



CALIPER
Gender Equality in STEM Research

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY DESIGN AND DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE GEP

The IRB Experience



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“ EU CONTEXT: EXISTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Horizon Europe sets gender equality as a crosscutting principle and aims to eliminate gender inequality and intersecting socioeconomic inequalities throughout research and innovation systems. In particular, European Research Area Priority 4 focuses on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research and innovation[1]. The objective is to foster scientific excellence and breadth of research approaches by fully utilising gender diversity and equality.

Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) have been recognised as an effective gender mainstreaming tool for Research and Innovation (R&I) and Higher Education (HE) institutions to tackle the objectives of the European Research Area (ERA) via a set of actions implemented along with clear timelines and monitored through specific indicators[2]. This is evident as well, since a GEP is an eligibility criterion for acceding Horizon Europe funding for the R&I Institutions. Lastly, the Ljubljana Declaration[3] adopted in 2021 highlights the importance of GEPs as a tool “to achieve long-term and sustainable advancement towards Gender equality in R&I”.

Even though the institutional change strategy implemented through GEPs has had very positive impacts in many research organisations and has been a catalyser at national and EU level, there is still a need for a renewed approach[2] which will enable Institutions to go beyond the minimum requirements for a GEP as defined in Horizon Europe eligibility criteria for effectively addressing the persisting structural barriers in R&I institutions.

For this reason, the recent ERA policies on gender equality in R&I have expanded their scope to cover innovation at large aiming at connecting academic research with society and the economy. This is evident from the European Commission’s (EC) most recent policy directions on Gender Equality in R&I and institutional change that seek for ‘inclusive’ Gender Equality Plans referring to “intersectoriality” as one of the dimensions along with intersectionality and geographic inclusiveness.

The **H2020 CALIPER project** was designed and is now being implemented, (since 2020) addressing these three dimensions and in particular having intersectoriality as its key specific feature embedded in all steps of the institutional change process, from the internal assessment to the GEPs design and implementation phase, as well as in monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, drawing upon the experience of the CALIPER project which aims at addressing gender inequality in STEM in 9 RPOs and RFOs across the EU and which has been built based on the GEAR tool but offering an additional inclusive approach, this policy briefing highlights the main takeaways on the design & development, of an inclusive Gender Equality Plan. This particular policy briefing is the first version of three policy briefings to be developed focusing on the inclusive GEP process.

Elaborating on the different dimensions of inclusiveness addressed by the CALIPER project, this policy brief aims at guiding national stakeholders in Spain to effectively contribute to tailoring GEPs to specific domestic needs and developing quality assurance for GEPs.

“**THE SPANISH CONTEXT: EXISTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

The Spanish legal framework has many provisions to ensure gender equality. The Spanish constitution contains articles that ensure the freedom and equality of individuals, and the equality before the law regardless of their sex, gender, religion, or other social conditions. In the last twenty years, Spain has passed laws regarding gender equality in employment, training, professional promotion, and working conditions, inclusion of the gender dimension in research and elimination of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in educational institutions. More recently, in October 2020, two crucial Royal Decrees were published in the frame of gender issues and gender equality plans, in particular the Real Decreto ley 901/2020[4] regulating the content of equality plans and their registration, and the Real Decreto 902/2020[5] stating the principle of transparent remuneration and obligation of equal remuneration of equal value work. Concerning the Regional level (Catalonia), L 17/2015[6] ensures equality between men and women, L 11/2014[7] guarantees the rights of LGBTI people, and L 19/2020[8] ensures equality and non-discriminatory treatment. More specifically, in Higher Education Institutions there are laws about equal representation of women and men and since 2011 GEPs are mandatory for public research bodies. Also, there are many existing policies regarding parental leave. At National level LOIMH 3/2007[9] applies, and article 25 about “Equality in the field of higher education”, which states that “In the field of higher education, public administrations in the exercise of their respective competences will promote teaching and research on the meaning and scope of equality between

women and men”. Regarding sexual harassment, the national legal framework contains “Specific measures to prevent sexual harassment and harassment based on sex at work”. According to the national legal framework “Companies must promote working conditions that prevent sexual harassment and harassment on the basis of sex and arbitrate specific procedures for their prevention and to channel the complaints or claims that may be made by those who have been subject of this matter”.

EVIDENCE ON IRB GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES”

IRB has set up measures and protocols for recruitment to ensure equal employment and opportunities, but it is necessary to better communicate these measures among the scientific community. In terms of career progression with a gender perspective, no protocols and guidelines are in place. In the sub-area of well-being and work-life balance, the Institute follows the national laws and regulations and has various initiatives set in place. In relation to the decision-making bodies, there is an underrepresentation of female participants because of the low number of female Principal Investigators. IRB has an Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) which currently comprises 11 members representing the majority of the positions in the institute. Regarding institutional communication, efforts are made to give more visibility to gender equality actions especially on the institutional website/intranet. In relation to the research content sub-area, IRB groups are aware of the gender perspective in the content of their research. With regards to the student services, there are some initiatives that contribute to giving visibility to women at IRB and to encourage

young girls to pursue STEM studies. Currently there are no initiatives aimed at counseling researchers and young scientists with a gender-sensitive approach. IRB has set up measures and protocols addressing sexual and gender discrimination, and the main protocol is available in Spanish and English to all employees on the Institute's intranet. IRB is channeling efforts into transferring research results into the market but currently there is no specific system to measure and monitor gender-related aspects. Finally, through experience gained in recent years and through actions of the Equality and Diversity Committee, IRB is evolving from a binary approach towards a broader, intersectional approach, taking into account other social aspects that converge and influence gender equality, such as social class, race, existence of disabilities, sexual or gender orientation, among other factors.

“ CALIPER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE GEP

Setting up the scene for the GEP design and development: Perform an analysis of external and internal conditions for the GEP development and acceptance. Identify potential gender biases and inequalities along with scenarios towards change using the proposed actions below:

Set up a GEP Working Group:

Suggested members of the GEP working group include staff members at different managerial levels including stakeholders from middle and high management.

Perform a qualitative and quantitative

gender analysis:

Suggested areas for data collection include human resources, institutional governance, research, teaching, student services, transfer to the market, institutional communication, intersectionality, and sexual harassment.

Tools:: set up intersectional indicators and targets to be achieved and collect sex-disaggregated data via desk research and interviews.

Set up Research & Innovation (R&I) Hub:

Adopting the quadruple helix approach gather information through desk research, network analysis and interviews with key stakeholders from academia and universities, industry, ministries/government, public sector, civil society organisations and identify the regional/national innovation ecosystems in which they operate adopting and engage them in the GEP design and development process.

Suggested members of the R&I Hub:

Stakeholders from academia and universities, industry, ministries/government, public sector, civil society organisations.

Develop strategic change scenarios to better understand and reflect key factors, the potential measures and the strategic collaborations with internal and external stakeholders that need to be leveraged with regards to the implementation of the GEP.

Suggested methodology: develop three scenarios focusing on the identification of the maximum resistances, the maximum opportunities, and a mix of both in the areas mentioned in the gender analysis.

Suggested main components of the scenarios: Situation; Main problems;

Objective(s); **Scenario 1: Maximal resistance** (including the possible solutions that would trigger high resistance and potential opportunities) **Scenario 2: Low resistance** (including the possible solutions that would trigger low resistance and potential opportunities) **Scenario 3: Intermediate resistance** (including the possible solutions that would trigger intermediate resistance and potential opportunities).

Organise Multi Stakeholder dialogues involving the R&I Hubs and assess the above-mentioned scenarios and investigate opportunities and barriers for collaboration with the regional and national stakeholders.

IRB stakeholder dialogues: They enhanced the networking activities of the institute and facilitated the mapping of the external situation. IRB provided roadmaps and instructions to support the process for R&I Hub members who had a solid knowledge regarding gender equality issues, also facilitating the communication among members of the HUB.

GEP design and development: Develop an inclusive GEP based on the knowledge and experience gained and the targets set.

Recommended areas to focus when designing and developing a GEP in Spain, on the basis of IRB's GEP design and development process:

Human Resources: To ensure a more gender equal and bias free environment, the proposed measures include: **Reviewing and updating existing recruitment policies** and guidelines from a gender perspective, leading potentially to cultural change. **Conduct a salary audit regarding equal pay.** The salary system should be analysed in order to detect any injustices. An action plan on unequal pay,

including an analysis of the reasons leading to this phenomenon, should be structured to facilitate the process. Develop training on the importance of work/life balance. The needs of the institution should be identified, and the training reflect upon these needs. The implementation of the training sessions should be followed by an assessment process. Dissemination of this activity is very important to raise awareness internally. **Develop parental leave and work/life balance guide(s).** First, the review and update of existing policies in this area is needed, followed by the development of the final structure and dissemination of the Guide to the employees. The Guide should be regularly assessed and updated.

Institutional Governance: To address the low representation of women in decision making bodies, the measures include: **A Mentoring Programme** to promote career progression reflecting a commitment to the career development of women. The programme should take into account all potential existing information and processes related to mentoring and collect feedback from the scientific community regarding desired practices to be implemented. The programme can contain leadership training sessions, peer coaching groups, and a list of senior role models to participate in mentoring and coaching activities. **Prepare an internal regulation to govern the Equality and Diversity Committee**, by providing a document regulating the functioning of the Committee and the roles of its members. Preparation, approval and dissemination of the new regulations on the institutional Intranet are necessary.

Institutional Communication: The popular perception of male dominance in the STEM community creates the need for gender neutral language in the internal and external

communication content. The proposed activities include: Give internal and external visibility to the new Gender Equality Plan and raise institutional awareness on equality and diversity. An important step is to connect the necessary documentation with the pertinent legal bodies, both at national and regional levels. **Create and promote manual/guidelines in inclusive language. Develop a checklist/guideline for posting and checking communication material** (posts, templates, announcements, etc.) ensuring the gender sensitivity of external communication on social media platforms. **Organise and participate in advanced training on inclusive language**, integrate an inclusive (gender, diversity, intersectional) approach into oral and written communications and apply the recommendations. **Promote institutional engagement to equality and diversity topics** (videos, institutional equality day, printed materials, among others). Related activities can include an Equality and Diversity Communication Plan, with the aim to promote news, role models, and events, among others, the use of an institutional Blog for gender and equality topics, disseminating updated pictures of Equality and Diversity Committee meetings and members, and visual material and campaigns to promote gender and equality.

Research: To adopt gender sensitive policies in the focus area of research, proposed measures include: **Offer training sessions on the integration of the gender dimension** into research, to understand the importance of gender dimension in research and innovation. **Create and consolidate a protocol for planning and developing internal seminars**, promoting and assuring the participation of speakers, chosen considering the gender perspective. **Help young scientists in their career progression from a gender**

perspective, by reinforce equality and diversity topics in onboarding sessions, giving all newcomers a general overview of efforts made in matters pertaining to equality and diversity. This can be achieved by developing a checklist of topics covering gender and equality and a mandatory presentation to be included in onboarding sessions; and by **integrating gender perspective training in the transversal PhD programme**, including a mandatory course to inform about existing initiatives addressing equality and diversity.

Sexual and Gender Harassment: Measurements to improve the methods of combating sexual harassment include: **Develop regular internal training on Sexual & Gender Harassment**, to increase awareness and capacity to prevent and recognise sexual harassment. **Review and update protocol on Sexual Harassment** to prevent and eradicate behaviours related to sexual and gender harassment. Proper dissemination of the policies is vital.

Intersectionality: To strengthen the culture of intersectionality in the organisation, proposed measures include: **Design awareness raising campaigns on Intersectionality** to develop a critical perspective on intersectional topics, providing the grounds to rethink everyday practices. **Organise an advance training session on gender and diversity topics** for members of the Equality Commission, to provide an advanced perspective on the concept of equality and diversity.

“CONCLUSION

The present policy briefing describes the European and Spanish national context as well as the institutional context regarding gender equality policies and practices as they have been depicted in the extensive external and internal analysis conducted within the context of the CALIPER project. Based on the abovementioned context, IRB's GEP has been designed and described here for giving the example to other Research Performing Organisations operating in Spain for setting up their inclusive GEP.

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Learn more about CALIPER project and the Gender Equality Plans:



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