



LeTSGEPs

Deliverable 6.19

LeTSGEPs Policy brief 3

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- 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

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26/12/2023	Unimore team	Partners	D6.19_v1
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Introduction

The following policy suggestions are based on the experiences during the LeTSGEPs project.

The General objective of the “LeTSGEPs - Leading Towards Sustainable Gender Equality Plans in Research and Academic Institutions” project was to implement institutional changes through GEPs:

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

LeTSGEPs aimed 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 sought to design actions and implement measures that would 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 were more experienced in GEPs implementation, with the aim to guide the 6 implementing RPOs through the various steps of the project, at the same time following the main steps provided in the GEAR step-by-step guide (EIGE, 2016, 2022).

Being this report delivered by the end of the LeTSGEPs project, we first provide a recap of the previous two Policy Briefs (D6.7 in Section 1, Policy Recommendations from nr.1 to nr.8 and D6.13 in Section 2, Policy Recommendations from nr.9 to nr.18) that cover two reporting periods between M1 and M30, then, in Section 3, we focus on the third and final reporting period, from M31 to M48.

This way, we offer an overall perspective of the LeTSGEPs policy vision achieved during the whole duration of the project

1. Recap of policy recommendations for GEPs Design (from D6.7, 1st Reporting Period, M1-M15)

The first reporting period of LeTSGEPs focused on the process of GEP design for six early-beginners RPOs' implementing partners. For this reason, Policy recommendations focused mainly on the initial steps of GEP design, as described by the EIGE GEAR Tool.

In detail, four out of eight policy recommendations¹ dealt with some of the **cross-cutting key enabling factors** recommended by the EIGE Gear Tool:

Political will

Policy Recommendation 1: There is a need for a higher commitment by the European Commission and Member States in supporting GB at RPOs both at the political and technical level.

Stakeholders' Involvement

Policy Recommendation 7: Include the top management in the RPO GEP's process and fully apply the principles of transparency and inclusivity.

Sex-disaggregated data

Policy Recommendation 8: Complete the process of standardisation at the EU level in terms of indicators, data and surveys concerning Gender Equality in RPOs.

Training

Policy Recommendation 6: Devote resources to specific training sessions within RPOs on gender equality, gender budgeting and gender equality plans.

The other remaining policy recommendations mainly concerned suggestions on how to embed **Gender Budgeting** into the GEP design methodology while maximising its transformative power in terms of gender equality.

Gender Budgeting & Context Analysis

Policy Recommendation 2: Going beyond context analysis in gender budgeting towards a full re-classification of expenditure in a gender and well-being perspective

Gender Budgeting & RPO's Accountability and Social Reporting

Policy Recommendation 3: Integrate gender budgeting into the broader reporting framework of the RPOs

Policy Recommendation 4: Link gender budgeting to the other social reporting documents

Gender Budgeting & GEPs

Policy Recommendation 5: Gender budgets should be linked to GEPs

¹ The Policy Recommendations are numbered according to the previous Policy Briefs they refer to.

2. Recap of policy recommendations for GEP's initial implementation process and following refinement (from D6.13, 2nd Reporting Period, M16-M30)

The second reporting period was mainly focused on implementing the GEP that the six implementing partners designed and approved in its first edition.

From this experience, the LeTSGEPs consortium learnt some lessons that were revealed to be precious for the second GEP refinement by M30 and the related policy recommendations reported in D6.13.

These policy recommendations mainly focus on the two steps of the GEAR Tool: "Step 4 - Implementing a GEP" and "Step 5: Monitoring Progress and Evaluating a GEP".

Step 4 - Implementing a GEP

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

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

Policy Recommendation 11: There is a need for specific Guidelines on implementing Gender Equality Plans.

Policy Recommendation 13: Assign each GEP's action to responsible persons within the RPOs.

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

Policy Recommendation 17: Mutual support to reach Gender Equality.

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

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

Step 5: Monitoring Progress and Evaluating a GEP

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

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

3. Policy recommendations for GEP's continuous implementation process and consolidation (3rd reporting period, M31-M48).

The lessons learnt and the policy recommendations here presented about the third reporting period are the result of a reflection arising from the LeTSGEPs' Consortium commitment on the activities implemented between M31-M48 for

D4.4 GEPs Implementation Report 2.0

D4.5 Guidelines to overcome local resistances

D6.20 Handbook for Sustainable GEPs

Between M31 (June 2022) and M48 (December 2023), the LeTSGEPs six implementing partners mainly consolidated the second round of the GEPs implementation process.

Partners were therefore concentrated on maximising the impact of their GEPs measures, consolidating their first experimental initiatives into a structured and institutionalised framework, and overcoming the local resistances they encountered on the way.

The **lessons learnt** from these activities mainly concern the GEP's systemic implementation that:

- requires both political and technical will, power and endurance, even more than for the GEP initial design
- must be supported by adequate human and technical resources
- can increase its power of transformation if GEOs and GEPs supporters of the RPO are also sustained by a participatory process involving stakeholders', and by sharing knowledge, academic and institutional recognition
- teamwork and collective commitment must be pursued within the RPO. Actually, no significant achievements can be obtained by single GEOs left alone without adequate support, regardless of how competent and motivated they may be.
- must communicate achievements in a very synthetic and effective way, allowing a more transparent monitoring process. The external validation and recognition of GEPs' achievements trigger a renovated political and administrative commitment to perform better and strengthen the Gender Equality impact within the RPO.

The thorough discussion developed around the shared experience of the consolidation of the second round of GEP implementation by the six

LeTSGEPs implementing partners led, therefore, to the development of the following **policy recommendations**:

Policy Recommendation 19: Attention, commitment and focus on GEP implementation must remain high also by means of adequate public incentives.

When going through the GEP design and initial implementation, the characteristic of being an experimental approach is supported by the enthusiasm for an innovative approach, high expectations for change, and a strict calendar of activities due for the first GEP approval and subsequent implementation. This initial boost for change tends to decrease when GEP's measures are not perceived as experimental but as a daily routine that institutionalises GEPs into the RPO's structural and systemic framework.

This process of GEP normalisation has to be welcomed as a central achievement of the GEP, but on the other side, it is at risk of producing a progressive decrease in attention that represents a risk for the GEP's future impact.

Gender inequalities are much stronger if they can thrive in the shadow, far from the public attention, lost in the monotony of daily routines. To avoid this danger, attention to implementing structural achievements must remain high, and adequate incentives must be awarded to RPOs specifically for this structural and systemic purpose.

These incentives can include more funds at disposal, annual awards for Institutional prestige and competitiveness, or specific requirements criteria to access funds in addition to those already provided by the Horizon Europe Guidelines for GEPs.

Policy Recommendation 20: GEOs and GE Teams must be recognised and adequately awarded for their commitment to GEP implementation

The motivation of human resources assigned to GEP implementation is crucial to its success. For this reason, their role and action must be concretely recognised and awarded both within the RPO and externally to it. This public consideration will be connected to a higher prestigious status within the RPO. It will offer them more negotiation power to pursue the GEP's objectives regularly and daily.

Policy Recommendation 21: GEPs' and GB's implementation achievements must be monitored and evaluated in the middle/long term with specific tools.

Monitoring and evaluation are undoubtedly crucial for a good and

continuous implementation process. Having at disposal specific tools for these activities is essential to ensure high-impact effectiveness to the GEP and achieve sustainable and transformative change within the RPO. The availability of data and information allowed by specific monitoring and evaluation tools is also beneficial to strengthen the implementation process, which can be adequately communicated and shared with stakeholders on a sound knowledge basis.

Policy Recommendation 22: GEPs and GB implementation achievements must be comparable among RPOs thanks to a standardisation process

Another vital source of strength and support for the implementation process within the RPOs may arise from the possibility of comparing GEP's implementation achievements among RPOs. To reach this result, it is necessary to reach a standardisation system that can catalogue GEP measures and describe their implementation process through shared indicators and benchmarks.

Policy Recommendation 23: GEPs and GB implementation achievements must be directly connected with the Gender Equality issues within the research contents.

Among the pillars of GEP's methodology, Gender Integration in Research contents still appears insufficiently addressed and studied in depth and, above all, disconnected from the other areas. The future challenges for developing GEPs methodology should focus on connecting women's careers in RPOs, GE in decision-making, Work-life balance and Sexual harassment prevention to Gender Equality in Research content.

This would be important not only to support sustainable research in the diversity and human rights perspective but also to strengthen further the awareness of the importance of GE in the RPO's competitiveness.

In the GB perspective, this connection is also essential to engender the performance cycle of the budget and link the budget items related to the researchers' earnings to the GE in terms of people (input side) and the outputs they provide (output side).

Policy Recommendation 24: GEPs' and GB's implementation achievements must be connected with the integration of the gender equality dimension in the RPO's teaching contents.

Another critical issue in consolidating GEP implementation within RPOs is to provide specific GE training and teaching sessions in the RPOs for administrative staff, researchers, academics, and students.

GE should be the focus for specific training and teaching courses but

should also be included in as many disciplines as possible with a true gender mainstreaming approach. This would positively contribute to improving the Gender Equality context in the RPO and also help in the process of GEP's implementation and gender equality awareness.

Policy Recommendation 25: GEPs' and GB's implementation achievements must be connected with the higher quality of RPO's research on Gender Equality.

New methodological approaches should be pursued to strengthen the GEPs implementation process in middle- and long-term perspective research.

Policy Recommendation 26: Diffusion of GEPs' and GB's methodologies to build a gender-equal environment.

GE is an objective that must be shared with as many stakeholders as possible. GEP and GB implementation can become an objective to share with more qualified stakeholders and decision-makers, thus creating a gender-equal environment.

References:

EIGE (2016, 2022). 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-11e1-c-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: Policy Brief 2 (D6.13, drafted by University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and available on <https://letsgeps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/D6.13-Policy-Brief-2.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 available on: <https://letsgeps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/D4.3-Refined-GEPs-for-each-RPOs.pdf>)

LeTSGEPs: GEPs Implementation Report 2.0 (D4.4 drafted by UT, public and available on <https://letsgeps.eu/deliverables/>)

LeTSGEPs: Guidelines to overcome local resistances (D4.5 drafted by MISANU, public and available on <https://letsgeps.eu/deliverables/>)

LeTSGEPs: Handbook on sustainable GEPs (D6.20 drafted by UNIMORE, public and available on: https://letsgeps.eu/protected_download?file_path=/wp-content/uploads/)

