Gender in Horizon Europe Research Proposals

ICER - Pro

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Why include the topic of 'gender' in research proposals?

Political Framework:

- Equality as a core value of the EU

- EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025

- Gender equality as one of the five priorities of the European Research Area: Structural barriers to equality persist and must be addressed.

What does "Gender" mean?

„Gender equality is a cross-cutting priority *in Horizon Europe and concerns all programme parts. Activities will aim to eliminate gender inequality and* *intersecting social inequalities* *– including those based on age, disability, ethnic or racial origin, and LGBTIQ identity – throughout R&I systems, including by addressing unconscious biases, stereotypes, and systemic structural barriers."*

Three Levels of Implementation in Horizon Europe

1. Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) of Institutions

2. Gender Balance in Research Teams

3. Integration of the Gender Dimensionn in Research Content

Why actively consider (intersectional) gender equality?
A scientific view (1/2)

- *"Promoting diversity not only promotes representation and fairness but may lead to higher quality science."*
Campbell et al. (2013)

- *"(…) the key levers and drivers for innovative processes are positively influenced by having a 50:50 proportions of men and women in teams. This clearly shows that equal gender representation can help to unlock the innovative potential of teams."*
The Lehman Brothers Centre for Women in Business. (2007)

Why actively consider (intersectional) gender equality?
A scientific view (2/2)

- *"the publications of mixed-gender teams [in the medical sciences] are substantially more novel and impactful than the publications of same-gender teams of equivalent size […and] the greater the gender balance on a team, the better the team scores on these performance measures."*
  Yang et al. (2022)

Why actively consider (intersectional) gender equality?
A reviewer view

Ranking criteria for "ex-aequo"-applications

1. Aspects of the call that have not otherwise been covered by more highly ranked proposals

2. Scores on „Excellence", then on „Impact" (IAs: „Impact, then „Excellence")

3. Gender balance among personell named in the proposal who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the research and/or innovation activities, and who are included in the reseachers table in the proposal

4. …

Source: General Annexes, Part F

What Does "Gender Dimension in Research" Actually Mean? (1/2)

Gender differences

- Sex (biological)

- Gender (social)

- Intersectionality and Inclusive Gender Analysis

Key Aspects

- Gender differences (biological/ social) influence research questions, methodology, data collection, and data analysis.

- Goal: Achieving more relevant, accurate, and inclusive results.

What Does "Gender Dimension in Research" Actually Mean? (2/2)

Additional Considerations

- No homogeneity within gender groups

- Overemphasis on gender differences

- Risks of stereotypical assumptions

What is required in the proposal? (1/3)

Proposal Sections

Part A2 – Participants

- Researchers involved in the proposal: List of key participants
  → *Include their gender.*

- Gender Equality Plan:
  → *Tick the box to indicate whether the institution has a Gender Equality Plan.*

What is required in the proposal? (2/3)

Part B - Content

- **Excellence – introductory text**

"Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, interdisciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content […]"

- **Excellence – Section 1.2 Methodology**

"Describe how the gender dimension (i.e. sex and/or gender analysis) is taken into account in the project's research and innovation content [e.g. 1 page]. If you do not consider such a gender dimension to be relevant in your project, please provide a justification."

What is required in the proposal? (3/3)

Part B - Content

- **Implementation – Section 3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole**

"Describe the consortium. How does it match the project's objectives, and bring together the necessary disciplinary and inter-disciplinary knowledge. Show how this includes expertise in social sciences and humanities, open science practices, and gender aspects of R&I, as appropriate."

Example: VR-Glasses

Women are more affected by VR-induced nausea (Cybersickness)

- women, on average, experience VR-induced nausea significantly more frequently and more severely than men.

- Study on spatial navigation: women reported 40% higher symptoms and ended twice as often prematurely.

- Study with virtual pedestrian scenarios: women experienced significantly more symptoms such as nausea, dizziness, and eye strain.

Abu Selo, T., Hussain, Z., Hussain, Q., Alhajyaseen, W., Al-Quradaghi, S., & Alqaradawi, M. Y. (2025). Exploring Simulation Sickness in Virtual Reality Pedestrian Scenarios: Effects of Gender, Exposure, and User Perceptions. Safety, 11(3), 63. https://doi.org/10.3390/safety11030063
Stanney K, Fidopiastis C and Foster L (2020) Virtual Reality Is Sexist: But It Does Not Have to Be. *Front. Robot. AI* 7:4. doi: 10.3389/frobt.2020.00004
Kelly, J. W., Gilbert, S. B., Dorneich, M. C., & Costabile, K. A. (2023). Gender differences in cybersickness: Clarifying confusion and identifying paths forward. 2023 IEEE Conference on Virtual Reality and 3D User Interfaces Abstracts and Workshops (VRW)

Example: Smart Cities

Women and marginalized groups are more negatively affected

- Smart Cities: Cities that use digital technologies to make transportation, energy, security, and services more efficient.

- Access to services: Women are often disadvantaged (sense of safety)

- Intersectionality: low income, marginalized groups (Surveillance)

- Needs of different groups—such as barrier-free access, safe routes for children, or adequate lighting—are often not sufficiently considered.

Shin, S.-Y., Kim, D., & Chun, S. A. (2021). Digital Divide in Advanced Smart City Innovations. Sustainability, 13(7), 4076. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13074076
Iivari, N., Tervo, E., Käsmä, M., & Heikkinen, M. (2023). Participatory design meets gender equality at European higher education institutions. *CoDesign*, *19*(4), 304–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2023.2215742
Mitieka, D., Luke, R., Twinomurinzi, H., & Mageto, J. (2025). Mapping the Institutional and Socio-Political Barriers to Smart Mobility Adoption: A TISM-MICMAC Approach. Smart Cities, 8(6), 182. https://doi.org/10.3390/smartcities8060182

Outlook & Q&A

Practical Implementation in the Project Proposal

- Recommendation: Build internal expertise from the start

- Early engagement with gender/diversity experts

- Use of indicators and monitoring tools

- Trainings and awareness-raising activities

Benefits and Added Value

- Strenghtens Scientific Quality

- Promotes Innovation

- Improves Funding Chances

- Enhances Societal Impact

Left with questions?
Support & Contact Points at Your University

If you have specific questions regarding the gender and/or diversity dimensions of a proposal you are currently preparing, please contact the designated representative at your university.

- Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany): Equal Opportunities Office/ Stabsstelle Gleichstellung, Diversity und Antidiskriminierung, gda@haw-hamburg.de

- Turku University of Applied Sciences (Finland):Elli Sillanpää, Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) Advisor, Elli.Sillanpaa@turkuamk.fi

- HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (The Netherlands): Netwerk Diversiteit & Inclusie, info.di@hu.nl

- Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain): Equality Unit, igualdad@upv.es

- Politécnico do Porto (Portugal): Office for Gender Equality, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination, Deolinda Meira, meira@iscap.ipp.pt

- University of the West of Scotland (United Kingdom): n. A.

Thank You!

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Please check the following tools for further information:
CARPE Website
(general project information & training material)

LinkedIn
(news & up-dates)

HAW HAMBURG

TURKU AMK
TURKU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

HOGESCHOOL UTRECHT

UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE VALÈNCIA

P.PORTO
ISCAP

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST of SCOTLAND
UWS

Excursion: Example questions for each research phase (1/3)

1. Gender in the Research Question and Objectives

- Does gender play a role in the problem definition? If so, how?
    - Are there gender-specific differences in impact, perception, or outcomes?
    - Are men, women, and non-binary individuals equally addressed?

2. Gender in Methodology and Data Collection

- Can data be collected and analyzed in a gender-sensitive way?
    - Use sex-disaggregated data collection (e.g., separate analysis by gender).
    - Consider gender in the selection of participants, interviewees, or case studies.
    - Use inclusive language and phrasing in surveys and interviews.

Excursion: Example questions for each research phase (2/3)

3. Gender in Analysis and Interpretation

- Do the results reveal differences based on gender or other diversity characteristics?
  - Are there different mechanisms, access points, or barriers?
  - Are certain groups systematically disadvantaged or overlooked?

4. Gender in Project Implementation and Governance

- Can gender equality be promoted through team composition and project structures?
  - Ensure gender balance in leadership, committees, and work packages.
  - Appoint a Gender Equality Officer or Gender/Diversity Advisor.
  - Plan gender/diversity trainings or workshops.

Excursion: Example questions for each research phase (2/3)

5. Gender in Communication and Dissemination

- Is it appropriate to design dissemination and outreach in a gender- and diversity-sensitive way?
    - Use inclusive language and imagery in public communication.
    - Consider the needs of different target groups when exploiting results.

6. Gender in Risk Analysis

- Is it useful to reflect on gender and equity aspects in the project's risk assessment?
    - Could the project unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities?
    - Are there ethical challenges in handling gender-specific data?