

Helsinki Group on Gender in Research and Innovation

Position paper on H2020 interim evaluation and preparation of FP9

The Helsinki Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (hereafter the HG) welcomes the progress made to implement gender equality and gender mainstreaming under the H2020 as a cross-cutting issue and the concrete provisions adopted to achieve the three specific objectives. The HG underlines that the three gender equality objectives in H2020 are crucial for Research and Innovation (R&I) excellence in the ERA, stimulating both the quality of R&I outputs and their relevance to society:

- **Encouraging gender balance in research teams** is a basic principle for pursuing excellence because it increases the participation of talented researchers from diverse backgrounds.
- **Ensuring gender balance in decision making** is more than a matter of a basic right to equal participation. It also contributes to better grounded decisions and enriches the R&I agenda setting, facilitating the inclusion of all gender specific needs and interests.
- **Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation** content increases the overall quality and relevance of R&I by avoiding biased studies based on gender stereotypes and on the male default model. It fosters responsible research for sustainable future by improving R&I methods and outputs that take into account the needs and interests of the whole population.

The current situation, as defined by EC key performing indicators, is as follows, and indicates that further action is necessary in most areas:

- Percentage of women **participants** in H2020 projects: 35.8% of total workforce
- Percentage of women project **coordinators** in H2020: 43.6% (scientific + administrative)
- Percentage of women in EC **advisory groups** (51.9%), **evaluation panels** (36.7%), **individual experts** in Expert Database (31.1%)
- Percentage of projects taking into account the **gender dimension in research and innovation content**: 36.2% of signed grants

The present HG position paper maps the current situation on the three main objectives, identifies progress made, and proposes measures in the context of the mid-term review of H2020 and the preparation of the next Framework Programme for R&I¹.

¹ Additionally, the HG strongly supports the recommendations on gender balance in research teams and careers and on the integration of the gender dimension in R&I contents made by the Advisory Group Gender (2016) in its [Report for the Strategic Programming – Gender as a cross-cutting issue in H2020 Work Programme 2018-2020](#) and in its position Paper "[For a better integration of the gender dimension in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020](#)" (December 2016).

Main recommendation:

- To **continue and reinforce** provisions on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in R&I in the next FP, **especially in evaluation, monitoring and capacity building**. H2020 and FP9 are crucial instruments to strengthen the advancement of gender equality in R&I both at national and EU-level.

Specific recommendations:

1. Gender balance in research teams²

- A **more detailed system to monitor the workforce**, and in particular the **research workforce by categories of researchers** (Scientific Coordinators, WP leaders, Researchers, Postdocs and PhDs), disaggregated **by each part of H2020**. For FP9, an additional indicator on the number of *ex aequo* proposals that have been prioritised in the evaluation process on the basis of the gender balance ranking factor³.
- A monitoring distinction between **scientific and administrative coordinators**.
- As a follow up to Article 33, a procedure should be developed **to monitor funded projects in terms of gender balance in research teams** (at grant agreement and final reporting stage).
- Regarding **family/parental leave, additional funding should be provided** to recruit a cover post or to extend the research period, in collaborative projects.

2. Gender balance in decision making positions⁴

- **Monitoring gender balance in Evaluation Panels by field of research.**
- **A specific review of fields where women are severely under-represented** (at less than 25%), comparing the proportion of women in the EMM database pool and the percentage of women selected to sit on evaluation panels.

3. Gender dimension in research and innovation⁵

- **To disaggregate monitoring data** as a function of topics explicitly mentioning gender compared to the other ones, and to use and disseminate **additional key performing indicators** related to the implementation and impact of the various measures taken to increase the integration of gender in R&I content⁶.

² Gender balance in research teams is addressed in Article 33 of the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement Model. Gender balance is a ranking factor to prioritise proposals with the same score.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2016-2017/annexes/h2020-wp1617-annex-ga_en.pdf (see Annex H)

⁴ Gender balance in research teams is addressed in Recital 25 and Art. 16 of the [Regulation \(EU\) No 1291/2013 establishing Horizon 2020](#). The Commission has adopted a 50% target for gender balance in advisory groups and a 40% target in evaluation panels.

⁵ H2020 addresses it through making explicit references to gender in topics where sex and gender analysis is considered to be particularly relevant and through a specific question in the application template.

⁶ E.g., as recommended in the GENDER-NET [Manuals with guidelines on the integration of sex and gender analysis into research contents, recommendations for curricula development and indicators](#).

- To **explicitly mention gender in increasingly more topics**, and to ensure that the topic description mentions **in concrete terms** the gender-related issues to consider. The ultimate aim should be that not including a gender perspective is the exception (and reasons for the exceptional cases should be provided in the topic description). While this aim is not reached, it is necessary to require **an explanation** in the event applicants do not consider sex and/or gender analysis to be relevant for their proposal.
- To guarantee that all the call topics where the gender dimension is relevant **explicitly require applicants to develop a sex and/or gender analysis and to include a gender expert in the consortia for those topics**.
- The integration of sex/gender analysis needs to be monitored in **mid-term/final project reporting, at least for topics** explicitly mentioning gender
- **To fund gender-specific research**, aimed at fostering the production of new knowledge for a better understanding of gender issues besides considering gender as a cross-cutting issue in other topics.

4. Institutional Change and other instrumental projects for Gender Equality in R&I policies⁷

- **To keep and reinforce the funding line for more effective, harmonized and extended Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) for institutional change** at Research Performing and Research Funding Organisations (RPOs and RFOs) across EU.
- **To keep and reinforce the funding line for projects** (e.g. RIAs, CSAs, ERA-NETs) **aimed at strengthening and aligning** the design, monitoring and evaluation of **national and EU-level gender policies in R&I**.

5. Awareness raising and competence building⁸

- To improve **gender knowledge** and **capacity building for key actors in the R&I funding process** such as advisors, NCPs, applicants, evaluation moderators, evaluators, Project Officers (POs) etc.
- **NCPs have a special role to play in addressing gender as a cross-cutting issue. To this end**, the next update of the *Minimum standards and Guiding principles for setting up systems of NCPs* must be amended to reinforce the role NCPs play. Furthermore, **NCP projects** should be continued and financial support should be provided by the EC for NCPs to mandatory participate in in depth and interactive **gender trainings**.
- **Specific training opportunities and dissemination materials on the gender dimension in R&I content should be developed** by WP, main field of science, Societal Challenge, etc. to advisors, applicants, POs and NCPs. Mandatory trainings in case of POs, NCPs, research programme officers, Call Coordinators, and coordinators of the Advisory Groups and the other H2020 Groups.

⁷ Mainly Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs) under ‘Science with and for Society’ (SwafS) Work Programmes, which give support to the three H2020 and ERA gender objectives.

⁸ New tools have been developed to assist NCPs and proposers in addressing gender issues in H2020: the [Gender Vademecum](#), Guidance for evaluators, H2020 website, the Participant Portal etc. The HG also notes the positive steps taken by the NCP Academy and other NCP projects.

6. Evaluation and further monitoring⁹

- To institutionalise a procedure whereby **evaluation moderators** will be held accountable for providing appropriate briefing on gender issues in H2020.
- **For the topics explicitly mentioning gender:** 1) a compulsory gender training required for evaluators; 2) gender experts included among evaluators; 3) the evaluation form must include a question on the integration of the gender dimension in the project (not only under the “excellence” and/or the “impact” criteria, also on the “*implementation*” regarding the gender expertise or experience); 4) proposals that do not address the gender dimension in R&I should fail to receive the threshold point awards in the Excellence section; 5) the summary evaluation report must include an explicit mention.
- Such new provisions must be **explicitly integrated**, where appropriate, **in the evaluation and monitoring guidelines and briefings**, as well as in the **self-evaluation forms and grants manual** for applicants.
- **Set up another expert group at the end of H2020, to evaluate gender equality and gender mainstreaming issues in H2020** and continue the analysis performed for the interim evaluation.
- To establish a **transnational award scheme**¹⁰ operated preferably under the auspices of the EC to promote both institutional change for gender equality in RPOs and the integration of the gender dimension into R&I content in RPOs and RFOs, based on institutions commitment and continuous upgrading.

To sum up, the current provisions in place to address gender issues under H2020 should be reinforced, with proper measures put in place to ensure their integration by grant applicants, and in evaluation, granted projects review and monitoring of H2020. Institutional Change and other instrumental projects for Gender Equality in R&I organizations and policies should be retained and reinforced. The same should be retained in FP9. For the next framework programme, there should be monitoring of all gender-related actions and measures used in the FP.

Adoption date: 28 June 2017

⁹ Gender balance is included in the review template for project officers and external experts/reviewers, and failure to achieve this must be explained. However, issues persist particularly as regards the concrete evaluation process on the gender dimension in topics with explicit mention gender.

¹⁰ Such as the GENDER-NET framework inspired by the Athena SWAN charter award: http://www.gender-net.eu/IMG/pdf/GENDER-NET_D4-14_final.pdf. The EC should consider how the award can be linked to the FP funding it provides to applicant organisations, and whether some kind of conditionality of the award for funding should be required. The EC should also consider how it could be linked to other European award schemes such as the HR Excellence in Research Award, taking into account that such a scheme is not gender specific and that gender experts will be needed to fully integrate gender into that award and its evaluation process. Management of the award must take into consideration different national contexts and therefore, explore a possible pairing with other national awards by creating a form of equivalence.