

Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together



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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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# **GIA Policy Recommendations**



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### **Abbreviations**

- CoP Community of Practitioners
- DEI Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- ENRIO European Network of Research Integrity Offices
- ERA European Research Area
- **GE Gender Equality**
- GEO Gender Equality Officer
- **GEP Gender Equality Plan**
- **GIA Gender Impact Assessment**
- **GM** Gender Mainstreaming
- HEI Higher Education Institution
- KTH Kungliga Technical Högskola Royal Technical University
- **R&I** Research and Innovation
- **RFO** Research Funding Organisation
- SDG Sustainable Development Goals
- SG&DA Sex, Gender and Diversity Analysis
- SMART Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
- UKÄ Universitetskanslersämbetet Swedish Higher Education Authority





### **Executive Summary**

Our four year long experience in mainstreaming gender dimension in research content and disseminating GIA checklist in RESET partner universities, allows us to make more general GIA policy recommendations. These GIA policy recommendations are for both HEIs and research policy makers in the European Research Area. We have reflected and enriched our recommendations with the literature on the topic. As we have learned (e.g. SheFigures 2021) less than 2% of research publications globally and in Europe explicitly address sex and gender in their key fields – title, abstract and keywords. This particular example also influences gender blindness in knowledge production and adds to biased generalisations. This is the particular problem definition that gender impact assessment (GIA) aims to solve - **gender bias in knowledge**.

Thus, in WP7 we have prepared GIA policy recommendations that are useful both on institutional level and European Research Area levels. These presented GIA policy recommendations address several key dimensions to ensure gender mainstreaming in core operations of HEIs, namely; both research and education, as well as their supporting operations. Furthermore, the aim has been to ensure effectiveness and relevance of gender mainstreaming through these GIA policy recommendations. The recommendations provided by the RESET project partners are designed to be easy to apply. We intend to ensure the overarching goals and objectives of the GIA policy recommendations are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) and that these goals align with broader organisational or societal objectives for contributing to greater gender equality. The deliverable D7.4. structure is introduced as follows.

Based on a literature review, the Chapter 2 presents seven core domains for further policy recommendations. These seven domains are research content, education content, institutional gender equality plan, research funding, institutional data, mainstreaming gender expertise as a professional qualification criterion, and mainstreaming gender dimension in institutional communication.

In chapter 3, the main results of the partner survey conducted during final months of the project are summarised. The survey consisted of five thematic areas (attached as Appendix) and its aim was to help RESET partners systematically draft a GIA policy recommendation across various dimensions to ensure effectiveness, feasibility, and legitimacy as the focus was on challenges encountered throughout the GIA checklist implementation. The analysis resulted in altogether sixteen (16) institutional policy recommendations. It is worth considering the possibility of adding these policy recommendations as action points for an institutional gender equality plan among others.





Chapter 4 presents altogether seven GIA policy recommendations for European Research Area (ERA) policy-makers. The chapter presents the seven policy recommendations in a table. Each of the policy recommendations is presented both with short-term and longer-term implementation strategies. The policy recommendation focus areas are research, education, gender equality plan (GEP), research funding, monitoring data, gender expertise and communication strategy - which all should be nothing less than explicitly addressing and improving the gender responsibility of academia in a SMART manner.

Chapter 5 briefly describes the seven GIA policy recommendations in their own small paragraph and builds connections between them resulting in a continuum. In the long run the GIA policy recommendations are aiding towards institutional transformation and gender mainstreaming in knowledge production in a precise manner. Chapter 5 closes the deliverable D7.4. The document D7.4. GIA policy recommendations should be read as a compilation of recommendations on mainstreaming gender dimension in knowledge production in general. Additionally, it can be consulted when it is time to update the institutional GEP.

In the RESET project we hope that all presented policy actions will be both consumed in practice and developed further in aim to better meet the local realities and new future challenges. This work can be continued in close collaboration with the local GE community of practitioners (CoPs). Work towards Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together continues for sure. For that purpose, please note the GIA checklist for analysing gender dimension of a research proposal is freely available online: <u>https://toolkit.wereset.eu/#/gia-checklist</u>





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#### **1.** Introduction - an Evolving Context

In Europe and the rest of the world, the desire for equality between women and men seems to be strongly supported but also increasingly contested: gender issues seem to be polarising public opinion more and more (Alexander et al., 2024). When it circulates in the social arena, gender is perceived by certain social and political groups as an ideology rather than a science, with increasingly assertive denunciations. It is difficult to measure the effect of this hostility and denunciation in scientific circles. We have only experienced one explicitly hostile reaction to our activities on GIA, in the form of an open letter written by a biology professor to the President (published in the national press) at the University of Bordeaux in 2022. Here again, it is difficult to gauge the general feeling in the universities, and we can only interpret the reception received by our training proposals on GIA as ranging from indifference (shared) to enthusiasm (localised and most often dependent on the commitment of a female researcher in the laboratory/research department on this issue).

In this political context marked by a split over values in which gender issues are involved, the best response seems to us to be precisely the gender impact assessment (GIA) as a methodology to provide explicit and tangible academic research results on gender. Showing that gender is science, based on theoretical perspectives and a lot of empirical research, with concrete results. Applying the GIA checklist in the research application phase is helping to enrich the content of research in different disciplines. The GIA checklist is helping to frame the limitations of the results from a sex and gender perspective more accurately, and thus assisting in making interpretation of research results as well.

GIA guidelines D7.1. (Heikkinen et al., 2022) provided a starting point for HEIs to operationalise and institutionalise gender impact assessment as a support service for researchers. Co-designed GIA checklist (Heikkinen et al., 2022) introduced in the deliverable D7.2., sets out the questions to be asked at every stage of the research process, and is fully in line with this process of recognising gender as an essential dimension of the scientific approach. Deliverable D7.3 GIA implementation report (Heikkinen et al., 2024a) illustrates the contribution of the gender perspective to different subjects in different disciplines, and is a useful resource from this point of view. Furthermore, GIA online training demonstrated in the D7.5. (Heikkinen et al., 2024b) provides a possibility for students and researchers deepening their understanding on sex and gender dimension in knowledge production. So, this document GIA policy recommendation D7.4. takes the lessons learned during the GIA implementation back to policy formulation aiming to result in improved practices on mainstreaming gender dimension in knowledge production in HEIs.

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#### 2. Research Review for Formulating Recommendations

Promoting gender equality in research and innovation (R&I) is part of the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. The Horizon Europe Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 committed to make the integration of gender dimension a standard requirement in all research and innovation content throughout the programme. In the new Horizon Europe Strategic Plan for 2025-2027, the inclusion of gender dimensions in R&I will continue to be a standard requirement across the entire programme. The application forms for Horizon Europe participants require applicants to describe how they have included gender dimensions in their projects or provide justification on why the gender dimensions do not apply to the proposed project.

As a result of literature review we present the following seven main domains related to gender mainstreaming in research and elaborate them for further policy recommendation. These seven main domains are research content, education content, institutional gender equality plan, research funding, institutional data, mainstreaming gender expertise as a professional qualification criterion and mainstreaming gender dimension in institutional communication.

Content of the selected literature review is structured in each section according to the following idea: each domain is presented in **a title** followed by **a key message** that summarizes the idea of the domain. A brief chapter provides a summary of relevant research, which ends with an identification of a specific research based **needs**. Based on that we have formulated a **vision statement**, that is the aspired objective for the policy recommendation. The structure aims to clarify the rationale of the seven main domains and the seven related research based policy recommendations presented, that need to be tackled urgently both institutionally as well as ERA more generally.

#### 2.1. Gender Dimension in Research and Innovation Content

**KEY MESSAGE:** Including gender analysis in the research design can bring new perspectives, raise new questions, and promote social equity by making research results relevant to all of society and the environment. Ignoring sex and gender aspects can lead to harmful effects or missed opportunities for innovation and even cost lives and money. Existing elaborative case studies illustrate differences that acknowledgement of gender dimension can bring into knowledge production, research and innovation. The GIA online tool provides first-hand aid for a researcher to analyse the gender dimension in research.

There are many ways to include gender dimension or gender analysis in every research content and project. Stanford University's Gendered Innovations website (Schiebinger et al., 2011-2020) offers scientists from different STEM fields practical methods to analyse sex, gender and intersectionality in research content. They also provide case studies to demonstrate how analysing sex, gender, and intersectionality drives



innovation. These case studies are available on the Gendered Innovations website under four categories: science, health & medicine, engineering and environment. Case studies successfully including the gender dimension in research were also presented in the RESET GIA implementation report (Heikkinen et al., 2024). These cases can help researchers understand how to consider gender in their own work. The cases are divided into four sections by field: "Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics" (STEM), "Social Sciences and Humanities" (SSH), "Life Sciences" (LIFE), and "Multidisciplinary projects" (MULTI). Each case includes a description of the case and its gender perspectives, a short summary of the highlights, questions to consider based on the example and RESET GIA checklist, suggestions for further reading and references. These real case examples can give researchers ideas on how to incorporate gender dimension in their research.

There are already self-study materials which provide information about gender impact assessment in research, such as Stanford University's Gendered Innovations website (2011-2020), Gender and Excellence (2014) and Gendered Innovations 2 (2021) (D7.3). Recently, a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) online checklist (RESET GIA checklist) has been created by the RESET teams to help researchers to independently consider the role of gender in their work. Using the guestions in the checklist, researchers can assess their research proposal. The checklist is divided into three sections which are excellence, implementation and impact. The online checklist includes additional information and references on the topic, making it more user friendly and comprehensive. checklist The GIA is freely available online: https://toolkit.wereset.eu/#/gia-checklist

**NEEDS:** Gender Dimension is lacking from more than approximately 98% of the research publications.

**VISION STATEMENT**: Gender dimension is to be mainstreamed in all research, when relevant through online GIA checklist: <u>https://toolkit.wereset.eu/#/gia-checklist</u>

#### 2.2. Gender Dimension in Academic Education Programmes

**KEY MESSAGE:** Gender dimension in education is crucial, because universities are providing education for the next generation of researchers and citizens. Each higher education institution must ensure that gender equality is integrated into the content, design, and delivery of education. This includes implementing gender equality into programmes and providing gender perspective training for both students and teachers to improve education that values diversity and avoids reinforcing inequality or hierarchical structures that prevent participation in democratic knowledge production in academic and professional contexts.

In the RESET project we have arranged training courses for Master's students, PhD researchers as well as Post Docs and a Summer School in connection with WP4, which all were well received based on evaluations. It is important that students starting from



the first year receive knowledge on the importance of gender dimension in research and society as large (Bragazzi et al., 2024).

The Swedish Higher Education Authority UKÄ emphasises that a gender perspective is integrated, communicated and systematically included in the content, structure, and implementation of the education. UKÄ requires that every higher education institution takes gender equality into account in the content, design, and implementation of education programmes (Kungliga Technical Högskola, 2022).

In the RESET project we have collaborated with Royal Technical University (Kungliga Technical Högskola, KTH), and learned about their higher education development work. Royal Technical University is located in Stockholm Sweden, and it is one of Europe's leading technical and engineering universities known for their institutional effort on gender equality. A public lecture presenting the development work led by Professor Anna Wahl was arranged at the University of Oulu on the 19th of March 2023 - as a celebration of the Finnish national day of gender equality. Thus, we wanted to present this successful and encouraging practical example implemented in KTH on inclusion of gender dimension in the content of education programmes. The following seven central points of the KTH to take into consideration in gender sensitive education are listed here to gain a viewpoint. These points are presented in the KTH's website, illustrating their interpretation and operationalisation on how gender dimension could be included into educational content as an example. Furthermore, KTHs Gender Equality Office is also included updated version of the EC's GEAR in the tool (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/equality-office-royalinstitute-technology-kth-se?language\_content\_entity=en)

The following list presents the KTH's interpretation on UKÄ's objective on how they include the gender dimension into the content of the education programmes. Each point in the list presents a different dimension in gender dimension inclusion on, which then can be assessed

(https://intra.kth.se/en/styrning/jamstalldhet/necessaren/integrering-pa-progr/ukas-granskning-av-hogskolornas-kvalitetssystem-gallande-jamstalldhet-1.1053951):

1. A gender perspective is taken into account; awareness and knowledge of gender equality need to be considered important, which influences the content and form of education.

2. A gender perspective is communicated; education is influenced by gender equality perspective and it has a visible part in course plans, follow-ups, formulations of intended learning outcomes, etc.

3. A gender perspective is anchored; knowledge of gender equality affects education, is made visible in documents, and decisions related to this should be made transparent, monitored, and evaluated.

4. The concept of systematic work; having a long-term plan for integrating knowledge and awareness of gender and equality into all programmes, with continuous monitoring of its implementation.

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5. The concept of content; meaning that knowledge about gender is presented in education so students can have the idea of basic concepts in gender research and knowledge of theories that describe meanings of gender in society, in working life and at the individual level.

6. The concept of design; having a clear structure and plan for when and how integration happens in all programmes. That this is worked in via degree goals and learning goals, and that there is a clear structure for follow-up via programme analyses in the quality system. It is about how skills and abilities, values and attitudes within the field of gender equality are ensured, how this is followed up and remedied if necessary.

7. The concept of implementation; includes gender-conscious pedagogy. Actions need to be taken to promote inclusive gender equal and equitable teaching and create an educational environment free from discrimination. This involves how the teachers conduct the teaching, i.a. that they acquire knowledge of and practice gender-conscious pedagogy and that there are routines and information to prevent harassment and sexual harassment.

**NEEDS:** Gender Dimension is still lacking in many higher education programmes. We need more gender-sensitive teaching, which would ensure that people become more knowledgeable of the impact of gender in society, ultimately leading to more inclusive knowledge.

**VISION STATEMENT:** Gender dimension is to be mainstreamed in all degree programmes. The role of education in promoting gender awareness in research is crucial, as it helps future researchers understand how gender may affect their work and studies.

#### 2.3. GEP actions on Gender Dimension in Research and Education

**KEY MESSAGE:** European Commission's funding instrument Horizon Europe (years 2021-2027) for research and innovation requires all grant applicants including higher education institutions to have a gender equality plan. One of the programme's essential factors is integrating the gender dimension into research and teaching content. These equality plan requirements help to include women's, gender, and feminist studies in higher education curricula and pedagogical practices (Lopes, 2024).

The gender equality plan (GEP) as a policy tool aims to sustainably change organisational processes, cultures and structures in research and innovation (R&I) to address and reduce gender inequalities (European Institute for Gender Equality). GEPs should be comprehensive and holistic, addressing a wide range of gender equality issues across the entire organisation and its relevant stakeholders. It should be inclusive and address both women and men in all their diversity. The most important aspect of GEP is to include concrete objectives aimed at improving gender equality within the organisation. The goals and measures in the GEP are defined based on a



comprehensive assessment of the current situation. The GEP also sets timelines for implementing actions and evaluating their progress and success. It should be flexible and adaptable, incorporating monitoring and evaluation activities to support continuous learning. Finally, it should establish clear roles and responsibilities for activities and to outline the general governance and leadership accountability for guiding the implementation of the GEP and its progress and outcomes.

**NEEDS:** Mainstreaming Gender dimension in all Higher Education Institution operations including the core activities research and education.

**VISION STATEMENT:** GEPs are institutional policies that should be used to systematically mainstream gender dimension in research and education.

#### 2.4. Gender Dimension in Research Funding Decisions

**KEY MESSAGE:** It is important that funding agencies include gender analysis in their policies and guidelines for grant applicants. National research agencies play a vital role in promoting high-quality research that benefits all of society. To achieve this, many national funding agencies have started implementing policies to integrate sex, gender, and, more recently, diversity analysis into the grant proposal process. This ensures that research benefits all by considering the needs of different groups in society and promoting innovation that includes and values diversity.

For achieving excellence in science, it is essential for national research agencies to integrate sex, gender and diversity analysis (SG&DA) into the design of research grant application evaluation. Several national funding agencies have started to implement policies to include sex and gender analysis into grant applications (Hunt et al. 2022; Sjöö & Kaltenbrunner, 2023; White et al., 2021). Hunt with their colleagues (Hunt et al. (2022) developed an analytical framework for implementing and evaluating SG&DA policies. This framework was used to evaluate the quality of SG&DA policies across 22 significant national funding agencies from around the world. The framework covers five aspects which are "definition of terms", "proposal guidelines for applicants", "instructions for evaluators", "training for applicants, evaluators and staff" and "evaluation of policy implementation". Based on this framework, a survey was conducted for funding agencies to gather information regarding the agencies' actions related to SG&DA. The results showed that funding agencies are swiftly creating new quidelines and policies to support the integration of SG&DA considerations in research but a simple policy requirement is not sufficient enough on its own. Different funding organisations also provide materials for educating researchers on gender analysis in research. Funding organisations can provide examples of research which successfully include gender dimensions in their work, how-to guides, checklists, etc. These materials are usually given in funding calls, guidelines, and other funding-related resources. (Sjöö & Kaltenbrunner, 2023).



Policies differ between funding agencies, and it is important to understand how they work in practice. It is also necessary to consider how researchers understand and can answer these questions about inclusion of sex and gender in their research (Sjöö & Kaltenbrunner, 2023). Of the research proposals submitted to the Swedish Research Council in 2020 within the STEM fields, 19 percent stated that they considered the gender or sex perspective relevant to their research proposal and content, while 81 percent stated that sex or gender perspectives were not relevant. Many of the responses rejecting the relevance of the gender or sex perspective provided only brief justifications in their applications, often coming across as superficial.

**NEEDS:** Inclusion of the gender dimension in research funding instruments is needed in aim to mainstreaming the gender dimension in all research and research projects.

**VISION STATEMENT:** Gender dimension shall be mainstreamed in all research, unless proven irrelevant.

#### 2.5. Institutional Data on Gender Dimension in Research Content

**KEY MESSAGE:** Integrating the gender dimension into research activities and outcomes is a current challenge in achieving inclusive excellence. Between 2015-2019, only 2% of European publications included gender dimension. This underlines the need for universities and research institutions to enhance the assessment of gender impacts in their work. By prioritising gender analysis in research, we can increase understanding and address the differences and challenges faced by different genders, ultimately leading to more inclusive and equitable research outcomes.

The European Commission report *She figures* [10] presents data on gender equality objectives in the field of R&I. According to the *She Figures* report, less than 2% of publications at European level included a gender dimension in their research and innovation content. The research material consisted of publications from the years 2015-2019. Publications including gender perspectives have only increased less than 1% since 2010. This highlights that the growth has not been significant. As examined by country, the inclusion of gender dimension in publications varied between 0.79% (Ukraine) and 4.3% (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Growth range, in turn, varied between - 4.9% (Iceland) and 17.7% (Ukraine). In European countries and Associated Countries with available data, the growth was negative in 14 countries and in 27 countries it was positive.

There is variation between different fields on how likely publications contain a gender dimension. *She Figures* shows that Medical and Health science publications will most likely include a gender dimension. In both review periods 2010-2014 (3.9%) and 2015-2019 (3.8%), Medical and Health science had the largest inclusion of gender perspectives in publications, although it decreased by around 0.1 pp. The second largest proportion of publications with a gender dimension were in Social Sciences, which remained stable (3.0%) across both review periods. The fewest publications Page 8 of 25



containing a gender perspective were found in the field of Engineering & Technology with only 0.2% and in Natural Sciences with 0.8%, both remaining stable across both review periods. At the country level, in all cases Medical and Health Sciences (EU-27 member states and associated countries) had the largest proportion of publications considering gender perspectives, varying between 2.99% (Italy) and 11.05% (Montenegro). Social sciences came second with the percentage ranging between 0.49% (Moldova) and 6.4% (Iceland), with Agricultural & Veterinary Sciences and Humanities & Art in the third place. Engineering & Technology had the smallest inclusion of gender perspectives ranging from 0.05% (Ukraine) to 1.48%. (Albania). The second lowest inclusion of gender dimension publications was in Natural Sciences ranging from 0.21% (Armenia) to 1.53% (Iceland).

Herbert et. al (2022) developed a method to identify and visualise the proportion of research publications that include explicit mention of sex and gender (Herbert et. al., 2022). The method analyses publications with a gender dimension in research related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The research analysed publications from the year 2020. The findings indicate that attention given to sex and gender perspectives differs across the 16 SDGs. In the following table "Table 1: Sustainable Development Goal and percentage of of publications including sex and gender keywords", each of the SDGs is presented together with a percentage of the sex and gender sensitive publications

Sustainable Development Goal	Proportion of publications that include sex and gender keywords
Gender Equality	95%
Good Health and Wellbeing	62%
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	39%
Reduced Inequalities	37%
No Poverty	31%
Quality Education	25%
Zero Hunger	20%
Decent Work and Economic Growth	14%
Life on Land	9%
Sustainable Cities and Communities	7%
Life Below Water	7%
Clean Water and sanitation	5%
Responsible Consumption and Production	4%
Climate Action	3%

Table 1: Sustainable Development Goal and percentage of of publications including sex and gender keywords

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Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	3%
Affordable and Clean Energy	1%

Each SDG was classified in one of three categories, "gender-sensitive", "gender-sparse" or "gender-blind". Out of 16 different SDG categories, only six were classified as gendersensitive. These categories were "Gender Equality", "Good Health and Well-being", "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions", "No Poverty", "Quality Education" and "Decent Work and Economic Growth". Four categories which were "Reduced Inequalities", "Zero Hunger", "Sustainable Cities and Communities" and "Climate Action" were classified as gender-sparse and the rest were classified as gender-blind. Altogether, only 21% of all the SDG publications reviewed included gender integration. The results indicate the need for greater integration of sex and gender across research in each SDG.

Gender mainstreaming (GM) remains a crucial part of the international research agenda but comprehensive analyses of the GM literature are scarce. Kataeva et al. (2024) studied the development, evolution and emerging themes of gender mainstreaming publications by collecting and combining data from two different databases, Web of Science and Scopus (Kataeva et al., 2024). The results show that there has been emerging growth in publications since 2017. Nonetheless, the publications from the Global South countries remain limited, except for India and South Africa. The UK, Spain and the US lead in the number of publications on gender mainstreaming listed in Scopus and WoS. Gender mainstreaming research is primarily oriented toward the development agenda, with the majority of studies appearing in journals dedicated to this field. There is still an urgent need to incorporate GM research into STEM fields.

**NEEDS:** We are lacking gender sensitive knowledge widely.Gender blind knowledge requires gender mainstreaming actions for remedy in all countries, research fields and SDGs.

**VISION STATEMENT:** Every researcher in every country and research field shall be capable to produce gender responsible knowledge and report gender aware results, when relevant.

#### 2.6. Gender Expertise in a Professional Qualification

**KEY MESSAGE:** Higher Education Institutions have a key role for providing good practical examples on valuing gender expertise. Demand to prove expertise on gender dimension in knowledge production can be applied in recruitment e.g. proven expertise of gender knowledge on one's own field, gender in knowledge production more generally, and gender equality and diversity in HEI and segregation.

Training teachers to take gender into account in their teaching is probably the best way in the medium term to disseminate gender in the research of future generations. Universities that have affiliated gender researchers could allocate their expertise for the



research projects of the scientific community. Furthermore, the RESET partner universities including University of Bordeaux, has just offered an online training course to raise awareness among its teaching community of gender and diversity issues in teaching activities as well as the RESET Train The Trainers scheme (Rozalska et al. 2024).

According to the legislation, teacher education in Finnish higher education institutions shall provide competences to promote gender equality at educational institutions. During the years 2017-2019, the SETSTOP project developed content for teacher education in Finland related to gender equality planning and equality work. The main aim of this nationwide project was to to include themes of gender equality and non-discrimination in the curricula of all the levels of teacher education provided in higher education institutions in Finland. This consists of Bachelor's and Master's level degree education of class teachers, subject teachers, vocational teachers, teachers for early childhood education and care, and student counsellor education.

In 2020, the Ombud for Equality conducted a survey (TAS 533/2020, 9.12.2020) in eight Finnish teacher training units. The survey focused on how teacher training units ensure that those who graduate as classroom or subject teachers have sufficient knowledge and skills when entering the working life in order 1) to offer gender- and equality-aware teaching and 2) to implement the requirements for the promotion of equality set by the curriculum's principles (Ombud's report for parliament 2022).

Furthermore, the ongoing Erasmus+ ED-TED is studying how the theme "Equality and Diversity" is implemented in teacher training institutions. ED-TED is an international forum working to promote equity and diversity in teacher educators' professional development. The overall aim of ED-TED is to establish a European professional network and communities of higher education teacher educators to support (virtually and face-to-face) teacher educators' professional development as they strive to have the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes (i.e., competences) to address issues of equity and diversity throughout teacher education programmes.

**NEED:** Definition of the minimum requirement of gender expertise in publicly funded research and education positions such as teachers.

**VISION STATEMENT:** Inclusion of gender expertise as a professional qualification criterion for all new and current HEI personnel in all disciplines and research fields.

#### 2.7. Institutional Communication Strategy on Gender Dimension

**KEY MESSAGE:** Universities' communication offices are in a key role of promoting gender equality and diversity within the entire HEI through various media. The communication department is therefore an important participant in disseminating progress of institutional GEP actions and engaging members of the academic community in achieving those goals.



Female and non-binary experts are less visible in the media compared to male experts. This contributes to the gendered bias in the concepts of expert and scientific expertise as well as scientific excellence more generally. Universities' communication offices act as expert mediators, but are also actively creating an image of expert and scientific excellence at the interface between science and the mass media. The research project "Discovering and communicating excellence" (EXENKO) focuses on university communication officers' work from a gender perspective. According to Altenstädter & Wegrzyn's (2024) study, the interviewed university communicators stressed that editorial offices are under time pressure and therefore often rely on established expert contacts, but at the same time emphasised their engagement with equality. Time constraints in the media sector contrast the logic of scientific communication of reliable knowledge and the verification of validity of new findings, thus resulting in a link between gender, sustainability, and visibility (Altenstädter & Wegrzyn, 2024). Representation of women and men in institutional communication is biased and needs remedies as women find and gain less recognition as experts and for their work. In addition to researchers it is important to acknowledge the value of the other areas of expertise within HEIs e.g. support personnel. During the RESET project we also implemented campaigns to increase the visibility of research support staff.

**NEED:** A need to tune university communication channels to promote institutional gender equality work.

**VISION STATEMENT:** By promoting gender equality through the visibility of female scientists, we are also promoting sustainable practices.



#### **3.** Partner Survey for Informing Recommendations

Towards the end of the project implementation (M42-M46) each local RESET team in partner universities were approached by an email consisting a request to provide short answers to a brief survey considering the potentials and pitfalls of the GIA checklist. Our intention was to gather information on local experiences of the GIA checklist implementation through the survey. The main objective was to gain a better understanding of the challenges encountered. Answers were expected to be useful especially for the policy recommendation formulation purposes, namely informing on encountered responses in the HEIs. Themes of the five questions were addressing 1. stakeholders of GIA, 2. implementation of GIA, 3. risks in GIA, 4. ethical considerations in GIA and 5. communication on GIA. Summaries of the main challenges drawn from answers to these questions are reported in following sub-chapters:

#### 3.1. GIA stakeholders

Participants involved and/or trained in gender impact assessment training sessions were MA students, PhD students, post-docs, researchers, and officers in support services. They provided generally positive feedback received, but, in some RESET partner universities, some persons expressed a lack of interest or even gender backlash by questioning gender dimension in a research content. Respondents indicated that some of the researchers participating in training expressed a lack of knowledge on gender/diversity/intersectionality, especially those who were working in STEM fields and medical sciences. In those cases, gender and intersectionality were perceived rather as something ideology based and not as concepts developed within a scientific discourse. Additionally, personal indifference was expressed especially by men as if these issues were still perceived as a women's problem.

#### Institutional recommendations based on lessons learned

- 1. Organise both gender awareness raising sessions and GIA training sessions for employees and students.
- 2. Welcome participants to the GIA training sessions from all target groups: researchers, research support service, science/research department (e.g. science commission), and gender equality officers (GEO).
- 3. Allocate institutional resources, both money, time, analytical, communication and intellectual capacity, for planning and delivering the GIA training sessions.
- 4. Focus of the GIA training sessions shall be to show clearly how gender, from an intersectional perspective, enriches research results and 'universalises' science.



#### 3.2. Policy implementation

In order to have an institutional mandate to implement gender impact assessment training and to provide GIA consultation, it is advised to include such actions in the institutional gender equality plan. This is very well aligned with the EC's recommendation on the content of the institutional GEP, according to which one of the five recommended content areas should address sex and gender dimension in research and education contents.

#### Institutional recommendations based on lessons learned

- 5. Explain in detail the purpose and importance of a tool and activity such as a gender impact assessment for research results and scientific excellence.
- 6. Practice in the training session to use the gender impact assessment tool with the "hands on" principle, and possibly use one's own research or research project as an analytical case in aim to bring gender dimension closer to one's own world.
- 7. Institutionalise the gender impact assessment training and GIA consultation sessions for researchers as part of available research support services, and for the younger generation of researchers, include them in research methodology course contents mentioned as a specific action point in the institutional GEP.

#### 3.3. Risk assessment

According to the partner survey results, the risks in relation to implementation of the gender impact assessment training and the GIA checklist relate mainly to improper or superficial end-use of the tools. Respondents reported that they encountered expressions of resistance that varied from opposition and openly questioning the meaningfulness of gender dimension in research to more subtle forms of resistance. Resistance from certain persons/services appeared as "gender backlash" - denial of the existence of gender as a category influencing sociocultural divide in societies e.g. gender based division of labour. Examples of milder forms of resistance appeared as co-optation, meaning that GIA is rather seen as including gender dimension in research as another box to tick, and nothing more. Therefore, implementing GIA is sometimes perceived as just fulfilling the research funding organisations' (RFO's) criteria on inclusion of sex and gender dimension in research content without a proper examination and analysis of it in the context of a particular research. Thus, lack of resources to correctly implement GIA training is a serious threat for aspired outcomes - increased gender awareness within knowledge production in general. High demand



for GIA training may increase a risk for those too few gender experts with a shortage of time to help researchers to implement GIA properly.

#### Institutional recommendations based on lessons learned

- 8. Including gender expertise as an area to be addressed and evaluated, and considering possibilities for including it as a required area of expertise for new positions.
- 9. Increasing gender expertise among researchers, research support services and employees in general, and including gender expertise in the curricula of degree programmes.
- 10. Establishing an institutional gender studies research unit that coordinates institutional gender expertise and provides lectures, courses and training for all faculties.

#### 3.4. Legal and ethical considerations

Academic practices and principles are global - meaning that science is practiced everywhere aligned with commonly agreed guidelines. Therefore, gender equality demands within academic knowledge production apply everywhere. Due to the selfcorrecting nature of science, in addition to scientific knowledge, scientific practices are improved constantly and this results in demands for gender balance in academic institutions, disciplines as well as innovations. Furthermore, compliance with national laws and regulations is a process whereby international commitments such as the European Commission's regulations set demands to be applied on member state level policies. The RESET project partners identified some laws in Greece, Finland, France, Poland and Portugal that align with a principle of GIA. Potential implications considered and addressed in relation to legal and ethical aspects that GIA may arise within HEIs relate to a positive understanding of GE and concepts among the community. Also more public discussion on the importance of sex, gender and intersectionality were considered as a consequence. Concerns whether implementation of GIA would result in a risk of marginalising certain inequalities were voiced, or if it would result in genderblind equality.

#### Institutional recommendations based on lessons learned

11. Gender dimension in research should be considered as an important ethical consideration more generally. This should be addressed in ethical guidelines for responsible research and innovation. Institutional research ethics advisors should be trained on gender impact assessment.



12. For further policy making, the European Network of Research Integrity Officers (ENRIO) shall be contacted for further debate.

#### 3.5. Communication and advocacy

The RESET partners proposed the use of various communication measures for promoting the GIA policy recommendations to decision-makers, stakeholders, and the public. Presented measures could be framed as mainstreaming GIA as a content for overall institutional communications. In aim to ensure systematic inclusion of gender dimension in research and education contents as well as practical GIA tools for its implementation, an institutional communication strategy is viewed as an appropriate tool for systematising this intention. A successful gender sensitive institutional communication strategy supports institutional awareness raising and informs on GIA training initiatives with an invitation to join in. Furthermore, the EC's demand on inclusion of sex and gender dimension in the research content should be included in the core institutional websites. Gender dimension shall be mainstreamed in all institutional digital communications starting from the institutional website of GEO and diversity portal spanning to intranet and broader social media. It is particularly dimensions important to address aender on the websites of laboratories/directors/allies. In addition to public events, gender dimensions should be discussed in meetings with partners. Central communication channels consist of a newsletter of the science support department, universities' news portal, and in general all newsletters / training / talks / blogs / and presentations. Thus, close collaboration with the communication office is needed as a strategic part of the institutionalisation of GIA policy and actual implementation of GIA policy recommendations.

#### Institutional recommendations based on lessons learned

- 13. In close collaboration with the communications office, revise the institutional communication strategy and mainstream gender dimension in it. This may include, for instance, initiating regular communication opportunities between female researchers and HEI communicators; integrating the expertise of gender equality officers into HEI communication processes; and using empowerment and awareness raising workshops to strengthen the visibility of female researchers and further develop formats.
- 14. In close collaboration with publication analytics (e.g. library services), conduct an impact assessment of research and publishing the results.
- 15. Use the university's website/intranet to share information regarding GIA checklist and training.



16. Mainstream gender dimension as a regular part of institutional communication activities helps to increase awareness. Additionally, awareness-raising sessions should be made available for both staff and students.



#### 4. GIA Policy Recommendations for ERA Policy Makers

In this chapter the seven GIA policy recommendations are presented as to be implemented in HEIs in the European Research Area. They are drawn from the previous Chapters - a research review presented in Chapter 2 and a survey of institutional experiences on GIA checklist implementation challenges presented in Chapter 3. The following seven principles consist of both short term strategies that may be implemented immediately within HEIs and long term strategies that may require a few iterative policy cycles.

The following table, "Table 2: Policy recommendations with short and long term strategies" presents seven policy-recommendations including a brief guidance on its operationalisation. The short-term strategies on the left side and the long term strategies on the right could be addressed through the institutional gender equality work more generally. The presented strategies may serve as useful objectives to be included in institutional GEP.

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES	POLICY RECOMMENDATION	LONG-TERM STRATEGIES
Incorporate already existing gender knowledge in research projects.	1. Deep Integration of Gender Dimension in Research and Innovation:	Transform knowledge production practices as gender responsible.
	Ensure that the gender dimension is a mandatory component in all research and innovation content.	
Engage programme leaders to promote gender dimension in the programme.	2. Profound Inclusion of Gender Dimension in Educational Programmes: Require the inclusion of the gender dimension in the content of educational programmes at the programme level.	Promote independent gender responsible course, programme and curriculum development by including gender training in initial teacher education at all levels, as well as providing in- service teacher education for higher education teachers.

Table 2: Policy recommendations with short and long term strategies



Involve entire academic community in each faculty in gender equality planning – including critical groups such as newcomers, minorities	3. Gender Dimension in Research and Education as mandatory GEP action Implement a policy for the e.g. biannual update of Institutional Gender Equality Plans to ensure they remain current and effective specifically in relation to research and education.	Ensure sex, gender and intersectional perspectives are included into the faculty level biannual gender equality plan, with the actions measured and updated regularly.
Identify academic priorities for reconstructing knowledge	4. Funding for Gender- Responsible Research: Research funding organisations should prioritise and fund research that is gender- responsible, i.e. takes sex and gender in account.	Incorporate academic community consultations and cultural consultations into the planning of gender responsible research programmes and plans.
Institutional state of the art - collecting data on educational programmes consisting gender dimension.	<ul> <li>5. Institutional Statistics on Gender Dimension in Research</li> <li>Develop and make available comprehensive institutional gender statistics to inform policy and practice (education).</li> </ul>	Annual follow-up of institutional gender statistics on inclusion of gender dimension in research publications, applications, and programmes.
Monitor participation in general training on gender dimension in research and gender impact assessment training for all students and staff.	6. Requirement of Gender Expertise as a Professional Competence: Require participation in mandatory training on the gender dimension in knowledge production for	Development of professional qualification criteria on gender expertise - requirements to be included for recruitment processes in all institutional positions.



	all relevant stakeholders with a preset frequency.	
Review the existing gender equality and DEI communications in aim to see the state of the art.	7. Institutional Communication Strategy on GE and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Contents Gender equality and DEI matters shall be part of the institutional communication flow in aim to ensure increased awareness of employees and students.	Draft gender equality and DEI matters communications plan, e.g. based on the annual clock of the institutional gender equality board agenda.



### 5. Concluding remarks

#### 5.1. Deep Integration of Gender Dimension in Research and Innovation

The first policy recommendation is to ensure that the gender dimension is a mandatory component in all research and innovation content, unless argued otherwise. In the short term, the strategy is to incorporate already existing gender knowledge in research projects e.g. through literature review. In the long term, this recommendation requires transformation of knowledge production practices as gender responsible, and therefore the connection to the following policy recommendation 2 is needed.

#### 5.2. Profound Inclusion of Gender Dimension in Educational Programmes

The second policy recommendation focuses on the inclusion of Gender Dimension in Educational Programmes. It is foundational that there exists a requirement for the inclusion of the gender dimension in the content of educational programmes at the programme level. In the short term strategy, the programme leaders' engagement for promoting inclusion of the gender dimension in the programme is crucial. Institutional hearing events are needed to discuss and ask questions on curriculum updates. The long-term strategy consists of promoting independent gender responsible course, programme and curriculum development by including gender training in initial teacher education in all levels, as well as providing ongoing in-service teacher education for higher education teachers.

## 5.3. Gender Dimension in Research and Education as a Mandatory GEP Action

The third policy recommendation focuses on systematical and analytical approach explicated in the Institutional Gender Equality Plan. Inclusion of gender dimension in institutional research and education contents shall be monitored systematically. HEIs are guided to implement a policy for the e.g. biannual update of Institutional Gender Equality Plans to ensure they remain current and effective specifically in relation to research and education. In the short term, the strategy involves the entire academic community in each faculty in gender equality planning – including critical groups such as newcomers and minorities. For longer term engagement, the strategy would require ensuring that sex, gender and intersectional perspectives in research and education are included in the faculty level biannual gender equality plan, in which the actions are measured and updated regularly. The faculty level GEP is a focused action plan concerning questions actual in each faculty, drawn by the faculty members in an alignment with the university level GEP.

#### 5.4. Funding for Gender-Responsible Research

The fourth recommendation focuses on research ethics or rather calls after higher standards in research ethics. This is because we just cannot afford to make research wrong like Londa Schiebinger famously formulates. Research funding organisations

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should prioritise and fund research that is gender-responsible, i.e. takes sex and gender in account, and thus produces exact research results and therefore stands for inclusive scientific excellence. The short term strategy includes identifying academic priorities for "reconstructing knowledge" - sex and gender gaps in knowledge exist, and it is important to acknowledge them properly. The long-term strategy could incorporate academic community consultations and cultural consultations into the planning of gender responsible research programmes and plans.

#### 5.5. Institutional Statistics on Gender Dimension in Research

The fifth recommendation focuses on developing and making available comprehensive institutional gender statistics to inform institutional policy development such as GEP as well as research and education practice. The short-term strategy includes mapping of the institutional state of the art: collecting bibliometric data on sex and gender dimensions in research publications, and data on educational programmes' gender dimension. Such data is helpful for further discussion on needs. The long-term strategy consists of activities such as annual follow-up of institutional gender statistics on the inclusion of gender dimension in research publications, research grant applications, and degree programmes.

#### 5.6. Requirement of Gender Expertise as a Professional Competence

As it has become clear, mainstreaming gender dimension in education and research requires strategies, capacities and capabilities. In order to facilitate these abovementioned five policy recommendations, this sixth recommendation requires participation in mandatory training on the gender dimension in knowledge production for all relevant stakeholders on a frequent basis. The short-term strategy is to offer and monitor participation in general training on gender dimension in research and gender impact assessment training for all students and staff. In the long-term strategy, activities such as development of professional qualification criteria on gender expertise are needed. This would consist of requirements for recruitment for all positions with a definition of needed competencies for a proper judgement on gender in knowledge in that particular field.

#### 5.7. Institutional Communication Strategy on GE and DEI Contents

There seems to be a shortage of appropriate gender equality and diversity, equity and inclusion contents in our institutional media. The reasons may vary, but one obvious reason is a lack of expertise and resources. Gender equality and DEI matters shall be part of the constant institutional communication flow in aim to ensure increased awareness as well as interest towards various GE and DEI matters by employees and students. Therefore, as a starting point it is necessary to review the existing gender equality and DEI communications in order to see the state of the art. In the long-term strategy, a gender equality and DEI communications plan should be drafted, e.g. based on the annual clock of the institutional gender equality board and related agenda.



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### 7. APPENDIX - SURVEY

#### 1. Analysis of GIA Stakeholders

- Who are trained to use the GIA, how is it spread, how is it received, which difficulty is faced, are they similar for each audience (researchers, PhD students, research support services and others)?
- How have local researchers and research grant officers, i.e. stakeholders been engaged in the GIA development process thus far?
- How would you describe the perception and the feedback received during GIA sessions/training?
- What potential barriers or challenges do stakeholders perceive in implementing the GIA policy?

#### 2. Implementing GIA Policy

- What are the practical considerations for implementing the GIA policy, including resource requirements, timelines, and potential challenges?
- How will progress towards GIA policy goals be monitored and evaluated over time?
- What strategies are in place to address potential barriers to the implementation and adaptation of the GIA policy as needed?

#### 3. Assessing Risks of GIA

- What difficulties have you faced in implementing the GIA?
- What potential risks and uncertainties are associated with the GIA?
- How have these difficulties / risks been assessed and prioritised, and what mitigation measures are proposed?

#### 4. Legal and Ethical Considerations of GIA

- Does the proposed GIA policy comply with relevant laws, regulations, and ethical principles?
- How have potential ethical implications of the GIA policy on different stakeholders been considered and addressed?

#### 5. Communication and Advocacy Related to GIA

- What communication strategies are proposed to promote the GIA policy recommendations to decision-makers, stakeholders, and the public?
- What steps are being taken to build support for the GIA policy and address potential opposition or skepticism?