

Gender Equality Plan

[EU-OPENSREEN ERIC]

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Content

INTRODUCTION.....	2
Methodology.....	4
List of challenges.....	5
ACTION PLAN.....	6
Goal 1: Equal access to training and career development possibilities.....	6
Goal 2: Improving access to decision boards and responsibility for females.....	7
Goal 3: Improving work/life balance.....	8
Goal 4: Information and prevention of microaggression, bullying and sexual harassment.....	9
Goal 5: Gender-balanced recruitment process.....	9
Overview of measures and targets per recommended area.....	10
Monitoring and Evaluation.....	11
Abbreviations.....	11
References.....	11

INTRODUCTION

Addressing and acting against gender inequality is a strong commitment that the European Commission sets as a goal in the Horizon 2020 work program.

The poor access to leading positions in academia and research infrastructures for women results ultimately in a dramatic loss of intellectual prowess, research capacity and economical loss, given the cost of academic education.^[1]

In fact, even if the ratio between men and women is balanced up to the doctorate, there is a significant decrease afterwards. According to the 2021 “She Figures”, drafted by the European Commission, women obtain 48% of PhD degrees, but represent only 26% of top positions in the higher education sector. This percentage is even lower (18%) if only the fields of science and engineering are considered.^[2]

Women on their way to the top in academia face biases against their qualifications: even if most of these biases are relatively small at an aggregated level and at a group level, however, they become easily apparent.^[1] Strategies to address and challenge those bias are clearly needed to ensure an equal access for females to high-ranking position in science and are also the key for maintenance and sustainability of scientific careers.

The benefits of gender equality in science and in general in society are multifaceted.

A more gender equal European Union (EU) would have strong, positive Gross Domestic Product (GDP) impacts growing over time, higher level of employment and productivity and could respond to challenges related to the ageing population in the EU. Estimates from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) speculated that by 2050, improving gender



equality would lead to an increase in EU (GDP) per capita by 6.1 to 9.6% and an additional 10.5 million jobs. ^[3]

This is particularly crucial for jobs in the so-called STEM area (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). In fact, reducing the gender gap in STEM education could help reduce skills gap, increase employment and productivity of women and reduce occupational segregation. Ultimately this would foster economic growth via both higher productivity and increased labor market activity.

The impact of a more balanced gender equality is even more important on a social scale, and here the role of science, research and education is crucial. Those are important catalysts for social change and increase population's cognitive and non-cognitive skills. ^[3]

EU-OPENSREEN ERIC is committed to implement a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) as a measure to increase gender-balanced leadership and visibility in science, challenge gender-role bias and promote a healthy work/life balance for the employees, with the aim of disseminating ideas and policies to all EU-OPENSREEN partner sites.

Individual actions part of the GEP will be revised every six months, while the whole GEP will be revised once a year.

Methodology

Information about the GEP and strategies to put it into place were gained by participation in seminars offered by the Gender Equality (GE) Academy ^[4], using the online Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool ^[5] and by exchanging content and ideas with the ERIC Forum ^[6] community. Furthermore, a discussion between EU-OPENSSCREEN and the EU-OPENSSCREEN partner sites at a workshop on women in science, held at the annual EU-OPENSSCREEN DRIVE project meeting, and the movie "Picture a Scientist" ^[7] at the European Chemical Biology Symposium in 2021, also organized by EU-OPENSSCREEN, highlighted the challenges for female individuals in natural science.

In order to collect the relevant data on the personnel at EU-OPENSSCREEN, a first survey was conducted that gathered information on gender, age, highest academic degree, type of working contract, degree of responsibility and salary.

The collected replies were disaggregated by gender and analyzed with one or two tail t-tests.

Afterwards, a second in-depth questionnaire, based on the Gender Equality Audit Monitoring (GEAM) survey ^[8], was carried out. This questionnaire asked for personal views on access to training, career advancement, access to decision boards, job flexibility, work/life balance, workload, work culture, microaggression and sexual harassment.

The result of this survey highlighted the most relevant areas for actions on the following topics: "equal access to decision boards", "equal access to training", "equal access to career advancement", "work/life balance" and "prevention of bullying and microaggression".

List of challenges

Challenge No.	Description of the challenge identified	Brief description of the data collected from gender audit	Related Goals	Additional remarks
1	Equal access to training and career development possibilities	Almost 88% of female employees have not gained the chance to participate in conferences. The percentage for male employees is 75%.	Goal 1	
2	Improving access to decision making processes and responsibility for females	Only 14% of females have access to decision-making meetings, while 33% of males stated that they have access.	Goal 2	
3	Improving work/life balance	Over 50% of females report to have worked overtime on a monthly basis while this figure for males is 33%.	Goal 3	
4	Information and prevention of microaggression, bullying and sexual harassment	Most employees are scarcely informed about these topics.	Goal 4	
5	Gender balanced recruitment process	An equilibrated and transparent process is needed.	Goal 5	

ACTION PLAN

Goal 1: Equal access to training and career development possibilities

Measures

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators*	Responsibilities/Resources*
1.1	Set up and implement an information system for tracing participation in training and conferences	End of Summer 2022	All employees	Transparent and clear tracking system in place.	HR Manager 0.5 PM
1.2	Actively inform all employees about training opportunities.	Continuous from GEP adoption	All employees	Regular emails about training compatible with employees' duties.	HR Manager 1 PM
1.3	Dissemination of knowledge within the infrastructure	Continuous from GEP adoption	All employees	Reports on conferences and storing of training material on common server accessible to all employees	HR Manager IT Manager 2 PM

Goal 2: Improving equal access to decision making processes and responsibilities

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators*	Responsibilities/Resources*
2.1	Survey the total number of decision-making processes which are part of the infrastructure and explore feasibility of a rotation mechanism.	Oct 2022	All employees	Having a list of boards, and responsibility of rotation mechanism or co-chairing/observing options	HR Manager 0.5 PM
2.2	Establish a strategy workshop involving all employees twice a year.	Beginning 2023	All employees	Documentation of meetings and inputs from all employees	HR Manager 0.25 PM

Goal 3: Improving work/life balance

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators*	Responsibilities/Resources*
3.1	Set up a management system to track overtime	Summer 2022	All employees	Publication of internal guidelines on overtime tracking	HR Manager BR Directorate 1 PM
3.2	Inform employees about stress-related health risks. Ensure a good work/life balance. Encourage work sharing (for instance, in case of illness, holidays, leaves etc)	Continuous from GEP adoption	All employees	Internal dissemination of information material on burn-out prevention	BR GE Officer HR Manager 0.5 PM
3.3	Monitor employees' work/life balance	Continuous from GEP adoption	All employees	Results of questionnaire on work/life balance	GE Officer 0.5 PM

Goal 4: Information and prevention of microaggression, bullying and sexual harassment

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators*	Responsibilities/Resources*
4.1	Organize a workshop on unbiased communication (focused on conflict management)	End 2022	All employees	Survey among employees	GE officer, HR Manager 1 PM Budget of 2 K for external expert for the workshop
4.2	Organize a workshop on microaggression and sexual harassment	2023	All employees	Survey among employees	GE officer 0.5 PM Budget of 2 K for external expert for the workshop

Goal 5: Gender-balanced recruitment process

Measures

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators*	Responsibilities/Resources*
5.1	Set up a gender-neutral employment policy	End 2022	All employees	Publication of employment policy	GE + HR manager + BR 1 PM
5.2	Establish guidelines for interviews	End 2022	New employees	Publication of guidelines for interviews	GE Officer+ HR manager BR 1 PM
5.3	Evaluate recruitment process	Continuous from GEP adoption	New employees	Survey among employees	HR manager GE officer BR

Overview of measures and targets per recommended area

Measure No	Measures	Work-life balance and organizational culture	Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Integration of the gender dimension into research and/or teaching	Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment
1.1	Set up and implement an information system for tracing the participation in training events and conferences for each employee.		X	X		
1.2	Actively inform all employees about training options.			X		
1.3	Disseminate knowledge within the infrastructure.	X		X	X	
2.1	Survey the total number of decision-making meetings of the infrastructure and feasibility of rotation mechanism.		X			
2.2	Establish a bi-annual strategy workshop involving all employees.		X			
3.1	Set up a management system to track overtime correctly.	X				
3.2	Inform employees about stress-related health risks. Ensure a good work/life balance. Encourage work sharing (for instance, in case of illness, holidays, leaves etc).	X				
3.3	Monitor employees' work/life balance	X				
4.1	Organize a workshop on unbiased communication (focused on conflict management)				X	X
4.2	Organize a workshop on microaggression and sexual harassment				X	
5.1	Set up a gender-neutral employment policy	X	X			X
5.2	Establish guidelines for job interviews		X			X
5.3	Evaluate current recruitment process		X			X

Monitoring and Evaluation

The GEP and the effectiveness of the measures decided here will be continuously monitored and evaluated by the Gender Equality Officer. This work will be carried out in collaboration with the EU-OPENSSCREEN management team and the EU-OPENSSCREEN workers council. In addition, a survey on topics covered by the Gender Equality Plan will be carried out among the employees at the end of each calendar year to monitor the outcome of the measures, and the outcome of the survey will be made available to EU-OPENSSCREEN employees.

Abbreviations

BR Betriebsrat, Workers' Council

EIGE European Institute for Gender Equality

ERIC European Research Infrastructure Consortium

EU European Union

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GE Gender Equality

GEAM Gender Equality Audit Monitoring GEAM

GEAR Gender Equality in Academia and Research

GEP Gender Equality Plan

HR Human Resources

IT Information Technology

PM Person Months

References

[1] "Women, research and universities: excellence without gender bias" LERU, League for European Research Universities, 2012

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/leru_paper_women_universities_and_research.pdf

[2] European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, "She figures 2021: gender in research and innovation: statistics and indicators", Publications Office of the European Union, 2021

<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/06090>

[3] European Institute for Gender Equality EIGE, "Economic Benefits of Gender Equality in the EU-EU and EU Member States overviews", Publication Office of the European Union, 2017.

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/economic-and-financial-affairs/economic-benefits-gender-equality>

[4] Gender Equality Academy

<https://ge-academy-docc.eu/>



[5] Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) Tool

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>

[6] European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) Forum

<https://www.eric-forum.eu/>

[7] "Picture a Scientist", movie, Uprising Production, USA, 2020, directed by Sharon Shattuck and Ian Cheney

<https://www.pictureascientist.com/>

[8] Gender Equality Audit and Monitoring (GEAM) Survey

<https://geam.act-on-gender.eu/>