



TeleRehaB

TeleRehaB DSS Gender Equality Plan 2023-2025

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Foreword

In recent decades, women have entered the field of higher education and scientific research en masse. Gender inequalities, however, still pervade the structure and functioning of these disciplines, even in the most advanced countries.

These are clearly reflected in the European Commission's SHE reports, which include detailed data on the gender gap in higher education institutions and on the employment of women researchers in the 27 EU member states.

Universities and research institutions remain both gendered and gendering organizations. Both academia and labor market is still horizontally and vertically segregated, there is significant absence of the gender dimension in and research and there is still persistent phenomena of sexual harassment affecting the quality of the produced work and research which in turn has a negative social and economic impact in the wider society.

TeleRehaB DSS effort to design, implement and monitor its Gender Equality Plan (GEP), stems from the consortium's initiative to act against any form of potential (gender) discrimination within its operation.

The present GEP translates the project's commitment to the promotion of gender equality by setting it into an explicit goal. The GEP foresees the implementation as well as the monitoring and evaluation of specific intersectional gender equality actions around five thematic areas.

Signatures



Prof. Georgios Matsopoulos
Project Coordinator

Introduction

Background and Scope

Horizon Europe sets gender equality as a crosscutting principle aiming to eliminate gender and intersecting socioeconomic inequalities throughout Research and Innovation (R&I) systems. In particular, European Research Area (ERA) Priority 4 focuses on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in R&I¹. To this aim, Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) have been recognised as an effective gender mainstreaming tool for R&I and Higher Education (HE) institutions to tackle the objectives of the ERA, via a set of actions implemented alongside clear timelines and monitored through specific indicators.

Following this paradigm and adapting the scope of a GEP to address a Horizon Europe project, our project “*TeleRehabilitation of Balance clinical and economic Decision Support System*” with the acronym “*TeleRehaB DSS*” having been designed following a gender sensitive approach, develops and adopts the present project GEP, translating the consortium’s commitment to the promotion of inclusive gender equality into an explicit project goal.

The present document, being a living document throughout the project’s lifecycle, aims to present the project’s gender equality status quo and implementation of actions setting, while defining specific goals for mainstreaming gender in all of the project’s processes and activities.

The general strategic principles of the project’s GEP, forming the basis for the design of the actions, are:

- the plan is consistent with the project’s GA.
- the plan respects the partners’ internal rules and procedures.
- the plan responds to the gender equality challenges as defined by the ERA and takes into account the internal capacities of the consortium.
- the plan is open towards internal, and external stakeholders.
- the plan allows for changes in line with new insights based on the project’s progress and monitoring process of the actions.
- the plan responds to the five recommended thematic areas and the four horizontal building blocks suggested by the EC GEP guidance (European Commission, 2021)².

¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en#:~:text=Mandatory%20requirements%20for%20a%20GEP&text=gender%20balance%20in%20leadership%20and,based%20violence%20including%20sexual%20harassment

² European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, (2021). Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans–Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/876509>

Thematic areas

Following the guiding principles of the “GEP guidance” published by the EC, the project’s GEP is designed and presented below, covering the EC’s five recommended thematic areas in an adaptive manner to address the specificities of an EU funded project. These key priority areas are described in the following sections, including a set of specific actions to be implemented per area throughout the project duration.

These five priority areas are:

- Work-life balance
- Gender sensitive communication
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Integration of the sex/gender dimension into research content
- Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

Horizontal actions

In line with the mandatory horizontal actions, mentioned in the EC’s GEP guidance, the present document will be a public document officially uploaded on the project’s website. The gender equality and equal opportunities manager of the project, supported by the project’s scientific and technical coordinators will be responsible for the data collection, monitoring and implementation of the specific actions described in the following sections and the respective training activities to be conducted throughout the project’s duration.

Target audience

The primary audience of the present document is the project partners. Secondary audience constitute all external stakeholders involved in other Horizon Europe projects and aspire to mainstreaming gender in all of the project stages.

1. Work-life balance

Background:

Overall, long working hours, high pressure and work-life imbalances are common in academia. This can negatively affect productivity and staff satisfaction (Kindman & Jones, 2008). Effective work-life balance policies provide a way to address this.

TeleRehaB DSS, in particular, is a multidisciplinary consortium, consisting of 14 (12 Beneficiaries and two Associated) partners from eight countries (including one non-EU country) having different working time zones. For example, Thailand is five hours ahead of Central European Summer Time resulting to limited overlap on office hours (assuming “normal” office hours 9.00 – 17.00 local time) among the project parents. This in turn can easily promote organizing online project meetings relevant to the project activities outside of working hours, increasing the pressure to the researchers involved in the project implementation.

In addition, women are often under-represented in the labour market and in management positions, while men are usually under-represented in unpaid care work. In this respect EIGE³ highlights that *“there is a direct link between the unequal division of unpaid care in households (...). The bulk of unpaid care work is done by women, and this hinders their access to employment”*. Thus, it is necessary to facilitate and promote especially the participation to all project activities that entail physical presence (i.e. project meetings, conferences and other in person meetings) of the people who have increased child caring duties that can potentially affect their participation to such activities. This measure can be useful for single parents too.

Project goals:

- Promote a healthy balance between the time allocated to work and private life for project related tasks.
- Facilitate the participation in project meetings, conferences and other project related physical meetings of parents/carers.

Actions:

- Online project meetings to be held during weekdays within office hours (i.e. between 10.00-17.00) for all time zones.
 - Monitoring
 - Number of meetings held in total in M12, M24, M36.
 - Number of meetings held in total during weekdays within office hours in M12, M24, M36.
 - Resources: N/A.

³ <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/gender-inequalities-care-and-pay-eu>

- Timeline: Continuous action until the project end.
- Physical meetings to be held during weekdays, to cover the provision of childcare services and be accessible to people with reduced mobility.
 - Monitoring
 - Number of physical meetings held in total in M12, M24, M36.
 - Number of physical meetings held in total with the provision of childcare services in M12, M24, M36.
 - Resources: partner's project budget allocated for the organisation of the physical meeting.
 - Timeline: Continuous action until the end of the project.

2. Gender sensitive communication

Background:

Language, often has oppressive roots, ending up reproducing oppression and stereotypes⁴. Gender responsive communication means using and deploying language (verbal and non-verbal) in a way that addresses all genders and identities (gender +) in an equally visible and appreciative manner.

Project goals:

- Create a digital communication and information channel for the dissemination of relevant information on gender+ equality.
- Adopt basic principles of gender sensitive communication (verbal and non-verbal) at the project's Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication (DEC) strategy including equal and inclusive visual representation of people at the project's communication material.
- Ensure that the project's communication material is inclusive and accessible to people with visual impairments.

Actions:

- Create a subpage on the project's website dedicated to Gender Equality.
 - Monitoring: 1 subpage to be created.
 - Resources: Project's gender equality and equal opportunities officer and DEC manager.
 - Timeline: Subpage to be created by September 2023.
- Review and adjustment of the current content of the website and social media accounts with the overall aim to use gender-neutral language (verbal and non-verbal) whenever possible.
 - Monitoring:
 - At least 3 reviews (M12, M24, M36).
 - Resources: Project's gender equality and equal opportunities officer and DEC manager.
 - Timeline: Finalise each review on M12, M24, M36.
- Update DEC strategy to include the basic principles of inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication.
 - Monitoring: Developed strategy.
 - Resources: Project's gender equality and equal opportunities officer and DEC manager.
 - Timeline: Until September 2023.

⁴ <https://www.boell.de/en/2023/06/13/power-feminist-writing-creating-feminist-gender-sensitive-language>

- Create communication campaigns on the occasion of the International Women’s Day (8th of March), the International Day of Women and Girls in STEM (11th of February) and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25th of November).
 - Monitoring:
 - Number of campaigns created/participated.
 - Resources: Project’s gender equality and equal opportunities officer.
 - Timeline: every year on the 8th of March and the 11th of February until the end of the project. The activity will start in 2024 and will last until the end of the project.

3. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Background:

According to the She Figures report (European Commission, 2021)⁵ women and other minorities are underrepresented in decision-making positions across academic schools and administrative functions.

At project level there are five main governance bodies, namely:

- **Project Steering Committee**
 - Currently includes 3 women and 2 men
- **General Assembly**
 - Currently includes 4 women and 10 men
- **Ethical Advisory Board**
 - Currently includes 6 women and 8 men
- **Scientific Advisory Board**
 - Currently includes 1 woman and 2 men
- **WP Leaders**
 - Currently the project is consisted of 9 WP in total. Currently there is only one woman holding the role of WP for one WP

In addition, there are 9 important roles for the decision-making processes with regards to the project implementation and currently there are 6 women and 3 men undertaking these roles.

Project Role	Partner	M/W
Project Coordinator (PC)	ICCS	M
Scientific Manager (SM)	UCL	W
Technical Manager (TM)	UOI	M
Gender & Equal Opportunity Manager (GEOM)	VILABS	W
Exploitation Manager (EM)	QUAN	W
Dissemination Manager (DM)	ACT	W
Innovation Manager (IM)	HIN	W

⁵ European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, She figures 2021 – Gender in research and innovation : statistics and indicators, Publications Office, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/06090>

Ethical and Data Manager (EDM)	QUAN	M
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Table 1 Project roles

Project goals:

- Promote equal participation of all genders in the project’s governance bodies.
- Promote equal participation of all genders in the project’s teams.

Action:

- Develop a monitoring tool and apply corrective measures, where possible, on participation of all genders in the governance bodies and the abovementioned roles as well as in the project teams.
 - Monitoring:
 - Number of men, women, non-binary involved in the project’s governance bodies, PIs and teams.
 - The update of the progress during consortium physical meetings.
 - Review to be made on M12, M24, M36.
 - Resources: Project’s gender equality and equal opportunities officer.
 - Timeline: Continuous action until the end of the project.
- Update the data collection process to include a third category on gender namely “non-binary”.
 - Monitoring:
 - Updates implemented on the data collection process.
 - Resources: Project’s gender equality and equal opportunities officer.
 - Timeline: 2nd project’s physical meeting on M6.

4. Integration of the sex/gender dimension into research content

Background:

The integration of the gender dimension in R&I content is emphasised in several policies and entails mainstreaming gender analysis throughout all stages of research process, from research questions and design, carrying out research, to its dissemination (European Commission, 2021).

However, gender is often not considered as an important aspect of research. According to She Figures report (European Commission, 2021)⁶ fewer than 2% of publications included a gender dimension. In particular, publications in Medical & Health Sciences were the most likely to contain a gender dimension, while publications in Engineering & Technology were least likely. Finally, according to the same report at European level, 1.7% of all Horizon 2020 projects integrated a gender dimension.

Enhancing knowledge about gender among researchers, as well as including aspects of gender analysis within research practices (where applicable) is vital in ensuring effective cultural change.

Project goals:

- Ensure the integration of the sex/gender dimension in project's research content.
- Ensure effective use of the sex and gender+ findings or outcomes of the project results (i.e. data analysis on sex/gender+ dimensions are properly reported) and/or include appropriate statements in case sex/gender+ dimension is not considered in the research process and at the report of the results.
- Raising awareness on the integration of the sex/gender dimension within the project's team.

Actions:

- Training aimed to the project researchers on the integration of the gender dimension in their research.
 - Monitoring:
 - At least one training.
 - Number of trainings provided.

⁶ European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, She figures 2021 – Gender in research and innovation : statistics and indicators, Publications Office, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/06090>

- Resources: Project’s gender equality and equal opportunities officer and scientific manager.
- Timeline: Until the end of the project. Training should be conducted during an upcoming physical consortium meeting.
- Provide training to the project partners on unconscious biases.
 - Monitoring:
 - At least one training.
 - Number of trainings provided.
 - Resources: Project’s gender equality and equal opportunities officer
 - Timeline: 2nd physical meeting
- Promote and monitor the integration of the sex/gender dimension in the research activities of the project.
 - Monitoring:
 - Develop a monitoring tool where partners can indicate if and how they have taken into account the gender dimension in their research activities.
 - Resources: Project’s gender equality and equal opportunities officer and scientific manager.
 - Timeline: Until October 2023.

5. Measures against gender-based violence and sexual harassment

Background:

Sexual harassment is an issue that is often underestimated in research organisations and universities. All organisations are subject to relevant local laws and regulations and many organisations are likely to have existing employment policies that cover dignity and harassment at work.

At project level, raising awareness on the issue and provide reporting mechanisms as well as procedures to tackle these incidents is important.

Project goals:

- Establish a culture of zero tolerance toward sexual harassment and gender-based violence.
- Raise awareness on the issue of sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

Actions:

- Provide raising awareness training aimed for all project partners on gender-based violence and sexual harassment.
 - Monitoring:
 - At least one training.
 - Number of trainings provided.
 - Resources: Project's gender equality and equal opportunities officer and project coordinator.
 - Timeline: Until the end of the project. Training should be conducted during an upcoming physical consortium meeting.
- Establish a mechanism to report cases within the project's context of gender biased violence and sexual harassment including also the procedures on how these incidents will be tackled.
 - Monitoring:
 - Mechanism created.
 - Resources: Project's gender equality and equal opportunities officer and project coordinator.
 - Timeline: Until December 2023.