the advices provided by the monitoring and evaluation partner during the design process, a preliminary assessment has been performed. Based on a set of generic indicators communicated in the Monitoring and Evaluation plan of the project, and using the checklist as a guiding document, this assessment is briefly summarized below. Highlighting the key features of the adopted GEP with regards to the specifics of RESET, it calls attention upon a few in the prospect of their implementation phase, and will be further enriched based on participatory Monitoring and Evaluation activities to be carried out later in the project.

In terms of presentation, it is important to underscore that all adopted GEPs fits the standard of strategic, evidence-based documents, framed in a broader policy and institutional framework. Beyond bringing elements of diagnosis to support the case for action, preambles all make reference to RESET and to university policies and documents. Broader policy references (UN, EU, national) are present in three out of four GEPs. Their absence in the GEP adopted by the University of Łódź is justified by the willingness to primarily refer to internal university documents, in absence of a strong policy and legal framework to support GEP implementation.

As from the main features summarized in table 3, it appears that GEPs adopted under RESET are **comprehensive** in terms of issue coverage and addressing challenges revealed by the thorough audits carried out during the early phase of the project, being thus also *evidenced-based*. It will thus be particularly important to monitor whether this comprehensiveness is sustained throughout the implementation life cycle of each GEP.

GEPs are **participative** as they largely relied upon co-design activities and broader consultation through the Gender Equality Boards established over the first phase of RESET, and intend to rely upon the contributions of variety of services for their implementation. Monitoring and assessing to which extent the use of co-design techniques throughout the project will help supporting participation and engagement, and the degree of ownership achieved over the GEP by the stakeholders and services involved in its implementation, will therefore be key.

**Inclusiveness** has been ensured in terms of addressing the situation of the different collectives of the academic community and intent to address the situation of particularly disadvantaged groups or individuals. The **intersectional** approach of RESET is largely reflected in the GEPs, although those may adopt a multiple-discrimination approach and limit the scope of intersectionality to a limited number of targeted actions. If implemented, though planned measures are *innovative* and would contribute to enhance the standard in terms of addressing intersecting inequalities. This is especially remarkable as RESET GEPs makes explicit references to intersectionality and/or

multiple discriminations in implementation contexts where those are disputed (France) or deemed contentious (Poland).

GEPs are *cumulative* insofar they take stock of: a) existing structures and policies; b) gender audits carried out earlier in the project and c) tools and instruments (to be) developed as part of RESET. Cumulativeness is also evidenced in references to other organizational, national or international policy documents. Yet, references/use of tools developed under other initiatives are *not* included. It will thus be a priority in terms of monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that the vast body of knowledge and instruments available to support gender mainstreaming in research and the academia, as well as the lessons learnt from practices, will be taken on board.

Contributing to enhance the standard for such internal policy documents, it is worth underlying that many GEP actions are aimed at anchoring change into structures, internal documents and processes, while other are devoted to GE *infrastructures* – that is, strengthening gender information management systems, gender mainstreaming and gender equality structures, thus fostering *sustainability*. It will be another priority of the Monitoring and Evaluation exercise, to assess the capacity of RESET partners to incorporate changes in the daily functioning of their respective organizations, to make a strategic use of the resources available to this endeavour, and to rely upon a variety of actors to advance their agenda, both internally and externally to their organizations.

**Tab. 3 Main features of RESET GEPs**

	GEP FEATURE	AUTH	UBx	UPorto	UL
Implementation context	Explicit mandate	X	X	X	
	GEP mandatory		X		
	Reference to GEP in broader policy document				
Gender mainstreaming infrastructure	Sustainable GE mechanism / function	(X)	(X)	(X)	
	Gender data management system	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
	Separate gender training plan				
	Decentralized GM structure (focal persons)		(X)		
	Complaint mechanism for SH and GBV	(X)	X	(X)	(X)
GEP structure	Preamble with policy framework <i>EU/International/National Organizational/RESET</i>	X x x	X x x	X x x	X x x
	General objectives or goals	X	X	X	X
	Specific objectives	X	X	X	X
	Timelines defined	X	X	X	X
	Responsibilities defined	X	X	X	X
Intersectionality	Additional approach				
	Multiple discriminations approach	X		X	
	Intersectional approach		X		X
Scientific excellence	Scientific excellence discussed	X	X	X	X
	Review of criteria foreseen		X	X	
Monitoring and Evaluation	Output indicators	X	X	X	X
	Outcome and impact indicators				

Core areas of action and objectives of the GEPs are presented, and complemented by action plans including specific objectives and actions, indexed on timelines and (mostly) output indicators. Services and positions responsible for delivery (often multiple), are identified. Capacity-building and monitoring activities are mainstreamed throughout GEPs (no separate sections or annexed documents)

As shown in table 4, GEPs are relatively balanced in terms of types of actions (directed to structures/processes; analysis and monitoring; awareness-raising and capacity-building). Actions aimed at impacting ways of doing things and institutionalizing change predominate and account for more than the half of all actions. Actions aimed at analysis and monitoring are intended to secure consent, and to support robust Gender data management systems.

**Tab. 4 Distribution of GEP actions per priority areas and partners**

Thematic Areas	AUTH	UBx	UŁ	U.Porto
<b>A</b> Recruitment, retention, career progression including the availability of family-friendly policies	A. Inclusive and gender-sensitive environment D. Gender equality in recruitment and career development	I. Recruitment, retention, career progression including the availability of family-friendly policies	A. Recruitment, retention and career progression	B. Recruitment, retention and career progression
<b>Actions</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>B</b> Leadership and decision making (accountability, transparency, inclusiveness)	A. Inclusive and gender-sensitive environment C. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions	II. Leadership and decision making	B. Leadership and decision making	A. Leadership and decision making
<b>Actions</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>C</b> Gender dimension in research and knowledge transfer (content and curricula)	B. The gender dimension in teaching and research	III. Gender dimension in research and knowledge transfer	C. Gender dimension in research and knowledge transfer	C. Gender dimension in research and knowledge transfer
<b>Actions</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>D</b> Gender biases and stereotypes, sexism and sexual harassment	A. Inclusive and gender-sensitive environment E. Gender-based violence and harassment	IV. Gender biases and stereotypes, sexism and sexual harassment	D. Gender biases and stereotypes, sexism and sexual harassment	D. Gender biases and stereotypes, sexism and harassment
<b>Actions</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Total of Actions</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>60</b>

However, indicators included in the GEPs are virtually all *output* indicators, offering little learning value about *outcomes* and *impact*: this will require RESET partners to consider further the expected impact of their actions and to devise valid indicators to measure it. Quantitative indicators are little present and limited to gender balance in certain functions or bodies. A broader use should be considered for GEP-specific KPIs + support of experimental evaluation. Building a broader set of indicators will thus be a core priority of the Monitoring and Evaluating partner of the project, a task for which the checklist detailed above will offer continuous guidance throughout the GEP implementation cycle.