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RESHAPING GENDER IN DECISION-MAKING

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENDER⁺ EQUAL INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Gender-SMART project is a community composed of seven European Research Performing & Funding Organisations, operating in the broadly framed field of research in food, agricultural and life sciences, committed to advancing gender equality.

This fact sheet aims to summarize the main recommendations of an extensive study on integrating the gender⁺ dimension in research and innovation partnerships conducted within the Gender-SMART project.

Introduction

✓ Purpose

This factsheet aims to summarize the main recommendations of an extensive study on integrating the gender⁺ dimension in research and innovation partnerships conducted within the Gender-SMART project.

✓ Definition

Gender⁺ captures the intersection of gender with other dimensions of inequality.

✓ Relevance of integrating gender⁺ considerations in international partnerships

Partnership environments are affected by gender⁺ inequality at the workplace and in wider society. Indeed, gender⁺ practices, routines and norms are re-produced in inter-organizational settings.

Recommendations for implementing Gender⁺ equality principles in research, education and R&I funding partnerships

The most important lesson is that measures for greater gender⁺ equality in partnerships and collaborations should be taken at multiple levels, in the various stages of partnerships, and connected to the experience of partners as an important guide. If there is an unbalanced focus on ratios and requirements, rather than the working environment and dialogue, gender⁺ equality measures will not be effective. Partners need to work together for building inclusive projects and achieve equal standing for all partners.



Core recommendation

Implement measures for gender⁺ equal partnerships on institutional and operational level.

To achieve gender⁺ equality and gender⁺-sensitive collaborations, there are two levels of impact that measures should tackle. The first is the **institutional level** in which gender⁺ equality principles and requirements are taken up in institutional policies and actions. For instance, this could be keeping track of gender⁺ quota or including gender⁺ aspects as a criterion in grant proposals. The second is the **operational level** which focuses on the principles of interaction between partners and actions to create a safe and respectful working environment. Indeed, collaboration is a practice and a process that needs a consistent attention and action for gender⁺ equality.



The full draft
report

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Operational actions

Foster dialogue

Working together with partners to foster a safe, inclusive and gender+ equal working environment is crucial. Rather than imposing institutional equality principles, open dialogues with external partners on gender+ equality issues should be fostered.

Organise collaboration workshops

Collective workshops and trainings addressing the partners' cultures and collaborative working conventions are crucial to foster continuous respectful dialogue. Cultural awareness of gender+ differences is key since the social and geographical context definitely affects the working environment. Attitudes towards gender+ equality vary within institutions, countries and continents.

Establish a set of leadership criteria

Equitable and gender+ aware leadership is necessary to let all partners feel they belong. It is recommended to elaborate guidelines on how to realize and maintain inclusive and accountable leadership in collaborative settings. Such guidelines allow leadership to learn how to stimulate the diversity of perspectives in a project team and what kinds of strategies exist for leadership to create a safe working environment for everyone. Especially a "transformation leadership style" gives credit to the so-called soft skills: listening, democratic, open, accountable, respectful and inclusive.

Organise an inclusive working environment

An inclusive working environment is achieved by being attentive to partners' non-work responsibilities and by recognising how context (e.g., geographical and cultural locations, conventions and agreements on work styles) impacts performance. It is advised to address these aspects when making agreements about meetings, deadlines, communication and working together.

Ensure internal action and awareness on gender+ equality

Before expecting gender+ awareness from others, organisations best take action internally. In order to achieve partnership equality, it is key to look inwards as well, to reflect on institutional policies within one's organisation, and to build gender-sensitive working environments through awareness raising and training.

Offer trainings to evaluators on the issue of gender+ equality

If gender+ equality is part of the evaluation criteria in human resources and/or gender+ analysis in research content, it is important for the funding agencies to offer training to evaluators on these topics. While training on gender+ inequalities in higher education, research, research funding and gender+ bias in proposal evaluation is essential, also the members of evaluation committees require training to enable them to assess the evaluation criteria.

Institutional actions

Set official institutional standards for partnerships

The design of a guideline or document with criteria and requirements for institutions to organise equal partnership is a helpful tool to steer dialogue and achieve gender+ equality. Partners that have institutionalised gender+ criteria can negotiate more action. For RFOs, funding is a powerful tool in encouraging behaviours and projects to involve inclusive and democratic collaboration practices.

Include gender+ equality in partnership agreements

It is important to have coherence between the institutional gender mainstreaming goals and contracts for partnerships. In the preparation phase of collaboration agreements, it is advised to dedicate a section on how to create a fair and equal partnership environment addressing and tackling existing gender+ inequalities. Crucial is that these documents are co-constructed and highlights a common roadmap how the partners will work together to advance a gender+ equal collaboration.

Since partnership agreements are crucial for the entire collaboration time, these can best include gender+ equality indicators that are formally agreed, and consistently applied and regularly monitored during the entire collaboration.

Set up a Gender+ coordination team


The successful mainstreaming and negotiation of gender+ equality principles can be better secured when gender+ experts fully participate, meaning in the project preparation, negotiation and evaluation. Gender+ experts may be grouped into an institutional body that tracks and monitors the success and effect of gender+ equality policies in the organisation, as well as suggests new and better ways to achieve institutional equality.





 **Set up a transparent and effective evaluation monitor**

Setting up transparent and effective evaluation and monitoring procedures allows to gradually learn from current and past partnerships and collaborative actions in support of advanced gender⁺ equal practices. Standardizing and normalising reflection on collaborative interactions, openness and honesty about problems encountered, makes addressing (gender⁺) inequality becoming normalised on the long run.

 **Include gender⁺ equality in call for proposals and supporting guides**

Funding agencies play a very important role in reaching gender⁺ equality if they set gender⁺ criteria for proposals and budgets, and ask for not only sex distribution of staff in project teams but also for the gender dimension in running partnerships. **Projects' evaluators should be trained how to assess gender⁺ (in)equality aspects regarding staff distribution, collaboration and research contents if these are part of the evaluation criteria. Gender⁺ equality then needs to be included as well in the guides that support researchers to respond to calls for projects.**



Guide to advance gender+ equal partnerships

Gender+ captures the intersection of gender with other social dimensions of inequality

Implementing gender+ equality principles

The most important lesson for gender+ equal partnerships is that measures for greater gender+ equality should be taken at multiple levels, in the various stages of partnerships, and with the experience of partners as an important guide. If there is an unbalanced focus on ratios and requirements, rather than the working environment and dialogue, gender+ equality measures will not be effective. Partners need to work together to build inclusive projects and achieve equal standing for all partners.

Types of roles:

Research



Training



Project funding



Operational actions

Measures for gender+ equality at the level of partner interactions in collaborative settings, so *during* the partnership, are key steps towards achieving gender+ equal partnerships. This goes for any type of institution.

Institutional actions

More well-known are institutional steps that organisations may make to formalise and require gender+ equality in their projects, which have been listed below. These recommendations suggest ways to institutionalise gender+ equality.

Dialogue



Working together with partners to foster a safe, inclusive and gender equal working environment is crucial. Set aside resources for open dialogue.

Gender+ institutional requirements

Funding agencies play a very important role in setting gender+ criteria in proposals and budgets

Setting official criteria in policy is necessary to achieve gender+ equality in spaces where dialogue is not possible or successful. Partners that have institutionalised gender+ criteria can negotiate more action.



Collaboration workshops



These trainings help to foster respectful dialogue.

1. Intercultural workshops to prepare for collaborative interactions
2. Collaboration workshops for gender+ equal teamwork

Focus on shared values and commit to these shared equality principles together

Partnership agreements



In the negotiation phase of new projects, partners can agree to implement gender+ equality principles in their collaboration. These documents guide further gender+ equal interactions.

Collaborative leadership



Equitable and gender+ aware leadership is necessary to let all partners feel like they belong.

Gender+ coordination team



The successful mainstreaming and negotiation of gender+ equality principles depends on the participation of gender experts in project preparation, negotiation and evaluation.

Inclusive working environment



The working experience of all partnership actors throughout the project should be taken into account. An inclusive working environment is achieved by being attentive to partners' non-work responsibilities and by recognising how context impacts performance.

Evaluation monitor



Set up an evaluation monitor to learn from past partnerships and how collaborative actions may be more gender+ equal. Experience matters.

Internal action and awareness



Before expecting gender+ awareness from others, organisations should take action internally.

