

**Guidance  
for national and  
regional authorities  
for the creation and  
implementation  
of the European  
Commission GEP  
requirements**

# **Guidance for national and regional authorities for the creation and implementation of the European Commission GEP requirements**

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This Guidance supports EU Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) and other relevant national and regional stakeholders in their effort to provide support in their national Research and Innovation ecosystems to set and implement Horizon Europe requirements for Gender Equality Plans. The Guidance builds on the SWG GRI report<sup>1</sup> ‘GEPs as a catalyst for change’ and on the European Institute of Gender Equality’s Gender Equality in Academia and Research tool.<sup>2</sup>

## Who is this Guidance for?

This Guidance is primarily addressed to national authorities in MS and AC in charge of supporting the participation in Horizon Europe at the national level, such as:

- national and regional public bodies – e.g. national and regional ministries or governmental departments in charge of higher education, science, research, innovation, and/or gender equality;
- public research funding organisations (RFOs);
- other relevant public authorities.

The Guidance also encourages other relevant R&I stakeholders to be part of the conversation and the shared effort - e.g. private RFOs and private sector companies.

The aim of this Guidance is to support national bodies in identifying potential measures and steps they can take at the national level and to provide examples of good practice from different types of countries with a variety of R&I systems. An additional, more overarching goal is to contribute to the coordination of the GEP requirement at the EU level.



- 1 Report by the ERAC SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation on Gender Equality Plans as a catalyst for change, June 2021. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1202-2021-INIT/en/pdf>
- 2 The step-by-step GEAR tool developed by EIGE is available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

The aim of this Guidance is **not** to give advice on the GEP requirement implementation at the level of Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) applying for funding. Support is in place for the institutional level, including:

- trainings provided by the GE Academy project;
- the EIGE GEAR tool;
- the Factsheet provided by the Commission;
- trainings and Guidance for RPOs provided by the Pilot Knowledge and Support Facility on GEPs funded by the European Commission. Very detailed guidance already exists and has been made available by the European Commission.

## Background: gender equality policy in the EU

Promoting institutional change through Gender Equality Plans is among the most significant policy instruments to achieve long-term, sustainable advancement towards gender equality in Research and Innovation.

The new European Research Area (ERA), through the Commission Communication on the new ERA (COM(2020) 628 final) and the Council Conclusions on the new ERA for R&I (13567/20), launched a call for deepening by moving from the coordination of national policies to a deeper integration of these policies. In July 2021, the proposal for a Council Recommendation on the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe (COM(2021) 407 final) defines gender equality and equal opportunities among its values and principles and cited gender equality, equal opportunities, and inclusiveness as priority areas for deepening and creating a truly functioning internal market in knowledge. The Pact for Research states that research teams at all levels must have a gender balance and take into account diversity in the broader sense, including, inter alia, gender, ethnic, and social diversity, disability, and other factors.

Specifically, the Commission Communication ‘A New ERA for Research and Innovation’ (COM/2020/628 final)<sup>3</sup> introduces a new concept for the ERA, which for gender equality includes,

most notably, the development of inclusive gender equality plans with Member States and stakeholders, starting in 2021, and building on Horizon Europe. This inclusiveness dimension aims to better tackle three different levels: opening up to intersections with other social categories such as ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation; geographical inclusiveness, to making sure all countries are on board and well supported; and sectorial inclusiveness to better address innovation and the private sector.

Similarly, the Council Conclusions on the New European Research Area of 1 December 2020 (13567/20) call on ‘the Commission and Member States for a renewed focus on gender equality and mainstreaming, including through the instrument of gender equality plans and the integration of the gender dimension into R&I content [and invites] Member States and research funding organisations to advance measures to ensure that allocation of research funding is not affected by gender bias’.

These policy commitments were reaffirmed in 2021 in the Ljubljana Declaration which defines the objective to ‘Employ existing and newly developed tools, such as Gender Equality Plans, to facilitate systemic institutional change and remove institutional barriers’.



- 3 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2020:628:FIN>

## Horizon Europe: GEP as an eligibility criterion

In Horizon Europe, the General Annexes stipulate the following minimum process-related requirements that a Gender Equality Plan<sup>4</sup> must meet:

- **publication:** a formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management;
- **dedicated resources:** the commitment of resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan;
- **data collection and monitoring:** sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) and annual reporting based on indicators;
- **training:** awareness-raising/training on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.

In terms of the content of a Gender Equality Plan, the General Annexes list the following areas for which concrete measures and targets must be defined:

- work-life balance and organisational culture;
- a gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
- gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
- integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
- measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

This new eligibility criterion will be in place for any and all calls for proposal with a submission deadline in 2022. An interim grace period has been granted for proposals submitted in 2021.

The GEP must be adopted and in place as of the date of signature of the Grant Agreement, and not at the proposal stage. Hence, institutions may be part of consortia without a GEP at the proposal and evaluation stage.

## The GEP requirement at the national level

In response to the introduction of the GEP requirement in Horizon Europe, **the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation** carried out a study in 2021 titled *Gender Equality Plans as a Catalyst for Change* (ERAC 1201/21),<sup>5</sup> to map the GEP requirement at the national level of **Member States and Associated Countries**. The report was prepared by the SWG GRI Taskforce on Gender Equality Plans with the support of external experts, based on a survey carried out among the SWG GRI members to assess the adoption of GEPs by Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) and to identify needs related to the implementation of GEPs at the national level.

The report identifies the following eight main challenges:

- 1) Building political consensus to achieve substantive change through GEPs;
- 2) Policy coordination to build a common definition of a GEP requirement;
- 3) Monitoring and evaluation of GEP implementation;
- 4) Uptake of GEPs by RPOs at the national level;
- 5) Mobilising support and resources to build capacities at the national level;
- 6) Involvement of the private sector;
- 7) Knowledge development, capacity building and mutual learning at the EU level;
- 8) Inclusiveness with a special focus on intersectionality.

For these challenges, the SWG GRI presents eleven recommendations to the Commission Member States and Associated Countries.



4 Note that a strategic plan or an inclusion strategy that would fulfil all mandatory requirements of a GEP will be considered as equivalent.

5 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1202-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

**Table 1. Requirements for GEPs in public HEIs and/or RPOs and their features**

country	Law	Public policy	Building blocks	Support Structure	Monitoring	Sanctions	Funding for GEP development
<b>Austria</b>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
<b>Germany</b>	Yes*	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Denmark</b>	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Finland</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
<b>France</b>	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Iceland</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Ireland</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Israel</b>	No***	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Norway</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Portugal</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Spain</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Sweden</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Switzerland</b>	Yes**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

\*Germany has a legal GEP requirement for RPOs on the federal level. For HEIs the requirement is in place at the regional level (Länder), and Länders are responsible for GEP implementation.

\*\*Switzerland has gender equality as a legal requirement for institutional accreditation of HEIs. GEPs are compulsory in order to apply for funds at the national level for cooperative projects.

\*\*\*Israel does not have a legal GEP requirement for HEIs and RPOs in academia but it is in place for some of the national RPOs.

The SWG GRI has identified that national authorities have a key role in coordinating with other countries, in informing and awareness-raising, in funding and allocating human resources, in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the requirement, and in assessing its impact. The next two sections will show examples of ways in which national authorities have integrated GEPs or their equivalents in their own R&I policy frameworks in terms of process-related building blocks and content-related building blocks.

The Table 1 above presents an overview of the GEP requirement in place at the MS and the AC level.

## The equivalence of national/regional GEP requirements and the EC requirement

This section provides an overview of the equivalences that exist between the national GEP requirements established either through law or policies and strategies, on the one hand, and on the other, by the GEP requirement defined as an eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe. The objective is to provide an overview of information on where individual MSs and ACs are positioned vis-à-vis the GEP requirement.

**Table 2: Overview of the equivalence of the national/regional GEP requirements and the EC requirement**

EC requirement	AT	BE-WBF	BE- Flanders	BE-Brussels	CH	CZ	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	IE	IL	IS	IT	LT	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	SE	SI	TR	
<b>PROCESS-RELATED BUILDING BLOCKS</b>																									
Publication (mandatory)	In place	Not in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Not in place	Partially in place	In place	To be announced	Partially in place	To be announced	In place	Not in place	Not in place	To be announced	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	In place	Not in place	To be announced	In place	TBA	To be announced	
Dedicated resources (mandatory)	In place	In place	Not in place	Partially in place	In place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Not in place	In place	In place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	Partially in place	Not in place	To be announced	Partially in place	TBA	To be announced	
Data collection & monitoring (mandatory)	In place	In place	In place	Partially in place	In place	Not in place	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	In place	Not in place	In place	In place	TBA	To be announced	
Training (mandatory)	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	To be announced	To be announced	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	To be announced	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	Partially in place	Not in place	To be announced	Partially in place	TBA	To be announced	
Incentives (optional)	Not in place	In place	In place	Partially in place	In place	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	Not in place	To be announced	Not in place	In place	In place	To be announced	Not in place	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	Partially in place	Not in place	Not in place	In place	To be announced	To be announced	
Sanctions (optional)	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	Partially in place	In place	To be announced	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	In place	Not in place	In place	In place	To be announced	To be announced	
Award (optional)	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	Partially in place	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	In place
<b>CONTENT-RELATED BUILDING BLOCKS</b>																									
Work-life balance and organisational culture	In place	Not in place	In place	Partially in place	Not in place	Not in place	In place	To be announced	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	In place	Not in place	To be announced	In place	TBA	To be announced	
A gender balance in leadership and decision-making	In place	Partially in place	In place	Partially in place	Not in place	Not in place	In place	To be announced	In place	To be announced	In place	In place	In place	To be announced	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	In place	Not in place	In place	In place	TBA	In place	
Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	In place	Partially in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Not in place	Not in place	In place	To be announced	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	In place	Not in place	To be announced	In place	TBA	In place	
Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content	In place	Not in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Not in place	Not in place	In place	To be announced	In place	To be announced	Not in place	In place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	Partially in place	Not in place	In place	Partially in place	TBA	To be announced	
Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	In place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Not in place	Not in place	In place	To be announced	In place	To be announced	In place	In place	In place	In place	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	TBA	In place	Not in place	In place	In place	TBA	To be announced	
Salary gap (optional)	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	Partially in place	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	In place	In place	In place	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced
Measure for "race equality" (optional)	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	Partially in place	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	In place	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced

**LEGEND:**

In place
  Partially in place
  Not in place
 • To be announced
 TBA Information unavailable/unspecified

While 15 countries have provisions (fully or partially in place) on data collection and the monitoring of GEPs, fewer countries have provisions on the other three mandatory building blocks. Nine countries have provisions on dedicated resources, eight countries on providing training, and seven countries on publication. In addition, seven countries provide incentives, ten countries have provisions on sanctions for non-compliance, and one country has an award in place.

While 12 countries have provisions (fully or partially in place) on achieving a gender balance in leadership and decision-making, on pursuing gender equality in recruitment and career progression, and on combating gender-based violence, and 11 countries have provisions on work-life balance and organisational culture, the least addressed building block is the integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content with only six countries.

## An overview of formal GEP requirements in place at the MS and AC level

This section presents good practice from the SWG GRI members on the legal requirements of GEPs, GEPs as an ex-ante criterion, and sanctions.

### Austria

Public and private HEIs have a similar legal foundation: In their statutes, public universities have to enact and implement an equal opportunity plan in addition to a women's promotion plan (BGBl. I No.21/2015). Both plans are linked to the Federal Equal Treatment Act (B-GlBG), which applies to public universities and includes both an obligation to promote women and the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic origin, religion or ideology, age, and sexual orientation, and the prohibition of gender-related harassment. The obligations to adopt equality plans and women's promotion plans are anchored

in the University Act (UG 2002), which applies to public universities in Austria. University colleges that provide teacher education are subject to the Higher Education Act (HG), which also contains regulations for the adoption and implementation of plans for the promotion of women and equality plans. These are anchored in the statutes as well. The equality plans of university colleges devoted to teacher education are linked to the Federal Equal Treatment Act (B-GlBG). For universities of applied sciences and private universities, a provision for the development and adoption of equality plans was introduced for the first time at the beginning of 2021 - through the University of Applied Sciences Act (FHG) and the Private University Act (PrivHG), respectively. Two public research institutions have anchored specifications for the development and implementation of equality plans in a performance agreement with the Federal Ministry. For the non-university research area and for research funding institutions, there are currently no requirements for GEPs in place.

### Denmark

In line with the Danish Act on Equality between Women and Men, every three years or anytime on request from the Ministry of Equality, public authorities, state institutions, and state-owned companies with over 50 employees (including universities and RPOs) have the obligation to report to the Ministry of Equality on their gender equality objectives, on actions taken and future actions for equality (such as guiding targets or other gender equality initiatives), and on their gender distribution in management and in their staff in general.

### Finland

In Finland the Act on Equality between Women and Men is in force<sup>6</sup>. The objectives of this Act are to prevent discrimination based on gender, to promote equality between women and men,



6 [https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1986/en19860609\\_20160915.pdf](https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1986/en19860609_20160915.pdf)

and thus to improve the status of women, particularly in working life. This act directly concerns the implementation of the promotion of gender equality in education and training and sets out measures to promote gender equality in educational institutions. The act aims to protect both students and staff. Under this act, educational providers are responsible for ensuring that every educational institution prepares a gender equality plan, which must include: an assessment of the gender equality situation within the institution; the necessary measures to promote gender equality; and a review of the extent to which measures previously included in it have been implemented and of the results achieved.

### France

France has two laws<sup>7</sup> that set the requirement for GEPs and appoint a gender referent at each HEI, RPO and RFO. The GEP needs to report on different aspects such as salary gaps, professional gender diversity and equal access to responsibilities, the balance between private and professional life, and the fight against gender-based violence and harassment at the workplace. A report about GEP is expected every year. Each University President must send the report to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. The Ministry of Higher Education and Research has provided specific guidelines<sup>8</sup> and appointed three full-time employees to support public establishments in promoting gender equality. If the institutions do not comply, a sanction in the form of a fine of 1% of the total of the salaries paid over a year will follow. The deadline to comply was initially 31 December 2020. By March 2021, approximately 21% (39 out of 187) of HEIs and RPOs have submitted GEPs. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, the deadline has been extended for several months. As a result, 59 institutions asked for a postponement while the 89 other institutions are currently being reminded of their duties.

### Germany

The GEPs requirement for public research organisations is established at the federal level, by the Federal Gender Equality Law (Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz, §11). Additionally, RPOs and RFOs are bound by the Joint Science Conference Implementation Agreement on equal opportunities which sets the requirement to report on gender equality measures and to appoint equal opportunities officers. However, the requirement for HEIs to have GEPs is established on the regional level by the Higher Education Acts of all the Länder, which require universities to create gender equality plans. The denominations of these plans and their characteristics differ across Länder.

### Iceland

According to the Act on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008, all companies and institutions that have 25 or more employees are required to establish a GEP or to integrate gender equality perspectives in their employee policy. The building blocks focus on wage equality, job vacancies, vocational training, continuing education and lifelong learning, the coordination of family and work life, and how employers and managers can prevent gender-based violence in the workplace. The Directorate of Equality provides guidelines and support institutions. There are sanctions for non-compliance.



7 Act on the Transformation of Public Services, 2019, article 80 and the Act on Higher Education & Research, 2013, article 46.  
8 Guide presenting the act and the implementation calendar: <https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/files/files/20190927-guide-presentation-LTFP.pdf>, Summary of the act with the main facts: [https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/files/files/FP\\_en\\_France/pjl/presentation-synthetique-de-la-loi-de-TFP.pdf](https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/files/files/FP_en_France/pjl/presentation-synthetique-de-la-loi-de-TFP.pdf), a report on the progress of the act's implementation one year after its adoption: [https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/files/files/modernisation\\_de\\_la\\_fp/Dossier-point-etape-lftp.pdf](https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/files/files/modernisation_de_la_fp/Dossier-point-etape-lftp.pdf)

## Ireland

In Ireland HEIs are required to create and adopt a GEP and submit it to the Higher Education Authority (HEA), an advisory body to the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to the higher education sector and a statutory funding authority for HEIs. In the case of non-submission of a GEP and inaction on gender equality, HEIs are considered ineligible for public research funding and are at risk of losing up to 10% of their core funding.

## Israel

Israel adopted a government resolution (No. 2331) in 2014 on the promotion of gender equality and the assimilation of gender thinking. It requires the 'Civil Service Commissioner' to change the status and structure of the Authority for the Advancement of Women, requires the directors of government ministries to take action to assimilate gender thinking in the manner specified and to introduce reporting obligations on the subject, and requires the authorities to have a comprehensive action plan to promote gender equality. There is also a national strategy that encourages HEIs and RPOs to submit GEPs or other programmes aimed at promoting gender equality, such as a strategic institutional long-term plan that has building blocks, quantitative and qualitative measures, and defined target audiences. A Steering Committee has been set up to approve and monitor GEPs. Israel offers several strong incentives for adopting and implementing GEPs such as the PBC (Planning & Budgeting Committee), which provides funds to institutions to create GEPs. The institutions that show the most improvements each year receive additional budget funding. This programme is called the GE 'Equator Measure' programme and provides funds to institutions based on GEP implementation. If the GEP is not implemented, the funding is not given.

## Norway

Norway has the Norwegian Equality and Anti-discrimination Act, which includes a requirement to have a GEP and report on it annually. In January 2020 this act expanded the duty of employers (all public undertakings and private undertakings with

more than 50 employees, which includes all HEIs) to promote equality by making a risk analysis of discrimination or other barriers to equality as a basis for identifying active, targeted, and systematic measures for equality and anti-discrimination. In the Norwegian Equality and Anti-discrimination Act, there is also a requirement to report annually on the GEP. All relevant employers are required to issue a statement on the actual status of gender equality at the institution and on the work they have done to meet the requirements of the activity duty, and every other year the institutions are required to issue a statement on the gender pay gap and involuntary part-time and gender distribution at different position levels. The statement on equality and anti-discrimination is to be published in the institution's annual report or some other public document. The Norwegian Equality and Anti-discrimination Act and its expansion from January 2020 is referred to in the University and University College Act for all HEIs and in the Ministry of Education and Research's annual Letter of Allocation that is sent to all HEIs that receive public funding.

In terms of the gender dimension in research, the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research has in its mandate the promotion of the gender and diversity dimension in research. The Research Council of Norway (RCN) adopted in 2019 a four-year Policy for Gender Balance and Gender Perspective in Research and Innovation. Gender dimension is a selection criterion for RCN funding, if relevant. For more than 20 years RCN has had an earmarked allocation for disseminating gender research through Kilden.

## Portugal

The results of an analysis of gender in the global research landscape, which were presented in 2020 in *The Researcher Journey Through a Gender Lens: An Examination of Research Participation, Career Progression and Perceptions Across the Globe*, showed that Portugal was the closest to gender parity in terms of women's representation in research (48%). Moreover, Portugal exhibited the largest percentage increase in women's representation – an impressive 10% – over the last two decades, which puts the country at the leading edge of closing the gender gap in research.<sup>9</sup>

In 2019, the Portuguese parliament passed a pioneering law establishing a minimum 40% threshold for women and men on candidate lists for elective decision-making bodies in public HEI.<sup>10</sup> The law stipulates that non-compliance with the requirement of balanced representation of women and men when making appointments to academic and governing bodies of public institutions renders the appointment invalid. The electoral rules of each HEI and public associations provide for the introduction of a deadline for adjusting candidate lists to comply with the minimum threshold, and if it does not comply with the minimum threshold of balanced representation, under penalty of *rejection of the whole list*.

HEIs are developing gender equality plans that include targets for gender balance in decision-making positions and measures to induce organisational change, promote gender studies, and mainstream the gender dimension in research. GEPs have been developed on a case-by-case basis in the more pro-active universities and until recently were not compulsory.

A specific example is Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, which is a partner in the European consortium under the H2020 project, Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research (SPEAR).<sup>11</sup>

## Spain

Spain is an atypical case given that 96% of public universities have a GEP in place (according to data from the last report *Científicas en Cifras 2017*), although creating one was not specifically required of universities by law. The Organic Act on Effective Equality between Women and Men (3/2007) provided a strong impetus for the development of GEPs at Spanish universities. This law together with the provisions included in 2007 in the Organic Law on Universities (4/2007) regulate the establishment of gender equality structures and policies at universities in Spain.

GEP legislation and regulation

A new national regulation was approved in October 2020. It covers the formation of GEPs – a diagnosis and the content of the GEP/required GEP content.

Any company with more than 50 employees must have a GEP or update its already existing GEP according to the following criteria:

Diagnosis

- The diagnosis, which is the first step in designing a GEP, must include Trade Unions in order to negotiate and validate the audit;
- Mandatory topics in the diagnosis include: hiring, training, remuneration, remuneration audit, working conditions and audit, work-life balance, under-representation of women, gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

Content of the GEP

- Personal, territorial, and temporal scope;
- Identification of the parties that arrange them;
- A diagnosis;
- A remuneration audit;
- The qualitative and quantitative objectives of the GEP;
- A description of specific measures, the execution period, and the prioritisation of these measures, and a description of the design of the indicators, which should be designed in a way that it is possible to determine how each measure should evolve/should be developed further;
- Identification of the resources (human and material) for implementation;
- A monitoring and evaluation system for each objective;
- A calendar of actions;
- Measures for monitoring and evaluating the GEP
- A review system;
- Composition of the committee/joint body in charge of the periodic monitoring and evaluation of the GEP.

The maximum term of validity for a GEP in Spain will be 4 years. There will be a public register for GEPs and all GEPs will have to be registered there.



- 9 See this new research which focuses directly on Portugal: [https://www.elsevier.com/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1173263/portugal-gender-report.pdf](https://www.elsevier.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1173263/portugal-gender-report.pdf)
- 10 <https://dre.pt/dre/LinkAntigo?search=121665677>
- 11 <https://www.unl.pt/noticias/geral/nova-integra-con-sorcio-europeu-para-promocao-da-igualdade-de-genero-na-academia>



## Sweden

The two legal requirements for HEIs, RPOs, and RFOs are the Discrimination Act (2008:567) and the Higher Education Law (1992:1434). The requirements are similar to that of IS or FI in terms of building blocks. In addition, Sweden has set up a support structure, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, which provides guidelines and support. The Discrimination Ombudsman is responsible for overseeing compliance with the Discrimination Act. Sanctions for non-compliance include financial penalties and orders to comply. Monitoring is carried out by the National Agency for Higher Education and by Statistics Sweden. Additionally, there were gender equality mainstreaming programmes for all universities and university colleges for the period 2016-2019, which is now a permanent instruction for HEIs. Similarly, there was a 2014-2018 gender equality mainstreaming programme and it is now a gender mainstreaming instruction for state research funders.

In terms of the gender dimension in research, the three research councils (Swedish Research Council, Formas, and Forte), the innovation agency (VINNOVA), and the Swedish Energy Agency all have, in their government Instructions, a mission to promote the inclusion of the gender dimension, when relevant, in funded research and innovation. However, the inclusion of the gender dimension is not mandatory for funded research and innovation.

## Switzerland

The Federal Act on the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector sets the criteria for the accreditation of HEIs. Equal opportunities and gender equality is one of them. In addition, the Confederation set up the Federal P-7 Programme of Equal Opportunities and University Development, which funds HEIs and RPOs to develop and implement GEPs and cooperative projects. These funds function as an incentive for universities to implement GEPs. Conversely, however, no explicit sanctions are foreseen if an HEI foregoes a GEP (and the additional programme funds). To date, 25 HEIs out of 34 have benefited from the programme. As of 2024, HEIs are financially responsible for carrying

on and developing GEPs following the bottom-up approach. The State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI) supervises and controls the results of the yearly reporting and publishes a controlling report for the attention of the Swiss Higher Education Council. In the case of non-compliance, a reduction of funding may be decided by the steering committee of the P-7.

### Additional national measures connected to process-related building blocks

Below is information on the compulsory building blocks that are partially in place or are not mandatory in the GEP formal provisions at the country level.

#### PUBLICATION

Although it is not mandatory to publish GEPs, all or most RPOs in the following countries do publish their GEPs:

In **Spain**, although the publication of GEPs is not explicitly required by law for universities and public research bodies, it can be considered implicitly mandatory. All these GEPs are published on different websites.

In **Switzerland**, all 25 GEPs that existed for the period 2017-2020/21 are published on the website of the Swiss Rectors Conference (swissuniversities).<sup>12</sup> These documents (or the follow-up documents) are also available on the website of each HEI.

Some HEIs publish their GEPs, but it is a less common practice than the former two countries (**Belgium, Ireland**).

#### TRAINING

In **Norway**, the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF), the BALANSE-programme (RCN), and Kilden genderresearch.no hold regular trainings on different topics regarding gen-



12 <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/equal-opportunities/p-7-equal-opportunity-and-university-development> see box Module A.

der equality and diversity in research, but these trainings are voluntary.

In **Switzerland**, some HEIs offer training on the deconstruction of stereotypes and deepening skills in gender equality and diversity in higher education. The HEI decides whether these are compulsory.

#### RESOURCES

A few countries provide human resources and expertise but do not provide financial resources.

In the **Czech Republic**, the National Contact Centre for Gender and Science at the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences is the national contact point for gender equality issues in framework programmes. Established in 2001, it is supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. For Horizon Europe, it has received funding for a period of 2021-2027, and one of the three objectives is to support Czech RPOs in implementing GEPs and address other gender equality measures in Horizon Europe. The Centre runs a community of practice called Community for Change, with over 400 members, for mutual learning and the exchange of experience. The Centre also provides trainings, consultations, and tailored trainings to institutions on GEPs and audits, and as of autumn 2021 runs a training course in Czech on GEP implementation, the content of which will be expanded in the coming years.<sup>13</sup>

In **France**, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research hires three full-time people to support public institutions in developing their GEPs. However, no budget has been dedicated for HEIs.

**Germany** has a support structure (Frauen- und Gleichstellungsbeauftragte / Women's rights and equal opportunities commissioners) but does not make funding available.

In **Spain**, public research organisations and the state RFO Agencia Estatal de Investigación receive support from the Women and Science Unit of the Ministry on Science and Innovation. There are regular meetings coordinated by the Women and Science Unit with all Gender Equality Contact Points every two to three months to define needs, priorities, and joint actions and to identify cooperation mechanisms and support actions. There are also bilateral meetings and a channel of information via email through which all GE Units receive updates of relevant information to support their

work in this field. However, no funding has been made available.

In **Norway**, there is no budget dedicated to fulfilling the law at the institutional level. However, there are national support structures in place such as the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research, (KIF), the KIF-secretariat, with two gender experts, and the Equality and Antidiscrimination Ombud. The Research Council of Norway (RCN) has a task force with two dedicated gender experts.

**Sweden** has set up a support structure, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, that provides guidelines and support. The agency's programme for gender mainstreaming in HEIs receives 5 million SEK annually from the government. However, no direct funding is provided to HEIs for GEP development.

### National developments in countries that do not have a GEP requirement in place

**Belgium** has GEP-related provisions and mechanisms in place at the regional and community levels. Generic gender equality and equal opportunities regulations for the entire nation exist at the federal level (equivalent to the national level), but GEP-related provisions fall are the responsibility of regions and communities through subnational legal requirements.

#### Belgium – Wallonia-Brussels Federation

As such, there is no requirement for HEIs, RPOs, or RFOs to have a GEP, but there exist other mechanisms that are grounded in legislation.

- The six universities and the RFO (F.R.S.-FNRS) need to appoint gender-contact persons who are allocated a specific budget to ensure the implementation of their missions (information, awareness-raising, networking, and contributing to setting up gender equality policies). These missions do not explicitly include a GEP but this mechanism and its funding help institutions in adopting a GEP.



13 For more information see <https://genderaveda.cz/en/gender-and-science/>.

- The 'Plan Droit des femmes' has a legal foundation and applies to many areas that are responsibility of the Ministry of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. In its 3rd axis it has a provision to '[e]nsure better representation of women in all professional sectors and at all levels and in decision-making bodies', specifically on gender balance in higher education and research, where it is stated that the responsible ministry will adopt an action plan for equality between women and men in HE and research.
- The intra-francophone plan to combat gender-based violence has one recommendation relating to supporting HEIs and RPOs in setting up tools and support systems for gender-based violence survivors. Some universities have specific actions about gender-based violence in their global strategy on GE. Some actions are also developed at the inter-institutional level through the Women in Science Committee (Comité femmes et sciences) and the new Commission Genre en Enseignement Supérieur (CoGES) of the Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur (ARES).

#### Belgium – Community of Flanders

In Flanders, like in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, there is no formal GEP requirement but via intensive consultations between RFOs and HEIs and RPOs, there are equivalent constructive initiatives and engagements:

- HEIs, RPOs, and RFOs address the themes of equality, equal opportunity, diversity, non-discrimination in their strategic plans. For example, in June 2019, the rectors of the Flemish universities signed a new Gender Charter to accelerate the effort started in 2013 to achieve the goal of gender equality. By law, boards of management have a quota that there be between one-third and two-thirds of one gender; data collection and the monitoring of gender data, measures and actions for equal opportunities are also required in formal periodic reports. The strategic plans on research are evaluated on a yearly basis.

- The Horizontal Integration and Equal Opportunities Policy Plan 2020-2024 applies to all administrative bodies in Flanders. The plan employs an intersectional perspective and presents different building blocks such as actions, research, data collection, and monitoring. An annual report is submitted to the Flanders Parliament.
- All institutes have in their 'rules of working conditions' specifications as to what is 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' behaviour in the workplace. After the Me-Too movement, the Minister of Education called on the five universities and the university council VLIR to draft a Charter on gender-based violence in academia.<sup>14</sup>

#### Belgium – Brussels Region

In the Brussels Region, there is no GEP requirement, but there are equivalent requirements:

- When it comes to gender inclusion in innovation policy, a number of measures and actions are already in place, notably in the framework of the regional gender mainstreaming action plan. This plan was established in 2017 through an in-depth analysis of data and literature with the assistance of gender experts, and its focus is on internal and external scientific awareness-raising actions with a gender dimension. Many of these actions have been carried out to date, and they include mandatory training on gender biases for people leading jury selection for R&D project proposals.
- Gender is also given special attention in the specific strategic plan for science awareness-raising.
- In addition, in the Brussels region grant applications must include a mandatory equal opportunities test, in which gender is widely addressed, and the regional innovation funding agency responds to the gender budgeting policy with a gender-based budget allocation.



<sup>14</sup> <https://vlir.be/nieuws/charter-grensoverschrijdend-gedrag/>

## The Czech Republic

The Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has provided funding for the Centre for Gender and Science since 2001. The Centre acts as the national contact point for gender equality in research and innovation. The current support approved by the government covers the period of 2021-2027. In line with its objectives, the Centre provides support to Czech RPOs and RFOs in implementing gender equality measures, including gender equality plans (training, workshops, and consultations), and runs a national Community for Change, with over 400 members. In addition, the Centre provides strategic policy advice to the relevant ministries and bodies of state administration as well as RFOs. In 2020, the Centre prepared a methodology for implementing gender equality by RFOs for the Governmental Research, Development and Innovation Council, which was approved by the Council in October 2020. In 2021, the Centre launched a dedicated website called One Size Doesn't Fit All to raise awareness about the gender dimension in research among the research community and the wider public, to support the Horizon Europe default requirement. Also, on 8 March 2021 the government adopted the Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030 which contains Section 8 with two relevant Strategic Objectives: SO2 Extending the Content of Education, Science, and Research to Include a Gender Perspective and SO3 Applying a Gender Perspective in the Operation and Management of Educational and Research Institutions.

## Italy

Italy has a legal requirement for national, regional, and local public authorities and non-profit institutions (that includes RPOs) to adopt a triennial Positive Action Plan aimed at removing the obstacles that hamper the full realisation of equal opportunities at work. However, this requirement does not provide any guidelines, budget, building blocks, or sanctions. In addition, there are no specific provisions for R&I organisations.

## Lithuania

Apart from equal opportunities legislation, Lithuania has set up the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson which provides well-made practical tools for the implementation of GEPs.

## Malta

The Parliament is currently debating the Equality Bill (Bill 96). This legislation consolidates and strengthens the current equality law in Malta, by ensuring an equal level of protection against discrimination for all protected characteristics in all spheres of life. It also imposes considerable obligations on the Government, including, inter alia ensuring equality mainstreaming when formulating and implementing laws, regulations, administrative provisions, policies, and activities, and creating and adopting an Equality Action Plan. The Action Plan should not be limited solely to gender but should consider all characteristics protected by the proposed bill (e.g. disability, race, sexual orientation, age, etc.). The bill is currently at the Committee Stage and is expected to be approved by the Parliament in the second half of 2021. These developments consolidate the Government policy as per the circular titled 'Gender Mainstreaming in Practice' that was issued in 2012 by the Office of the Prime Minister. This circular stipulates that 'each department/entity is required to prepare a brief report on the measures taken and the progress achieved in the sphere of gender equality and gender mainstreaming'.

## The Netherlands

The National Action Plan for greater diversity and inclusion in Higher Education and Research lists five goals for the period of 2020-2025, including goal no. 4, which is to 'bring together and support institutional diversity plans'. An Advisory Committee and a Centre of Excellence will be set up to advise the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on these goals with the necessary expertise and administrative resources. The Advisory Committee will also provide guidelines and assistance on the design and implementation of GEPs to HEIs. The basic building blocks will be in line with the ones

proposed by the European Commission and will be expanded to cover other forms of diversity, such as ethnic diversity, LGBT+, and disability.

## Slovenia

Slovenia is in the process of adopting new legislation in the field of science and research, where special emphasis on gender equality will be introduced. Public research organisations will be obliged to adopt and implement measures in the area of gender equality, address their effects at least once a year, and report them in the framework of regular annual reports.

## Turkey

Out of 207 universities in Turkey, 107 have Gender Equality Research Centres, which were established over the past 15 years with the encouragement of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). The Directors of these centres are members of their university senates. These centres are expected to keep records on the indicators related to gender equality and publicise their findings, carry out research projects on the subject area, and create awareness on the issue across the university. The CoHE has also taken action to increase the proportion of women deans at universities by asking the universities to propose at least one female candidate among the three candidates for any deanship. Moreover, several universities have participated in the European Framework Programme's SwafS projects and have established their own GEPs. These GEPs may not exactly follow the requirements introduced for Horizon Europe, but they have created a culture across these universities to design and implement GEPs in a certain format. As the most important RFO in Turkey, TUBITAK (the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) established its Gender Equality Advisory Group in 2019, prepared the first Policy Paper for achieving gender equality in all its actions, and has taken significant steps in the evaluation process of the 'TUBITAK Awards' since the year 2019.

## Good practice at the national level

This section builds on and, where available, expands the information provided in the SWG GRI report. It explores good practices from selected MSs and ACs on the following aspects:

- Capacity-building
- Human and financial resources and expertise
- Monitoring and evaluation

## Capacity building

Capacity-building activities refer, but are not limited, to educational and training programmes, good practice examples, mutual learning exchanges and the sharing of experiences, guidelines and hubs of information on GEPs, handbooks on GEPs, competence building, and developing skills and knowledge.

## Austria

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science (BMBWF) and Research supports public universities in the preparation and implementation of GEPs in different ways:

- 1) With the funding of a model-GEP: This model-GEP was prepared by an external proven expert in cooperation with one of the 22 public universities (TU Vienna). This model-GEP served the purpose of setting minimum standards for all public universities and was made available to each university. However, the university plans are to be adapted to the specific requirements and circumstances at each university. According to the University Act 2002, the Working Group on Equal Opportunities at every university has the task of preparing a gender equality plan, which is to be adopted by both the rectorate and the senate and published on the website of the university.
- 2) Accompanying support was provided through an exchange and discussion of this model-GEP between representatives of the universities (chairpersons of the working groups on equal opportunities), external legal experts,

and representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. On the one hand, they served to increase competence and, on the other, to coordinate and discuss content-related issues that arose during the development process. The meetings took place at regular intervals and were chaired by the chairperson of ARGE GLUNA (a network of chairs of the working groups of equal opportunities at every university). These networking meetings were voluntary, but well received.

- 3) The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research provided the public universities with external legal expertise. This means that the universities were able to draw on the expertise of the author of the model-GEP when developing their own GEPs. However, the universities only made use of this offer in a minority of cases.<sup>15</sup>

For the teacher training colleges and their preparation of gender equality plans, the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research has created a similar legal basis as for the universities. The university colleges of teacher education have thus been able to orient themselves on the legal requirements of the public universities and their implementation of the GEPs and have actively sought an exchange with the public universities. This means that, at their own initiative, the working groups of the teacher training colleges and the public universities have created a forum for exchange and knowledge transfer on the development of GEPs.

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research is currently cooperating with the Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, and Technology on a 'guide for the preparation and implementation of gender equality plans

for Austrian Higher Education and Research Institutions'. The guidance should be published in November 2021. It should help institutions that do not yet have a GEP, but should also aid institutions in reflecting on and improving their GEPs in the cases where they do exist. Following the publication of the guidance, the two ministries plan to hold further networking meetings with higher education and research institutions in 2022.

## Finland

The Ombudsman for Equality is responsible for giving guidance on GEP.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, labour organisations provide guidebooks and give training on GEPs.

## France

The Ministry in Charge of Gender Equality, Diversity and Equality of Chances has developed a web page with a list of resources and guidelines on gender equality at work. The Ministry of Higher Education and Research has published a guide for HEIs to support them in developing their GEPs.<sup>17</sup> The guide presents the good practices of institutions as well as relevant measures that support equality. This guide has been distributed to all heads of institutions and all human resources directors.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research has published a guide to investigate gender-based and sexual violence within HEIs and has launched a national action plan against gender-based violence in higher education and research.<sup>19</sup>



15 <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/en/Ministry/Equality.html>

16 <https://tasa-arvo.fi/en/promoting-equality-in-schools-and-educational-institutions>

17 [https://www.egalite--femmes--hommes-gouv.fr.translate.goog/egalite-entre-les-femmes-et-les-hommes/publications-ressources/?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=auto&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=cs&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=cs&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=nui](https://www.egalite--femmes--hommes-gouv.fr.translate.goog/egalite-entre-les-femmes-et-les-hommes/publications-ressources/?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=cs&_x_tr_hl=cs&_x_tr_pto=nui); [https://www.enseignementsup-recherche-gouv.fr.translate.goog/fr?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=fr&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=cs&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=cs&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=nui,elem](https://www.enseignementsup-recherche-gouv.fr.translate.goog/fr?_x_tr_sl=fr&_x_tr_tl=cs&_x_tr_hl=cs&_x_tr_pto=nui,elem)

18 <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid155160/plans-d-action-sur-l-egalite-professionnelle-le-mesri-publie-un-referentiel-d-accompagnement-des-etablissements-de-l-esr.html>

19 <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid155521/comment-enqueter-sur-les-violences-sexistes-et-sexuelles-dans-l-enseignement-superieur-et-la-recherche>; <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid159601/une-nouvelle-etape-dans-la-lutte-contre-les-v.s.s.-dans-l-e.s.r.-avec-le-deploiement-d-un-plan-national-d-action.html>

## Ireland

In Ireland, data on staff by gender is collected continuously and published annually by the HEA. Gender disaggregated data from Irish HEIs includes staffing information by category of post, discipline, contract type and pay scale.<sup>20</sup> The data is continuously updated, analysed and evaluated.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the Centre of Excellence for Gender Equality, under the auspices of the HEA, is responsible for, among other things, fostering HEI collaboration and disseminating good practices.

## Norway

The Norwegian Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF) runs a website that provides summary information about GEPs.<sup>22</sup> The website provides a complete list of GEPs in Norwegian HEIs (GEPs in Norwegian HEIs)<sup>23</sup> and a 2021 survey report on the higher education and R&I sector's work with gender balance and diversity. The report also includes an overview of which universities, colleges and research institutes have an action plan for gender equality and diversity. Furthermore, it contains a self-evaluation of HEIs' work on gender equality and ethnic diversity and information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this work.<sup>24</sup>

## Sweden

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency provides support to HEIs in implementing gender mainstreaming measures according to individually developed gender mainstreaming plans.<sup>25</sup> To this end, the Agency is also in contact with the government and several ministries. In 2016-2019, all publicly-funded Swedish HEIs were given a similar assignment, Gender Mainstreaming in Academia (GMA), which instructs the institutions to gender mainstream all of their operations according to individually developed gender mainstreaming plans. The programme has been extended to include 2020 and 2021 and the support is designed in dialogue with the universities.

The Gender Equality Agency thus maintains contacts with 'GMA coordinators' for universities

and has also met with university rectors on several occasions. The support consists of networking meetings, education/seminars, and support in setting up gender mainstreaming plans and in communicating results and analysing the gender mainstreaming work at the HEIs. GMA further published a guidance on gender mainstreaming (in Swedish only).<sup>26</sup> The Gender Equality Agency is also allocated funding each year to support the entire GMA programme through incentives for individual HEIs, which will continue in 2022 (EUR 502,000; the same amount as in the previous year).

## Switzerland

Swiss HEIs under the P-7 programme Equal Opportunities and University Development prepared an information brochure Equal Opportunity 2017-2020 in Swiss Higher Education Institutions (University Action Plans).<sup>27</sup> In addition to this, there is a dedicated website that contains a list and evaluations of 25 GEPs. There are 11 cooperation project applications that strengthen innovative forms of networking and knowledge transfer between HEIs under the umbrella of Swiss universities. All information about GEPs and their design, implementation and evaluation is available on the web and in the cooperation project



- 20 <https://hea.ie/policy/gender/statistics/>
- 21 <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/07/Higher-Education-Institutional-Staff-Profiles-by-Gender-2021.pdf>
- 22 <http://www.Kifinfo.no>
- 23 [Action plans for equality and diversity | Kifinfo](#)
- 24 <https://kifinfo.no/nb/artikkel/fravisjontilpraksis>; [https://kifinfo.no/sites/default/files/rapport\\_fra\\_visjon\\_til\\_praksis\\_les\\_april21\\_0.pdf](https://kifinfo.no/sites/default/files/rapport_fra_visjon_til_praksis_les_april21_0.pdf)
- 25 <https://www.jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/en/gender-mainstreaming/government-agencies-higher-education-institutions>
- 26 <https://www.jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/vagledning-stod-for-att-planera-organisera-och-folja-upp-arbetet-med-jamstalldhetsintegrering>
- 27 [https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Organisation/PgB/P-7/Brochure105x260\\_Egalite\\_030317.pdf](https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Organisation/PgB/P-7/Brochure105x260_Egalite_030317.pdf)

applications.<sup>28</sup> The programme also provides a training workshop for the Gender & Diversity delegates of the HEI on how to carry out the annual reporting on the action plan projects to the State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI).

## Resources and expertise

Resources, both financial and human, are key to the proper design, adoption, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of GEPs. The use of gender expertise is also recommended. This section presents good practices from SWG GRI members on resources and expertise.

## Austria

In Austria, gender mainstreaming officers have been nominated by the rectorates at every teacher education college to support gender mainstreaming within the institution. In addition, a working group for questions on equal treatment must also be set up by the university college at every pedagogical university. Its task is to counter discrimination by bodies of the Pedagogical University on the basis of gender, as well as on the basis of ethnicity, religion or belief, age, or sexual orientation, and to advise and support the members and bodies of the Pedagogical University in these matters (Rechtsgrundlagen und Strukturen)<sup>29</sup>. The Higher Education Act provides for the promotion of women and gender equality plans as part of the statutes. The 'Working Group for Equal Opportunities' has the right to propose an amendment to these plans (the rectorate can only ignore these proposals if it can provide a good reason for doing so). The Working Group must make sure that the plan is implemented.

In Austria, gender mainstreaming officers have been nominated by the rectorates at each Pedagogical University to support implementation. In addition, a working group on questions of equal treatment must also be set up by the university college at every Pedagogical University. The working group's task is to counter discrimination by

bodies of the Pedagogical University on the basis of gender, as well as on the basis of ethnicity, religion or belief, age, or sexual orientation, and to advise and support the members and bodies of the Pedagogical University in these matters (Rechtsgrundlagen und Strukturen).<sup>30</sup> As well as human resources and expertise, the rectorate needs to make funding available. Depending on budgetary considerations, it should allocate the required personnel and equipment as well as the necessary rooms to the working group on equal opportunities for the performance of its duties.

## Ireland

In Ireland, the public HEI-PBC (Planning & Budgeting Committee) provides funds to the institutions to create a GEP, and the institutions that show the most improvements each year receive additional funding. The HEA has awarded funding of EUR 286,114 under the Gender Equality Enhancement Fund 2020 to advance gender equality initiatives in Irish higher education. Projects were funded across several areas including the promotion of female role models in the physical sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics (pSTEM), the development and implementation of gender identity, expression and diversity training for staff in Irish HEIs, the creation of networks to support female participation in computer science, resources to support the academic advancement of mid-career female staff, the provision of gender equality-based leadership training to future leaders, and the development of resources to assist departments in modelling gender-disaggregated data against national trends.<sup>31</sup>



- 28 <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/equal-opportunities/p-7-equal-opportunity-and-university-development> and <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/themen/chancengleichheit-diversity/p-7-diversitaet-inklusion-und-chancengerechtigkeit>
- 29 [bmbwf.gv.at](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at)
- 30 [bmbwf.gv.at](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at)
- 31 <https://hea.ie/policy/gender/gender-equality-enhancement-fund/>

## Israel

The Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education established the 'equator' index for gender equality in the academic system. The index distinguishes among three types of institutions: universities, general academic colleges, and academic colleges for education.

Institutions are required to submit multi-year plans in which they set goals for gender equality and lay out their strategic plan for meeting those goals. Each institution sets its own goals based on its current degree of gender equality and its perceived ability to improve within a five-year time frame. Plans can be either approved, rejected, or returned to the institution with calls for revisions. Institutions whose plans are approved will be given a grant to fund its plan.

Universities will be given NIS 250,000 (EUR 69,800). Of this, NIS 120,000 (EUR 34,000) goes directly to the activity of the University Advisor to the President on Gender Equality. The rest can be used to fund other aspects of the plan, at the discretion of the university. Universities that receive the grant must also add at least NIS 60,000 (EUR 16,700) to the budget of the Advisor.

Colleges whose plans are approved will receive NIS 200,000 (EUR 56,000). Of this, NIS 60,000 (EUR 16,700 EUR) goes directly to the Advisor. Colleges who receive the grant must contribute an additional NIS 30,000 (8,370 EUR) to the budget of the Advisor.

In addition to the Equator programme, the CHE has taken a number of additional steps, one of which is providing larger scholarships for women who pursue postdoctoral studies abroad. The scholarships have been increased from USD 30,000-50,000 (EUR 26,000-43,000) for two years to USD 60,000-80,000 (EUR 52,000-69,000 EUR) for two years (the funding volume depends on marital status and number of dependents). Additional new scholarships for women MA and PhD students in fields in which women are more severely underrepresented, with an emphasis on the STEM fields, have also been established.

## Spain

The Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation has set up the Women and Science Unit, which provides methodological support to the State Research Agency of Spain (Agency). The Women and Science Unit provides expert advice and training on GEPs according to the European framework on gender and science and holds regular meetings with all Gender Equality Contact Points to define needs, priorities, and joint actions. The Agency thus developed its first GEP 2021-2023 in cooperation with the Women and Science Unit. Creation of the GEP was further supported by the SUPERA project and the Agency's own Strategic Group on Gender Equality. The GEP design is oriented towards the identification of needs and the implementation of measures to promote effective equality between women and men in R&I funding activities, which is the main mission of the Agency. The GEP includes objectives, specific measures, and corrective actions, as well as a timetable for their implementation, which shows the Agency's commitment to promoting effective equality between women and men in R&I activities. The Women and Science Unit will collaborate with the SUPERA project and the Strategic Group on Gender Equality in the implementation of the measures included in this plan. In 2023, the Strategic Group on Gender Equality will carry out an independent evaluation of the impact of the GEP measures adopted, as well as additional measures carried out during the implementation period.<sup>32</sup>

## Switzerland

Switzerland has been running national funding programmes of HEIs in support of equal opportunities for women and men<sup>33</sup> since 2000 in several-year cycles. The second funding cycle (2013-2016) was primarily focused on progress in the implementation of gender equality through 'structural/cultural change' by means of Gender equality Action Plans



32 <https://www.superaproject.eu/advancing-in-gender-equality-in-spain-the-state-research-agency-approved-its-first-gender-equality-plan/>

(GAPs) and structurally implemented gender equality offices. The GAPs are, ideally, integral parts of general university management structures and procedures.

In 2017 the P-7 programme 'Equal Opportunity and University Development'<sup>34</sup> was launched under the Swiss universities organisational umbrella and applies to all types of HEI under the Higher Education Act. In the funding period 2017-2020, an increase in diversity competence at HEIs was added to the project goals. The steering committee of the new programme was first the Diversity Delegation of swissuniversities followed by a new steering committee, the COPIL P-7.<sup>35</sup> They have prepared project calls for the P-7 programme.

The programme offers a project application procedure with instructions on how to draw up a GAP, including a list of proposed areas of activity and possible measures / activities in German and French. The HEIs are able to choose which domains of action they want to focus on, tailored to their needs and in line with their own annual strategies. In addition, also depending on the available budget (distribution of funding depends on the size of the HEI).

For the financial period 2021-2024, the project 'Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities / Justice in University Development' is prepared within the same COPIL P-7.

The project application form of the State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI) includes a question on sustainability: How do you implement the project measures or activities (in the case of a positive evaluation) after the end of the project funding period? The funding should be an 'initiation' and the HEIs are expected to assume the full costs after the project period has ended. Some will receive a follow-up project if the topic is continued in the next four-year period.

## Monitoring and evaluation

This section presents good practice from SWG GRI members on the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of GEPs. They can refer to common unifying frameworks with established criteria and indicators for the bodies responsible for GEP implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

## Ireland

A good example of data collection and monitoring is Ireland where data on staff by gender is collected continuously and published annually by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Gender disaggregated data from Irish HEIs include staffing information by category of post, discipline, contract type, and pay scale.<sup>36</sup>

The HEA annually publishes progress update reports on the HEA Expert Group recommendations and the Gender Equality Taskforce actions at the sector level. At the end of the Gender Action Plan, a review of the progress will include an analysis of the annual reviews of HEIs' progress on GE, an analysis of the estimated rate of change for the future based on updated recruitment and promotion data from the HEIs, an updated literature review on national and international good practice since the publication of the action plan, and a national Gender Equality Survey.



33 <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/equal-opportunities-and-diversity>

34 <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/equal-opportunities/p-7-equal-opportunity-and-university-development>

35 [https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Forschung/Chancengleichheit/P7\\_Organigramme.pdf](https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Forschung/Chancengleichheit/P7_Organigramme.pdf)

36 <https://hea.ie/policy/gender/statistics/>

Data collection and monitoring is a mandatory part of GEP formal requirement, wherein the body responsible for monitoring and evaluation is defined. The responsible authority manages a database where the data are stored. The data must in particular cover:

- staff numbers by gender at all levels and by discipline and function;
- wage gaps by gender and category of post;
- the number of women and men in decision-making positions.

The data are continuously updated, analysed and evaluated. The generated statistics are freely available to all interested institutions and serve as a basis for shaping gender equality objectives and actions. It is good practice to publish the results of analysed data regularly to raise awareness of the topic.<sup>37</sup>

Ireland is also an example where the monitoring and evaluation authority is also the statutory funding authority for the HEIs, which gives this institution the opportunity to hold HEIs accountable for inaction in the field of gender equality with possible sanctions.

In addition, in Ireland, all GEPs are evaluated at two levels - by the HEA Expert Group, which recommends certain actions and practices, and by the Gender Equality Taskforce, which (where necessary) updates or extends the HEA Expert Group recommendations (Higher Education Authority - Gender Taskforce Plan 2018-2020<sup>38</sup>).

## Israel

HEIs' GEPs are built on two matrices: quantitative and qualitative. The implementation of a GEP in a given institution is monitored in accordance with these matrices. In the framework of the quantitative part, institutions are asked to demonstrate improvement in factors such as: the percentage of women among senior academic faculty; the percentage of women hired as senior lecturers as compared to the percentage who are hired as junior lecturers and as opposed to the percentage of men who are hired for equivalent positions; the nomination of women for prestigious honours and scholarships, etc. Under the qualitative portion, these institutions are asked to demonstrate im-

provement in the following areas: the representation of women in institutional committees and among its officers, wage supplements for officers, leadership seminars for the implementation of gendered thinking, employment equality and fairness, designing a gender-supportive institutional environment, and similar actions. All institutions must publish data on gender equality on their website.

## Portugal

Act No. 26/2019 of 28 March established a minimum threshold of 40% women or 40% men on the candidate lists for elective decision-making bodies in public HEIs.<sup>39</sup> Elaborating an annual report on the implementation of this law is the responsibility of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, and must be submitted to the respective member of the Government by the end of the first semester of each year. In addition, Act No. 10/2001 of 21 May requires that an annual report be prepared on the progress has been made towards the equality of women and men in jobs, at work, and in training.<sup>40</sup> The report must include information on the evolution of the balanced representation of women and men in the positions and bodies that this legislation applies to.

Sex-disaggregated data on management staff, submitted to the Directorate-General for Administration and Public Employment and on the composition of HEIs' bodies, submitted to the Directorate-General of Science and Higher Education, are shared with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality and the Commission for the Equality at Work and to other enterprises of relevance for this legislation/to which this legislation applies.



37 <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/07/Key-Facts-Figures-Higher-Education-Data-by-Gender-2020.pdf>

38 <https://hea.ie/>

39 <https://temp.dre.pt/home/-/dre/121665677/details/maximized>

40 <https://dre.pt/dre/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2001-116145700>

## Switzerland

The 25 Gender Equality Action Plans of Swiss HEIs (Module A) and the 11 cooperation project applications (Module B) were evaluated by external gender and diversity experts. GEPs for the 2017-2020 funding period (extended to the end of June 2021) were created in reference to an analysis of the state of gender equality in a specific HEI.

A concrete example of this process is the Plan of Action for Equal Opportunities at Università della Svizzera italiana: 2017-2020, which began with an analysis 'of the university's situation in matters of gender equality with specific reference to statistical data for the student, administrative and academic bodies. The evidence gathered helps define, in the second part of the document, the main areas of intervention for the four-year period'. The need for continuous monitoring and evaluation was then embodied directly in the document as a measure and indicator of the degree of innovation.<sup>41</sup>

Based on a detailed evaluation, the P-7 project 'Diversität, Inklusion und Chancengerechtigkeit in der Hochschulentwicklung (2021-2024)' is regularly updated in preparation for the next programming period.<sup>42</sup>

Other interesting examples are Finland<sup>43</sup> and Norway.<sup>44</sup> In both countries, the evaluation of the GEPs is the responsibility of the ombudsperson.



41 See [https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Organisation/PgB/P-7/USI\\_PA\\_17-20\\_web\\_English.pdf](https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Organisation/PgB/P-7/USI_PA_17-20_web_English.pdf); here is another Swiss GEP in English [https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Organisation/PgB/P-7/EPFL\\_BureauEgalite\\_PlanAction\\_en.pdf](https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Organisation/PgB/P-7/EPFL_BureauEgalite_PlanAction_en.pdf)

42 <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/themen/chancengleichheit-diversity/p-7-diversitaet-inklusion-und-chancengerechtigkeit>

43 <https://tasa-arvo.fi/en/promoting-equality-in-schools-and-educational-institutions>

44 <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/kud/organisation/subordinate-agencies-and-related-institutions-under-the-ministry-of-culture/underliggende-etater/The-Equality-and-Anti-Discrimination-Omb/id418111/>

**Guidance for national and regional authorities for the creation  
and implementation of the European Commission GEP requirements**

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