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## 1. Introduction

This section outlines the objectives of the GenderSMART project, the purpose of this document, Deliverable 3.2, and the structure of the report

### 1.1 Objectives of GenderSMART

The overall aim, and first objective, of the GenderSMART project is to develop and implement a tailor-made gender equality plan in each of the participating Research Performing Organisations (RPO's) and Research Funding Organisations (RFO's). Each gender equality plan will be designed around four challenges:

- Building a gender equality culture
- Developing equal career support measures
- Reshaping decision-making and governance
- Integrating gender in funding, research and teaching

The second objective of the project is to initiate change within the partner organisations that will have a long-lasting impact. The Gender Equality Plans (GEP's) will be co-designed with key internal stakeholders and the agreed actions will be implemented during the four-year project delivering change beyond the project duration.

The third objective is to disseminate and share lessons learned and good practices among the partners, within, and beyond, the academic world and more globally.

### 1.2 Purpose and development of Deliverable 3.2

Work package 3 aims to build a gender equality culture within each of the partner organisations. A key part of the development of the culture will be to challenge gender biases, stereotypes and sexism in management and communication. The purpose of deliverable 3.2 is to provide guidelines to the partner organisations on implementing gender-sensitive management and communication.

All GenderSMART partners contributed to the development of this document. The structure of the report and the initial text was drafted by the task leader, Teagasc, and circulated to all partners for input. Based on the input, comments and feedback the report was reviewed and edited by Teagasc.

It is acknowledged that many previous EU funded gender projects and various institutions have already published documents providing guidelines for gender sensitive communications and other aspects relating to achieving gender equality. This document does not attempt to generate new guidelines but rather draws on these existing guidelines and reference materials to provide the GenderSMART partners with a brief overview of relevant guidelines that will be useful to them in the development and implementation of their gender equality plans and to direct them to relevant resources.

### 1.3 Structure of the document and how it will be used

The guidelines are structured in three sections: gender-sensitive communication; gender-sensitive management and sexism and sexual harassment. This document, the guidelines herein, and the links

to associated reference materials are intended to be used by the partner organisations in the design, development and implementation of actions for and within their GEP's to enable and contribute towards building a gender equality culture.

While this document provides guidelines for gender-sensitive communication, it is acknowledged that these relate predominantly to the English language and may not be appropriate for other languages. It is recommended that each partner organisation will develop their own policies and principles for gender-sensitive communication. These should be tailored to their specific needs and language, in collaboration with their internal communications teams, thus creating the desired position for gender equality.

As we become more and more aware of how forms of inequalities and discrimination intersect, there is a need to elaborate aspects and logic for sensitive use of language and iconography concerning identifications on gender intersecting with other social dimensions such as race, ethnicity, religion, health status, sexual orientation, civic status and (urban/rural) location. Due to time constraints we could not include this but we certainly want to encourage partners to keep this in mind and we recommend further elaboration.

## 2. Gender-Sensitive Communication

According to Gender Equality in Communications, KOC Holding (2017) *gender-sensitive communications mean inclusive use of language and visuals as well as positioning of men and women so that they are equally represented, have equal access to resources and opportunities, enjoy balanced roles and have equal share in decision-making. It requires questioning gender stereotypes, serves and enables mainstreaming gender equality.*

This section of the report outlines the importance of examining the way we communicate in order to reflect gender equality across all areas of the organisation and ensure an inclusive approach is adopted across all methods and channels of communication. It emphasises the importance of language in challenging gender stereotypes and sexism.

### 2.1 Gender, Sex and Stereotypes

Kutateladze (2015) emphasises the need to understand the distinction between gender and sex as a pre-requisite for gender-sensitive communications. Gender is a term used to describe the socially constructed roles of women and men (OSCE, 2010). It is shaped by culture, beliefs, behaviour and activities. Gender is learned; it can change over time, and varies within and across cultures. Sex describes the biological characteristics (reproductive organs, genetics, and hormonal structures) of male and female human beings that they are born with. Sex is not learned. Gender is learned.

Gender stereotyping is a challenge to achieving gender equality. Gender stereotypes are generic attitudes, opinions or roles applied to women and men based on unjustifiably fixed assumptions (OSCE, 2010). Gender stereotypes are often deep-rooted and reflect a culture's perception of gender. Stereotypes are attributed to both men and women. For example, men are often perceived as the providers for the family and women are often perceived as the caretakers.

With regard to communication, the language, pictures and media we use to reflect, describe or characterise men or women can reinforce gender stereotypes and awareness of the importance of choosing the right materials to use is essential for moving towards gender equality. Using stereotypes in communication and marketing reinforces inequality and provides an obstacle to equal and inclusive representation.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality Malta (NCPE, 2008) published a gender sensitivity manual to promote gender equality in Malta. The manual is a compilation of information relating to gender equality and includes a useful section on the use of language and the media in eliminating stereotypes.

### 2.2 Why use gender-sensitive language?

Gender-sensitive communication contributes to social and organisational transformation by bringing the gender equality filter to communications. It contributes towards breaking gender stereotypes in

mass communications (KOH, 2017). The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2018) toolkit on gender-sensitive communication states that using gender-sensitive language can:

- Make it easier to see important differences between the needs of women and men
- Challenge unconscious assumptions people have about gender roles in society
- Lay the foundation for greater gender equality throughout society
- Raise awareness of how language affects our behaviour
- Make people more comfortable with expressing themselves and behaving in ways that were once not considered 'typical' of their gender.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines language *“as a system of communication consisting of sounds, words, and grammar, or the system of communication used by people in a particular country or type of work”*. It can reflect, and shape, the attitudes, behaviours and norms within a society (EIGE, 2018) However, people also communicate ideas, values and messages through body language, pictures, and symbols. These factors also influence an organisation’s culture. Organisational culture manifests itself through numerous channels including symbols, practices, rituals, and values which are visibly internally and externally (Johnson, Whittington and Scholes, 2011). Understanding culture, using tools such as the cultural web, can help organisations to identify potential obstacles or challenges when implementing change or when trying to move towards gender equality.

Our choice of words matter in shaping our view of society and using masculine words for general references can reflect assumptions about gender roles and influence readers (Kutalelodge, 2015). In the English language, examples abound where the generic term “man” is used to encompass men and women or human beings (EIGE,2018). “Brotherhood of man”, “we came in peace for all mankind”, “all men are equal”, while ostensibly used to encompass both men and women, can also unintentionally communicate a preponderance of one gender over another. While women contribute actively to society, the language used frequently ignores or minimises their contribution.

Using gender-sensitive language in both spoken and written communication is a prerequisite for addressing gender biases and stereotypes and tackling gender inequalities. It helps to challenge unconscious assumptions (biases) people, including managers, have about gender roles. It also raises awareness of gender and makes people more comfortable with expressing themselves and behaving in ways that were once not considered 'typical' of their gender.

Language should be inclusive of all diversity in society. When opting for more inclusive gender-sensitive language, it is recommended to take into account implicit gender-related aspects, as a potential intersection might also arise with other relevant inequality grounds, including age, disability, sexual orientation and other personal circumstances. For example, communication activities should encourage the use of a “gender-sensitivity” that considers the value of different ethnic backgrounds, abilities, age, and sexual orientation etc. These are crucial factors that contribute to our sense of identity. Consideration should be given to re-phrasing or avoiding certain expressions that have negative implications in an explicit or implicit way.



## 2.3 Multilingual Context

The European Parliament published a handbook titled *Gender neutrality in the language used in the European Parliament* in July 2018. This handbook contains guidelines for members and officials on the use of gender-neutral language in institutional communication and the regulatory process (High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, 2018).

The manual lists words, sentences and expressions that are deemed to be discriminatory because they are only used in the masculine. It recommends that masculine grammar forms should be replaced by the corresponding feminine form, or both the masculine and feminine used. Expressions such as “businessmen” should be avoided, with the term “entrepreneurs” being preferable.

The guidelines take into account the multilingual context stating that the principles of gender neutrality in language and gender-inclusive language require the use of different strategies in the various official languages, depending on the grammatical typology of each language. For example, Latin languages, such as French, have their own distinctive rules and gender-sensitive challenges which can differ from those of the English language.

### 2.3.1 The French Language

Language is a living thing and usage forms and protocols are fluid and change over time. For example, in the French language, grammar rules have changed over history: the dominance of the masculine form is a result of a decision in the XVII century (previously, feminine forms were well represented in the French language)<sup>1</sup>. For example, in French, a grammatical rule that has been enforced for the last three hundred years says that when you refer to a gender-heterogeneous group even if there is only one man among a large group of women, the masculine noun takes precedence. In such cases, the presence of women are not explicitly acknowledged unless the speaker makes a point of making a distinction – as in “Chères et chers collègues” instead of just “chers collègues”.

The French High Council for Equality between men and women produced a practical guide for public communication without gender stereotypes in 2015 which aimed to develop inclusive writing practices. Given the grammatical challenges associated with gender-inclusive writing in the French language, the communication agency Mots-Clés developed a manual on gender-inclusive language in France in 2019. This manual took on board the feedback and lessons learned from the experiences of gender-inclusive French writing. The manual sets out three conventions of inclusive writing: usage of feminine forms for functions, jobs, ranks and titles; usage of both masculine and feminine forms by enumeration in alphabetical order, by adding sparingly a cantered-dot or by the use of gender-neutral terms; and avoidance of capital letters in gender-specific terms.

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<sup>1</sup> See also: *Pour Une Communication Publique Sans Stéréotype de Sex: Guide Pratique* [http://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/guide\\_pour\\_une\\_communication\\_publique\\_sans\\_stereotype\\_de\\_sexe\\_vf\\_2016\\_11\\_02.compressed.pdf](http://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/guide_pour_une_communication_publique_sans_stereotype_de_sexe_vf_2016_11_02.compressed.pdf)

### 2.3.2 The Spanish Language

Since there are public policies for equal opportunities between women and men, the importance of adopting non-sexist uses of language has been emphasized. Thus, different texts have been issued from Europe urging governments to adopt strategies for the use of inclusive and non-discriminatory language, which in turn were supported by recommendations from other international bodies.

The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers approved, in 1990, the recommendation on the elimination of sexism in language. It proposes three basic measures to the governments of the member states:

Incorporate initiatives to promote non-sexist language; promote in legal, educational and public administration texts the use of harmonic terminology with the principle of gender equality, and; encourage the use of a language free of sexism in the media. This recommendation has been transposed to Spanish regulations at least in:

- Organic Law 1/2004, of December 28, on Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence.
- Organic Law 3/2007, of March 22, for the effective equality of women and men.
- State Pact against Gender Violence (2017)
- In the region of Extremadura, Law 8/2011, of March 23, on Equality between Women and Men and against Gender Violence in Extremadura

One of the most controversial issues related to linguistic sexism comes from the confusion between sex and grammatical gender. While sex is a biological trait that some living beings possess, the grammatical gender is an inherent trait to certain types of words, which serves to classify nouns into masculine and feminine and, in the case of adjectives and determinants, to establish their linguistic concordance.

The functioning of the grammatical gender in Spanish often affects linguistic sexism. While the female has a restrictive use (can only be used for women), the male gender has a double value.

This generic affects the visibility of women and is problematic on many occasions, because it produces constant ambiguities: even in the case that women are included, it is clear that they can be hidden, invisible. Such concealment has important implications in the development of personal and social identity.

Because of this (and other issues), there are numerous guides and manuals of egalitarian and non-sexist language that have proliferated in Spain in recent years to serve as a tool to help correct this problem\*(IMEX, 2019).

In front of this, the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language and the Association of Language Academies Spanish on his first Spanish language style manual, under the title "Spanish language style book according to the Pan-Hispanic norm". This work insists on the institution's opinion of rejecting the use of inclusive language and thus considers all the inclusion variables of the double gender unnecessary (such as "todos y todas", "todxs", "todes" or "tod@s") and makes it clear that the masculine gender "*for being the unmarked, can include the feminine in certain contexts and that is firmly grounded in the grammatical system of Spanish*".

\*Synthesis of main recommendations for the Spanish language in majority of Guides and Manuals about non-sexist language:

1. Correct the androcentric approach to expressions, seeking equal language. A non-exclusive language makes it possible to create feminine references because it makes women visible, correctly names men and women, breaks stereotypes and neutralizes sexist prejudices that affect each other.
2. The use of grammatical and stylistic norms is compatible with the non-sexist use of language.
3. Avoid using unnecessary courtesy treatments. In the case of including them, the following will be used: “Don and Señor” for men and “Doña y Señora” for women. Appointments that involve dependency or subordination relationships will never be used.
4. The unnecessary or abusive use of the generic masculine is an obstacle to real equality between men and women because it conceals women and produces ambiguity. Its use will be avoided in texts and documents.
5. To replace the generic masculine collective generic terms, abstract or unmarked words, periphrasis or metonyms will be used. When it does not produce ambiguity, you can omit direct reference or use infinitives or pronouns.
6. The denominations of positions, professions and qualifications in women will be used, whenever possible, through the gender morpheme and / or the article. When its use is made in the plural, the use of the generic male will be avoided.
7. In cases where the text refers to who owns an entity, area or institution, the language will be adapted to the masculine or the feminine depending on whether it is a man or a woman. It is important to remember that Spanish has a gender brand so that charges held by women should be collected in female.
8. Administrative documents should be addressed to citizens with formulas that specifically name women when their gender is known. When it is unknown who the target person will be, formulas that encompass both sexes will be used, avoiding the use of the generic male.
9. The use of doublets by bars is limited to open-ended forms and to certain headings, not being used in any other way in other types of drafting.
10. The arroba @ cannot be used in any document, because it is not a linguistic sign and does not allow its reading.

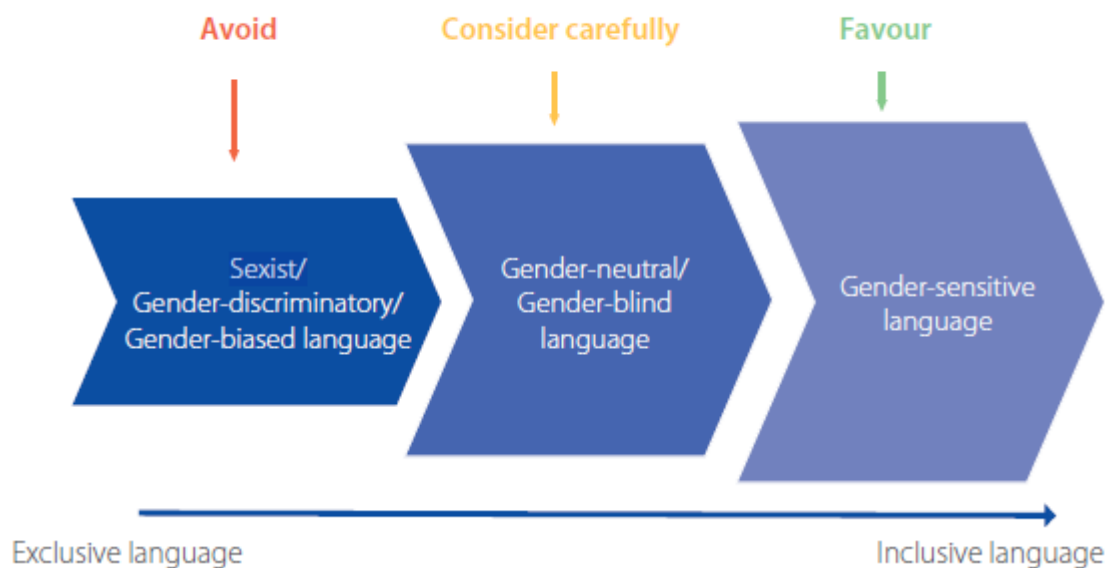
## 2.4 Inclusivity in Language

The EIGE (2018) toolkit includes a useful inclusivity scale in language which is shown in Figure 1 below. The following definitions taken from the EIGE toolkit clearly outline the differences in the three types of language that feature on the inclusivity scale.

- **Sexist language** is the same as gender-discriminatory language. Sexist language is language that the user intends to be derogatory. Gender-discriminatory language includes language people use without any sexist intention. Gender-biased language either implicitly or explicitly favours one gender over another and is a form of gender-discriminatory language. The use of these types of language create and/or reinforce stereotypes.
- **Gender-neutral language** (or gender-blind language) is not gender-specific and considers people in general, with no reference to women or men.
- **Gender-sensitive language** is gender equality made manifest through language. Gender equality in language is attained when women and men – and those who do not conform to the binary gender system – are addressed through language as persons of equal value, dignity, integrity and respect.

While it is recommended to favour the use of gender-sensitive language, it may be appropriate to use gender-neutral language in certain contexts.

### The inclusivity scale in language:



**Figure 1.** Inclusivity scale in language diagram. Source: European Institute for Gender Equality Toolkit on Gender Sensitive Communication (2018).

**Table 1: Examples of the different types of language on the inclusivity scale**

Type	Examples
<b>Sexist, gender-biased language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women must earn less than men because they are less intelligent</li> <li>• Ambassadors and their wives are invited to attend an after-dinner reception</li> <li>• The group chairman works closely with the chairman of the social action committee to plan events</li> <li>• Every day, each citizen must ask himself how he can fulfil his civic duties</li> <li>• Paul’s ladylike handshake did not impress his new boss, who believes salespeople need a firm handshake</li> <li>• Mr and Mrs Alistair Farrar will be attending the meeting</li> <li>• I’ll get one of the girls from my office to help me move the boxes (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018).</li> </ul>
<b>Gender-neutral, gender-blind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People do not fully appreciate the impact they have on the environment</li> <li>• The number of years an electrician will spend training depends on what country they are from</li> <li>• The group chair works closely with the chair/chairperson of the social action committee to plan events (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018)</li> </ul>
<b>Gender-sensitive language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every nurse should take care of his or her own uniform and cover the expenses themselves</li> <li>• Priti is focused on her career, instead of, Priti is a career woman</li> <li>• Paul’s weak handshake did not impress his new boss, who believes salespeople need a firm handshake</li> <li>• Jessica Farrar and Alistair Farrar will be attending this evening</li> <li>• I’ll get one of the gang from my office to help me move the boxes” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018)</li> </ul>
<b>Ambiguous phrasing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Man or mankind instead of people, humankind, the human race, we, women and men etc. “</li> <li>• Spokesman instead of spokesperson</li> <li>• Workmanlike instead of well-made</li> <li>• Chairman instead of chair</li> <li>• Fireman instead of fire-fighter.</li> <li>• Using his as in: the individual is strongly influenced by his family’s values; instead of: as individuals, we are strongly influenced by our families’ values (Deprez- Bowanchaud, Doolaege, &amp; Ruprecht, 1999).</li> </ul>
<b>Stereotyping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls instead of women or their occupation</li> <li>• Housewife instead of homemaker</li> <li>• Female scientist instead of scientist</li> <li>• Woman doctor instead of doctor</li> <li>• Male nurse instead of nurse</li> <li>• Female farmer instead of farmer</li> <li>• Ambitious men but aggressive women instead of ambitious women and men</li> </ul>

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mothering instead of parenting (Deprez- Bowanchaud, Doolaeye, &amp; Ruprecht, 1999).</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

In practice it is not always easy to judge where language falls on the inclusive/exclusive scale. In this regard, the EIGE toolkit recommends the following guiding questions for choosing between gender-neutral and gender-sensitive language (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018, p. 13):

- **Will mentioning gender shed light on key aspects of the issue being discussed?** If so, use gender-sensitive language. If not, use gender-neutral language.
- **Are people being referred to in general or a specific group?** If mentioning people in general, it may be acceptable to use gender-neutral language (in some cases), whereas if mentioning a specific group it is usually relevant to discuss gender.
- **Is there an explicit aim to be inclusive of those of a non-binary gender?** If so, gender-neutral language (particularly the third person plural: “they”, “them”, etc.) can be used.

Caution should, however, be exercised when using gender-neutral language as such language can hide important differences in the roles, situations and needs of women and men. This is also a consideration in gender-blind projects, programmes and policies where gender diverse roles and needs are not taken into account in their design and impact (EIGE, 2018, p. 12). Unfortunately, such projects, programmes and policies can often take the male perspective and maintain the status quo.

In introducing a gender dimension to a policy or programme, the aim should be to research differences in the actual situation of women and men (based on statistical information and other relevant research), rather than guessing or assuming what these differences are. This will assist in assessing the needs of women and men more effectively and in designing policies and programmes in a gender-sensitive way (EIGE, 2018, p. 13).

## 2.5 Addressing sexist language

The issue of sexist language was raised for the first time by Canada and the Nordic countries at the United Nations in 1987. United Nations resolutions<sup>2</sup> were subsequently adopted to avoid the restriction or reference of language to only one sex, except where appropriate to do so. UNESCO understood that constantly using words or expressions that imply that women are inferior, or at least invisible, to men tends to reinforce such perceptions as part of our mind-set. UNESCO differentiated between *ambiguities* (where it is unclear whether the author means one or both sexes) and *stereotyping* (where there is explicit gender bias in language) (Deprez- Bowanchaud, Doolaeye, & Ruprecht, 1999). Also highlighted was avoiding using the word “gender” as a synonym for “sex” or for “women’s”. This becomes more relevant when persons do not identify with binary categories or their gender identity fluctuates.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) went beyond the UNESCO gender-neutral communication guidelines by developing six principles of gender-sensitive communications with the

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<sup>2</sup> 24 C/Resolution 14.1 invites the Director-General ‘to adopt a policy related to the drafting of all the Organization’s working documents aimed at avoiding, to the extent possible, the use of language which refers explicitly or implicitly to only one sex except where positive measures are being considered’. 3. 25 C/Resolution 109, 26 C/Resolution 11.1 and 28 C/Resolution 1.13.

aim of helping readers to identify sexist language and to provide them with guidance for inclusive language for written communications (United Nations Development Programme, 2018) The six UNDP principles for written and oral communications are (United Nations Development Programme, 2018):

**Table 2: Six Principles of Gender Responsive Communication from UNDP Guide Note to Gender Sensitive Communications**

#	Principles	Guides
1	<b>Ensure that women and men are represented</b>	Gender equality is both a woman and a man’s issue. This principle aims to represent both genders equal in all internal and external communications.
2	<b>Challenge gender stereotypes</b>	<p>These include not representing certain professions or roles as being appropriate either to women or to men, avoiding phrases that stereotype women’s or men’s behaviour or thought processes, or make unfavourable behavioural comparisons between women and men. It is also necessary to challenge the implicit masculine traits used in job descriptions. For example, the inclusion of willingness to work outside office hours or being resistant to stress.</p> <p>The EIGE toolkit classifies the following instances where gender stereotyping occurs in language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using gendered pronouns.</li> <li>• Adding irrelevant information about gender in a description of an individual.</li> <li>• Assigning gender to inanimate objects<sup>3</sup>.</li> <li>• Using gender stereotypes to describe objects or events.</li> <li>• Describing people of different genders using different adjectives (descriptive words).</li> <li>• Perpetuating stereotypes in non-verbal communication, such as images and symbols.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Avoid exclusionary forms</b>	Avoid exclusionary forms of language where “he”/“his” is used when referring to both a female and male, which excludes females. For example, “Each employee will do better if he has a voice in the decision” excludes females. This can be avoided by saying “Employees will do better if they have a voice in the decision” Also, it is good practice to use “she/he”, “her/his” or more inclusive terms such as “you” or “we”.
4	<b>Use equal forms of address</b>	While the term “Mrs” has now correctly commonly been replaced by “Ms”, for addressing women, incorrect forms of address still persist such as addressing a couple as “man and wife” instead of “wife and husband” or “husband and wife” <sup>4</sup> .

<sup>3</sup> Although this cannot be avoided in Latin-derived languages.

<sup>4</sup> Actually, France has done the opposite by electing to use “Madame” (the equivalent of “Mrs”) for both married and unmarried women, with the reason that the distinction between “Madame” and “Mademoiselle” in administrative forms was somehow demeaning to the latter.

#	Principles	Guides
5	<b>Create gender balance</b>	Many terms intended for generic use are male termed. While “mankind”, “fatherland”, “the ascent of man” are obvious examples, there are numerous other examples which are frequently and unconsciously used in everyday language. As such, the challenge is to check one’s use of language to ensure that inappropriate generic terms are avoided.
6	<b>Promote gender equity through titles</b>	Referring to a woman as a “career woman” instead of a “professional” puts women at a disadvantage compared to men. Simply put, one never hears of a “career man”. Similarly, using male or female job titles results in perceptions of women being subordinate or doing a different job than men. Examples include describing women as waitresses (instead of waiter) or men as policemen (instead of police officer) <sup>5</sup> .

The EIGE toolkit sets out **three key principles** for inclusive language use:

1. Recognise and challenge stereotypes.
2. Be inclusive and avoid omission and making others invisible.
3. Be respectful and avoid trivialisation and subordination.

## 2.6 Visibility

This section provides guidelines for communicating visibility of women in organisations, research programmes and outreach activities. While there is some overlap in terms of using gender-inclusive language to promote greater visibility of women, this section moves beyond language and looks at how media and audio and visual materials can be used to promote gender balance in organisations.

A useful reference point is provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Note to Gender-Sensitive Communication (principles for written and audio-visual communication) (United Nations Development Programme). Women and men should be seen, heard and treated equally in an institution’s corporate media products. Press releases, stories, report and publications should be planned in advance to highlight examples of both women and men to breakdown gender inequalities. Essentially, all communication material should be gender mainstreamed and language should be gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive. Data should be disaggregated by gender, if possible and women and men should be represented and interviewed in equivalent numbers. Women and men’s interests and concerns should also be equally reflected.

In terms of audio-visual communication, images should be used to challenge stereotypes (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). This entails challenging traditional male images or symbols and replacing them with gender-inclusive images such as pictures or symbols. A mix of genders should be used in presenting information such as in choice of voice over artists, and in choosing photographs or images. Care should be taken to avoid images or pictures which present one gender in a superior

<sup>5</sup> See however, Section 2.7: Responding to resistances to Gender-Inclusive Language, the Aesthetic Argument.



or inferior position to the other. Moreover, women should be depicted as being able to avail of opportunities to be in positions of power or decision-making and in professions where they are underrepresented such as in professorships or heads of research, or in groups with obvious gender-balance issues such as all men panels. Gender balance should also be reflected in personnel organising and presenting media events or outreach activities. Similarly, underrepresentation of men in many administrative/support functions such as librarians, and assistant and secretarial positions should also be addressed.

In terms of events such as seminars and conferences, gender balance can be achieved by eliminating gender biases. Measures include ensuring gender balanced numbers of speakers, gender balance on panels and, in STEM events, gender balanced representation in speakers and audiences from different and diverse fields. Particularly important in this regard is gender balance among event organisers<sup>6</sup>.

Visibility is not only about the percentage of women that are seen or heard, it is also about the time that is allocated for their expression. It is important that female speakers/chairpersons are given the same time allowance as men, that they are not left with "lousy" slots (end of day/end of event) that could be cancelled or skipped, and that they are not interrupted. In this context, organisers of events or meetings should factor in gender-sensitivity by acknowledging work-life balance constraints. For example, meetings and events should be scheduled so that they do not start too early or end too late, avoid school holidays, and are held in a manner that avoids undue travel to and from the venue. Managers too have a direct role in making sure that work conditions are not systematically unfavourable to women (or parents in general – especially if single, people living away from the workplace, people with disabilities, etc. since many of these constraints are intersectional. Managers should facilitate communication technologies so that participants at events or meetings have the option of participating remotely through video streaming, skype or other remote access technologies.

These actions can assist in creating and promulgating gender values, leading to a gender culture in an organisation. Such actions create an environment favourable to a gender-sensitive management and the achievement of gender equality.

Communication messages, in whatever form, should always be gender proofed with the target audience in mind. For example, events held to provide information and advice to farmers should not assume that the target audience will consist of male farmers only. Even where the audience is predominantly male, care should be taken to factor in the interests and requirements of both genders. Outreach activities should strive to include gender balance in target audiences. Moreover, messages should specifically target women to attract them to fields or occupations where they are underrepresented – such as in STEM. Communication media should be used strategically to achieve maximum impact on both genders. This could include adopting new or novel communication methods or making additions or improvements to existing ones – such as a gender website or gender webpage.

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<sup>6</sup> COUNTI is a practical online tool to count gender balance at conferences. It can be accessed at: <https://www.wax-science.fr/discover-itcounts/>

With regard to achieving gender-sensitive communication, inclusivity and visibility, it is recommended that partner organisations review and screen their existing communication materials, including corporate documents, websites and social media platforms. While everyone in an organisation has a responsibility for communication, managers and personnel involved in human resources and public relations have particular responsibility. On a technical level, organisations may find it beneficial to use specialised content analysis software, such as Nvivo qualitative software<sup>7</sup>, for the purposes of identifying gender patterns and gender biases in communication material (whether in digital, printed, oral or visual form).

The following set of questions identified during the audit stage of the GenderSMART project could assist partner organisations in carrying out a review of communications content.

- Do policies or guidelines on gender sensitive communication (quality, enforcement) currently exist within the organisation?
- With regard to communication material published in the last month is the content gender-sensitive? E.g. website or other printed publications (leaflets, brochures, weekly, annual reports).
- Are there women/men/non-binary people visible on websites or printed materials?
- How many women/men/non-binary people are visible?
- Do the communication materials reflect 'diversity'?
- What kind of pictures and images are used to illustrate men/women/all genders in the media?
- What kind of language is used? Are masculine generic terms such as “mankind” avoided in favour of inclusive language such as “humankind”?
- Are complaint mechanisms available in cases of sexist communication? (For example a mailbox or unit where people can complain).
- Is training on gender-sensitive communication provided or available to staff?

## 2.7 Resistances to gender-inclusive language

In their manual on gender-inclusive language in France, the French Mots-Clés agency identifies a number of arguments that writers may hear against inclusive writing and how to address them. While specifically focused on the French language, the arguments reproduced below also apply to other languages, including English.

- **The argument for the existence of a generic masculine form: “the masculine form is also neutral. It represents men and women”**

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<sup>7</sup> Extreme care should be taken when using content analysis software for several reasons. Firstly, such software can only be an aid and it cannot be a substitute for proper gender-awareness and training. Secondly, users should avoid the trap of blaming the software for computer-based errors in gender-proofing. Thirdly, content analysis software creates a dependency on technological solutions (which may be costly in many different ways: training time, money for maintenance, updating etc.). Lastly, algorithms essentially reflect the biases of their conceptors and of the datasets they are trained on.

In French, the neutral form does not exist: a word is either masculine or feminine. In fact, the use of the masculine form is not perceived as neutral despite its apparent intention. It actually generates less feminine mental representations among survey respondents as a generic *épïcène* word, which can be either masculine or feminine. It is in such common use that we have widely internalized it. A parallel could be drawn here in the history of universal suffrage: the masculine is not neutral, just as suffrage was not de facto universal in France until 1944 when women obtained voting rights. (Sebagh & Baric, 2019, p. 19)<sup>8</sup>.

- **The usefulness argument: “it’s an issue of secondary importance”**

Language reflects society and its conception of the world. It is precisely because language is political that the French language has been voluntarily inflected towards the masculine form for centuries by the groups that were opposed to gender equality. A language that makes women invisible reflects a society in which they play a secondary role (Sebagh & Baric, 2019, p. 19).

- **The aesthetic argument: “Écrivaine or pompière does not sound good”**

The aesthetic argument is frequently mentioned. Once again, using the feminine form is simply a question of habit. Feminine job titles are “disturbing” as they reveal the fact that a territory initially conceived as masculine is progressively being invested by women (Sebagh & Baric, 2019, p. 20)<sup>9</sup>.

- **The proscription argument: “the use of gender-inclusive writing was prohibited by the Académie Française and by the French Government”**

The French language is controlled by usage. Although certain institutions are indeed against gender-inclusive language, they do not have the power to ban it. The role of the Académie Française, for instance, is not to promulgate rules but to acknowledge social innovations that already and always exist beforehand (Sebagh & Baric, 2019).

- **The argument of mortal danger posed by gender-inclusive writing to the French language argument: “inclusive writing is a threat to the French language”**

If inclusive writing is threatening anything, it is the domination of one gender over another: the domination of the masculine form over the feminine, and, by extension, the domination of men over women. This is what frightens people. But the language itself is not at risk. It is alive because it evolves according to social changes and according to the way it is disseminated (Sebagh & Baric, 2019).

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<sup>8</sup> Also, “droits humains” or “droits Humains” rather than “droits de l’Homme”.

<sup>9</sup> In English, feminine job description nouns such as “waitress” can conjure up negative stereotyping of women.

## 2.8 Summary and Conclusion

While gender-sensitive communication guidelines, including those outlined in this document, are useful for implementing gender-sensitive communication, it is essential that firstly, such guidelines are formally endorsed by senior management in the organisation, and secondly, that such endorsement is clearly visible to everyone in the organisation.

The Antwerp Charter on Gender-Sensitive Communication in and by Academic Institutions, produced by the EGERA project, is a good example of explicit commitment to gender-sensitive communication. The Antwerp Charter commits signatories to acknowledging that they share certain values and principles, including equality and inclusion, diversity of talent, and that communication in all its forms can either hinder or advance gender equality. Signatories commit themselves to working towards gender equality in research and higher education through using gender-sensitive communication guidelines and measures to implement them.

Below is a summary of the guidelines for gender-sensitive communication discussed in this section:

**Representation and visibility:** should ensure that women and men are equally represented and provide equal visibility (Women and men should be seen, heard and treated equally in an institution's corporate media activities).

**Language:** should *Avoid ambiguities* (where it is unclear whether the author means one or both sexes) and *stereotyping* (where there is explicit gender bias in language), avoid exclusionary forms, use equal forms of address, create gender balance, promote gender equity through titles,

**Non – verbal communication:** challenging traditional male images or symbols and replacing them with gender-inclusive images, women should be depicted as being able to avail of opportunities to be in positions of power or decision-making.

**Implicit gender-related aspects:** should take into account implicit gender related aspects (potential intersection with other relevant inequality grounds, including age, disability, sexual orientation and other personal circumstances)

**Multilingual context:** should be taken into consideration as gender neutrality in language and gender-inclusive language require the use of different strategies in the various official languages, depending on the grammatical typology of each language.

**Events:** such as seminars and conferences, gender balance can be achieved by eliminating gender biases (by ensuring gender balanced numbers of speakers, gender balance on panels etc.).

**Impact:** communication should be used strategically to achieve maximum impact on all genders.

**Code of Conduct:** seek formal endorsement of a code of conduct on gender-sensitive communication by senior management in the organisation.

**Screening:** existing communication material should be screened to improve it according to these gender-sensitive communication guidelines.

### 3. Gender-Sensitive Management

According to the OSCE, 2010 *“A gender-sensitive management is a management aware of and taking proactive, corrective action against discriminations, stereotypes and difficulties that women (or men) might face in being hired to the organisation, in performing without harassments, in advancing their careers and being promoted on equal footing with the other sex.”*

This definition highlights the synergies between gender culture, gender-sensitive communication, and gender-sensitive management. Building a gender equality culture requires that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in all the activities of the organisation.

Developing gender equality values in an organisation is a prerequisite for developing gender-sensitive communication and gender-sensitive management and guides the activities of the organisation. Ideally, the values should be developed and endorsed by senior management thus contributing to the establishment of a gender equality culture and a commitment to taking proactive and corrective action if required. The actions should be reflected in the organisation’s gender equality plan. All GenderSMART partners have developed gender equality values as part of Task 3.1 of the project which were endorsed by their top management teams.

#### 3.1 Gender mainstreaming

According to OSCE (2010 p13) *gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, and taking them into consideration including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels with the aim of advancing and achieving gender equality.*

For the OSCE (2016) *“gender mainstreaming requires the inclusion of the perceptions, experiences, knowledge and interests of women, as well as men, within the process of policy-making, planning and decision-making.”* When gender equality is achieved these considerations will naturally be engrained in the processes and measures of the organisation. Most importantly, implementing gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all employees in an organisation.

The Vienna City Government developed the Gender Equality Monitoring Report to assist in the achievement of gender equality for their city and they have published a manual on gender mainstreaming titled *“Gender mainstreaming made easy. Practical advice for more gender equality in the Vienna City Administration”*. The manual is designed to provide practical advice and instructions to their employees for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in their everyday work. To make it easy for their employees, the manual includes five principles of gender mainstreaming which are outlined below:

**Table 3: Five principles of gender mainstreaming in the Vienna City Administration (Source: City of Vienna)**

Principle	Ethos
Principle No. 1 <b>Gender-sensitive language</b>	When referring to or addressing both women and men in writing or in speech, make both visible.
Principle No. 2 <b>Gender-specific data collection and analysis</b>	Services and products can only be designed to meet the needs of your target group if you have data on both women and men. All data must be collected and shown by gender.
Principle No. 3 <b>Equal access to services</b>	Consider the frequently different circumstances of women and men when planning services.
Principle No. 4 <b>Women and men are equally involved in decision making</b>	The gender ratio at all levels of work and decision making has an impact on processes and results. Ensure a balanced ratio.
Principle No. 5 <b>Equal treatment is integrated into steering processes</b>	To ensure sustainable equality policies, gender mainstreaming must be a part of steering systems such as controlling and quality management and of all evaluations.

The **4 R method** is a gender analysis tool developed by the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee. It can be used as by organisations to review their policies, procedures, activities and services from a gender perspective. It is based around one key question:

***Who (representation) gets what (resources) and why or why not (reality and rights)?***

- **R1: Representation:** how are different sexes represented in various parts and processes in the organisation?
- **R2: Resources:** how are resources distributed between sexes?
- **R3: Reality:** to what extent are representation and resources distributed affected by gender norms in the organisation?
- **R4: Rights:** do current policies, services and activities take the different realities of women and men into account?

The first stage towards achieving gender equality is to conduct a gender analysis or audit in an organisation to ascertain the extent to which gender is reflected its policies, procedures, activities and services and to identify where gender biases occur. Partners have already carried out audits under the four Gender-SMART project themes: Gender Culture in Task 3.1, Developing Equal Career Support Measures (Recruitment, Career Development, Work-life Balance), in Task 4.1, Reshaping Decision-Making & Governance in Task 5.1, and Integrating Gender in Funding, Research and Teaching in Task 6.1. Partners may wish to use the tools discussed above to conduct further analyses.

With regard to gender-sensitive management, the definition above highlights two core areas that must be considered on moving towards gender equality: creating a gender-sensitive career environment in terms of recruitment, career development and promotion; and preventing and addressing sexism and sexual harassment. The first area will be discussed in this section of the report

in addition to the promotion of women in decision-making and governance while sexism and sexual harassment will be discussed in the next section of this report.

### 3.2 Gender-sensitive career environment

A 2016 study by Holton and Dent provides useful gender-sensitive management guidelines for creating an inclusive career environment (Holton & Dent, 2016). The study offered insights into what individuals and employers could do to create a better working environment for women by exploring the key issues that help or hinder women’s careers. The study provides a practical framework in the form of a template or blueprint which is shown in Figure 2 below (Holton & Dent, 2016, p. 543).

Partners may wish to consider the key issues explored in the Holton and Dent study in the context of gender differences in women’s and men’s self-esteem. Empirical research by Bleidorn et al, found males reporting higher levels of self-esteem than females. Gender differences in self-esteem are “associated with cultural differences in socio-economic, socio-demographic, gender equality, and cultural value indicators” (Bleidorn, 2015). Women in countries with less traditional gender roles and more gender equality (e.g., Sweden, Norway, or Finland) are more likely to experience a sense of mastery, and to receive appreciation and social support. Also, women living in countries with greater gender equality tend to have higher self-esteem as they traverse early and middle adulthood (Bleidorn, 2015).

**Figure 2.** Women’s careers: a blueprint for individual and organisational change. Source: Holton & Dent, 2016 ‘A better career environment for women: developing a blueprint for individuals and organisations



The second (lower half) of the template focuses on what management can do to create a favourable working environment for women. For Holton and Dent (2016) the role and commitment of top

management is critical in creating a work culture favourable to women – a female friendly environment. Their study found that organisations which have moved beyond “lip service” build in regular reporting at board/CEO levels, provide support for women, and identify clear measures of success. Shell was highlighted as an example of a company where management had established ‘women’s networks in 20 countries, publishes targets to increase the number of women at senior management level and identifies who is accountable for achieving these goals’ (Holton & Dent, 2016, p. 554).

### **3.2.1 Overcoming Barriers**

Women surveyed by Holton and Dent in their study experienced barriers to their career advancement despite excellent HR policies – they considered that top management must commit to a shift in mind-set and culture for change to happen. An important enabling factor is a genuine willingness by senior management to understand the working experiences of women. Gender awareness workshops can help in this regard but for Holton and Dent (2016), gender checks and balances need to be in place for key career areas such as access to learning and development, judgements made at assessment events for leadership roles which include, inter alia, promotions, pay and bonus awards, the gender profile of interview shortlists and succession planning, and who is invited to lead special projects (Holton & Dent, 2016, p. 554).

Crucially, “once the top team is on board and modelling change, then the whole organisation will begin a process of movement towards an equal working environment” (Holton & Dent, 2016, p. 554). Holton and Dent identified ‘diversity champions’ as good practice to promote women (and inclusivity more generally) and a number of other measures including organising annual conferences for women managers and staff to provide role models and encouragement for younger women, mentoring and coaching schemes for women early on in their career, and innovative and flexible working practices, including working from home (Holton & Dent, 2016, p. 555).

### **3.2.2 Mentoring and Coaching**

In terms of *Mentoring, Coaching and Development*, women in the survey highlighted the importance of the role of managers in promoting women’s career success. Particularly important in this regard is access by women to female mentors and role models – and the lack of senior women in organisations is a problem in this regard. Support from sponsors is also important as women often lack sponsors willing to help them develop their skills and expertise (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010).

### **3.2.3 Talent Management**

In terms of *Talent Management* Holton and Dent highlight the problem of the female talent pipeline – the leaky pipeline with which GenderSMART partners will be familiar. Logically, a smaller pool of women in middle management (or in junior or middle research or academic positions) means fewer women to select from for senior decision-making positions. While equal numbers of women and men



often join organisations, women exit in large numbers between the ages of 30 and 40 (Hall, 2013). The challenge for management is to create a family friendly work environment and a culture where working parents of either gender can achieve a senior career.

Negative stereotyping of women is highlighted by Holton and Dent (2016) throughout their study. Negative stereotyping ranges over part time working, women's leadership styles, women not being serious about their careers, women having to prove their competence as managers, and negative stereotyping of working mothers (Holton & Dent, 2016). Many of these stereotyping biases can be addressed by managers implementing gender-sensitive communication in their organisations.

Overall, the study found that barriers to women's careers have not changed significantly in recent years and that female part-time workers and parents are disadvantaged in their careers in organisations. The glass ceiling also remains in place and this is attested to by the low levels of women at senior levels in corporate organisations. Holton and Dent conclude that 'if more organisations improve career development support and mentoring then the situation for women will improve over the next few years (Holton & Dent, 2016, p. 557).

### **3.3 Promoting Women in Decision-Making**

It is acknowledged that women are underrepresented in decision making positions in the partner organisations. Including more women in decision making will contribute to achieving gender sensitive management. Work package 5 in the GenderSMART project aims to reshape decision making and governance from a gender perspective to enable effective and sustainable change in the partner organisations and to develop tailor-made actions to improve inclusiveness and diversity in decision making.

The Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia (FESTA) project published an expert report in 2015 titled 'Gendering Decision Making and Communication processes (O' Hagan, et al., 2015). The report presents the findings of a cross national study on decision making and communication processes in three third level education and research institutes in Ireland, Italy and Turkey: University of Limerick, Fondazione Bruno Kessler, and Istanbul Technical University. The recommendations from this report are particularly relevant for GenderSMART partners.

Locating its research in the context of gender schema and power theories, the report found conclusive evidence of gender schemas and unconscious biases in all three organisations (O' Hagan, et al., 2015). *"Gender schema theory explains how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained, transmitted and differently evaluated"* (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, p. i). The exercise of power was found to be closely related to the promotion of unconscious biases and gender schemas. Institutional control can be exercised through committee decision-making, policies and procedures and through who holds top level positions in the organisation (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, p. ii). The report found that the vast majority of mid to high level decision-making positions were held by men and a pervasive belief that women's attitudes and behaviours were problematic in decision-making structures. The role of chairs was found to be particularly significant in influencing decision outcomes (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, p. 53).

To address unconscious gender biases in institutions' decision making structures, the report makes recommendations to improve institutional processes, procedures and culture and to empower women (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86). The recommendations are summarised below and provide guidelines for GenderSMART partners to consider including in their gender equality plans to encourage and promote women into decision making positions in their organisations.

**Table 4: FESTA Report Recommendations for gendering decision making and communication processes. Source: FESTA, 2015**

Category	Recommendations
<b>Recommendations to improve institutional processes, procedures and culture</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make the gender situation visible</li> <li>2. Train decision makers in gender awareness</li> <li>3. Recommend changes to internal structures i.e. equality committees independent of human resources, with top level support</li> <li>4. Ensure gender balance on all key committees</li> <li>5. Implement system of gender auditing the organisation</li> <li>6. Make committee membership more transparent</li> <li>7. Create accountability measures</li> <li>8. Circulate minutes of meetings</li> <li>9. Implement a system of regular meetings between management and staff for information exchange</li> <li>10. Introduce a system of having an independent (gender) observer at committees to eliminate potential bias in decision making</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendations to empower women</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Encourage women's participation in management positions</li> <li>12. Share good practices i.e. make female role models visible and available</li> <li>13. Train women in leadership and decision making</li> </ol>

A summary description and discussion to provide context for each recommendation is provided below.

### **1. Make the gender situation visible**

Improve the awareness and visibility of gender by publishing detailed and comprehensive gender-disaggregated data. This data should encompass, inter alia, pay rates for personnel at different hierarchical levels and gender compositions of decision-making committees. The rationale for this is that on the one hand, gender statistics will create awareness of gender imbalances, including biases, in organisations and on the other hand serve as a basis for policy makers to advance gender equality through taking institutional actions and using metrics to set targets (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86). In terms of filling vacancies, transparent publication of vacancies - as well as transparency on the criteria on which evaluation of the candidate is based - in decision-making committees will also avoid a co-optation process (where members are "co-opted" to an elite group at the discretion of the members of the body to maintain the status quo).

### **2. Training decision makers in gender awareness**

All committee members, particularly chairs of committees, should attend unconscious bias and gender awareness training before participating on committees (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86). The

rationale for this is to remove gender biases in decision-making and in policy making. However, such training can be problematic if it is “once-off”. A research report by CIPD entitled *Diversity Management That Works* found that “while diversity training is often well received by participants and can have short-term results, it doesn’t usually show a sustained impact on behaviour and emotional prejudice, and alone is not sufficient to create a diverse and inclusive organisation” (Gifford, Green, Young, & Urwin, 2019). Information retention may need to be embedded through periodic follow-up training.

Work unconscious bias/gender awareness training should also be a prerequisite for members of promotion or appointments boards to avoid judging candidates based on gender biases or on male or female role stereotyping.

### **3. Establish an equality committee or individual, independent of Human Resources, with top level support**

Formally establish as an independent structure, an equality committee or individual responsible for reporting to the most senior office of the organisation. The committee/individual would be responsible for gender auditing all policies and procedures, gender proofing the activities of the institution, and for ensuring that an independent gender observer is present at all appointment and promotion boards (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86).

### **4. Ensure gender balance on all key committees**

Promote gender balance on all key decision-making committees to ensure both genders participate on an equal footing. While Moss-Kanter (Kanter, 1977) found that thirty per cent of women is a critical mass for their balanced participation, the minimum for gender balance is forty per cent of either gender. In Ireland, the state had an official policy for state boards to have a minimum of forty percent of either gender since 2002. This policy was communicated periodically through the Department of Justice writing to those state boards not meeting the gender balance target. Since then, this target has been achieved overall for state boards (Department of Justice and Equality, 2019). In terms of gender biases, a study from France found that committees with implicit biases promote fewer women when they did not believe gender bias exists (Régner, Thinus-Blanc, Netter, Schmader, & Huguet, 2019)

### **5. Implement system of gender auditing**

A periodic comprehensive audit should be carried out by the equality committee/individual in the institution. The purpose of the audit will be to assess the institution’s commitments to gender equality against external benchmarks. The audit should be comprehensive, have a broad institutional approach and a comparative element. The audit should employ both qualitative and quantitative methods and compare the results for both males and females. The audit should cover participation of men and women in key committees at all levels in the organisation, how resources are controlled and allocated and how they are accessed and by whom and how training and travel benefits men and women (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86). Using both quantitative and qualitative indicators for evaluating

women's careers is also highly crucial, since the use of quantitative indicators alone put them at a disadvantage<sup>10</sup>. The gender audit results should be disseminated to the whole institution.

#### **6. Make committee membership more transparent**

Transparency is a key aspect of good corporate governance. The names of interview or promotion committees should be circulated in the institution. Vacancies on committees should be made public and the conditions for applying and the evaluation criteria be clearly communicated to staff (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86).

#### **7. Create accountability measures.**

Key indicators should be established in terms of targets for gender representation at all levels in the organisation hierarchy and gender balance on committees. Management should commit to a gender strategy and action plan which could include, inter alia, concrete gender-specific career development measures and gender-neutral work-life balance measures, and appropriate monitoring mechanisms for successful implementation of gender equality measures (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86).

An article by Latimer et al (2019) illustrates an inspiring example in Australia of targeted actions at national level to increase the representation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). One of the two complementary Australian national programmes, namely, Male Champions of Change (MCC) STEM, targets men as many STEM systems and structures were developed by men and they typically hold the senior leadership positions. MCC STEM brings together senior, influential male leaders who are committed to using their power and influence to deliver change in STEM. A key feature of the programme is that managers are held accountable for promoting women's careers and a gender-balanced workplace in general (Latimer, Cerise, Ovseiko, Rathborne, Billiards, & EL-Adhami, 2019).

#### **8. Circulate minutes of meetings**

Minutes should be taken for all meetings where key decisions are made, particularly in relation to the allocation of resources. The processes by which the decisions are reached should also be in the minutes. The minutes should be circulated or made available to staff on an intranet to increase transparency around how decisions are made and who makes them.

#### **9. Implement a system of regular meetings between management and staff for information exchange**

All staff in an organisation should be provided with an opportunity to meet and engage with managers at all levels and key decision-makers through a series of structured and regular meetings. These meetings assist with transparency in decision making and provide opportunities for networking and exchanging ideas, thus giving staff a voice.

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<sup>10</sup> See for instance, regarding bibliometric indicators as a measure of scientific outputs: Sewell L, Barnett AG. The impact of caring for children on women's research output: A retrospective cohort study. PLOS ONE. 2019;14: e0214047. doi:[10.1371/journal.pone.0214047](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0214047); also for other indicators of scientific influence: Wagner C. Rosalind's Ghost: Biology, Collaboration, and the Female. PLOS Biology. 2016;14: e2001003. doi:[10.1371/journal.pbio.2001003](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.2001003)

### **10. Introduce a system of having an independent (gender) observer at committees to eliminate potential bias in decision making**

An independent observer should be present in all committees where decisions are made affecting the careers of women such as in recruitment and promotion. The independent observer will impartially assess the questions asked of the candidates and whether any biases have been exercised in the decision-making process. The independent observer should have the authority to prevent a decision being made on the basis of a gender bias (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86)<sup>11</sup>. The independent observer should have expertise in gender issues.

### **11. Encourage women's participation in management positions**

Women should be supported and encouraged to take up management positions. This could be in the form of sponsorship. The rationale for this is that low numbers of women in decision-making positions is a waste of talent: their talents are needed to enhance decision-making processes and outcomes (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86). Work-life balance needs to be addressed as an issue in this context. A policy of implementing working/meeting/communication schedules that are more respectful of work-life balance is a good way to make management look like less of a burden for men and women alike. Such a policy would also assist in promoting awareness among staff and managers of shared responsibilities at home and in the workplace.

### **12. Share good practices – female role models**

This is a key guideline in applying gender-sensitive management to partner's institutions. Highlighting the experiences of successful female role models – for example, scientists in senior positions will be role models for encouraging women at lower levels in scientific or research positions to apply for, and to attain higher positions. Promoting visibility of women and their work, ensuring that chairpersons, speakers (including keynote speakers), panel members and external examiners are gender balanced will assist in challenging gender stereotypes (O' Hagan, et al., 2015, pp. 77-86). Gender visibility is also enhanced through gender-sensitive communication, as discussed previously. Sharing good practices should also be facilitated and reinforced through networking (not only among women, but among managers and/or people following a management career path) and enabling capacity building in female managers. Visibility of women scientists can also be highlighted through ease of access to their profiles. In this regard, partners could reflect on an American initiative for establishing a global online register of women scientists in a database entitled "Request a Women Scientist" (McCullagh, Nowak, Pogoriler, Metcalf, & Zelikova, 2019).

### **13. Train women in leadership and decision-making**

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<sup>11</sup> In certain cases (e.g. first phase of an application process or a promotion), selection is made from the evaluation of written material e.g. cover letter, resume, essay, before shortlisted candidates are interviewed. It would be good practice for the observer to also review such material - or at least the assessment that is made by committee members in a written report or table - in order to identify possible gender biases.

Specific training and programmes should be made available to women to assist them in taking up leadership and decision-making positions. This training should have a focus on helping women to overcome 'gender schemas' and to develop their networking and negotiation skills (O' Hagan, et al., 2015). Leadership training should aim to make people of all genders inclusive leaders.

### **3.4 Overcoming resistances and obstacles to implementing gender-sensitive management**

Institutions may experience differing levels of obstacles or resistances to implementing gender-sensitive management. EIGE identifies common obstacles to setting up, implementing, managing, monitoring and evaluating a Gender Equality Plan as well as measures to overcome them. While the obstacles and resistances identified by EIGE for gender equality plans are broader than for implementing a gender-sensitive management, this section identifies some important obstacles and resistances (among others) common to both.

#### **3.4.1 Engagement and commitment by top and middle management**

For EIGE, the visible and unequivocal commitment from top management is essential for overcoming resistance and for ensuring progress in relation to gender equality (GEAR Action toolbox: Common obstacles and how to overcome them). It is critical to involve all relevant stakeholders in identifying and naming problems and resistance points.

In addition to endorsement by top management, commitment and buy-in by other actors, particularly at middle management level, is critical for the successful achievement gender sensitive management. Key allies and actors need to be engaged with at the earliest stage of formulating and implementing gender sensitive management. Such engagement can take the form of workshops, seminars or meetings to identify barriers to gender equality, to communicate understanding and awareness of gender equality, to agree actions to promote gender equality and to bring about buy-in and commitment by top level and middle management to gender-sensitive management.

Also, managers set an example by embodying/enforcing the gender equality guidelines; they redirect needs and concerns through bottom-up communication; through their networking abilities they exchange good practices with their peers across different structures of the organisation; they are sometimes involved in the assessment of their female co-workers and, as such, instrumental in supporting them towards decision-making positions.

While there may be individual resistance to gender-sensitive management it is more likely to be challenged by institutional resistance which could be specific rather than general. For example, an institution may be resistant to gender balance quotas in decision-making positions.

#### **3.4.2 Data and statistics**

To improve the visibility of gender and contribute to gender sensitive management it is necessary to collate and get access to sex-disaggregated data. This may prove to be problematic and changes and improvements may need to be made to data collection systems. Accurate data is essential for establishing baselines for achieving gender equality targets. Building allies at middle management level may assist in gaining access to data.

### **3.5 Summary and Conclusion**

This Chapter sets out guidelines for gender-sensitive management. The guidelines follow from the development of gender equality values and they are contextualised in the wider framework of gender-mainstreaming. The guidelines in this Chapter have a focus on creating a gender-sensitive career environment for women. In particular, the need to create a favourable working environment for women through overcoming barriers, the importance of mentoring, coaching, and sponsors, and addressing negative stereotyping of women. In accordance with the OSCE definition of gender-sensitive management, this Chapter also sets out key recommendations for promoting women in decision-making. Lastly, the need for engagement and commitment by top and middle management is stressed as being critical for the successful achievement of gender-sensitive management.

## 4. Addressing Sexism and Sexual Harassment

A gender-sensitive management should ensure that women and men can perform their roles without harassment. This section of the report focuses on sexual and occupational harassment and sexism and how these can be prevented or eliminated in organisations.

### 4.1 What is sexual harassment and sexism?

The European Council (2002) defines sexual harassment as *'any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment'*<sup>12</sup>

The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines sexism as a "belief that one sex is superior to or more valuable than another sex" (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Protection against sexual harassment is normally enshrined in national legislation which requires employers and organisations to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and to provide means of redress in cases where instances of sexual harassment occur. Governments are also signatories to international instruments such as the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and to the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention Action against violence against women and domestic violence.

Some partners' institutions may already have policies and procedures in place to address sexual harassment. Some of these policies will be in compliance with national or European legislation. However, given firstly the range and nature of types of sexual harassment – where national or EU legislation may be insufficiently prescriptive - and secondly, the focus of this present document on academic and research institutions, guidelines based on the EGERA project recommendations can complement existing policies and practices in preventing and combating sexual harassment (EGERA, 2015, pp. 4-6).

Sexual harassment can also be considered in the wider context of occupational – or workplace – harassment.

According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, colour, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission).

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<sup>12</sup> Council Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions.. Official Journal of the European Communities L269/15, 5.10.2002, PP 15-20.



However, the above definition does not explicitly include sexual harassment. Irish legislation in the form of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015 explicitly includes sexual harassment along with other forms of workplace harassment.

The Irish Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 define harassment as unwanted conduct which is related to any of 9 discriminatory grounds (Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Age, Race, Religious Belief, Membership of the Travelling Community). Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In both cases it is defined as conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person and it is prohibited under the Acts.

Harassment is defined in section 14A(7) of the Acts as any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the discriminatory grounds which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission). Irish employment legislation distinguishes between sexual harassment (on the gender ground) and harassment that is based on one of the other grounds (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission).

#### **4.2 Types of sexual harassment and sexism**

Sexual harassment can take many different forms. Fitzgerald (1993) classified sexual harassment into three types; gender harassment, unwelcome sexual attention and sexual coercion (Fitzgerald, 1993). On a graduated scale, gender harassment consists of 'softer' forms such as offensive comments or inappropriate gestures. Unwelcome attention includes efforts to establish an intimate relationship, or talk about sexual or intimate topics. Sexual coercion is at the extreme end of sexual harassment and includes forced sexual encounters, unwelcome physical touching, and physical assault (Fitzgerald, 1993).

A further complication arises when the understanding of gender harassment is related to, and influenced by, the organisational culture of an institution or a society. This is true not only for different institutions or societies but also to gender norms which can change over time. This is especially problematical for calling specific behaviour sexual harassment if such behaviour is considered by the majority to be normal gender interactions (EGERA, 2015). In some instances, victims of sexual harassment encounter claims of exaggerating or being too politically correct. No wonder that in all too many instances victims are left feeling isolated and fall silent. Harassers often remain unpunished and stay in academia while victims are unprotected (EGERA, 2015). Moreover, people can become professionally discouraged when they perceive that they are not being taken seriously as victims of sexual harassment.

The importance of language cannot be overstated in addressing sexual harassment. The use of gender discriminatory – and particularly sexist – language can create an environment favourable for sexual harassment. Conversely, the use of gender-sensitive communication can complement gender-sensitive management by removing gender biases and stereotypes. Ultimately, developing gender values and a gender culture will underpin gender-sensitive management and communication policies to effectively tackle sexual harassment.

### **4.3 Prevalence of sexual harassment and sexism**

According to the EGERA project report *Communication Charter and Follow-up Recommendations on Fighting Sexist Violence and Harassment*, '68% of European women over the age of 15 experienced sexual harassment by an unknown person, 35% by somebody known to the respondent and 32% by somebody from their professional context (EGERA, 2015, p. 2)'.

### **4.4 Causes and Consequences**

Sexual harassment is not always overt and can remain hidden. In academic institutions, there can be instances where sexual harassment is used as a form of discriminatory practice in organisational practices and cultures that reproduce gender biases and stereotypes and covert barriers to women's academic careers (Recommendations to prevent and fight sexual harassment in academia). Academic institutions have also been found to silence victims who voice their experiences of sexual harassment (Fernando & Prasad, 2018). A study by Fernando and Prasad found evidence in academic institutions of systemic sexual harassment and of negation and silencing of victim's complaints. The study found that line managers, HR personnel and colleagues mobilized "myriad discourses to persuade victims not to voice their discontent" (Fernando & Prasad, 2018).

While universal, the issue of sexual harassment in academic and research institutions deserves a special focus for a number of reasons. Academic institutions are highly competitive working environments with interplays between internal and external competition and power relations (EGERA, 2015).

Sexual harassment can be used as a form of power not only in the traditional concept of a person controlling a subordinate but can also be used by peers or subordinates to gain or equalize power (Feltus, et al., 2012). Secondly, sexual harassment can take various forms in academic institutions as they are built on both peer and hierarchical relations. Peer relations would include student to student and academic staff in similar grades. Hierarchical relations would include student to lecturer or academic staff reporting to heads of faculties. Thirdly, a preponderance of one gender over another in an academic institution can result in an organisational culture where sexual harassment remains covert. This makes fighting sexual harassment especially problematical. Lastly, students and their educational environments need to be factored in to policies and practices aimed at addressing sexual harassment (EGERA, 2015).

### **4.5 Guidelines to address sexual harassment and sexism**

The EGERA project recommendations are comprehensive: some of them will be addressed in the context of partners' gender equality plans. For example, 'using gender-sensitive language in communication so as to avoid stereotypical interpretations of victims and perpetrators' (EGERA, 2015, p. 5). However, the recommendations presented below should be regarded as minimum essential guidelines:

- Institutions should have a formal code of conduct and policy for dealing with sexual harassment which should be brought to the attention of all new employees (permanent and non-permanent) and students. These policies should explicitly include both processing of complaints and (whenever appropriate) disciplinary measures.
- The code of conduct and policy should clearly identify the institution's understanding of what is meant by sexual harassment, having reference to EU, Council of Europe, and national legislation.
- Organise awareness raising, information, and training sessions, advertisements, posters and helplines for students and employees so as to prevent sexual harassment and facilitate availability of, and access to, support mechanisms.
- Provide training for staff, supervisors, and managers on how to prevent sexual harassment and how to provide appropriate supports for victims of sexual harassment
- Provide a safe and supportive environment where people can speak openly about sexual harassment and confidently avail of appropriate support mechanisms.

Support mechanisms should include informal and formal mediation procedures. Informal mediation procedures should be aimed at preventing potential sexual harassment. Formal mediation procedures should be designed to prevent a continuation of sexual harassment behaviour and to provide appropriate remedies for victims. Support mechanisms should also be informed by principles of confidentiality and respect for the affected subject's will, and should also provide for counselling facilities for victims of sexual harassment. Victims should also have full confidence that the complaint mechanisms are safe and do not result in institutional "silencing" processes.

Partner institutions should consider adopting these recommendations in the form of a code of practice or charter (along the lines of the EGERA charter) to be communicable to all personnel in order to promote visibility and commitment to preventing and combating sexual harassment.

With regard to sexism, it is everyone's responsibility to prevent and eliminate sexism and all forms of occupational harassment. In the (2010) report *We set the tone: eliminating everyday sexism* the MCC describe everyday sexism as frequently invisible, often accepted, and underpinned by factors such as culture, generational differences, and norms. The report provides numerous examples of what everyday sexism looks like, for example "I couldn't take her seriously in that presentation – did you see what she was wearing?" "Why do I need to "man up"? I am a man".

The report allocates responsibility for preventing and eliminating sexism to leaders and organisations. Leaders need to recognise and understand the impact of sexism in their organisations and to "set the tone" for how good they are at "calling out everyday sexism when it occurs" and how they respond to sexism. The report provides useful guidelines for leaders on how to respond to sexist jokes, how to value women's voices, make role stereotyping a thing of the past, how to keep the focus on capability, not appearance, supporting personal choices about caring and careers, and challenging gender labelling (Male Champions of Change (MCC)). Guidelines include:

- **Challenge gender labelling:** recognise where gender stereotypes are being applied to assess performance or leadership capability; reframe a discussion anytime an employee or candidate is assessed as 'too' anything – 'too bossy', 'too soft'. 'too emotional'; use the *In the Eye of the Beholder report* to reflect on your use of merit in your decisions about people.

- **Make role stereotyping a thing of the past:** ensure critical and ancillary roles at functions, meetings and in your workplace are shared equally amongst men and women, for example rotate meeting note taker and chair; question assumptions about the type of work, especially physical, that men and women can and cannot do.
- **Value women’s voices:** ensure equal share of voice at meetings you lead or attend; before closing a meeting or agenda item, ensure everyone has been provided the opportunity to comment or contribute; ensure all contributions/contributors to a discussion or initiative are acknowledged – beyond the most senior and/or vocal; adopt the [Panel Pledge](#) to ensure high profile discussions and forums include the voices and experiences of women.
- **Respond to “jokes”:** do not validate humour that is explicitly or implicitly sexist or offensive by laughing, staying silent, or making excuses; call out the joke, for example, say: “What did you mean by that comment?”; if you miss the moment to call it out, don’t let it pass - ensure both the joker and those who heard it are aware of your stance.
- **Keep the focus on capability, not appearance:** keep conversations focused on content and capabilities, rather than physical appearance; be vigilant when introducing women for example, as speakers or at meetings where comments about appearance can undermine credibility.

#### 4.6 Summary and conclusion

This Chapter sets out guidelines for dealing with sexual harassment. The guidelines have been considered in the context of what sexism and sexual harassment is, the different types of sexism and sexual harassment, and the causes and consequences of sexual harassment. The guidelines have also been framed for organisations in general and academic institutions in particular. Moreover, sexual harassment is situated in the wider context of occupational – or workplace harassment – where intersectionality can arise with other or multiple forms of harassment. Sexual harassment and sexism are intertwined: sexism, particularly sexist language, can create a fertile environment conducive to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment will ultimately be prevented and eliminated through the creation of a gender culture and a safe working environment for people of all genders.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this document was to provide guidelines to the partner organisations on implementing gender sensitive management and communication. A review of existing relevant documents, reports, papers and sister project outputs was carried out and discussed in this report.

There are many useful resources available and the guidelines in the this document are not intended to be exhaustive, rather they aim to create awareness of what is required for developing effective gender-sensitive communication and management in an organisation and the critical elements that need to be considered. It is recommended that each partner organisation develop their own set of guidelines that best fits with the culture, structure, processes and activities of their organisation. Partner organisations will encounter varying degrees of application of these guidelines in their organisations and some guidelines will be more relevant to some partner organisations than to others. Other guidelines may need further development for achieving particular aspects of gender sensitive communication or management in partner organisations depending on what is most appropriate.

A summary of the key guideline considerations referred to in this document and links to some useful resources are outlined in table 5 below.

**Table 5: Key gender-sensitive management and communication guideline considerations and links to resources**

Area	Guidelines	Links
<b>Gender-sensitive communication</b>	Using gender-sensitive language instead of gender-neutral or gender-blind language Avoiding stereotyping Ambiguous phrasing  Addressing sexist language Increasing gender visibility  Multilingual context	<a href="https://eige.europa.eu/publications/toolkit-gender-sensitive-communication">https://eige.europa.eu/publications/toolkit-gender-sensitive-communication</a>  <a href="http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950mo.pdf">http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950mo.pdf</a>  <a href="http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950mo.pdf">http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950mo.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/GenderSensitiveCommunicationGuidelines.html">https://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/GenderSensitiveCommunicationGuidelines.html</a>  <a href="https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/151780/GNL_Guidelines_EN.pdf">https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/151780/GNL_Guidelines_EN.pdf</a>
<b>Gender-sensitive management</b>	Gender-mainstreaming principles  Guidelines for creating a gender-sensitive career environment	<a href="https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/gendermainstreaming/principles/five-principles.html">https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/gendermainstreaming/principles/five-principles.html</a>  <a href="https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/GM-08-2015-0074/full/html">https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/GM-08-2015-0074/full/html</a>

	<p>Recommendations for promoting women in Decision-Making</p> <p>Increasing women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)</p>	<p><a href="https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/festa_gendering_decision-making_communication.pdf">https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/festa_gendering_decision-making_communication.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)32109-3/fulltext">https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)32109-3/fulltext</a></p>
<b>Sexism and sexual harassment</b>	Guidelines to address sexual harassment and sexism	<a href="https://www.egera.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Deliverables/EGERA_s_recommendations_to_prevent_and_fight_sexual_harassment_in_academia_-_dissemination.pdf">https://www.egera.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Deliverables/EGERA_s_recommendations_to_prevent_and_fight_sexual_harassment_in_academia_-_dissemination.pdf</a>

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