GENDER EQUALITY IN ENGINEERING THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND COMMITMENT

(GEECCO)

WORK PACKAGE 7: Implementing Gender Equality in RFOs

LIST OF PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION OF GENDER CRITERIA

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GEECCO – Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment. In a Nutshell

Scientific and technological innovations are increasingly important in our knowledge-based economies. Today STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is literally everywhere; it shapes our everyday experiences. With technologies we choose e.g. structures that influence over a very long time how people are going to work, communicate, travel, consume, and so forth. It is thus both a question of competitiveness and justice, to achieve gender equity within science and technology institutions, including policy and decision-making bodies.

GEECCO with its project lifetime from May 2017 to April 2021 aimed to establish tailor-made Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in 4 European RPOs and to implement the gender dimension in 2 RFOs (funding schemes, programmes and review processes). All participating RPOs were located in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) field, where gender equality is still a serious problem and whose innovations are increasingly important in the knowledge-based economies.

GEECCO pursued the following objectives in order to enhance systemic institutional change towards gender equality in the STEM-field:

(i)   Setting up change framework and a tailor-made GEP for each participating RPO;

(ii)   Implementing gender criteria in the activities of RFOs;

(iii)   Setting up a self-reflective learning environment in and between all RPOs und RFOs to participate from existing experiences and match them with their specific needs and circumstances.

(iv)   Evaluate GEP implementation within the participating RPOs and RFOs with a quantitative evaluation using monitoring indicators and a qualitative monitoring to enhance and fine-tune implemented actions over the course of the project.

http://www.geecco-project.eu/

https://www.tuwien.at/tu-wien/organisation/zentrale-bereiche/genderkompetenz/gender-in-der-forschung/geecco-resultate

Further resources developed by the GEECCO-project consortium

All public deliverables, resources and additional material can be downloaded on this website:

https://www.tuwien.at/tu-wien/organisation/zentrale-bereiche/genderkompetenz/gender-in-der-forschung/geecco-resultate

Public deliverables (in order of the related work packages)

- Postorino, Maria Nadia; Marino, Concettina; Suraci, Federica; Enzenhofer, Bettina; Lusa, Amaia; Costa, Carme Martínez; Pulawska-Obiedowska, Sabina (2018): Gender Analysis of Decision-Making Processes and Bodies. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Postorino, Maria Nadia; Marino, Concettina; Suraci, Federica; Enzenhofer, Bettina; Lusa, Amaia; Costa, Carme Martínez; Pulawska-Obiedowska, Sabina (2018): Overview on Improvements and Procedures. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Bryniarska, Zofia; Żakowska, Lidia; Enzenhofer, Bettina; Postorino, Maria Nadia; Marino, Concettina; Lusa García, Amaia (2018): Current Status of Women Career Development. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Enzenhofer, Bettina; Lusa García, Amaia; Sarnè, Giuseppe; Żakowska, Lidia (2020): Overview on How to Increase Female Visibility. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

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- Ratzer, Brigitte; Burtscher, Sabrina; Lehmann, Tobias; Mort, Harrie; Pillinger, Anna (2020): Enhanced Gender Knowledge and New Content. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2019): Integrating Gender Dimensions in the Content of Research and Innovation. An Exhibition. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Lasinger, Donia; Nagl, Elisabeth; Dvořáčková, Jana; Kraus, Marcel (2019): Best Practice Examples of Gender Mainstreaming in Research Funding Organizations. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

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- Lasinger, Donia; Nagl, Elisabeth; Dvořáčková, Jana; Kraus, Marcel (2020): Overview and Assessment of Gender Criteria for Funding Programmes. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Kraus, Marcel; Dvořáčková, Jana; Lasinger, Donia (2021): List of Principles of Communication of Gender Criteria. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Mergaert, Lut; Allori, Agostina; Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina; Lusa García, Amaia; Marino, Concettina; Zakowska, Lidia; Bryniarska, Zofia (2020): Tailor-made Gender Equality Plans (GEP version 3.0). GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Knoll, Bente (2021): Dos and Don'ts while Degendering the STEM Field. Learning Experiences of Four European Universities and Two European Research Funding Organisations. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Mergaert, Lut; Knoll, Bente; Renkin, Agnes (2021): Final Report on Supporting Activities. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Jorge, Irene (2021): Implementation of Dissemination Activities. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Jorge, Irene (2021): Engagement Activities. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Lipinsky, Anke; Schredl, Claudia: Final Evaluation Report. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

Additional resources and literature reviews

- Knoll, Bente; Renkin, Agnes; Mergaert, Lut (2020): Additional resources (living document). GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Burtscher, Sabrina (2019): Literature Review: Gender Research in Human Computer Interaction. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Pillinger, Anna (2019): Literature Review: Gender and Robotics. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Mort, Harrie (2019): A Review of Energy and Gender Research in the Global North. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

- Lehmann, Tobias (2020): Literature Review: Gender and Mobility. GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project).

Explanatory videos (available on Youtube)

- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2019): Humans & Computers. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrWx91RdmGo, checked on 4/30/2021.

- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2019): Robots in our society. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfXr29VAuwU, checked on 4/30/2021.

- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2020): Energy for all. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIwrgsNVfW8, checked on 4/30/2021.

- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2021): Mobility for all. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMIfoI5-14M, checked on 4/30/2021.

- Ratzer, Brigitte; Enzenhofer, Bettina (2021): Inclusive design – why intersectionality matters. Video produced under GEECCO. Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment (a H2020 project). Available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4eRb1NM21A, checked on 4/30/2021.

Evaluation and monitoring tutorials

Anke Lipinski and Claudia Schredl, both from GESIS, developed five online evaluation and monitoring tutorials.

1. GEECCO Data Monitoring Tool
2. GEECCO Infographic: Gender Equality Approaches and Their Impact on GEP Implementation
3. GEECCO Infographic: SMART Gender Equality Objectives
4. GEECCO Explainer Video: Gender Equality Plans in Technical Universities and the Use of Logic Models
5. GEECCO Log Journal

These tutorials can be downloaded on this website:

https://www.tuwien.at/tu-wien/organisation/zentrale-bereiche/genderkompetenz/gender-in-der-forschung/geecco-resultate

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Table of Content

1   About this document

This document was produced within work package 7, "Implementing gender equality in RFOs", of the H2020 funded project GEECCO – Gender Equality in Engineering through Communication and Commitment. It focuses on RFOs´ communication of gender equality measures being introduced towards beneficiaries, evaluators and other stakeholders. It aims to present the main communication principles that may help to explain the importance and meaning of these measures (it concentrates primarily on the measures for integrating the gender dimension in research and increasing gender diversity in research teams). As various misunderstandings and resistances may also complicate the introduction of gender equality measures in RFOs themselves, the document also involves the communication principles that may be beneficial when negotiating gender equality measures with employees directly or indirectly involved in the implementation process. The deliverable is based on the experience of two RFOs – TA CR (Technology Agency of the Czech Republic) and WWTF (Vienna Science and Technology Fund).

This document builds on the experience and activities of task 7.5 analyzing the "making-of" funding programmes and implementing WP6 content within funding programmes. While the essence of the task's activities focused on changes in the design and implementation of funding programmes (the programmes' texts, calls' documentation, evaluation criteria, evaluation process, guidelines for applicants and evaluators, adjustment of related internal regulations, etc.), this deliverable deals with the communication of "gender criteria" being introduced within the task directed at beneficiaries, evaluators and RFO employees directly or indirectly involved in the implementation process. The aim of this communication is usually not only to provide information about new parameters or rules but also to ensure that they are understood and accepted. Activities for promoting gender equality often provoke resistances; resistances seem to be an inherent part of the change process (e.g. Sağlamer et al. 2016). Therefore, the cooperation on the part of beneficiaries, evaluators and even RFO´s employees involved in the implementation process may be hindered, which requires specific communication strategies.

This document is primarily intended for persons in RFOs and others who are responsible for communication strategy with beneficiaries or are otherwise involved in gender mainstreaming. The ambition is to provide direct experience with the introduction of gender-sensitive approach in RFO, to present the arguments that persons responsible for implementation of gender criteria may encounter and to suggest possible responses to them. The aim of the communication activities should be - in accordance with the intent of this deliverable - to introduce the gender criteria to applicants (Research Performing Organisations, businesses) and other subjects (employees of RFO, evaluators, etc.), so that they understand their aims and meaning and adopt them.

2 INTRODUCTION

When describing experiences with the challenges connected with the communication of gender criteria, it is essential to outline the very specific context of both participating Research Funding Organisations (RFOs).

The Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR) is an organizational unit of the state that was founded in 2009. The main aim of the TA CR is the support of research, experimental development and innovation. Over the past 10 years, the TA CR supported over 2,500 research projects in 12 R&D programmes and invested around CZK 28 billion (more than EUR 1 billion) of the state support in applied research. The main task of the TA CR is preparation and implementation of programmes of applied research, experimental development and innovation including programmes for the needs of the state administration; evaluation and selection of programme project proposals and provision of funding for successful projects based on contracts. In 2021, TA CR has approximately 150 employees. Gender equality in research had not been the subject of interest for TA CR until 2015, when the Gender Policy of TA CR was adopted, with which the history of gender equality activities in this organization began.

The Vienna Science and Technology Fund is the only larger Austrian private non-profit organization established to promote science and research via funding for excellent basic research in Vienna. Since 2003, over €200 million have been dedicated to excellent researchers in Vienna and young research group leaders from abroad, the latter in order to establish their own research group in Vienna. This is achieved through competitive calls according to international standards, and organized within long-standing thematic programs such as life sciences, information and communication technology, environmental systems research and cognitive sciences. WWTF acts as a niche player in a regional limited area. The "customers" are universities and other research institutions in Vienna or to be more precise, Viennese researchers. Compared to public funding organizations in Austria, WWTF is quite small (around 10 employees) and embedded in a lively context of other RFOs and RPOs that are already very engaged in the gender mainstreaming and equality debate.

One aim of the GEECCO project was to develop gender equality measures in the two participating RFOs, while the crucial step was to introduce the gender dimension in research content as an evaluation criterion. Nevertheless, other gender criteria were also implemented – and thus communicated (evaluation of gender diversity in the research team or gender equality policy of research performing organizations, etc.). While WWTF enrolled the changes in one pilot call and then enlarged it to other calls as well, TA CR developed measures in two R&D programmes as part of the whole funding portfolio.

By "gender criteria" we mean measures aimed at achieving greater gender equality and sensitivity in research. Within the activities in Task 7.5, our efforts focused mainly on the gender dimension in the content of research and on gender diversity in research teams and among principal investigators. All the examples of disputations, arguments or resistances against gender-related measures, and the communication principles are derived from the efforts to implement changes in these areas.

The following specifications of communication principles directed at grant beneficiaries (such as RPOs, researchers, companies, etc.) and other entities (such as RFO staff, evaluators, management, etc.) can play an essential role in the successful implementation of gender criteria in RFOs and their sustainability. Following the content of the task, this document presents examples, experience, analysis, information, advice, and recommendations regarding the communication principles that need to be managed in day-to-day work at RFOs. It is mainly intended for managers in charge of the implementation of the gender equality measures (gender manager) working at RFOs, whose responsibilities include communication activities or implementation of gender equality measures.

The document does not explain in detail the nature of individual gender-related aspects (such as the difference between sex and gender, the principles of the integration of the gender dimension in research content, etc.). Therefore, readers are expected to have a basic knowledge of these issues. It is also necessary to realize that this document does not deal with a "communication strategy" for gender criteria, but with "communication principles". While the communication strategy deals with the content of the message, the target groups and the channels through which it intends to establish a relationship with them, the communication principles set out in this document deal with the input for the thorough communication strategy based on the soft skills and its successful implementation.

3   LIST OF ARGUMENTS

This section presents arguments that we have commonly encountered when implementing gender criteria in our organizations. It also suggests possible counterarguments that may increase the understanding of gender perspective and eliminate resistances. The presented experience draws on several sources: communication with applicants and beneficiaries in helpdesks, direct communication with these groups on different occasions, face-to-face talks with co-workers, internal meetings with the management, and internal written feedback on various documents implementing gender perspective (guidelines, assessment criteria, instructions in calls' documentation, etc.).

3.1   The TA CR's experience

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Using the example of the argumentation episodes, that is, situations where the gender manager had to face resistances in order to defend the implementation of gender criteria, we will show what ambiguities can arise in the communication principles of gender criteria. These were, in particular, measures to support the gender diversity of research teams and the advancement of female researchers in the role of principal investigator and measures to integrate the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation. Besides, these measures include a bonus (in the form of extra points) for those beneficiaries who have demonstrated an advanced level of care for human resources with an emphasis on gender equality.

In this context, we show in this chapter what types of resistance need to be addressed, how to react to different types of arguments, and what may be behind their utterance. Each argument also suggests an attitude that a person communicating gender criteria can take in response[1] to the concern of an interlocutor. These examples are the basis for understanding what communication principles need to be chosen for successful communication of gender criteria towards beneficiaries as well as colleagues or evaluators.

All arguments are presented in a direct speech for their higher authenticity. No argument was substantially modified, i.e. to alleviate its controversy, "backwardness" or its negative tone. The arguments emerged in different periods of time (some of them may be old up to four years) and concern the time period of the GEECCO project implementation. This may mean that their topicality (in the context of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic) has passed, and they would not be laid down nowadays due to the awareness-raising in the organization and the national research ecosystem as such. It is also important to note that this chapter may contain some more problematic communication episodes. This is primarily for the purpose of elaborating communication principles, which is the main aim of this document. However, the overall state of gender equality in the country cannot be deduced from these arguments. Nevertheless, they are listed here for documentation of experience and for information of readers as to what arguments might be encountered in other RFOs (especially those in countries shaped by similar geopolitical, cultural or historical circumstances) and thus be prepared for the proper communication.

3.1.1   Communication with beneficiaries

1) **But the advancement of a woman is discriminatory against men.** "The nature of measures to promote more women in research, on the one hand, is inextricably linked to discrimination against men, on the other. It is not possible to long for equality between men and women and at the same time to be discriminatory against one sex."

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[1] Recommendations for responding to a particular argument are not the same as dos and don'ts at the end of this document. While the recommendations in this chapter are case-specific, the dos and don'ts address the general setting of communication principles.

→ It is essential to explain that activities to increase the proportion of women are not directed against men, but against a system that does not provide equal opportunities for all sexes. It must be emphasized that the purpose of gender equality activities is not to reduce the participation of men in research but to equalize the opportunities for men and women to participate in research activities. We are levelling the conditions to such a point that they affect men and women alike. If you are having this debate with a male researcher, it may prove useful to use arguments that will help them realize that their position in research can be privileged in many respects compared to their women peers. Some men may acknowledge this and perceive this position as unpleasant, which may give them another perspective on gender equality issues.

2) **But gender is an imported ideology.** ”So far, we have been able to research without ideological nonsense, but unfortunately, the European Union has already reached us with its genderism.“

→ These kinds of arguments may also appear, albeit they are not always formulated as openly as above. It is legitimate to point to a European (or national) policy as a source of gender equality actions. Nevertheless, it is necessary to explain to the interlocutor that the EU-Member States have a duty to reflect European policy or try to harmonize the way it is implemented across the EU. Besides, it can be stressed that the experience with gender equality measures and criteria gained thanks to the national level activities (such as those performed by TA CR) can contribute to researchers' greater competitiveness in an international environment where the requirement to consider gender aspects in research is already the norm. Moreover, feminist approaches are nothing new in most countries' history, so they cannot be considered a "modern import".

3) **As a woman, I never needed any help to get my position in research.** "It would offend me as a woman if someone gave me benefits in calls for proposals just because I am a woman. I never needed any advantage in getting my position. I am no worse or better than my male colleagues, and that is why I would prefer to have the same conditions as them.“

→ It is often possible to meet female researchers disagreeing with activities aimed at promoting women in research because they consider them degrading. These researchers point out that they could achieve their positions without bonuses for women or quotas. They may also state that they have never encountered manifestations of gender discrimination in the workplace, so they consider gender activities to be distorting fairness in the research environment. In such a case, it is possible to respond by saying that personal experience is partial, and that research shows that many women do experience unfair treatment. It is also possible to bring other cases into the debate when female researchers (and other minorities) encounter barriers to career advancement, harassment in the workplace, earn lower salaries than their male counterparts in a comparable position, or feel being regarded as less competent and dedicated because of being mothers. Point out relevant research evidence.

4) **But should not it be researchers who decide whether to integrate the gender dimension or not?** "The discussion on the gender dimension should be left to the researchers' discretion, based on whether or not they intend to address it. As a research funder, you should trust our expertise and decisions on how good research should look. Furthermore, the integration of the gender dimension into research content is unreasonable interference from the pressure of public policy or institutional regulations into academic freedom.”

→ In discussion with researchers, make sure that there is a consensus that mainly the researchers are primarily responsible for the excellence and impact of their research. It applies to the gender dimension, too. Also, explain that, on the other side, the role of RFOs is to implement policies or help

to create actions that would not occur naturally, e.g. without targeted support of research, public tenders, or calls for proposals. Some RFOs are responsible for the redistribution of public resources, i.e. the resources of the whole society. And also, the private ones could strive for the principles of responsible research and innovation incl. gender equality without being obliged to do so by law or other regulations. Therefore, society as a whole, men and women, should benefit equally from the way these resources are used. From this perspective, the RFO's request for greater sensitivity to the gender dimension in the content of research projects is justifiable.

Discussing this topic, emphasize that freedom of research should not lead to dangerous, unsafe research outputs or research products with a negative impact on society or the environment (for some examples, please see Schiebinger et al. 2011-2021). All the more so when the research is supported with public resources or based on a responsible redistribution of private resources. In this context, you can compare the gender sensitivity of research to the ethical standards or procedures applied, for instance, in animal research or in the use of human tissues. They have a similar relationship to academic freedom as they are helping to shape better research for the good of society as a whole.

5) **But gender is not the only one thing we could consider.** "Why the gender dimension is so overprotected when other inequalities are also present, for example, neglecting of left-handers, which can also exclude this group of people from using innovative research solutions?"

→ There are many other human characteristics, which can enter into the content of research, such as age, ethnicity, social origin, or other social or biological aspects. Probably no target group of a research project is homogeneous in this respect and researchers should consider all characteristics that might be relevant for their project. Moreover, in each person, more of these characteristics overlap. Some combinations may highly increase the likelihood of being disadvantaged or neglected by research (and not only by it). Therefore, where possible, we should apply the principles of inclusive research and the concept of intersectionality (Metcalf et al., 2018).

6) **But the advancement of women damages the quality of research.[2]** "The evaluation is mainly about the quality of research! This should always take precedence over the artificial placement of women whose expertise might be lower than that of men. If RFOs give points for gender balance, their selection of the projects to be funded will be based on ideology rather than on meritocracy."

→ This is a very complex matter. Let your interludor think about these questions: Who has the opportunity to decide what will be researched? Who decides which research project will be supported, and thus what kind of knowledge or technology will exist in the public space? But above all: Who has the chance to develop their talent and apply their worldview in research and innovation contents and impact? And are working or competition conditions really equal and fair for everyone?

It is also possible to point out that the rules are not set fairly right now, because they do not consider the different life situations of people and, as a result, are unfair, albeit unintentionally. For example, if we limit the period of research results by which team members prove their expertise, we unknowingly put in a disadvantaged situation those who have been recently on maternity or parental leave or have undergone long-term illness or must divide their time between work and child care or care for elderly parents, etc. These people – mostly women – do not have much time to produce research results or broaden their professional network, but this does not automatically make them

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[2] This argument was used when gender balance in the research team has become (in some funding programmes) a part of the criteria for evaluating research proposals.

less qualified or educated professionals. Also, explain that the consideration of gender dimension in the content of research is part of excellence. Respectively, research that is relevant to the gender dimension but does not take it into account cannot be considered excellent.

7) **But gender-sensitive measures are unintentionally transferred by beneficiaries to another programme, where they are not required. This is confusing.** "The reflection of gender-sensitive measures is unknowingly transferred from one R&D programme where they are introduced to other programmes where gender-sensitive criteria are not required. Gender criteria confuse applicants as well as evaluators and complicate the evaluation procedure."

→ In a way, it is positive to see that a gender-sensitive approach to writing and evaluating project proposals that may have been piloted in one R&D programme is being picked up by researchers and transferred to writing (and evaluating) project proposals in other programmes. It should be explained that gender equality measures are developed so that they could once be applied generally, i.e. within the whole system of research funding. The unintentional transfer of gender-sensitive criteria is, therefore, a positive phenomenon.

8) **But the gender dimension is relevant in some research projects only.** "The evaluation of the gender dimension belongs to some programmes or specific calls for proposals only, which are directly focused on gender-relevant research or linked with social aspects. If we wanted to evaluate the gender dimension in each project proposal, we would artificially push researchers into something that is not necessary for their scientific fields or topic, where the gender dimension is not relevant."

→ Whereas some disciplines might be closer to gender-relevant content than other disciplines (for example, closer are sociology, demography, education, etc.), this does not necessarily mean that gender irrelevance is linked to a specific scientific domain. It is the research question, research products, and their impact on society that make the research project relevant for integration of the gender perspective. It would be a mistake to try to create gender relevance at all costs for a project where it does not need to be considered. However, it is always useful to ask whether gender-blind research questions, methodology, and thinking about the impacts of research products do not stand in the way towards new gender-relevant knowledge, market opportunities, safety or a higher quality of life.

9) **But the gender dimension of research is redundant because my project has met all the ethical requirements.** "I have already demonstrated in the project proposal that I met all ethical requirements of research. Thus, I don't need to deal with the gender dimension of my research when my project has been proven as ethically correct."

→ Although these two views on research – ethics and gender dimension – may have common features (e.g. in the field of health research), they are two different things. Their evaluation requires different approaches, expertise and reflections. Completion of one area does not mean that the other area was automatically fulfilled.

10) **But the gender dimension of research is met because my project is for everyone.** "My research is intended for all students, it does not distinguish between the sexes, and therefore is gender-sensitive, and the criterion of gender in the content of the research is met."

→ It is often a mistake that a project shows gender sensitivity by not distinguishing between the sexes and offering everyone the same research results "regardless of gender". This mistake may lead to

gender-blind research, as such research is implicitly based on the assumption that "one size fits all". However, this goes against the principles of integrating the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation.

11) **If research is aimed at improving the environment, it becomes automatically gender-neutral.** "Because my project is focused on reducing CO_2 and therefore has a positive impact on the environment, it means the gender dimension is irrelevant because the whole society – men and women – benefits from a quality environment."

→ Many beneficiaries rejected to further consider the gender dimension on the basis that the project is environmentally beneficial and thus has the same impact on society regardless of gender (this argument thus shares some elements with the previous one). However, this starting point can lead to false conclusions. In such a case, it is necessary to explain that the field of the environment has demonstrably different impacts on the lives of men and women (UNEP, IUCN 2018). And conversely, men and women have different relationships to environmental issues (e.g. Dietz, Kalof, Stern 2002; Xiao, McCright 2015).

3.1.2 Communication with RFO staff

12) **But I know already everything that I needed to know about gender.** "I already know enough about gender equality in research since the time GEECCO has started to be implemented, I fully understand the issues you are focusing on. I don't need further education. I am only expressing my doubts about the measure being introduced."

→ During the implementation of gender equality actions in your organization, your colleagues or managers can sometimes confront you with an argument that they already know enough about the gender equality issues to make responsible decisions about this agenda's future. It is necessary to assess whether this statement is true, for example, according to the frequency of their participation in relevant workshops or otherwise expressed real interest in the topic. It is essential to clarify to such colleagues that understanding these issues and implementing gender equality measures are long-term processes. To bring about positive changes, any of these measures requires complex knowledge. Suppose the person deciding on the future of gender agenda has insufficient knowledge about this domain. In that case, it may happen that the implementation will be lengthy, the decision-making will be postponed, or these issues will not be paid attention to at all.

13) **But it is the biological sex that shapes your destiny.** "The life opportunities of men and women are related to their biological differences (e.g., the lower strength of female body does not allow women to work in the mining industry; birth-giving and maternal responsibilities exclude women from career development because men cannot give birth, etc.). Therefore it is impossible to achieve gender equality unless we force men to give birth."

→ The notion that our work will never be achieved because we would have to get men to give birth is from the area of incorrect argumentation practices, so-called fallacy (also rhetorical trick or argumentation foul, see chapter 4.1), the purpose of which is to convince the debating partner of an opinion or to win the discussion. The essence of the argumentative delusion is an inconspicuous violation of the rules of logical proof by using invalid or otherwise faulty reasoning in the construction of an argument, which affects emotions instead of reason, hearts instead of heads (Shewan, 2003). Fallacies can be used intentionally or unintentionally, when the opponent is motivated by the desire

to win the debate at any cost or to support any beliefs and opinions that conflict with the debating partner.

It is important to stress that regardless of any partial biological differences, it is possible to strive for fair conditions and equal chances for men and women (or other minorities or underrepresented groups). For example, while brain size may vary, it does not say anything about intelligence, as the intellectual capacity cannot be deduced from the size. Overall, to postulate different abilities of women and men with reference to their supposedly different brains is not substantiated (Rippon 2019, Fausto-Sterling 2000, Fine 2010). Gender stereotypes and myths should not act as a barrier to greater equality.

14) **But gender correct language is not understandable.** "The use of gender-sensitive language instead of generic masculine the text not only lengthens but becomes incomprehensible."

→ It is necessary to explain to these colleagues that the use of gender-sensitive communication in text[3] or the image has a symbolic meaning, i.e. recognizing the contribution of men and women in the world of research and innovation. Moreover, avoiding generic masculine or portrayals of applicants, engineers or professors as men also has a practical impact. For example, if we address new evaluators in both feminine and masculine form, women are more likely to apply. However, it must be acknowledged that gender-sensitive writing does require a greater degree of effort to make the text comprehensible and smooth. It is good to check for possible examples of good practice or existing guidelines. Gender-sensitive writing is a matter of habit, and if it is done wisely, it does not harm the comprehensibility of texts. The same is true for pictures and other graphics and PR materials where both men and also women should be intentionally displayed (especially there, where one of the sex is underrepresented).

15) **But could we avoid the phrase "gender equality" and use "equality between men and women" instead?** "Do we need to use the word "gender"? Can we not use the more acceptable "equality between men and women"? The word "gender" sounds too ideologically, and it might cause negative connotations by the others."

You may often encounter reluctance to use the word "gender". It may be because it is a relatively new term (in non-English-speaking countries), associated with a politically or culturally sensitive topic. Therefore, there may be attempts to avoid the phrase "gender equality" and use "equality between men and women" instead. In such a case, it is necessary to explain that - although equality between men and women is part of gender equality activities – they do not express the same thing. While gender equality addresses a complex issue related to biology, socio-cultural aspects of society, individual identity, and expectations, equality between men and women presupposes a binary approach to society and reduces the issue to the antagonism of two homogeneous groups – men and women. However, gender identities are more diverse, may include, for example, non-binary genders. Also, they are always shaped by ethnic background, age and other characteristics. Therefore, the ultimate aim should be to contribute to equal opportunities for all individuals in their diversity.

16) **But the gender dimension does not need a special place in the application.** "The extra box in the electronic application (or the paragraph in the paper application) for the evaluation of the gender dimension in the research content gives to this criterion more weight than it deserves."

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[3] In terms of gender-correct expressions in text there are differences among languages.

→ As part of the piloting of the evaluation criterion, the TA CR tested both options: 1. application form without extra text box for gender dimension (gender dimension is scattered throughout the project proposal and is always mentioned where relevant) and 2. application form with an extra text box for gender dimension (gender dimension is concentrated in one place so that it is not fragmented). Both variants have their pros and cons. While the first option often resulted in the beneficiaries often forgetting to analyze it, the second option resulted in the beneficiaries concentrating the gender relevance in one place only and no longer elaborating, for example, in the area of methodology. Therefore, it has to be emphasized, that the gender perspective has to be always analyzed, no matter if the conclusion is that gender is not relevant for the. And if the gender perspective should be considered, it has to appear throughout the project proposal whenever it is relevant for its quality assessment (research question, methodology, expertise, application, societal impact etc.). Thus, one extra text box in the application form (or a mandatory paragraph) is recommended.

17) **But gender has already been integrated whenever necessary.** "The gender dimension is nothing new. It does not need special attention because it is already being integrated into research content, simply whenever common sense requires it."

→ Of course, gender relevance has long been a common feature of research, for example, in the field of basic social science research. At the same time, however, this does not guarantee that the gender dimension in the content of research is addressed in every research topic where its integration would be relevant. Many opportunities for gender-sensitive research, both in basic and applied research or innovation, remain unused. As still emerging discoveries demonstrate (e.g. Schiebinger et al. 2011-2021), this kind of attention is not a natural part of the research process.[4] It is therefore appropriate to actively promote this way of thinking about research topics, products, or impacts, which will clarify the importance of gender-sensitive research for society, instead of relying on its automatic integration without explicit requirements.

18) **But there are much more important criteria than gender.** "The evaluation of the gender dimension in the content of research might divert evaluators' attention from far more important things."

→ The information on the implications of a research topic for social justice (considering gender, sex, age, ethnicity or origin, etc.) is part of the quality of a project design. You should explain to the interludor that the criterion of gender relevance (or irrelevance) must not be perceived just as some formal or cosmetic accessory to the project proposal but as an important part of the research project's quality picture. There are, of course, topics where the impacts of gender perspective may be more relevant than in others. But this cannot be determined in advance, as the importance of the gender dimension is not linked in any straightforward way to the research field. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that this criterion is no more or less important than other evaluation criteria, such as work schedule, value for money, or expert composition of the research team. Also, gender equality is one of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015[5], which further supports RFOs´ strategies for promoting gender equality, including the efforts to integrate the gender dimension in research.

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[4] The level of attention of RFOs to gender dimension in the content of research and the time for which this view of research has been applied in organizations varies greatly both within the EU countries and from a global perspective. (for a basic overview, please see Schiebinger et al. 2011-2021)

[55] https://sdgs.un.org/goals

3.1.3   Communication with evaluators

19) But many applicants were so stressed out that they tried to falsely look gender-relevant. "When I read the arguments for gender relevance in the content of research, the nature of which was objectively gender-irrelevant, I felt sorry for the applicants. They desperately tried to find something gender-relevant to satisfy the nature of this new criterion. It was for the research design as useless as it was funny for the evaluation."

→   Indeed, you have to inform applicants that it is problematic not only not to reflect on the possible gender dimension, but also to emphasize this dimension without sufficient substantiation of its role in the research topic. The gender dimension should also not be emphasized at the expense of other variables (e.g. age, ethnicity, etc.), whose role may be more important for the project than gender or sex. On the other hand, even projects seemingly gender irrelevant at first glance may, after closer inspection, find an opportunity to promote gender equality, e.g. in the use of gender-sensitive language in research papers, with anticipated readiness to call in special experts into the research team if findings would appear to be gender-relevant or in presenting research products on the market by all team members - men and women[6].

20) But gender-sensitive measures confuse me, and there is a risk of making a mistake. "I am often forced to evaluate confusions dealing with the gender dimension in the content of research and gender diversity in the research team or even cases in which I am not sure myself, how to approach the topic. I could draw the wrong conclusions and unintentionally disadvantage applicants."

→   Misunderstandings and ambiguities regarding the evaluation of gender dimension might occur at the beginning of their introduction. Therefore, evaluators must be provided with sufficient training material in the context of the work expected of them (specific guidelines, awareness-raising, the inclusion of gender aspects in supporting materials and presentations, etc.). However, it is expected that it will take some time to reconcile the understanding of all the actors involved (RFOs – applicants – evaluators) as to what gender aspects of a research project mean and how they should be evaluated.

21) But I am not gender-biased when evaluating a project. "When evaluating a project, my approach is strictly impartial – I do not discriminate against or in favour of men or women. I never noticed during panel discussions that someone would comment negatively about a female researcher."

→   This argument may sound gratifying at first glance, but it would be appropriate to point out the existence of unconscious biases. Emphasize that unconscious biases affect everyone and acknowledge that this applies even to yourself. To eliminate them, it is necessary first to accept their existence and then consciously minimize them. It is good to provide examples of unconscious biases with already well available literature, e.g. the image of a proper scientist has an implicit male pattern, women need to have better research results or more results to be evaluated as equally qualified as men, the influence of so-called old boys' networks, etc. (for an overview of this research, see GEECCO 2020, p. 24-26). Apropos, it is hard to imagine any panel member to openly speak out against women in research (although such cases cannot be excluded).

22) But there is no time to be gender-sensitive during the panel meetings. "The evaluation panels act under heavy time pressure. There is no time to check gender sensitivity during these meetings. Should we insert another aspect into the way negotiations are conducted, the duration of the meetings would have to be disproportionately extended."

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[6] This, however, should not be confused with an adequately evaluated gender dimension in content of research.

→ The panel meetings are often accompanied by time pressure, which can have a negative impact (not only) on the gender-sensitive attention during the evaluation process. Try to explain to committee leaders (or RFO staff responsible for the evaluation process management) that in this respect, it is important not only to plan and organize the evaluation process well but also to realize that gender-conscious evaluation is its integral part. The gender-aware evaluation process has to become part of the basic professional equipment not only of the panel leaders but of all panel members. Colleagues can also be reassured that over time, even if the gender-sensitive approach becomes a common part of the evaluation practice, training should not stop.

23) But you can worsen gender biases by pointing them out. "So far, I have not noticed that there is a problem with gender bias in the evaluation process. By articulating this problem, there is a risk that women will be given more attention which may lead to their disadvantage in return."

→ According to the interludor, there is gender equality in place, but unconsciously. Even if this were true, it is not possible to rely on unconscious gender equality to be sustainable in the long term. Pointing out the issue of gender equality and understanding how to deal with it in the evaluation process can help evaluators in their professionalization so that the results of the evaluation will show a gender-sensitive approach on an awareness-based basis.

3.2 The WWTF's experience

Author: Donia Lasinger

In general, the WWTF understands its role as supporting excellent scientific research in Vienna on topics of priority. We are a small organization that is embedded in a wider context. We observe the activities of other RFOs, RPOs and conduct regular reviews to keep up with new developments and necessary internal improvements. Due to the fact that we are small in comparison to other funding organizations, there is a need to prioritize and select certain dedicated measures to enable structural or cultural changes, both internally and in the scientific context.

When it comes to gender equality, we are constantly learning from others. We identify and implement established standards, adapting them to our own needs and necessities. On the one hand, being a small organization means only having a certain amount of resources available. On the other hand, our advantage lies in the flexibility in driving changes as a niche player. Having limited options means we must use resources carefully and reach our targets efficiently. What we did in GEECCO is to check our whole funding cycle and check how we could make the process and every part more gender-equal. The next parts will focus on the communication of these changes, not the changes themselves. When looking at communication examples, there are different stakeholders that we encountered with different needs to be addressed. To share some experiences, several examples are given in the next few pages. It will be differentiated between internal and external stakeholders.

a) Internal stakeholders

a.1.) RFO staff

Before starting with the changes and the inclusion of new practices, criteria and processes, it is fundamental to know where to start, what gender mainstreaming knowledge already exists in the organization. This is marked by a lot of persuasions and internal communication in order to prepare the organization for the coming changes. This includes both the management and, ideally, all employees. Being a small team is fruitful as building a gender-friendly culture and understanding in-house can be easily implemented as only a few

persons need to be on board. However, to convince each one takes time and perseverance. Extensive and repeating communication is essential.

Workshops and trainings to raise awareness can be helpful at this point, in order to include external specialist knowledge as a key element. At the WWTF, we implemented them over the course of the project to improve our expertise and skills. This step of persuasion and argumentation was repeated throughout the change process.

a.2.) Decision bodies: boards and juries

To communicate with boards, evidence to justify the need for change should be collected. This includes statistics, e.g. not only the numbers of employees but also the data broken down by gender on various parameters such as average grant size, number of applicants compared to successful applicants, and number of reviewers / jury members/ jury chairs. Setting the right indicators is essential in this step. The even more important aspect is to benchmark externally and learn what others are doing. Work that others have done can inspire one's own work and bring good arguments that the own changes are necessary. For this reason, we identified about 20 European and international RFOs that focus on "gender in research" and established rigorous exchanges with these organizations. It is necessary to select the best examples to learn from, i.e. organizations that are quite similar in structure, strategy, instruments, funding objectives, legal status, size, etc. and to check them for applicability to the own context. Referring to these kinds of examples and knowing more in detail what the detailed process was (and also hindering and supporting factors) is very helpful in communicating it to decision boards.

When it comes to juries, we also took the whole evaluation process into consideration and provided detailed information and personal appointments to explain the new criterion "gender in content" and what we strive for. We adapted the material alongside and included gender expertise in the jury as well. As we do not use a pool of jury members, we decided to concentrate on pointed information and not to include long trainings.

b) External stakeholders

There are a lot of possible stakeholders that can be considered. However, the following examples are the most prominent ones and only provides some hints about thoughts and how to communicate changes.

b.1.) Other RFOs

There has already been taken a lot of effort by other RFOs and RPOs in Austria to include gender considerations and the public (and larger) funding body in Austria, FWF has already introduced gender in content and gender balance in teams. Also, other funding organizations are very active in gender considerations which were also part of the GEECCO observer group. Therefore, we exchanged in formal and informal conversations experiences and ways how to best implement changes in the organization and what fits its own context, resources, and possibilities. For us, it was good to adapt to a standard that was already in use and to learn from others beforehand, also about possible pitfalls. We also had the chance to formalize this communication by setting up an exchange group that meets on a regular basis.

b.2.) RPOs + researchers

When implementing something new, it is crucial to exchange beforehand with the applicants to get to know their needs, inform them extensively about the changes made, and helping them. As mentioned above, there has been already a lot of effort made. For our communication, we developed specific information pieces for our guidelines as well as information events where we explained the new changes and why they are important. We referenced literature and knowledge that already exists and encountered no real problems doing so. It has to be said that the gender competence at the universities and research institutions is already

well developed so that they can effectively help and support their researchers to address gender topics. We also developed checklists and examples to further make clear what we strive for.

4 CONTENT OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

In this section, the target groups of communication activities are divided according to their roles in the funding process. In the first part, the focus is aimed at communication with beneficiaries. In the second part, the communication with RFO employees, RFOs executives, evaluators and external partners is covered. The individual parts are framed by the key questions that characterize the discursive positions of the groups.

4.1 What beneficiaries should understand

After closer inspection of applicants' arguments, we can derive the following basic questions, from which other communication activities can develop:

- **Why is the RFO striving for greater gender equality in supported projects and why should I care?**

Applicants should understand the reason why gender-sensitive measures are in place and what kind of action is to be expected from them (European Commission 2020). If the applicants do not get clear reasoning of why the RFO requires gender-sensitive reflection, the gender criteria are most likely to be misunderstood, neglected, or considered in a formalistic manner. This can harm the evaluation of the project proposal in return.

Applicants (most often researchers in the private or public sector) should be aware that the approach they take to designing a research question, method, or research team may have negative as well as positive impacts on social justice. In the communication strategy, it will most likely be necessary to explain that personal experience with gender relations cannot be confused with scientific knowledge. For example, from the fact that a researcher has not yet witnessed gender-discriminatory behaviour, it cannot be concluded that her or his personal experience is generally valid.

Beneficiaries may complain about frequent changes in terms and conditions related to gender criteria. Therefore, they should understand that piloting gender criteria is linked to their evaluation, to which the only correct response is a change of terms and conditions. , especially in the first years of the implementation. It has to be explained that the changes are made based on data just obtained or facts that could not have been foreseen. Many relevant data are dependent on actual responses of the beneficiaries to gender criteria. It has to be clear that the purpose of the changes is to make the impact of the gender criteria more effective.

In the debate with researchers, it is also necessary to recognize that the demands for gender-sensitive change in the research ecosystem are not placed only on their shoulders but that a lot also depends on the management of their organization or on the organizational culture and labour law conditions that are applied in their workplace. In this respect, applicants should be reassured that the RFO is using its statutory capabilities to design systemic measures aiming at positive changes also in the RPOs.

4.2 What other actors should understand

Impulses resulting from argumentation episodes with **RFO employees** point to one fundamental question, to which employees/colleagues should get an answer:

- **Why should I cooperate on the gender agenda when it just gives me additional work?**

The RFO staff should understand that the gender agenda can only be implemented correctly if all the colleagues concerned work together on it. Like applicants, RFO staff must understand and, if possible, accept the reasons why the gender agenda is becoming part of their work. Disinterest, withholding of information, delaying, or boycotting is not a good way to cooperating, as these attitudes are negatively reflected in the work of the entire RFO.

The RFO team should also understand that the gender agenda is likely to change frequently, especially at the beginning or in the pilot phase, based on immediate experience that could not have been foreseen. At first glance, these changes may seem unnecessary, misunderstood, or may be used as a reason to discredit gender measures as such. It needs to be explained to colleagues that changes are being made by monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the criteria based on currently available data and that the purpose of the changes is to make the gender criteria system work as well as possible.

Based on the argumentation experience with **RFO executives**, it is necessary to be able to answer the following basic question:

- **Why should I defend the gender agenda when there are many other challenges for the RFO to work on?**

Like applicants and RFO staff, RFO managers must understand and accept the reasons why the gender agenda is becoming part of their work. Particularly the RFO management must understand that without adequate management support, or even with management obstructions, it is almost impossible to do anything on the gender agenda. The work associated with the implementation of the gender agenda is not unnecessary extra work, but work that professionalizes the RFO and, in this respect, gets it to a higher level in which RFOs of international importance already operate. The promotion of gender agenda in the RFO not only contributes to the harmonization of support conditions in an increasingly globalized research ecosystem but also contributes to the competitiveness of national research capacities at the international level.

Managers should further understand that the gender agenda is not icing on the cake, which the RFO addresses only when all other processes are developed, but that it is part of the RFO's everyday work, which should become part of the organization's DNA. However, managers should be prepared for the fact that implementing the gender agenda requires time and financial resources, that there may be more work at the initial phase of the implementation, that failures related to the piloted gender measures are normal, and that shortcomings need to be addressed and not used as an excuse to discredit the gender agenda.

RFOs employees in management positions should resist the temptation to make their work easier by the postponement of gender activities or by finding reasons why it is not possible to implement them. Where there is a will, there is a way. However, it is important that managers properly use their competencies, abilities, and responsibilities to facilitate the implementation of the gender agenda. This involves, for example, the use of negotiation power, proper prioritization, coordination, or proposing comprehensive solutions to problems, knowing the whole picture of organizational processes.

It can be expected that over time, once the problems associated with the initial phase of implementing the gender agenda have been resolved, the workload will be reduced as the gender agenda integrates within the common practice of the RFO. At the same time, managers must realize that gender agenda is a process whose tasks never end. It is necessary to look after the gender agenda, monitor and evaluate it, propose innovative solutions, react to new gender-based research findings, evaluate R&D programmes as they come, and constantly raise awareness of newcomers, such as the emerging research generation or RFO employees.

As part of the preparation of a communication strategy with **evaluators**, it is necessary to prepare answers for the following question:

- **Why should I take gender criteria seriously?**

Understanding the reasons why the RFO started to address gender criteria is naturally also necessary in the case of evaluators (European Commission 2012). At the beginning of the evaluation of gender criteria in project proposals, evaluators may show uncertainty, low self-confidence, and fluctuating calibration about when and if it is necessary to deduct or add points for the gender criterion in respective project proposals.

Evaluators should also receive a clear signal that gender criteria are not a formalistic matter and that their evaluation needs to be taken seriously. They, therefore, should understand (and RFO staff responsible for caring for evaluators as well) that their role is of major importance for the fairness and credibility of the RFO's evaluation process.

Gender criteria are reflected in three main areas of the evaluators' work. First, it is the individual professional work of the evaluator in the drafting of an evaluation report. Communication activities should thus focus on understanding the reasons for the RFO's gender measures, and on gaining expertise in how to correctly evaluate the gender criteria in the project proposal. It is necessary to ensure that this calibration is balanced among all evaluators so that the evaluation process is fair to all applicants, does not vary from case to case, and that the evaluation result is not based on a chance depending on a particular evaluator which receives the project proposal for evaluation.

Secondly, evaluators need to be instructed on gender-sensitive decision-making during a collective meeting of the evaluation body (jury, panel, etc.). Here, gender-relevant aspects (apart from unconscious biases, which apply to the individual evaluation of project proposals as well) include e.g. polarization of discussion by one or more panel members, marginalization of opinions of certain panel members, the ability to express opinion equally by all panel members, etc. Especially those evaluators who lead the collective evaluation body should be trained in this area.

Thirdly, the technical aspect and procedure of evaluating the criteria must be clear to the evaluators, including the way to arrive at a specific conclusion for the criterion. The way how evaluators approach project proposal evaluation should be as transparent as possible, especially for applicants, as it contributes to the credibility of the evaluation system to which their project proposals are submitted. If researchers do not perceive the evaluation process as credible, they are less likely to participate in the call for proposals, which reduces the chances of supporting the best possible projects potentially available in the research ecosystem.

If the implementation of gender criteria depends on close collaboration with **external partners**, such as ministries, government or other RFOs, the answer to the following question can facilitate negotiations:

- **What impact could gender-sensitive criteria have on the research ecosystem and why should I care?**

Communication principles must be adapted to this target group according to the extent to which they can influence the success of the implemented gender agenda. Same as the support of the RFO management, which is essential for the implementation of gender criteria within the organization, the support and cooperation of central state organizations are also very important for the success of the implementation of gender criteria in the RFO.

Whether the partner organizations are cooperative or not in the implementation of gender criteria in the RFO, they need to be aware of several facts. For example, if some external organizations are reluctant to accept gender criteria or even hinder their implementation in a particular RFO, it is appropriate to emphasize in communication the existence of national and international policies or obligations concerning gender equality in R&I (e.g. the requirement to address gender equality as part of achieving the goals of the European Research Area). In such a case, their cooperation in the implementation of gender criteria is justified, regardless of the location of these partners in the hierarchy of the research ecosystem.

The gender equality measures implemented in one RFO have an impact on the whole research ecosystem in which it operates (city, region, country, or transnational community). As the target group may be shared with other RFOs, it can be expected from partner organizations that some applicants' gender sensitivity will increase and will possibly be transferred to communication with these external partners.

It is important to realize that if one of the partner organizations is involved in gender equality activities, it may change applicants' behaviour and approach to research projects. Therefore, it would be beneficial for various RFOs in one research ecosystem and other state organizations to work together to harmonize gender measures so that their inconsistencies or even contradictions do not give rise to confusion among applicants.

In this case, the communication has to reflect that the relevant organizations may be at different levels of implementation of gender criteria, even within a single research ecosystem. They may attach different importance or rigour to gender criteria. It is therefore important that the achievements of one RFO are not undermined by the harmonization because other RFOs do not go so far in the implementation of gender equality activities or do not attach such importance to them.

5 LIST OF COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

In this chapter, we will conclude the question of the common communication principles of gender criteria towards beneficiaries, evaluators, RFO staff and other stakeholders. We present the general setting of RFOs' communication principles that may help to explain the importance and meaning of measures integrating the gender dimension in research and increasing gender diversity in research teams. We will show the basic types of argumentation fouls, as well as some aspects that determine the right choice of communication principles. At the end of this chapter, we present a list of dos and don'ts in setting communication principles that TA CR and WWTF learned throughout the change process.

5.1 Communication and fallacy

In debates on the gender agenda, we can very often encounter so-called "fallacy" (also rhetorical trick or argumentation foul), which aims at convincing the debating partner of an opinion or to win the discussion. The essence of the argumentative delusion is an inconspicuous violation of the rules of logical proof by using invalid or otherwise faulty reasoning in the construction of an argument, which affects emotions instead of reason, hearts instead of heads (Shewan, 2003). Fallacies can be used intentionally or unintentionally when the opponent is motivated by the desire to win the debate at any cost or to support any beliefs and opinions that conflict with the debating partner, in our case, contrary to the essence of the gender agenda.

Such rhetoric should be avoided, as it can become a trap from which it is very difficult to reach a reasonable level of discussion on gender criteria. It is also good to be able to recognize fallacy and adapt the answer accordingly. In such a case, it is always necessary to remain in a calm mode (point to existing policies or credible sources or evidence) or to end the discussion completely.

Often you can encounter ten basic types of argumentation fallacies, as suggested by Edward Schewan (2003)[7]:

- **Diverting the argument to unrelated issues**, also called "red herring" (Ignoratio elenchi),e.g. *"I recognize that the gender agenda is important, but our organization must pay particular attention to projects in implementation as well!"*
- **Insulting someone's character** (argumentum ad hominem),e.g. *"You can blame yourself for the problems in the implementation of the gender agenda because you are too impatient."*
- **Assume the conclusion of an argument, a kind of circular reasoning**, also called "begging the question" (petitio principii), e.g. *"Measures to address gender inequality in research are based on the promotion of one sex – women, yet the promotion of one sex is the cause of gender inequality."*
- **Making jumps in logic** (non sequitur), e.g. *"It is foolish to examine the development of menstrual pads on a reference group of men, so the reflection of the gender dimension in the content of research is complete nonsense."*
- **Identifying a false cause and effect** (post hoc ergo propter hoc), e.g. *"Our information system crashed due to congestion, shortly after we integrated the new text field for the gender criterion into the application. Thus, gender equality activities cause problems with the IT system."*
- **Asserting that everyone agrees** (argumentum ad populum, bandwagoning), e.g. *"All realistically thinking people will agree with me that our society is not ready for gender equality activities. For everyone, this is reminiscent of real socialism."*
- **Creating a false dilemma** ("either-or fallacy") in which the situation is oversimplified, e.g. *"If we introduce gender equality criteria, the whole evaluation system will collapse because evaluators do*

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[7] The examples in parentheses are derived from the experience of the TA CR, but some have been adapted to better correspond to the type of argumentative foul.

not know how to evaluate these criteria. If you want to cause the evaluation system to collapse, introduce gender criteria."

- **Selectively using facts** (card stacking), e.g. *"We have received many complaints from applicants about inconsistencies in the evaluation of their projects as regards gender equality criteria, and so we must stop implementing them."*
- **Making false or misleading comparisons** (false equivalence and false analogy), e.g. *"I have young researchers in the research team – parents, fathers, and mothers. However, female researchers do not stay in the laboratory overtime as often as men, although men are parents as well. This is a sign that women are not as interested in research work as men."*
- **Generalizing quickly and sloppily** (hasty generalization), e.g. *"From several project proposals, it was clear that the incorporation of women into the research team was a calculated move just to fake a gender-balanced team. Gender criteria, therefore, force applicants to cheat."*

5.2 Aspects of communication principles

The principles to communicate gender criteria, the type of these principles, and their correct choice, including the choice of the right degree, to which the principles will be applied in communication, depend on several aspects.

a) With whom the communication is conducted
It is clear that the people with whom it is necessary to communicate, are not a homogeneous group. They differ not only according to the type of responsibilities they have within the research support process but also according to the degree of seniority, expertise, age, gender, length of employment in the organization, education, application sphere – business or research organization, degree of already acquired awareness of gender issues and other personality characteristics. This plays a significant role in choosing communication principles correctly. And a key aspect, of course, is their attitude towards gender equality issues.

b) What message is to be delivered
The ability to estimate the degree of the audience's inclination towards cooperation or resistance, acquaintance with argumentation but also didactic techniques, and the art of diplomacy and negotiation are other aspects that can contribute to good communication practice.

c) What communication method is appropriate
It is also important to correctly evaluate the situation according to the environment in which communication activity takes place. Situations such as formal or informal, prepared or improvised, communication in a known or unknown environment, online or face-to-face, etc., are considered. Thanks to the correct evaluation of the situation, the appropriate communication principle can be chosen.

The above-mentioned aspects are influenced by several factors, which determine how the discussion about their implementation is conducted.

- **External determinants of communication principles**

Communication principles based on the question as to which communication tactics to choose to succeed in the gender criteria implementation will be based on **the level of maturity of the audience** in gender equality matters. If it is an audience that already knows gender issues and only needs to be advanced in this regard, the demands on the tactical choice of communication principles will be lower (e.g. in front of the audience, it is possible to speak of gender equality as a generally accepted value). Whereas with an uninformed

audience, or where the rejection of the principles of gender equality can be assumed, it is necessary to carefully adapt the principles of communication (e.g. start with an example of gender inequality that is difficult to question; cite a generally accepted authority with gender-relevant content, introduce the gender equality criterion together with other research-relevant issues such as ethical requirements or approaches in evaluation).

The size of the targeted audience for communication activities concerning gender criteria determines which tools (PR, marketing, education, online training, video, blog, etc.) the communication principles are to be used. The size of the audience must be compiled based on the size of target sub-groups (e.g., number of RFO employees, number of applicants usually participating in calls for proposals, number of evaluation panel members, size of the evaluation pool, etc.).

Regardless of the specific target group characteristics, it is possible to expect that the audience for the communication of gender activities will be divided into three groups, according to their relationship to the communicated issues. Concerning the implemented gender criteria, these are resistive, indifferent, and supportive groups of people. These three types of audience require different communication approaches, albeit within a single communication strategy.

- **Internal determinants of communication principles**

The factor determining the communication principle is the **basic characteristics of the RFO,** where gender criteria are being introduced. In this respect, the communication principles (as well as the communication strategy) will be influenced by the focus of the RFO (e.g. basic research, applied research and innovation, both); the possible focus of the RFO on a specific area of research (e.g. medical research, engineering and technology, social sciences and humanities or all disciplines); the number of RFO employees or regional reach of the RFO (city, region, nation, international). The available capacities dedicated to the communication activities of the gender criteria – i.e. time, financial and personnel resources, gender-relevant expertise – must correspond to given RFO's characteristics.

To properly understand the communication principles, it is necessary to get to know the audience in detail and determine **the target groups for gender criteria** communication based on the common characteristics of the subgroups (e.g. beneficiaries, RFO staff, RFO management, evaluators or RFO partners). Other separate target groups for gender criteria communication in an RFO may include middle management, senior management, evaluation panel leaders, evaluation panel members, external evaluators, in-house evaluators, national evaluators, international evaluators, etc., depending on their size or assigned importance. The gender manager responsible for communicating gender criteria should also be aware that he/she is likely to never fully persuade all partners and that there will continue to be a plurality of views on gender equality issues and potential resistance.

The choice of the right communication principles will also depend on the extent to which the implementation of gender criteria is **supported by RFO management**. The support of state administration for gender equality agenda within the implementation of relevant national and international policies can also play a significant role. Open resistance of the management to the agenda can encourage other colleagues to be reluctant, whereas support to it may accelerate the successful implementation. In general, the less supportive RFO management is during gender criteria implementation, the more attention and sensitivity must be devoted to their communication.

5.3 **Personal skills and competences**

The suitability of communication principles is linked to the persons who lead the communication of gender criteria. Therefore, the communication principles are largely dependent on personal characteristics,

knowledge, and communication tactics. The form and effect of communication principles will thus, to some extent, also bear the marks of the personality of those who communicate.

- **Personal characteristics**

The ideal **person communicating gender criteria** should have profound knowledge of gender-related issues, and, if possible, always be open, transparent, perceptive, and relentless. The gender manager should not resort to communication fallacy, even in response to emotional or unprofessional reactions of others to the gender agenda. It is necessary to be able to cope with resistance, in the long run, manage frustration, and pay attention to personal development in the field of communication.

The communication principles of the gender manager will also depend on her or his level of **willingness to accept compromises**. It is necessary to be able to recognize the situation when a possible compromise would be in favour of the implementation of gender criteria, and when, on the contrary, it would lead to their degradation.

A specific communication principle must be applied to a specific type of argument. In this regard, it is necessary to be able to **distinguish between arguments** that are a manifestation of mere resistance to the gender agenda (which are often motivated by a boycott of gender activities or an effort to win the discussion over gender manager at all costs, often using fallacies), and those which have a real basis, whether objective or subjective.

The gender manager should not allow compromises that are based on objectively invalid arguments. On the other hand, an argument affecting the implementation of gender criteria, which has a real basis, should always be considered by the gender manager. The gender manager should **avoid informal bargaining**, as what and how will be implemented should depend on the evidence-based principle, not on personal impressions or internal politics.

In a way, the **gender of the gender manager** is also decisive for the communication principles related to gender criteria. It must be considered that men in the role of gender managers may have different starting conditions or experience a different kind of argumentation behaviour than women - and vice versa. Thus, gender stereotypes and biases against the gender of gender managers are also to be reflected in the strategic decisions. And, of course, the person communicating gender criteria must not be gender-biased him/herself.

- **Communication tactics**

The gender manager can be attracted by using an unfair strategy of communication, which is based on the so-called **salami method**. This consists of splitting the proposal for gender measures in the RFO, which as a whole would be rejected, into several partial proposals so that it appears to the opponent as unproblematic or as insignificant concessions, while it will later become clear that it is necessary to modify the application or evaluation criteria ("It will not hurt anyone if we insert into the calls' documentation one sentence only, that it is also appropriate, among other things, to reflect the gender dimension in the content of research. Just for effect.").

These proposals may be presented by the gender manager "slice by slice" (which is not recommended) as seemingly unrelated and with sufficient time interval over a longer period so that the opponent (team leader, RFO management) cannot realize what goals they are aiming for. Controversial points of the gender agenda can be proposed by the gender manager only when the measures are already largely implemented, and their rejection would be even more problematic for the opponent than their acceptance (e.g. "We need to change the evaluation system quickly to avoid applicants' complaints that we have not been transparent in assessing the gender dimension, which above all appeared in binding call documentation").

In some cases, the gender manager may resort to **argumentation fouls (fallacies)**. There can be several reasons for it: The gender manager is trapped in the opponent's unfair rhetorical strategy and gets involved in a debate in which it is very difficult to break out of its emotionality and remain at the level of logical statements. Or the gender manager may resort to it intentionally, either out of frustration with the persisting resistance to the gender agenda or in the interest to accelerate or succeed in its implementation.

For example, it may be **argumentum ab autoritate**, which is to state in support of a claim that it is approved by an expert or an organization that deals with the gender issues, a well-known publication on the gender equality problem, etc. – but the mere fact that a claim enjoys the support of the authorities does not automatically mean for the interludor that the statement is true, although it may come from the work of world-class experts. However, there are areas in which a certain authoritative source is accepted as unquestionable such as a valid legal norm in law, or approved policy or agenda by a government or a transnational organization, because its biding force is not given by logical argumentation, but by the legitimacy of the legislator, the sovereignty of governments, etc., such as "This is part of the national as well as European Policy on gender equality, so we are obliged to implement it".

The gender manager can also be in situations where the interludor is openly misogynic or xenophobic. In such a case, the gender manager is expected to adequately defend herself or himself or the gender agenda against such utterances. The gender manager may also ask the RFO team leaders, colleagues, or other witnesses to oppose the aggressor's openly xenophobic conduct by setting clear limits for acceptable discussion.

While an unfair communication strategy can be effective in many respects for implementing the gender agenda, the persons communicating gender criteria should not resort to any above-mentioned manipulative tactics and her or his intentions **should always be transparent**. An unfair approach to the communication of gender criteria may discredit the entire effort, when these unfair tactics become apparent.

5.4 List of do's and don'ts

Context matters: be it the political situation outside or inside the organization, the type of organization and what kind of rules it has to follow as well as the environment it is in, i.e. how developed the rules, debates and laws on gender are in a certain country. This is very crucial when thinking about communication as it is the basis from where to start. Based on that organizations will make different experiences and need different ways to encounter them. If there is already some gender awareness in the environment, then it may be very fruitful to find allies and exchange experience with them. This could also imply that there is already a lot of expertise, and the problems might differ for a RFO in this context. Also, the communication partners could be different, sometimes the own colleagues have to be convinced first; in other settings, the decision bodies need more attention when communicating change.

This list is a common summary of both experiences in TA CR and WWTF and points out some of the main lessons learned throughout the change process. Based on the above-mentioned argumentation episodes, counter-argumentation and brief analysis of communication practice in the implementation of gender criteria in the previous two chapters, bearing in mind the three aspects of communication principles, as well as external and internal determinants of communication, the basic communication principles for a person communicating gender criteria can be stated as follows: transparency, realism, timeliness, sensitivity, relentlessness, resilience, persistence, understanding, helpfulness, affability.

Concerning the communication principles so far presented, the list of recommendations on what to do and what not to do when communicating gender criteria in a RFO and towards beneficiaries is presented at this place.

Do's and don'ts
In the communication of gender criteria with beneficiaries

What to do

1. In any case, the person communicating gender criteria should remain transparent in her or his communication strategy towards beneficiaries or colleagues in RFO.
2. Try to introduce gender equality as a part of the RFO's craft and professional honour – how to provide research support in a correct, fair, and responsible way.
3. Search for best practices, evidence and use it wisely in argumentation. Try to base your arguments on solid data and examples.
4. It is necessary to be able to distinguish whether an argument is just a delay tactic or if it is a relevant concern.
5. It is important to understand the intentions of our interludor, including the possibility of using her or his unique knowledge for a possible solution.
6. If the implementation is hampered by an objective barrier, propose an alternative solution that the opponent cannot see for the time being or ask for other options which could be proposed from the opponent's perspective.
7. If you encounter resistance, try to find its roots. The resistance can only be resolved when their causes are known.
8. Keep in mind that the context matters, so have a clear picture of where you start from, what your environment is and how open to the gender perspective it is, what you want to reach.
9. Search for allies and exchange experiences to better communicate in the future or to improve your strategies and tactics. Try to open an active dialogue with other organizations that are in the same state or even ahead to learn from them.
10. It is good to invest energy into communication with a group of people who do not have a strong opinion on the gender agenda or who support its implementation rather than losing your energy in the fight with persistent resistance.

What not to do

1. Be aware of fallacy argumentations and try not to fall into the trap of such a debate. You can lose your confidence in the argumentation very easily.
2. Don't forget that beneficiaries as well as colleagues may make assumptions, which prevent them from cooperating. Try to find out what they think, what the gender activity means for them, and clarify misunderstandings.
3. Be aware of the own situation, i.e. what goals your own organization has and how it wants to reach them. Carefully evaluate what kind of knowledge exists and try to find suitable communication options to improve the understanding. Work with examples and external expertise if necessary.
4. Don't be discouraged. Keep in mind that you can meet beneficiaries or colleagues whose attitude to the gender agenda will be critical in all circumstances.
5. Don't underestimate the evaluation of implemented gender criteria. When changes are needed, communicate them to the beneficiaries in order to understand the evolution.
6. Don't think that one communication principle fits all situations and target groups. Try to put the gender topics on the agenda as often as possible, in a suitable format fitting the audience: applicants, juries, decision bodies, etc.
7. Don't communicate everything to everyone. Think of your target audience first, where they stand, what you want of them and what they need. Adapt your communication strategy accordingly.
8. Do not be impatient – change needs time, and convincing others via communication is a challenging job. However, count the times where it was successful and celebrate them.
9. Do not simply adapt lessons learned without considering the context: context matters, therefore be aware of your own and where to learn from (and in which context these lessons were made). Your situation is specific, and the communication options should also be.
10. Don't forget to look after yourself, as the communication of gender criteria and facing possible resistances may be demanding on energy and personal welfare.

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