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GENDER EQUALITY IN ENGINEERING THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND COMMITMENT (GEECCO)

DOS AND DON'TS WHILE DEGENERATING THE STEM FIELD



GEECCO – Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment. In a Nutshell

Scientific and technological innovations are increasingly important in our knowledge-based economies. Today STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is literally everywhere; it shapes our everyday experiences. With technologies we choose e.g. structures that influence over a very long time how people are going to work, communicate, travel, consume, and so forth. It is thus both a question of competitiveness and justice, to achieve gender equity within science and technology institutions, including policy and decision-making bodies.

GEECCO with its project lifetime from May 2017 to April 2021 aimed to establish tailor-made Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in 4 European RPOs and to implement the gender dimension in 2 RFOs (funding schemes, programmes and review processes). All participating RPOs were located in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) field, where gender equality is still a serious problem and whose innovations are increasingly important in the knowledge-based economies.

GEECCO pursued the following objectives in order to enhance systemic institutional change towards gender equality in the STEM-field:

- (i) Setting up change framework and a tailor-made GEP for each participating RPO;
- (ii) Implementing gender criteria in the activities of RFOs;
- (iii) Setting up a self-reflective learning environment in and between all RPOs und RFOs to participate from existing experiences and match them with their specific needs and circumstances.
- (iv) Evaluate GEP implementation within the participating RPOs and RFOs with a quantitative evaluation using monitoring indicators and a qualitative monitoring to enhance and fine-tune implemented actions over the course of the project.

<http://www.geecco-project.eu/>

<https://www.tuwien.at/tu-wien/organisation/zentrale-bereiche/genderkompetenz/gender-in-der-forschung/geecco-resultate>

Further resources developed by the GEECCO-project consortium

All public deliverables, resources and additional material can be downloaded on this website:

<https://www.tuwien.at/tu-wien/organisation/zentralebereiche/genderkompetenz/gender-in-der-forschung/geecco-resultate>

Public deliverables (in order of the related work packages)

- Postorino, Maria Nadia; Marino, Concettina; Suraci, Federica; Enzenhofer, Bettina; Lusa, Amaia; Costa, Carme Martínez; Pulawska-Obiedowska, Sabina (2018): Gender Analysis of Decision-Making Processes and Bodies. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
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- Bryniarska, Zofia; Żakowska, Lidia; Enzenhofer, Bettina; Postorino, Maria Nadia; Marino, Concettina; Lusa García, Amaia (2018): Current Status of Women Career Development. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Enzenhofer, Bettina; Lusa García, Amaia; Sarnè, Giuseppe; Żakowska, Lidia (2020): Overview on How to Increase Female Visibility. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
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- Mergaert, Lut; Allori, Agostina; Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina; Lusa García, Amaia; Marino, Concettina; Zakowska, Lidia; Bryniarska, Zofia (2020): Tailor-made Gender Equality Plans (GEP version 3.0). GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Knoll, Bente (2021): Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field. Learning Experiences of Four European Universities and Two European Research Funding Organisations. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Mergaert, Lut; Knoll, Bente; Renkin, Agnes (2021): Final Report on Supporting Activities. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Jorge, Irene (2021): Implementation of Dissemination Activities. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Jorge, Irene (2021): Engagement Activities. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Lipinsky, Anke; Schredl, Claudia: Final Evaluation Report. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

Additional resources and literature reviews

- Knoll, Bente; Renkin, Agnes; Mergaert, Lut (2020): Additional resources (living document). GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Burtscher, Sabrina (2019): Literature Review: Gender Research in Human Computer Interaction. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Pillinger, Anna (2019): Literature Review: Gender and Robotics. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Mort, Harrie (2019): A Review of Energy and Gender Research in the Global North. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).
- Lehmann, Tobias (2020): Literature Review: Gender and Mobility. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

Explanatory videos (available on Youtube)

- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2019): Humans & Computers. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrWx91RdmGo>, checked on 4/30/2021.
- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2019): Robots in our society. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfXr29VAuwU>, checked on 4/30/2021.
- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2020): Energy for all. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIwrgsNVfW8>, checked on 4/30/2021.
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- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2021): Inclusive design – why intersectionality matters. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4eRb1NM21A>, checked on 4/30/2021.

Evaluation and monitoring tutorials

Anke Lipinski and Claudia Schredl, both from GESIS, developed five online evaluation and monitoring tutorials.

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

1. GEECCO Data Monitoring Tool
2. GEECCO Infographic: Gender Equality Approaches and Their Impact on GEP Implementation
3. GEECCO Infographic: SMART Gender Equality Objectives
4. GEECCO Explainer Video: Gender Equality Plans in Technical Universities and the Use of Logic Models
5. GEECCO Log Journal

These tutorials can be downloaded on this website:

<https://www.tuwien.at/tu-wien/organisation/zentralebereiche/genderkompetenz/gender-in-der-forschung/geecco-resultate>

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About this guideline

This guideline “Dos and Don'ts while degendering the STEM field “was developed by the GEECCO-project, a H2020-funded project. The aim of the GEECCO project was to establish tailor-made gender equality plans (GEPs) in four European research performing organisations (RPOs) and to integrate a gender dimension in research programmes in two European research funding organisations (RFOs) with a strong focus on funding technology related and applied research on a national level. All GEP-implementing partners are located in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) field, which is considered to be a core technological underpinning of an advanced society supporting innovation and economic growth.

The guideline is built on the results of the four-year project (2017-2021) and the insights gained from implementing measures and actions for gender equality and developing tailor-made GEPs for four universities. These are Technische Universität Wien (TUW) (Austria), Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) (Spain), Università degli Studi Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria (UNIRC) (Italy) and Politechnika Krakowska (PK) (Poland). Furthermore, the guideline reflects the experiences of integrating gender equality at two RFOs, which are Technologická Agentura České republiky (TA CR) (Czech Republic) and Wiener Wissenschafts-, Forschungs- und Technologiefonds (WWTF) (Austria). The guideline picks out learning effects and makes them transferable and applicable to other organisations, especially from the STEM field.

In general, this guideline aims to summarize tips and recommendations when implementing gender equality actions and measures in the STEM field and shall provide practical guidance to other RPOs and RFOs which aim to integrate gender equality in their institutions. The document addresses both employers and employees at various hierarchical levels, such as top and middle management leaders, and those with different responsibilities, such as researchers, lecturers, members in decision bodies and boards as well as administrative staff – but all with one joint mission: to foster (more) gender equality and to integrate a gender perspective in their organisations.

The structure of the document is as follows:

- 1) About the STEM field.** First, the framework conditions and characteristics of research performing organisations in the STEM field are highlighted.
- 2) Dos & Don'ts: RPO perspective.** In the following sections on Dos and Don'ts, the guideline is structured on the acronym GEECCO that stands for **G**ender **E**quality in **E**ngineering

through **Communication and Commitment**. These Dos and Don'ts and recommendations address the RPOs' perspective.



GENDER EQUALITY

ENGINEERING

COMMUNICATION

COMMITMENT

- 3) **Dos & Don'ts: RFO perspective.** Subsequently, insights and experiences gained by research funding organisations (RFOs) when integrating gender equality issues in their organisations and procedures are provided. Dos and Don'ts from an RFO's perspective are summarised.
- 4) **Resources.** The last chapter provides an overview on other useful and practical **resources developed by the GEECCO project** which are ready to download with corresponding links.

Basic definitions

Gender is a socio-cultural process. It refers to cultural values and social attitudes that together shape and sanction “feminine” and “masculine” behaviours, and also affect products, technologies, environments, and knowledge.¹ Gender equality is the result of the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex [and gender] in opportunities, in the allocation of resources or benefits or in access to services.²

¹ European Commission, RTD-B7 “Science with and for Society” (Ed.) (2016): Vademecum on Gender Equality in Horizon 2020. Available online at https://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub_gender_equality/2016-03-21Vademecum_Gender%20in%20H2020-clean-rev.pdf. p. 6.

² European Commission, RTD-B7 “Science with and for Society” (Ed.) (2016): Vademecum on Gender Equality in Horizon 2020. Available online at https://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub_gender_equality/2016-03-21Vademecum_Gender%20in%20H2020-clean-rev.pdf, p.6.

The European Commission considers a **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)**³ to be a set of actions aiming at:

- Conducting impact assessment / audits of procedures and practices to identify gender bias;
- Identifying and implementing innovative strategies to correct any bias;
- Setting targets and monitoring progress via indicators.

The scope of a GEP may vary strongly, depending on the type of organisation, the institutional context in which it is implemented, the disciplines addressed, or the type of gender biases and inequalities identified as part of the diagnosis. A GEP can be broken up into different steps or phases each requiring specific types of interventions:

- An **analysis** phase, in which sex-disaggregated data are collected; procedures, processes and practices are critically assessed with a view to detecting gender inequalities and gender bias.
- A **planning** phase, in which objectives are defined, targets are set, actions and measures to remedy the identified problems are decided, resources and responsibilities are attributed, and timelines are agreed upon.
- An **implementation** phase, in which activities are implemented and outreach efforts are undertaken so as to gradually expand the network of stakeholders.
- A **monitoring** phase, in which both process and progress are regularly followed through and assessed. Findings from the monitoring exercise(s) make allowances for adjusting and improving interventions so that their results can be optimised.

This set of actions, which can have different degrees of complexity, is meant to articulate a strategic view aimed at achieving gender equality. Initiatives such as adopting general gender equality objectives do not constitute per se a gender equality strategy/plan, as these commitments have to materialise into a concrete set of steps and actions to be undertaken. For the same reason, a broader diversity or anti-discrimination strategy and/or plan addressing gender among other issues, should not automatically be equal to having a GEP. If such a strategy does not rely upon sufficient data on gender, and only addresses gender through a limited number of measures and indicators, it is unlikely that gender equality will actually be achieved.

³ Mergaert, Lut; Arnaut, Catarina; Forest, Maxime e.a. (2016): Gender Equality in Academia and Research. GEAR tool. Edited by European Institute for Gender Equality. Available online at <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0716096enn.pdf>, p.8.

About the STEM field

Universities in Europe share a number of common characteristics. In addition, however, there are issues that are specific to the STEM field. To the extent that these issues also affect access to and implementation of gender equality, they will be briefly addressed here. From our experience there are three main issues that characterise the STEM field, namely, first, the significantly lower proportion of women in comparison with social sciences and humanities, second, the scientific tradition that presupposes neutrality, universalism, and objectivity, and third, the lack of approaches from social sciences or humanities to both define and solve problems.

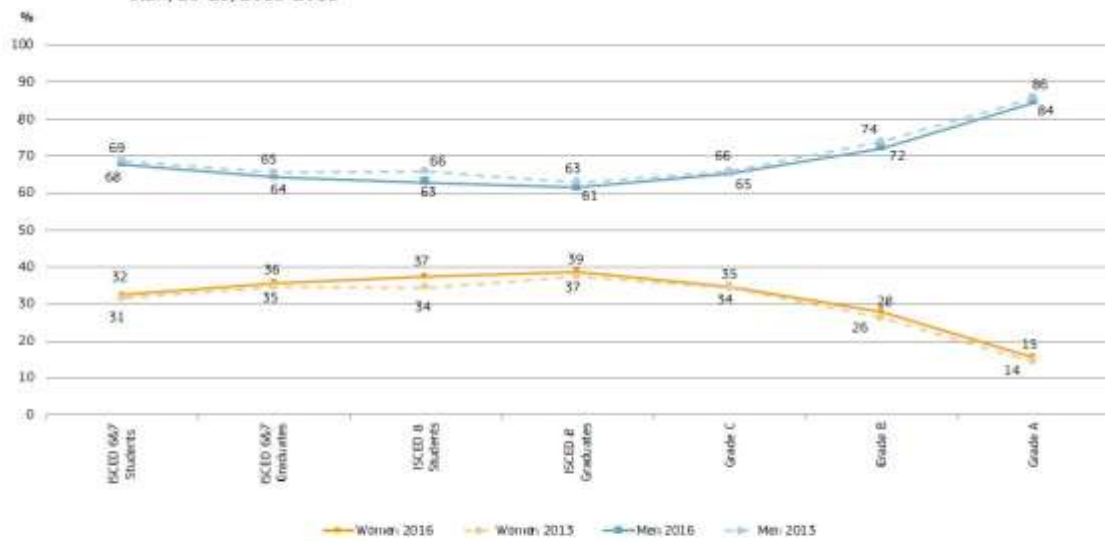
Some successful projects in FP7 and H2020 show that there is already a lot of knowledge and practical know-how on the conceptualisation and implementation of gender equality plans, but there are also some considerable persisting problems. Numbers of women in the STEM field have not increased significantly, women in higher positions are still a minority, “old boys’ networks” still obstruct real structural transformation towards gender equality, cultural change (including a societal/gender perspective in the research content) in the STEM field is still lacking and men are often not concerned by gender equality issues which are still considered to be a “female matter” only.

“She figures”⁴ is a data report on the ratio between women and men in the European research and innovation area and is published by the European Commission on a regular basis. The report provides a range of indicators on gender equality in research and innovation at pan-European level. Discrimination of women becomes visible in the wellknown scissor-shaped curve, where one can observe a progressive disappearance of women as they advance in the career: a phenomenon known as “leaky pipeline”.

In contrast to other disciplines, the proportion of women in STEM fields is already very low among students. This leads to another form of the well-known scissor diagram, which is not a scissor in the STEM field, but more like a flattened cone. The figure below shows these data.

⁴ European Commission (2019): She figures 2018. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available online at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9540ffa1-4478-11e9-a8ed01aa75ed71a1/language-en>, checked on 5/28/2020.

Figure 6.2 Proportion (%) of men and women in a typical academic career in science and engineering, students and academic staff, EU-28, 2013-2016



Notes: Reference years for Eurostat data: 2012-2016. Exceptions to the reference year for WIS data: HR: 2014-2017; LU: 2015-2016; UK: 2014-2016; CY, AT, SI, SE: 2013-2015; MT (Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology): 2017. Eurostat data unavailable for: PL (ISCED 8 graduates): 2012; MT (Women: ISCED 8 graduates): 2012; NL (ISCED 8 students and graduates): 2015; WIS-data unavailable for: BE, CZ, EE, IE, FR, LT (2013), LV, HU, MT (2013), RO. Others: Data are in headcounts (HC); Break in time series: DE (Grades B - C): 2016; ES: 2015; UK: 2014. Data rounded to nearest multiple of 5. UK: The same person may be counted in several grades: BE (French speaking community), SE. The same person may be counted in several fields: SE. Data do not include persons of unknown sex: PL; Grade C data include some persons with M.Sc. only: LT, SK; Eurostat data for 2013: ISCED 667 corresponds to ISCED 5A of ISCED-97; ISCED 8 corresponds to ISCED 6 of ISCED-97. The base reference population of WIS data is that of 'Researchers' as defined in the Frascati Manual (OECD, 2015), with the exception of the following countries which used 'Academic staff' based on the UDE Manual (UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat, 2017): BG, DE, IE, EL, IT, LV, LT, NL, SI, SK, SE.

Source: Women in Science database, DG Research and Innovation; Eurostat – Education Statistics (online data codes: educ_enr5, educ_grad5, educ_uae_enr03, educ_uae_grad02).

Figure 1: Quantitative underrepresentation of women in the STEM field (Source: European Commission (2019): She figures 2018. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available online at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publicationdetail/-/publication/9540ffa1-4478-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>, page117, checked on 5/28/2020.)

The STEM field is characterised by this fact: women are still a numerical minority – especially in post-doc and leadership positions.

As fewer women study and work in STEM fields, these fields tend to perpetuate inflexible, exclusionary and male-dominated cultures that do not support or appeal to women.

Given the relevance of technologies in our societies, an adequate participation of all genders in the STEM field is of utmost importance. With technologies, we choose structures that have long-term influence over how people will work, communicate, travel, consume, spend their free time and so forth. To this day, the white male engineer is predominantly seen as the bearer of technological progress and technological knowledge. This has an impact on the concrete content and solutions in research and development.

One important issue is to push for recognition of the social contexts in which scientific research and innovation takes place and how scientific knowledge is received. Scientists typically work in teams, not in isolation, and the contexts within which they work have their own social histories. Researchers are trained by other scientists to adopt the practices of the disciplines

in which they work. Moreover, the evaluation of their research occurs within this social context.

Gender analysis shows that especially the STEM field is – still – mainly considered to be “gender blind”. The recent publication “Gendered Innovations 2”⁵ states regarding the STEM field:

“In engineering and product design research, sex includes anatomical and physiological characteristics that may affect the design of products, systems and processes. Many devices and machines have been designed to fit male bodies. For example, military and commercial cockpits were traditionally based on male anthropometry, which made it difficult or even dangerous for some women (or small men) to be pilots. Crash test dummies are also based on male bodies; while small dummies are now used to represent women, they do not model bodily differences, such as neck strength. Office building thermostats, which are based on male metabolic rates, may set temperatures too low for many women. Workplace safety gear (e.g., police vests) often does not fit women or small men. It is also important to understand differences within groups of women, men and gender-diverse people. Many period-tracking apps fail users who have irregular cycles.”

Nota bene: Integrating sex and gender analysis into research and innovation adds value to research – also in the STEM field.

When it comes to organisational and structural change, many researchers and decisionmakers with an academic background in STEM follow a linear approach that follows a simple formula: there is one problem – and only one solution. This approach has serious disadvantages when initiating and continuing a process that does not follow this logic. The advantage: in general, STEM professionals tend to be more pragmatic and are quicker in finding solutions

When analysing the efforts to integrate gender equality programmes in the STEM field, it has to be said that the resistance to gender equality is particularly strong. This is not to say that there is no resistance to gender equality efforts in other types of higher education institutions, but that the STEM field is even more reluctant to accept these topics. Often it is

⁵ European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (Ed.) (2020): Gendered Innovations 2: How Inclusive Analysis Contributes to Research and Innovation. Policy Review. Brussels. Available online <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/33b4c99f-2e66-11eb-b27b-01aa75ed71a1/language/en/format-PDF/source-search>, checked on 12/11/2020.

perceived that gender experts implicitly criticise common STEM knowledge as incomplete or invalid. Likewise, STEM professionals and disciplines usually rely on numbers, data, direct outcomes and their focus is rather less on social sciences, gender issues, gender sensitivity and gender equality. STEM researchers have difficulties in acknowledging gender knowledge as relevant and scientific knowledge.

Topics of communication and commitment are particularly important in the STEM field.

Therefore, this guideline aims to provide recommendations to foster and promote gender equality especially in the STEM field.

Dos and Don'ts

Gender Equality

Dos

Some suggestions of particular relevance in the STEM field

- To start the process towards gender equality, understand the specific context of your organisation. It is particularly important to know the logic, views, and customs of the organisation's members.
- Know the key players of your organisation: who is who, who is important for what, get in contact, build communication channels, find allies, think about how to talk to people, build a strategy – think pragmatically.
- Become familiar with the values and key mission of your organisation. You will need to convince people at your institution with a narrative argument that fits the values of your institution.
- Before starting any activity – develop a vision and strategy together with relevant actors and/or long-standing members of your organisation.
- Be prepared and do expect resistance when promoting structural change in your organisation – especially in the STEM field.

General recommendations

Create a solid baseline assessment.

- Conduct an in-depth institutional gender analysis and try to understand gender biases. Establish gender-disaggregated data and indicators – all data related to people and processes that affect people should be collected by gender, ethnicity, disability, age, and other characteristics.
- Analyse data about staff and students. Consider staff numbers by gender at all levels, by disciplines and function, average numbers of years needed for all genders to make career advancements, wage gaps as well as direct and indirect remuneration by gender and job, number of candidates

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applying for distinct job positions, number of absence days, number of training hours (and lots more).

- With the help of an in-depth analysis of the proportion of women across all qualification levels in your organisation, you get an overview of the leaky pipeline at your institution.
- Complement quantitative analysis with qualitative analysis for a better understanding of underlying issues.
- With the help of qualitative research, you get a better understanding of where, why and how your institution is losing qualified women.
- Review relevant legislation and policies in your country (legal and policy frameworks, initiatives towards gender equality).
- Having a solid baseline assessment with data and indicators helps to raise awareness among decision makers (e.g., by the highest management or more senior workforce) and can help to overcome resistance to structural institutional change.

Define a vision, strategy, and goals.

- Prepare a vision and strategy based on a systematic, integrated and outcome-based approach. Get clear on your visions and goals and set your frame: What structures do you want to change? What shift in thinking do you want to see? What is reachable? How will this contribute to your overall goal and vision? Set your goals S.M.A.R.T. (= specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-specific).
- Before starting any activity, inform employees about meaning (benefits of gender equality), objectives and concrete goals.
- Involve and engage all stakeholders. Work on the ownership of that process towards gender equality among employees.
- Keep good balance between bottom-up and top-down interventions, this could make the institution's commitment more sustainable and create more impact in the long term. However, be aware that bottom-up interventions and measures need more oversight and quality management than a mere top-down approach.

Implement actions tailored to the context.

- Define operational fields of action focussing on the implementation of gender equality. For Horizon Europe⁵, the following topical areas are recommended by the European Commission:

⁵ European Union (Ed.) (2021): Gender Equality. A Strengthening Commitment in Horizon Europe. Factsheet. Available online at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c0b30b4b-6ce2-11eb-aeb501aa75ed71a1/language-en>, checked on 3/24/2021 and European Commission (Ed.) (2021): Gender equality in research and innovation. Available online at https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en, updated on 3/23/2021.

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

- Work-life-balance & organisational culture
 - Women in decision-making
 - Recruitment & career progression of women
 - Gender into research & teaching
 - Measures to deal with gender-based violence including sexual harassment
- Unite these topical areas in a specific gender equality plan that includes objectives, measures, indicators, targets, timeline, and division of responsibilities.
 - Offer gender trainings and workshops to the whole university community (researchers, lecturers, administrative staff, students) or respectively to the whole research institution community and adjust the topics and methods to the targeted audience.
 - Include antisexist and antiracist awareness-raising measures and trainings. Foster a respectful, inclusive and professional environment that motivates all staff members and students to perform to the best of their ability. Make clear what types of behaviour will not be tolerated.



Experience from Politechnika Krakowska (PK): There are (online) coaching formats for researchers, management staff and students focussing on women's visibility in media work.



Experience from Technische Universität Wien(TUW): Take the students' overall timing into account. The timeframe during students' representative elections might not be the best period to reach the students and should not be the starting point for activities targeting students.

Food for thought: Measures and actions focussing on recruitment and career development.

- - Before the recruitment process begins, set up a recruitment strategy; define strict assessment criteria and key questions.
 - Establish quantitative targets for the representation of all genders, adopt gender quotas.
 - When advertising job positions, make sure that the wording and requirements do not scare off potential female applicants. Generate inclusive job advertisements and descriptions as well as descriptions of skills needed for the position, that do not only or mainly address male candidates.
 - During a recruitment process, avoid the reproduction of imbalances and inequality by setting measures to enlarge the pool of potential candidates. Take a proactive approach to recruitment by actively inviting suitable female candidates to apply. Re-examine the applications and consider re-advertising if too few women are shortlisted.
 - During the interview phase, conduct interviews with candidates in gender-balanced pairs (if possible); make candidates feel welcome; ask the same questions at each interview; take the same amount of time; make sure that all interviewers adhere strictly to the pre-set list of questions.
 - During the shortlisting phase, do not make decisions based on assumptions; slow down the decision-making process and take time to decide; be aware of the “halo effect” (first impressions can influence the evaluation process positively or negatively; people tend to prefer candidates who are similar to themselves or have something in common with themselves); reconsider and discuss reasons for decisions.
 - If a decision is made by a committee or group of people, encourage all group members to monitor each other for unconscious biases.

- Offer attractive job possibilities to staff members after maternity and paternity leave.



Experience from Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC): Women who have returned from maternity leave can apply for a six month period without teaching, to focus on their research and career.

- Create working conditions and a work-life-balanced culture that allow all genders to have an equally fulfilling working environment, career opportunities and safe spaces.



Experience from Technische Universität Wien (TUW): Female scientists are disproportionately burdened by the current quota system (50% women on all committees): to compensate, they can take six months of research leave.

Food for thought: Measures and actions focussing on female career advancement in the STEM field.

- Foster networking and active involvement of women in key events and committees to give visibility to women.
- Provide visibility by looking for and proposing women for prizes, awards, or prestigious tasks and positions.
- Project of “good cheer”: at each meeting, a middle manager introduces one female junior researcher and highlights her scientific achievements and potential. The exercise helps supervisors to better recognise the potential of their female employees and helps the entire faculty to develop a better perception of the achievements of female scientists.

Monitor and evaluate actions (combine quantitative and qualitative indicators).

- Conduct qualitative research where quantitative data needs to be interpreted or where you want to better understand specific mechanisms.

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

- Reflect gender differences in collected quantitative and qualitative data (surveys, focus groups, questionnaires etc.) at all stages of your research: when collecting data, when analysing data, when reporting data.
- Publish the results of the monitoring on your website, and in your annual report, if applicable.



Experience from Technische Universität Wien (TUW): yearly monitoring report on men and women at TUW has been revised, the streamlined form is clearer and enables precise monitoring of developments

- Once a year, always best in the same time period, plan the meeting of all relevant stakeholders of your organization to discuss the monitoring results and plan activities for the next year focusing on increasing gender balance and gender equality.
- Make use of the monitoring tools that have been developed within GEECCO.

Don'ts

Do not conduct (quantitative) analysis as an end in itself.

Do not get stuck in analysis but move on to concrete actions.

Do not reproduce stereotypes when interpreting data and context.

Do not set too ambitious goals, e.g., increasing the participation of female researchers in a topical field from 15% to 45% in a three-year period.

Do not follow the “one-size-fits-all” approach. The STEM field is characterised by a high heterogeneity.

Do not forget to develop specific actions to involve representatives of your middle management.

Do not work on too many actions in parallel.

Dos and Don'ts

Engineering

Dos

Find strategic alliances and friendly allies. Build up a network of researchers and lecturers who are pro-active towards gender issues in research and teaching content.

- It is all about allies, gate keepers and strategies! Put your efforts into forming networks and alliances. Map your possible network and allies: who can be part of the base, who could be the moveable middle, and who is part of the opposition. Learn their stories and frames about your issue.
- To avoid burnout and frustration among the change agents for gender equality, work with people who want to make a change, not those who are (initially) reluctant.
- Involve university staff at different levels from the beginning, not only people in leading positions.
- Encourage men to get more involved in promoting gender equality in research by stopping male privilege.
- Encourage researchers and lecturers who are already involved in promoting gender aspects in research and teaching to explicitly point out the advantages of doing so.
- If possible, find experts from STEM topical fields and disciplines who know about gender aspects, build up a network, use them as spokespersons in the community.
- Look for advice from gender experts, continue to stay in contact with these key people.
- RFOs can be good allies – many calls explicitly ask for an explanation of gender dimensions in research applications.

Raise awareness among researchers and lecturers. Provide information, guidance, counselling, and gender trainings.

- Let people know that gender knowledge within scientific fields, also in the STEM field, is internationally recognized, both in research and policymaking. Make use of the argument: “It is standard in the European Union; we cannot afford not to have it.”

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

- Provide information and guidance to researchers about the relevance of the gender dimension for their own research content. This can be provided in the shape of checklists, guidelines, internal web platforms, newsletters, blogs, trainings, workshops, seminars, debates, etc. Approach the research support/technology transfer department at your university for support.
- Provide detailed information on how the gender dimension can be included in different research topics and fields. Make use of the existing body of literature and guidelines.
- Encourage researchers and lecturers to discuss and reflect on the issue among themselves and support their exchange.
- Encourage researchers and lecturers to reflect and rethink theories, methods, and hypotheses from a gender perspective, e.g., by considering how stereotypes about what it means to be male, female, or non-binary in our society might bias research questions and methods.

Make gender-related literature accessible to lecturers, researchers, and decision makers in the STEM field.

- Elaborate new or disseminate existing guides and checklists to help lecturers and researchers to include gender dimensions in teaching as well as in project proposals and the content of research projects.
- Use the available materials and publications, which – mostly through case studies – already cover gender aspects of many STEM fields. Make use of the literature reviews, and the videos that were developed under the GEECCO project.
- Provide seminars or workshops for lecturers, researchers and decision makers which impart knowledge that including gender perspectives is about reflecting and rethinking theories, methods, and hypotheses from a gender perspective.
- Develop support capacities (i.e., personal advice) to support researchers and teachers in integrating gender aspects and dimensions in their work.
- Train the research support department so that they can do gender consultations themselves in the future.
- Consider the key word “internationalisation” – have a look at EU projects at your university, look at the project consortium, who is involved, identify people who are involved in “gender-flagged” EU-projects and people who take a gender dimension into account. Talk to those people.

Make gender knowledge a part of the education of engineers and future scientists.

- The student level matters: students are likely to be more open towards societal change. Consider how students can be involved and engaged in (societal) transformation processes.
- Active development of gender knowledge during education: the curricula of technical universities and technical colleges should include compulsory courses and lectures on “gender studies” in the training of engineers.

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

- Implement communication and transferable skills into lectures to support interdisciplinarity and to bring other methods and perspectives into teaching.
- Support lecturers in addressing the gender dimension in teaching. Provide already existing (webbased) resources as well as personal advice.



Experience from Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC): The vocational training institute of UPC has implemented gender equality trainings on a regular basis.

Don'ts

Do not leave inclusion of the gender dimension to researchers without previous experience with this topic as unfavourable, sometimes even negative effects might occur. Gender stereotypes are used that lead to equally stereotypical products.

Do not develop gender stereotypical (technology) solutions, e.g., pink tools for women.

Avoid common pitfalls like I-methodology (“everybody is like me”) and universal design (“one-size-fits-all – everyone is the same”).

Do not use standard phrases and disconnected add-ons when answering the “gender dimension in research” section within proposals.

Dos and Don'ts

Communication

Dos

Provide and discuss definitions and approaches.

- Clearly define terms, such as “gender”, “equality”, “diversity”, “equity”, “inclusion”. Note that the same terms (like “gender”) in different languages may mean something different. Some languages do not have a specific term for the English word “gender” and therefore, the English term is used but must – always – be defined to avoid misunderstandings.



Experience from Politechnika Krakowska (PK): In Poland “gender” is an overused word in political fights.



Experience from Università degli Studi Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria (UNIRC): In Italy statements like “society needs to change first before more gender equality can be achieved at UNIRC” seems a convenient excuse for not tackling gender inequalities in the institution.

- For a common understanding provide a glossary with the most relevant terms (including translation to English and other relevant languages) for internal and external purposes. Distribute this glossary via your official communication channels to all staff members, e.g., management, researchers, lecturers including students and administrative staff.

Inform the institution about the advantages of gender equality.

- Gender dimension in research content: emphasize the fact that the quality and sustainability of research outcomes rise when considering and including the gender dimension.
- Student level: if there is more diversity and gender balance among students, a better gender balance in researching and teaching staff can follow.
- Gender dimension in teaching: including the gender dimension in teaching results in a better inclusion of the gender dimension in research – in the long run.

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

- Embrace positive approaches and perspectives, instead of focussing on the negative. Use positive stories about the benefits of gender equality and inclusion.
- Get to know your audience – think about who they are and what you want to tell them – it will help you to identify challenges and opportunities and to adapt your message and language to your specific target group.

Use inclusive language, media design and images.

- All genders should be equally present in communication. Communication is an interplay between sender and receiver. It works well when recipients of a message (= target group) are properly addressed and “picked up”. It is therefore essential to address female, male, transgender, and non-binary equally – as (future) employees, (future) students, clients, customers, multipliers, and stakeholders.
- When directly communicating with people, ask people how and with which name and pronoun they want to be addressed.
- Conduct awareness-raising campaigns and guidelines for gender-sensitive language and communication – liaise with the student bodies.
- Use inclusive vocabulary: Emphasis on diversity and inclusion, not only gender equality. This approach might be more accepted – but too much focus on diversity and inclusion might dilute gender equality.
- Portrait employees and students in day-to-day working situations that do not correspond to predominant gender roles.
- Sometimes it is preferable to talk about the wellbeing of all people, creating healthier environments, encouraging family life and more work-life-balance instead of gender equality. The issue then does not come across as “political”.
- Rethink the word “gender” or “quota”, if necessary. Using the word gender or quota sometimes invites huge resistance. Leave the word out, talk about it differently, but with the same meaning.

Establish a respectful working environment also in teaching and research performing teams.

- Enrich your skills as a change agent towards a respectful working environment: become a good listener; get and provide support and feedback.
- Work-related meeting formats should be less static. Include interactive methods, provide spaces for interaction. Include creative and design-thinking approaches as well as out-of-the-box thinking techniques.
- Elaborate new ideas together in groups and think about how the measures could be adapted for the specific need in your organisation. Conduct gender impact assessments – as a creative method – within your research activities.

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

- Refer to the “authorship” – also in the learning and research environment, e.g., by pointing “As Anna has already pointed out”, “I am referring to Mikel’s idea on ...”.
- Establish formal mechanisms to deal with inappropriate behaviour such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, threats, and violence.
- Encourage staff and students not to tolerate inappropriate behaviour and to take firm action against it.

Promote your gender equality activities broadly within your organisation and beyond.

- Develop and implement a sound communication strategy including information which is both efficient and long-lasting.
- Organise campaigns with publicity on key dates like 8th of March (International Women’s Day) or anniversaries, e.g., “100th year anniversary of female students admitted to our university”.
- Run a campaign that focusses on men to promote what gender equality means from their perspective.
- Make the costs of hegemonic masculinity visible, e.g., poor work life. Highlight existing differences among men. There is no single, homogeneous masculinity that is valid for all men.
- Make use of the exhibition, and the videos that were developed under the GEECCO project.
- Conduct up-to-date media work and promote gender-equality activities with the same quality standards as you do for other research-related activities.
- Stay in contact (interviews, talks, etc.) with female scholars and professors within the university, and make their work visible through interviews, talks, etc.
- Foster the exchange of RPOs and RFOs regarding the gender dimension in research content and gender mainstreaming.
- Anchor your actions to other actions – when it contributes to other goals some people might see it as more valuable.
- Spread the project/activities etc. in communities that do not pursue gender equality as a priority.



Experience from Poland: Gender-related topics are also linked to working conditions, work-life balance, maternity leave etc.

Address issues such as: Do decision makers have daughters, wives, sisters? Talk with male decision-makers about the situation women they know might face. The strongest allies may be fathers whose daughters have experienced discrimination.

Offer gender trainings and workshops to the whole community at your organisation.

- Conduct gender equality awareness-raising campaigns and gender trainings.
- Have a person representing the top management give a statement or make sure one person holding an important position in the hierarchy attends the training. That highlights the importance of gender equality in general and the training in particular.
- Inform the institution about the advantages of increased gender equality for working climate and personal well-being.

Make gender equality change agents, their work, and networks visible.

- Build a strong alliance between the gender equality office, the core gender equality group, and the student body.
- Conduct and publish interviews with female role models to enhance visibility and showcase the situations of women and the difficulties and struggles in a mainly male-dominated working environment they face.

Don'ts

Do not reproduce gender stereotypes, e.g., men are more competent as managers and in leadership positions.

Avoid discriminatory language and terms.

Do not forget to communicate your gender equality activities to new staff members.

Do not only communicate about gender equality issues at your institution with women.

Do not focus on the negative. Do not use “don'ts” and other negative demands in your public communication.

Dos and Don'ts

Commitment

Dos

Rely on the GE principles and strategies developed at the European⁶ and national level.

- Make use of the topical areas that are recommended in Horizon Europe:
 - Work-life-balance & organisational culture
 - Women in decision-making
 - Recruitment & career progression of women
 - Gender into research & teaching
 - Measures to deal with gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Take steps to get the top management on board. Gender Equality needs support and resources from the top management.

- Share good practices from other – comparable – RPOs in the STEM field with your top management.
 - Coordinate and build up synergies with other national and international universities, especially those who have already been involved in EU-funded structural change projects. For example, organise site visits for the management board to other high-ranking technological universities. Perspectives will be exchanged with other persons in the same position.
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- To get the attention of the rector (top management), imagine how gender equality can “feed” the goals of the rectorate (e.g., policy goals, attention of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research

⁶ European Union (Ed.) (2021): Gender Equality. A Strengthening Commitment in Horizon Europe. Factsheet. Available online at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c0b30b4b-6ce2-11eb-aeb501aa75ed71a1/language-en>, checked on 3/24/2021 and European Commission (Ed.) (2021): Gender equality in research and innovation. Available online at https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en, updated on 3/23/2021.

and/or Innovation and the respective ministers, unique status among the rectors at national level, more subsidies and publicity).

- Improve the communication on the benefits of professional networks and informal knowledge sharing, for example, by inviting high profile female researchers to talk about the importance of networking for their career advancement.

Develop top-down gender mainstreaming policies. Secure support and resources for gender equality from the top management.

- Consider gender equality as a priority which must be communicated and worked bottom-up, but the policies have to come top-down.
- The top management should always make a positive public statement towards structural change and promoting gender equality.
- Build up institutional structures for gender equality at the university to facilitate the realisation of equal opportunities and equality.
- Allocate sufficient resources, in terms of personnel, institutional power and money, for fostering gender equality. Establish a gender equality office at universities, with adequate personnel and a supporting core group.
- If a gender equality officer is in place, they should have a clear mandate (written, specific to the university), full-time engagement (in case of very small universities possibly part-time), close to the core management and supported by top leadership.
- Staff and researchers should be able to claim working hours for their gender equality work and the effort that they invest for gender equality activities. That is a way forward to make gender equality work visible.

Address the middle management in your organisation.

- The middle management is a very important community as they often are “in the middle of things”. Specifically, and clearly address the middle management, as they are the gate keepers and core stakeholders.
- Addressing the middle management requires a strategic approach from the top management to actively engage the middle management by holding them accountable for jointly set goals (strong top-down approach).
- When new appointments are made to management positions, e.g., vice rectorate, deans, senior faculty members, use the opportunity to include gender goals in their job description.
- Offer tailor-made gender trainings for middle management. If possible, make them compulsory.

Build up your gender equality team and involve friendly allies at various stages. Promote a collaborative approach to gender equality work.

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

- Set up your gender equality activities in a collaborative way.
- Establish and organise mechanisms for regular reflection on the strategy and the implementation of gender equality as well as for learning loops to facilitate long-term organisational learning and for meta-reflection and self-steering purposes.
- Establish a community of practice (CoP) – i.e., a group of people who share a common concern and come together regularly – to develop a reflexive gender equality policy which supports mainstreaming gender in the institution.



Experience from PK: GEECCO team is the main consultant of the Anti-Discrimination Act: the team was invited to work together regarding harassment and anti-discrimination for students and general equity for everyone

- Organise exchange formats between RFOs and RPOs to raise mutual understanding for the difficulties which both groups encounter in their everyday work.
- Keep in mind that gender mainstreaming as well as structural and organisational change towards gender equality take and need time. It is always a matter of mutual learning by doing and the persistent process of trying and adapting ideas, approaches, methods, tools, instruments, and activities.

Don'ts

Do not forget to ensure a formal commitment including a clear mandate for gender equality from your top management.

Do not conceptualise gender equality as a “stand alone” measure, but coordinate gender-equality work into a wider equality agenda.

Do not expect that gender equality will be achieved in the short run.

Dos and Don'ts

focussing on RFOs (Research Funding Organisations)

Dos

Put emphasis on the essence of gender equality in research content in RFOs.

- Gender equality is relevant in (almost) all disciplines. As an RFO be aware that there is (nearly) no scientific discipline which would be irrelevant for consideration of the gender dimension in research content.
- Try to raise awareness inside your own institution and to check gender equality issues in-house. Analyse the status quo of the whole funding cycle and where gender equality issues arise. In addition, use best practice examples to compare your own situation or progress with what others are doing and experiencing, and exchange ideas with them.
- The gender dimension should be integrated in each project (e.g., methodological considerations and intended application of the results). If a gender dimension is not relevant, proper justification must be provided.
- Instruct applicants to consider the intersections of gender with ethnicity, sexual orientation, social status, age, and other axes of inequality, and reflect which dimensions might be relevant for their particular funding programme. The corresponding data shall be collected and analysed, including the relation to the sex/gender variable.
- Put emphasis on the essence of gender equality in research content, namely on the production of safe, acceptable, and useful research results for everyone without implicit or explicit genderbased stereotypes. Make use of arguments based on evidence (e.g., referring to the European level, studies, etc.).
- Keep in mind that the context and the political situation in a specific country matters and might be a crucial precondition for an inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the funding cycle.
- In the case of an online (or any written) campaign, use language that explicitly addresses women and non-binary (in some languages that would mean using female as well as male grammatical terms and/or gender-neutral language). Publish and communicate in such a way that all genders

feel welcome and acknowledged. Try to establish expertise in-house or include relevant experts from outside.

Integrate gender equality and the gender dimension in research in funding calls.

- Ensure that the gender-related criteria the RFO applies are transparently communicated and explained in detail to the applicants. The usage of examples and guidelines can be helpful. Incorporate this in your communication internally as well as externally. Use the resources developed under the GEECCO project.
- Incorporate gender equality measures throughout the funding cycle, i.e., starting at the application phase. One example is the format and content of CVs: state explicitly in your instructions that candidates can mention in their CV any relevant career breaks (e.g., due to caring responsibilities for children/other persons, or because of long-term illness) and include this in the eligibility criteria. This means that when evaluating CVs and selecting peer reviewers, these breaks should be taken into account.
- Moreover, be flexible about fixed time frames for the track records of researchers (e.g. “not older than five years”) and include the possibility of extending this period due to care duties so as not to disadvantage those researchers who have had career breaks (due to maternity/parental leave, long-term illness, caring responsibilities as mentioned above).
- Try to invite applicants openly and without discrimination: If you are able to (formally or informally) influence the text of nomination calls, communicate that you encourage applications (also) by women, or require nominations from candidates of all genders, and researchers with care-responsibilities.
- Be open for atypical research careers and consider them when preparing the evaluation rules and procedures.
- Try to reflect on how to improve gender equality, e.g., support researchers with care responsibilities, especially parents with young children or researchers caring for elderly relatives. Consider providing a bonus for these researchers in the grant scheme or other affirmative actions.

Include gender equality considerations also in the evaluation procedures.

- Consider mechanisms to push gender equality forward and adapt them to your context (e.g., national law, quotas). Also consider good-practice examples in your own country as well as abroad. Possible certification mechanisms could be bonuses, extra points, higher flat-rates, eligibility of applicants.
- Consider the gender dimension both in basic research projects and applied research or innovation projects. Take into account differences between those spheres and that applicants might need more or less training, or they may need their awareness raised to fulfil the specifications.
- Include gender expertise in your decision processes and bodies, and make sure there is a constant awareness of the matter through all decision stages.

Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field

- Highlight examples of innovation, especially in applied research, where the gender dimension is important but initially unnoticed. Work with the examples from other RFOs or research groups and raise awareness by giving practical examples.
- Monitor the gender compositions of teams in a research proposal, the gender of the principal investigator as well as the gender of reviewers (number of proposals reviewed by gender, based on main project disciplines). Keep in mind that research is often a group accomplishment and try to put the whole team on display. Furthermore, check the workload and input as well as composition of each member and gender aspects there (e.g., who is working how much on what kind of managerial level). Choose indicators wisely and monitor them on a constant basis. Think about how to communicate them internally as well as externally, if relevant and possible.

Establish juries and boards that include diverse and gender competent members.

- If self-appraising procedures for jury members are in place at your RFO, encourage female researchers and researchers from underrepresented groups to apply explicitly for a position as an expert in your RFO.
- Proactively recruit women, and researchers from underrepresented groups and experts into the pools of reviewers and panels and strive for (gender) balance according to the field/topic.
- When recruiting peer reviewers, make sure to communicate transparently that you are interested in both women and reviewers from underrepresented groups.
- Keep balanced shares of chairpersons and vice-chairs. If possible, establish quotas for underrepresented genders. But: be aware that the balanced proportions of all genders alone will not ensure gender-competence in decision making – awareness, sensitivity and experience are needed.
- Connect with female expert networks that exist in many countries and ask them to share the call among their networks and/or for active nominations or use them to find potential jury members or reviewers.
- Actively and regularly (e.g., once a year) monitor the gender composition of peer reviewers and of the evaluation committees.
- With the help of e.g., gender trainings and/or other short-term awareness raising measures, make reviewers, evaluators, jury members and decision-makers in general aware about unconscious biases, address gender sensitivity and other dimensions of diversity.

Make costs related to gender equality trainings and/or consulting eligible.

- Make the costs related to gender training eligible for funding.
- Consider affirmative actions, e.g., make costs for care duties (day-care facilities, babysitting etc.) during conferences and other career-related events eligible for funding or support respective services.

Organise and foster exchange among RFOs and RPOs and build up a network.

- Think about ways and formats to establish a routine exchange between RFOs in your region/country/in a similar context. It helps to increase understanding of the different levels of progress regarding gender mainstreaming. In a safe environment the most burning questions and issues with which all RFOs are struggling can be better disclosed
- Think about ways and formats to create dialogue between RFOs and RPOs in your community and beyond in order to raise mutual understanding of the difficulties both groups encounter in their everyday work.
- Build sustainable relationships; include allies from RPOs, RFOs, and at all levels of policy making and try to establish a network.
- Communicate openly and continuously the fact that your organisation cares about equal opportunities for all genders.

Don'ts

Pushing for gender-balanced committees can mean that the few women in an organisation or in a certain (male-dominated) field are overloaded. Therefore, do not overload female experts and consider how to include them wisely in decision-making processes while giving them enough exposure at the same time.

Do not consider single measures without thinking about consequences or links to other processes (i.e., installing a new criterion without communicating it transparently). Be aware of the whole funding cycle!

Do not accept standard phrases in the gender equality section of the proposals. Strive for a situation in which applicants consider gender equality not in a single section but throughout their whole proposal.

Do not work as a satellite, i.e., get in contact with other RFOs as well as experts in the RPOs. Try to avoid working alone: find allies in your own organisation, in other RFOs and RPOs and beyond.

Do not try to implement everything at the same time. Search for a window of opportunity and adapt accordingly as you go along.

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