

## LeTSGEPs Leading Towards Sustainable Gender Equality Plans in research performing organisations



# LeTSGEPs

### Deliverable 6.13 LeTSGEPs Policy brief 2

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**Workpackage concerned:** 6

**Concerned workpackage leader:** MISANU

**Task leader:** UNIMORE

**Dissemination level:**

- PU: Public (must be available on the website)



## List of abbreviations and acronyms:

Acronym	
RPOs	Research Performing Organisations
ERA	European Research Area
GA	Gender Auditing
GEO	Gender Equality Officer
GEPs	Gender Equality Plans
GB	Gender Budgeting
LB	Leading Beneficiary
WP	Work Programme
WG	Working Groups

## Document Review History

Date	Authors	Feedback / Review	Version
30/06/2022	UNIMORE team	ICM and MISANU	D1.5_v1
06/07/2022	UNIMORE team	All partners	D1.5_v2

The following policy suggestions are based on the experiences carried out in the second reporting period, from M16 to M30 of the LeTSGEPs project.

*The General objective of the “LeTSGEPs - Leading Towards Sustainable Gender Equality Plans in research and academic institutions” project is to implement institutional changes through GEPs:*

- (1) taking stock of what has been done so far to achieve better gender equality in six research institutions;*
- (2) adapting, testing and ensuring continuity to GEPs inside those institutions and warranting their sustainability;*
- (3) particularly focusing on Gender Budgeting that will further consolidate and increase GEP potential.*

*LeTSGEPs aims at connecting different Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) through designing and implementing their GEPs and exchanging experiences in the area of Gender Equality in research. The project seeks to design actions and implement measures that will lead to systemic institutional change and address gender bias, by involving RPOs that are at a very initial stage of Gender Equality measures implementation, while at the same time including partners that are more experienced in GEPs implementation, that will guide the implementing partners through the various steps of the project, at the same time following the main steps depicted in the GEAR step-by-step guide (EIGE, 2016).*

The present D6.13 Deliverable is an update of the previous **D6.7 Policy Brief 1**, which referred to a reflection on the work done between M1-M15 and resulted in eight Policy Recommendations, which still remain valid. In addition, during the period under consideration (M16-M30), the Project implemented some Deliverables that are core to its main objectives and led to the formulation of ten new policies recommendations.

The lessons learnt and the policy recommendations presented below are therefore the result of a reflection arising from the LeTSGEPs' Consortium commitment on the activities implemented for :

**D4.1 Tailor-made Gender Equality Plans for the implementing RPOs**

**D4.2 GEPs Implementation Report 1.0**

**D4.3 Refined GEPs for each RPOs**

The **lessons learnt** from these activities concern:

- The need of an external support and training activity in the GEP designing process
- The awareness of the obstacles that the Gender Equality Officer (GEO) in charge of GEP design in RPOs has to overcome to introduce concrete and ambitious measures
- The strategic importance of developing negotiation skills for teams in charge of GEPs' design and implementation
- The need to report constantly on the process of GEPs' implementation, giving evidence both of the results achieved and of the obstacles and problems met in unsuccessful measures' implementation
- The need to further develop the integration between GEP and GB methodology

The thorough discussion developed around the common experience of the design, implementation and re-design of the Gender Equality Plan by the six LeTSGEPs implementing partners, therefore led to the development of the following **policies recommendations**:

**Policy Recommendation 1-8:** See D6.7 Policy Brief 1

**Policy Recommendation 9:** External support for less experienced RPOs committed to GEP's design and implementation should be provided for.

In the LeTSGEPs experience, having bilateral meetings with the leading partner teams, working groups, mentors, occasions to share reflections and experiences was very important to strengthen the process of GEPs design and implementation. Gender Equality Officers and their related teams were directly supported and motivated thanks to the exchange with colleagues from other RPOs. In addition, they found a great support by the meetings with their decision-makers in which the presence of an external support (the Leading partner and/or the evaluator) had a very positive impact in terms of psychological pressure and drive to action.

**Policy Recommendation 10:** Basic and advanced training sessions on negotiating skills should be provided to better enable RPOs in the GEPs implementation and in the design of the actions.

The lessons on negotiation skills (organized within D3.4 Gender Budgeting Training 2.0, due at M32) with a specific gender perspective, were very much appreciated since it was recognized by all the teams of the implementing partners that negotiation is a main skill required to gain ambitious and really transformative Gender Equality Plans. Especially role-game plays, simulations and practical exercises were considered very useful.

**Policy Recommendation 11:** Need for specific Guidelines on the implementation process of Gender Equality Plans.

The Gear Tool (Eige, 2016) and the recent Guidelines on Gender Equality Plans for Horizon Europe (European Commission, 2021) have achieved a very high level of standardization, also thanks to the many best practices and experimentations throughout the EU27 RPOs, Member States and Associated Countries that contributed to it. The following implementation process of continuous GEPs refinement and update is a specific topic that needs further reflection, study and deserves specific guidelines to achieve a truly transformative change in RPOs and prevent the GEPs from being only a “first time experiment”.

**Policy Recommendation 12:** the GEPs implementation process in RPOs should also be supported by a tailored tool for the day-by-day management of the measures.

LeTSGEPs successfully designed and used a dashboard that was shared by all partners, in which each measure was constantly monitored through indicators, deadlines, obstacles, strategies adopted to overcome them, and delays. This tool was revealed to be very helpful to give evidence and substance to the implementation process, became an integrating part of the GEP and further supported the transformative change that often stops or slows down significantly after the GEP’s approval.

**Policy Recommendation 13:** Assign each GEP’s action a responsible person within the RPOs.

In order to ease the process of implementation and monitoring, each action should clearly identify internally the person in charge of it.

**Policy Recommendation 14:** Strengthen the unveiling of defeats and failures in the GEPs' implementation process, methodology, templates, tools and guidelines.

The recognition of the points of weakness, the defeats encountered and the failures suffered in the implementation process are essential to support the transformative change in RPOs for Gender Equality. This "negative part" is not present in the first GEP's design, since it only represents a "positive" starting point. During the following implementation process, pointing out what did not work and why, who was responsible, and how obstacles and delays were faced is of basic importance to adequately support the GEPs' following editions and to identify people liable for delays or denials on which to take action with initiatives of moral suasion.

**Policy Recommendation 15:** Implement the Gender Mainstreaming approach into the GEP Methodology thanks to the Gender Budgeting integration.

The experimentation of Gender Budgeting measures into the GEPs revealed how the present methodology for GEP is mainly concentrated on main and specific Gender Equality fields like careers, work life balance, harassment, etc. The Gender Budgeting methodology forced to widen the perspective of gender mainstreaming and to reflect on gender equality issues in RPOs that would not have emerged otherwise, like for example the gender impact of Academic Housekeeping, the connections between Academic earnings, careers and the gender issues in research, the gender impact in the regulation for access and use of the RPOs' laboratories and equipment.

**Policy Recommendation 16:** Ensure a participatory dimension in GEP's design and implementation.

The participation of stakeholders in the design process of the GEP should be activated during GEP's implementation and lead to share the need of revisions or of new actions to be included in the new editions of the GEP.

**Policy Recommendation 17:** Mutual support to reach Gender Equality.

Together with the support of the coordinating university and mentors, the discussion within the implementing RPOs that has been experienced also in the last months of LeTSGEPs increased RPOs teams' self-confidence in the implementation process. This can be the basis for a community of practices on Gender Equality in RPOs.

**Policy Recommendation 18:** Plan new context analyses that enlarge the focus on new dimensions.

During the implementation, new impact indicators can be envisaged or new needs can be revealed through a renewed context analysis that can expand to new dimensions as the working time allocation amongst different activities to measure the distribution of activities that bear a different impact on the career progress.

## References:

EIGE (2016). European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender equality in academia and research GEAR tool*, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>

European Commission, (2021) Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans, September 2021 ISBN 978-92-76-39184-5 <https://op.europa.eu/it/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-232129669>

LeTSGEPs: Policy Brief 1 (D6.7, drafted by University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and available on <https://letsgeps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/D6.7-Policy-Brief-1.pdf>)

LeTSGEPs: Tailor-made Gender Equality Plans for the implementing RPOs (D4.1, drafted by Max Planck, confidential)

LeTSGEPs: GEPs Implementation Report 1.0 (D4.2 drafted by University of Tirana, confidential)

LeTSGEPs: Refined GEPs for each RPOs (D4.3 drafted by Max Planck, public and soon available on <https://letsgeps.eu/deliverables/>)