
DRAFT THEMATIC REPORT: GENDER AND HRM

Benedetta Magri

International Training Centre of the ILO for GENIS-LAB Project

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Section 1 Gender Equality Policies That Work.....	5
1.1. Gender Equality At The Core Of Research Strategy	5
1.2. Gender Equality Policies That Work: A Step-By-Step Approach	8
Step 1 Knowing The Institution	8
Step 2. Establishing The Gender Equality Policy Objectives And Scope:	9
Step 3 Institutional Set Up For Implementation.	10
Step 3- Developing A Gender Equality Action Plan.....	11
Step 5 : A Monitoring, Evaluation And Follow-Up System.....	11
1.3 Embedding Gender Equality Policies In Hr Management Systems	12
Key Concerns for HR Systems.....	12
Who Is Responsible?.....	13
Promoting Equality At All Stages Of The Hr Life Cycle:	14
Section 2. Tools And Examples	20
2.1. Tool For Gender Screening Of Hr Processes	21
2.2. The Human Resource Strategy For Researchers.....	23
2.3. Case Study: Tromso University's Six Steps To Become A More Diverse Organisation.....	24

INTRODUCTION

This Thematic Report on Human Resource Management and Gender is part of the EU FP/ Project GENIS-L@B. GENIS – L@B aims to implement structural changes in a group of selected scientific organisations in order to overcome the factors that limit the participation of women in research. The project involves six scientific partners which have committed to improving their capacity to promote gender equality in scientific research, supported by three partners, which assist them in their tasks by coordinating the network, encouraging knowledge sharing and providing technical advice.

The Scientific Partners are:

- CSIC - (Spanish Superior Council for Scientific Research) Institute for Polymer Science and Technology, Spain;
- IPF - Leibniz Institute of Polymer Research Dresden, Germany;
- FTM UB - Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade, Serbia;
- NIC - National Institute of Chemistry, Slovenia;
- INFN - National Institute for Nuclear Physics, Italy;
- BTH - Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden.

Technical partners are:

- FGB - Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini, Italy;
- ITC/ILO -International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization, UN Agency, International;
- ADS – Italian women in science organization, Italy.

GENIS-LAB aims to initiate change at three levels:

1. the *organisational* level: analysis of the organisational capacity to promote gender equality and definition of action plans to implement structural changes where necessary (e.g. new HR rules and practices or adoption of gender-sensitive methods for resource allocation and monitoring);
2. the *social/environmental* level (promotion of a communication and awareness campaign aimed at fighting against stereotypes - de-constructing the stereotyped relation between women and science); the trans - national European level (promotion of networking/mutual learning among involved scientific organisation to support the exchange of experiences, practices, efficient management tools);
3. the *transnational European level*: promotion of mutual learning among involved scientific organisation to support the exchange of experiences, practices, efficient management tools.

The first Phase of the Project took place over the year 2011 (WP2) and engaged all six organisations in participatory self-assessments of their structural capacities to promote and sustain gender equality in the management and practice of research. The methodology of the Participatory Gender Audit – which the ITCILO has tested with a range of organisations over the last ten years – was adapted to the specificities of the research sector helped draw a picture of the institutions in terms of their gender representation in the research and non-research staff,

as well as the gender-sensitivity of their existing policies, formal and informal HR practices, working conditions and organisational cultures.

During the participatory audits institution did not only assess internal and external obstacles to gender equality. They also become aware of their existing gains and good practices. The ensuing recommendations were born out of a dialogue between the facilitators and the staff and management of the institutions, on how to concretely initiate structural change by starting from existing good practice and inner “gender equality” strengths. Recommendations were discussed with and approved by the senior management of the institutions.

A comparative synthesis of the good practices, challenges and recommendations identified in the six institutions was also offered to the partners for further peer discussion and as a first step towards the design of their own internal action plans.

The purpose of the “Virtual Labs” which represent the second “Work Package of the Project (WP3) was to establish a space for “free exchange area” and repository for positive experiences and tools that institutions could set in place to give follow up to the results of the PGA. The virtual Labs are organised around the three key themes of “Organisational Culture and Stereotypes”; “Human Resource Management” and “Gender Budgeting”.

In line with most of the current research in this field¹, in many of the institutions involved emerged a clear need for “gender equality policies that work”, or in other words to “walk the talk” of their political statements on gender equality. Gender equality is frequently a separate agenda, disconnected from other levels of organisational functioning and rarely accompanied by appropriate enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. This is exactly one of the reasons why these policies do not seem to work as they should.

At the same time, lack or scarce attention to gender equality and/or diversity issues appears a symptom of the broader need to upgrade the human resource management function both in centralised systems and procedures and in the way in which team leaders manage the everyday work of research. The latter is a finding that emerged as a need across the geographical and scientific diversity of all partner institutions and it clearly finds its origins in the challenges faced by today’s “*post-academic research*”: pressure for money, the dynamic relations with the private sector, competition for visibility, need to set up large collaboration teams, international mobility, quest for innovation, multiculturalism...

In terms of gender equality, common² needs identified were related to:

- need to improve the institutional capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate the their internal gender policies through adequate formal accountability and monitoring mechanisms;
- need to improve the capacity to attract, recruit, retain and support capable women researchers, particularly young women at the beginning of their career, through formal institutional measures as well as through a broader change of mind set and awareness of indirect discrimination;
- need to adopt more women-friendly criteria for selection, job evaluation and assessment, as well as to improve the capacities of evaluators to assess performance freely from gender bias;

¹ Cfr. For instance, *GenSET Consensus Report (2010)* or

² It is necessary to recall here that the different institutions present a broad range of diversity so not all “needs” are common to all institutions.

- need to establish or reinforce adequate systems- within institutions and among networks of institutions- to support researchers (women and men) in their needs to reconcile work, family, private life.

Responding to these challenges calls for actions addressing two equally important dimensions:

- *Formal dimension*: policies, rules and formalized practices regulating work organisation and human resources management
- *Informal dimension*: organisational culture, unspoken assumptions, behaviours, relations with the community, “context”.

These two aspects are closely inter-twinned and mutually reinforcing. Informal working practices and networks, unspoken assumptions and internal cultural biases shape the ways in which policies are effectively translated- or not - into working practices. They also create the conditions under which accepted “norms” which appear to be “neutral” in fact tend to favour men, as they tend to replicate the unconscious acceptance of unequal gender relations in historically male-dominated environments.

While a parallel Thematic Report focusses on the informal aspects related to organisational culture and on the specific tools that can be applied to raise individual and organisational awareness, this Report analyses the formal aspects regulating an organisation. It looks at ways in which explicit organisational strategies, processes and mechanisms can be revisited so as to limit and address the influence of stereotypes and create the enabling conditions for “gender-and people”-friendly organisations. It presents the rationale and some tools that can be used to revisit HR strategies in a perspective which is free from gender bias and also proposes some practical measures – as way of example - which have proved to be successful to achieve better gender equality in institutions.³

The Report is structured in two Sections:

Section One: Describes the overall approach as well as the main characteristics of success for an integrated gender equality policy in human resource management.

Section Two: Describes some examples of the measures and implementation models, which were shared with the partners in the virtual LAB on Human Resource Management .

³ PRAGES o.c. offers a plethora of examples and practical tools. The measures described in this Thematic Report were selected as a way of examples, on the basis of the needs and good practices emerged in the partner institutions.

SECTION 1 GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES THAT WORK

1.1. GENDER EQUALITY AT THE CORE OF RESEARCH STRATEGY

A good gender equality policy is not just a statement of intention to respect “equal opportunities”. A gender equality policy should be an instrument to help organisations improve their overall performance in terms of social responsibility, scientific excellence and economic sustainability.

The reasons for prioritizing gender equality and adopting a gender-sensitive institutional strategy can be summarised as follows:

- Case studies reveal that the interplay between gender and science stereotypes has an influence on evaluation of scientific excellence and on women’s equal access to resources or career.⁴ Stereotypes *disadvantage*, not only women. Discrimination can be also based on prejudices against ethnical backgrounds, age, handicaps, social class, hence the need for “diversity management”. Unconscious discrimination can be based on many different grounds and advancing gender justice through fairer and a more objective evaluation and recruitment procedures serves the interests of all researchers.
- The scientific environment is traditionally not friendly to the conciliation of work and family responsibilities. The fact that few women undertake scientific careers has a strong correlation with the modalities of work organisation of scientific research. The very low fertility rate among women scientists is a well-known fact.⁵
- Work-life balance is not only a woman’s issue. This is more and more true as young men become more conscious of their rights and duties as caring fathers. Working conditions in science and research (mobility, availability, precariousness) are not necessarily attractive for all men, or even the majority of men.
- A broad corpus of research⁶ proves that when adequately managed :
 - gender balance among teams can greatly improve organisational performance and innovation capacity;
 - women’s participation in teams has a positive correlation with increased collective IQ of the team;
 - a critical mass of women in leadership positions positively correlates with organisational performance.
- Extensive evidence points to the existence of implicit bias in scientific knowledge *production* and on the benefits brought about by the integration of gender analysis in scientific research . ⁷

It is evident that “focussing on women as the problem”, i.e. taking isolated actions to promote gender balance or to support women is not likely to keep the good promises of gender equality. A gender equality policy can work and be a plus both for organisations and individuals only if

⁴ Wennerås & Wold, “Nature 347, 341-343 (1997): this study on recruitment practices in the Swedish Medical Research Council revealed the strong influence of gender stereotypes in apparently “neutral” peer reviews.

⁵ See for instance: “Understanding current causes of women’s underrepresentation in science.” Stephen Ceci and Wendy Williams October 6, 2010

⁶ Catalyst (www.catalyst.org) has conducted extensive research on the correlation between women in management positions and organisational performance in the private sector.

⁷ See Schiebinger, L. ed. (2008). *Gendered Innovations in Science and Engineering*, Stanford U.P: More on <http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/>

adequate implementation mechanisms and cultural changes are planned and put in practice at all the components of an institution's strategy.

Figure 1 shows the different areas where gender equality –as equality at large - should and can be practically integrated as an objective of its own right.

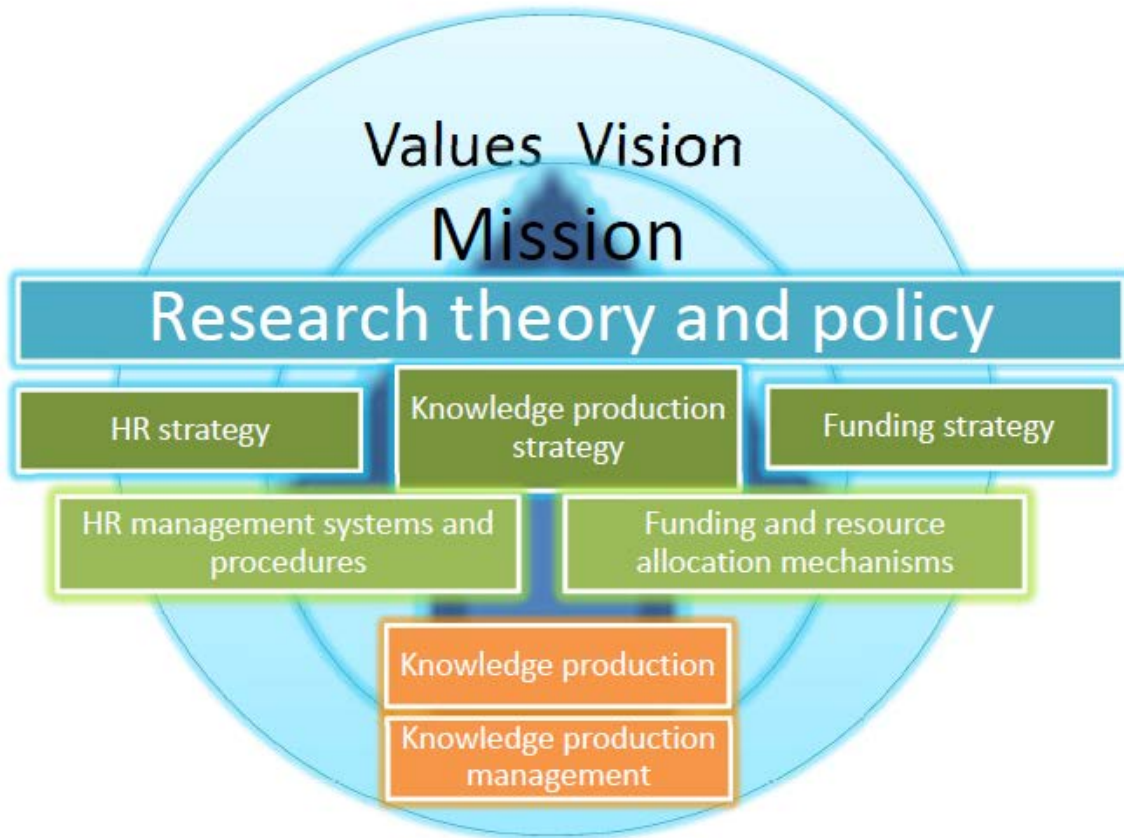


FIGURE 1 -GENDER EQUALITY AS PART OF A SYSTEM

These areas are related to three⁸ different aspects of decision-making:

- macro level (overall policy and decision-making, core value setting, overall objectives);
- meso level (formal implementation structures, rules, normative dimension, resource allocation, occupational profile) and
- micro level (everyday management, projects, inter-personal dynamics, individual mind sets as influenced by culture, empowerment or disempowerment of individuals etc.).

Each of these functions can and should integrate gender equality considerations as illustrated in Figure 2.

⁸ This categorization is broadly used in gender analysis and planning for policy design. Cfr. For instance EC (2010) *Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EU-funded research* among others.

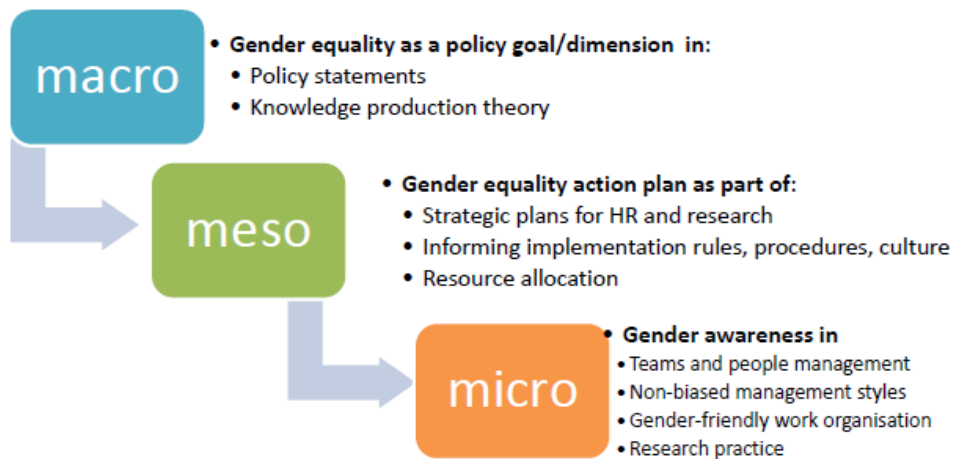


FIGURE 2 SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AND GENDER EQUALITY

At each of these levels we can imagine a different *avatar* of the “gender equality policy” :

Macro-level policies	
	<p>A gender equality policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with clear goals and a timeframe - supported by decision makers who show a clear conviction that it makes sense, and make it part of the overall institutional vision and goals
Scientific programme, budget and human resource strategy	
	<p>A gender equality action plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is the tool to achieve policy objectives - which are clearly defined, time-bound, measurable and relevant, - based on the actual knowledge of the situation - shared and discussed with women and men working in the institutions, at different levels and in different professional clusters - adequately resourced - clearly establishing responsible implementation bodies and shared accountability mechanisms not only for a specific “equality” body - committee, unit...
Every day management of research	
	<p>Gender-sensitive management (research management, team management) where the implementation of the gender equality action plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is accepted as responsibility for those who manage researcher , - encourages individuals and teams to became aware of the hidden dimensions of discrimination - supports researchers and other staff to improve their knowledge and capacity to attract, recruit, manage, develop in a gender –sensitive and non-discriminatory way - fosters creativity, collaboration and innovative ways to face the challenges

1.2. GENDER EQUALY POLICIES THAT WORK: A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

From the process point of view, there are some important steps that need to be taken to transform a good declaration of intention on gender equality into a sound policy and action, as shown in Figure 3.



At each of these steps there are a number of practical tools can be used, as appropriate to the set up and complexity of each institution.

STEP 1 KNOWING THE INSTITUTION

As in any policy, the diagnostic phase is essential as it allows to detect

- Whether there are gender inequalities and whether these inequalities can be considered as forms of direct and indirect discrimination (according to national and international law);
- Which are the priority areas for action;
- Which are the positive aspects to build on for the policy to be successful

Diagnosis should include:

- a. Quantitative analysis of employment patterns in the organisation through e.g.

- i. Gender sensitive statistical data collection and analysis (historical trends in occupational segregation: vertical/horizontal/by type of employment relationship)
 - ii. Gender-sensitive budget analysis of internal resource allocation and in relation to gender-sensitivity of research areas
- b. Qualitative analysis including
 - i. desk reviews, surveys, questionnaires, focus groups
 - ii. “Institutional story telling”
 - iii. Gender-impact assessment of research programme

Participatory gender audits normally comprise both aspects and can provide a useful basis for further policy development.

- c. Discrimination/pay equality audits to discover whether existing inequalities (e.g. segregation of women in administrative or lower status positions) can be depend on direct or indirect discriminatory practices as prohibited by national level legislation.

STEP 2. ESTABLISHING THE GENDER EQUALITY POLICY OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE:

An equality policy should first of all set clear mechanisms to ensure full compliance to non-discrimination law so that structural and individual measures are enforced to **prevent or correct** cases of direct and indirect discrimination.

Secondly, a realistic policy to **promote gender equality** will address the gaps identified in a way which builds on the existing – or potential – strengths of the organisation. It sets objectives which can be realistically achieved and supported by the institution’s staff and the more constructive aspects of its organisational culture. To be realistic, the objectives and scope of the policy should be developed considering:

- Comparative analysis of equality gaps with the objectives set by gender and science policies at sector level as well as at EU-level
- Benchmarking with like institutions
- Definition of possible approach in relation to the actions needed and the national/local legislative environment (mainstreaming, positive action, diversity management, inclusion of issues such as sexual harassment, mobbing....)
- The existence or the need to establish appropriate institutional mechanisms and resources to achieve them.

It is important to recall that real action towards gender equality may require change of formal processes and different mind sets, and therefore is likely to meet various forms of conscious and unconscious resistance. Change can be supported only if those affected by change can perceive its benefits in terms of work satisfaction and welfare, so building on existing positive attitudes is an important conditions for sustainability and success. For this reason formal and informal consultation processes should be part of the development of policy objectives.

WHAT DOES A GENDER EQUALITY POLICY LOOK LIKE?

Any policy has to be adapted to the size and context of the institution, but the essential elements are:

- The overall **goal**:

A statement on the gender equality vision e.g.:the aim of encouraging and valuing gender equality (and equality of opportunity for all);a commitment to ensuring equality for all its staff;

- The **rationale**

The rationale for the policy in term of legislative compliance and how this contributes to the institutions strategic plan (e.g. research excellence, efficiency, quality, social responsibility);

- The **vision**:

A statement on the institutions' commitment to ensuring a working environment in which all are able to give of their best, and where all decisions are based on merit and capacity to contribute to research excellence.

A statement on the institution's commitment to combat sexual harassment, harassment, mobbing or bullying; some institutions have a separate policy on harassment, and this may also vary according to national legislative provisions.

- The **scope** of the policy which should include

Staff: A statement of gender equality objectives in terms of concrete gender equality objectives (e.g. gender balance in decision making, elimination of pay discrimination, support to work-life balance according to the results of the diagnostic stage).

Substance: A statement on how the institution intends to be gender-sensitive in its research/service delivery function (e.g. in knowledge production methods, research objectives)

Structure : A statement of how the policy will be practically implemented, including establishment of a body responsible for supporting and monitoring the policy implementation, the definition of accountability lines the link to a clear and adequately resourced implementation strategy and mechanism (Gender Equality Action Plan).

- An appropriate **communication** strategy: to be effective, a gender equality policy should be shared and discussed with all staff,

Examples: [The Medical Research Council's Equality Schemes](#):

STEP 3 INSTITUTIONAL SET UP FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

Equality Committees are normally established with promotional, technical advice and monitoring functions. They may be supported by Gender Focal Point Networks. These structures, which are often of bipartite nature, are essential. However experience shows that in lack of comprehensive accountability frameworks these committees remain isolated while everyone assume that the implementation of the equality policy is not a common concern.

Responsibilities with the ultimate achievement of the policy should rest with top management. Accountability lines should then be established, so that all staff, at different levels, have a shared responsibility. These should include staff at managerial levels as well as both administrative and research staff.

The establishment of incentive systems or application to external certification and awards systems has proved useful to raise commitment towards policy implementation. Example of certification systems that promote active engagement of all staff include: [the Athena SWAN awards](#) in the UK and the [EU Excellence for Research Logo](#) (See in Annex)

STEP 4. DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

A Gender Equality Action Plan is an important tool to achieve gender equality objectives and ensure that no discrimination is place within an institution. It should naturally derive from the Gender Equality Policy in a hierarchical logic of objectives and activities, which need to discussed and developed in consultation with all the staff concerned. *Engagement and awareness raising of middle management functions– female and male is critical here.*

A participatory action plan should be based on the availability of credible baseline /diagnostic information and should be facilitated by someone possessing good knowledge of the national legislative provisions in the area of equality.

The plan should prioritize the actions to be undertaken to achieve the overall policy objectives and include

- clear, measurable, time-bound objectives and targets in relation to human resources, structures, work –organisation, substance;
- a visibility and communication strategy for making the policy known to all staff and at all management and professional levels;
- training and capacity building for all staff;

STEP 5 : MONITORING, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The achievement of the objectives of the gender equality action plan should be regularly monitored and evaluated also to allow for possible adjustments to be made. It is important that these results are also made public and that the monitoring indicators (quantitative and qualitative) are agreed by those responsible for the various actions.

Equality Committees often have monitoring functions and are responsible for reporting to national level equality bodies.

The collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data should however be part of the overall institutional monitoring and evaluation functions (internal and external evaluations) so that to feed into the overall institutional strategy (in both quantitative and qualitative terms). For instance, HR monitoring systems should be able to highlight inequalities and monitor trends and collect information to be provided to Equality Committees.

Monitoring and evaluation results should be used to ensure that the policy objectives are achieved and keep relevant to the needs of the institution. This means that evaluations should assess also the qualitative impacts of the policy (by e.g. regularly consulting staff), staff representatives should be involved in the discussion of evaluation results, in view of

policy updates. All staff should be informed of the results, as part of the policy communication strategy.

Example: In the context of the Berundundfamilien Certification Process, IFP Germany undertakes regular questionnaires to assess staff work-life conciliation needs

1.3 EMBEDDING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES IN HR MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Policies and action plans to promote gender equality in an organisation require a revision of HR systems and procedures, from a gender equality perspective.

HR management systems and practices are the tools through which an institution can attract and retain people, namely the most precious resource they can rely on to achieve their strategic objectives. This is particularly important when the institutions' mission is research – human knowledge production.

In many cases the negative gender impact of HR practices is due to the presence of involuntary and unconscious gender biases in relation to the different capacities, ambitions and needs of women and men. Unveiling these biases is not only useful to promote gender equality, but it benefits the institution overall as it help adopting more transparent, efficient and non-discriminatory HR management systems.

In practical terms, an HR system free from gender bias:

- Is able to **correct** existing hidden or open discriminatory practices, and prevent their occurrence in the future;
- Takes an active stand to **promote equality**, also with specific actions favouring those who have been under-represented or de-favoured in the past (on the basis of data and other evidence)
- Creates the **enabling conditions for all talented women and men to succeed** and reconcile their private and professional lives
- Ensures that the organisation is **a healthy workplace** and fit to compete in today's quest for excellence.

KEY CONCERNS FOR HR SYSTEMS

Looking at HR systems through a “gender lens” means to be able to recognize if existing procedures and practices challenge or reinforce existing inequalities and gender discrimination. Institutions which are truly concerned with the low representation of women at the top of scientific research should address these concerns:

1. Building capacity to document existing inequalities and discrimination;
1. Spreading the awareness that gender issues are important for both women and men
2. Gaining and maintaining leadership commitment,
3. Challenging the idea that Science is by definition “neutral” and “meritocratic” and unveil how gender stereotypes have a negative impact in organisational cultures and HRM practice, leading to implicit acceptance of existing inequalities in the scientific environment;
4. Need to promote an healthy balance between work and private life, for all;

5. Need to support the parental rights of young women and men, with due consideration of the impact of maternity on women's careers
6. Need to directly address existing inequalities by e.g. supporting women's careers, especially at the initial stage, and promoting their participation in the practice and management of research.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

A typical aspect of research and academic institutions (particularly in the public sector) is the tension between a highly, if not totally, decentralized level of responsibility in human resources management (performance management and evaluation, including evaluation of scientific production) and a typically centralized system of regulations for recruitment and employment conditions. For instance, in many of GENIS LAB project partners we find HR responsibilities shared between:

- **Administrative departments and staff** who are in charge of HR administration, ensuring law compliance and compliance with internal regulations. These comprise HR managers, staff in legal departments, training departments, or administrative staff at departmental levels.
- **Research functions:** Heads of departments, heads of research, research team leaders. Senior researchers are those most frequently involved in recruitment and performance appraisal processes, although often – at least in public research institutions - recruitment is regulated by national level legislative provision (competitive procedures based on curricula).

On the other hand gender equality issues are often left to the responsibilities of dedicated bodies which tend to be working in isolation as the matter is not perceived as a “true” HR concern.

Other variants depend as to whether institutions are organised in rigid hierarchical functions or flatter structures. In some cases the top management comprises an administrative director and a scientific director (frequently an elected scientist). Gender equality is often not considered an issue that deserves attention in the dialogue between these two functions.

Putting gender equality in the agenda of the HR dialogue is a first step to define the level of autonomy and responsibility that these different organisational functions have in terms of proactive measures towards gender equality, and accountability lines towards their implementation.

For instance it will help clarify who will be responsible for:

1. assessing whether internal regulations and work-practices are in compliance with the national legal provisions on equality and non-discrimination, and whether they are actually respected
2. assessing whether internal regulations and work practices –although apparently “neutral” - directly or indirectly favour discrimination or inequality and need critical revision
3. when some inequality issues could be addressed only through legislative revisions, initiating policy dialogue with the appropriate institutional instances (e.g. EU/ national research councils, ministry of labour and/or equal opportunities/multi-sectoral committees etc.)

4. establishing of new procedures, criteria, or work-place arrangements and facilities etc.
5. training and raising awareness of research and other staff to ensure appropriate enforcement of existing or new provisions
6. ensuring that all actions aiming at enhancing management skills among research staff are gender sensitive and equally benefit women and men.
7. Adopting gender-sensitive HR styles and actions at all levels.

As an example central HR functions should be able to encourage and advise research leaders on how to support young women's careers, in compliance with non-discrimination law.

PROMOTING EQUALITY AT ALL STAGES OF THE HR LIFE CYCLE:

There is a natural "life cycle" of HR management. The starting point is recruitment, followed by retention and ending with release. Each of these stages include sub-elements that address the different aspects of an employment relationship:

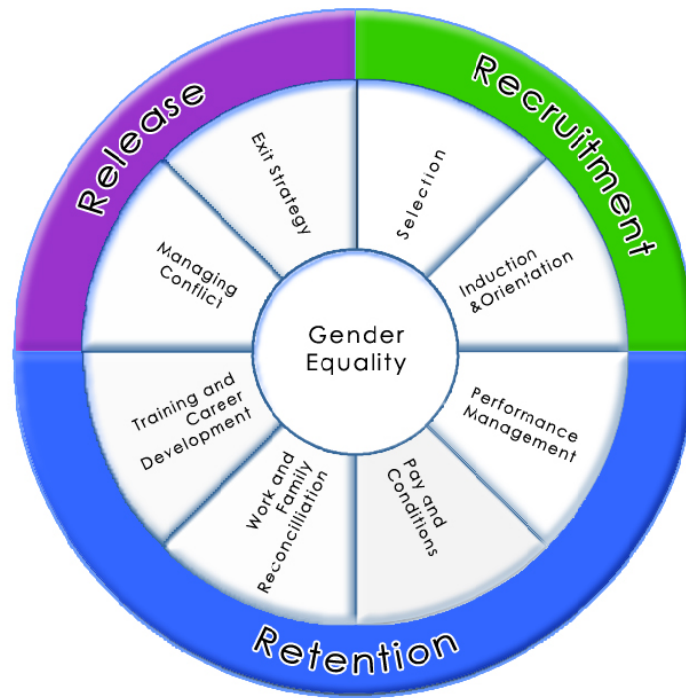
- "Recruitment" includes induction of new employees and orientation of employees who have transferred to new responsibilities.
- "Retention" generally comprises pay, employment conditions; working conditions; performance management; work and family/private life reconciliation; performance evaluation; training, rewards and career development.
- "Release" covers retirement, health, return to study as well as leaving for end-of-contract, downsizing, redundancy, underperformance, or misconduct.

This cycle has been described "an Iris"⁹. Looking at the Iris through a gender lens is the first step towards a gender-sensitive HR system as it helps discover the existence of inequalities and unveil practices and attitudes which have a different impact on women and men, their career opportunities, and their capacity to give the best of their talent to the institution.

The HR Iris¹⁰

⁹ EC(2009) *Break Gender Stereotypes, Give Talent a Chance: Tips and Tools for Smart HR Managers*

¹⁰ EC(2009) *Break Gender Stereotypes, Give Talent a Chance: Tips and Tools for Smart HR Managers*.



A gender sensitive HR system will integrate the objectives of the gender equality policy and action plan at each of these stages, as relevant, and on the basis of the inequality data collected at diagnostic stage.

At each of these stages there are three types of actions that can be implemented¹¹:

- **Corrective measures**, aimed at correcting specific situations of sex discrimination in relation to working conditions or inequalities attributable to an unjustified institutional practice or criterion. These must be included in the plan insofar as if they were not, they would give rise to liability for the institution.
- **Positive action measures**, i.e. giving preference, reserving posts, establishing quotas or targets, and introducing any other kind of measures that favour the underrepresented sex. It is particularly important that measures of this kind are established through bipartite negotiations and not unilaterally imposed by the institution.
- **Measures to reconcile family and personal life** which the institution can establish unilaterally, as part of its human resources development policy.

Section Two presents

- A matrix to screen the different stages of the HRM cycle from a gender perspective.
- An HR tool (the HR Strategy for Researchers), that integrates a gender approach in recruitment of researches
- A case study of an academic institution which has managed to achieve gender equality results in record time (Tromso University).

The following boxes provide some practical examples of actions that could be taken at each stage:

¹¹ The following examples are adapted from: ILO (2011), *Labour inspection and gender equality*.

Area: RecruitmentBaseline

Low number of female applicants in relation to male applicants in a specific professional category / research area

Objectives (Examples):

- Encourage women/men to apply for jobs in research areas where they are underrepresented
- Attract women/men to take the training needed to take up the job.

Actions (Examples):

- Remove data concerning marital or family status from job questionnaires.
- Publicise the existence of an active non-discrimination policy in job offers.
- Set up a complaint helpline for workers of either sex who believe that they have been discriminated against in selection processes and investigate the matter.
- Establish quota for jobs in which one sex is underrepresented.
- Organise training initiatives on bias-free evaluation for members of selection and recruitment committees
- Revise selection and evaluation criteria to avoid penalising non-linear careers
- Publish all the curricula of selected staff

Area: Retention - Employment relationshipBaseline

Higher rates of women among young researchers holding temporary contracts

Objective:

- Promote equality in access to permanent position held by men and women.

Actions:

- Strict compliance with the legal requirements concerning temporary contracts.
- Review for possible discriminatory processes in permanent recruitment processes

Area: Retention - employment conditionsBaseline

Job segregation by gender: too many women or men in specific professions

Objectives:

- Promote equality (women/men) in the composition of the different professional categories, reduce vertical segregation.
- Give due recognition to jobs by offering suitable remuneration according to

each professional category.

Actions:

- Change the name of professional categories by removing any references that are associated with the sex of the worker performing the job.
- Introduce a job evaluation system based on neutral criteria, i.e. assess requirements according to their actual importance to the institution and not according to generally accepted social criteria.
- Set up a specific programme to encourage women so that women are attracted to work in jobs principally occupied by men.

Area: Retention – Promotion and career development

Baseline:

Few women in top positions and women's career's paths longer than men's

Objectives:

- Remove obstacles, encourage the promotion of women to top positions.
- Ensure that the reconciliation of family and working life is not an obstacle in progressing to jobs of greater responsibility.
- Introduce an active non-discrimination policy in the appointment of leading positions.

Actions:

- Introduce transparency criteria into selection procedures: advertisement, publishing of assessment criteria and grading system.
- Participation of the equality body in the recruitment processes.
- Establish measures to reserve places in promotion rounds with respect to jobs where women are underrepresented.
- Remove references in contracts or collective agreements whereby male or female workers in more senior positions do not work ordinary working hours.
- Publish the percentage target to be achieved among staff to ensure that women participate in promotion rounds, together with the job advertisements.
- Publish advertisements for promotions on a regular basis and use clear and transparent assessment criteria.
- Establish working time flexibility.

Area: Working conditions - Pay / Salary

Baseline

Pay gap between women and men employees

Objectives:

- Ensure compliance with the principle of equal pay for *work of equal value*.
- Ensure that discretion in relation to salary setting does not constitute grounds for discrimination.
- Narrow wage differentials between men and women.

Actions:

- Perform a pay discrimination audit to assess the causes of pay differentials
- Replace unregulated bonuses (voluntary bonuses, rewards) with pay-by-performance systems that stipulate the criteria on which pay is based.
- Reduce the salary band in those categories where it is observed that men earn more than women. That reduction may be immediate or progressive.

Area: Working conditions - Working time / reconciliation of personal, family and professional life

Objective:

- Promote fair reconciliation of personal, family and professional life among women and men.

Actions:

- Introduce a system for managing proposals aimed at promoting the reconciliation of family and personal life.
- Analyse the gender impact of usual working hours / overtime
- Establish flexible working hours.
- Organise information and awareness-raising days about paternity leave to show that the institution has an open attitude towards employees taking such leave.

Area: Working conditions - Sexual and sex-based harassment

Baseline

Lack of awareness that sexual harassment is not permitted by law.

Objectives:

- Prevent conducts of a sexual nature or based on the sex of a person which may objectively create an intimidating, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Actions:

- Draw up protocols to tackle sexual and sex-based harassment.
- Introduce policies, codes of conduct and other initiatives and ensure that all staff are familiar with these.
- Raise staff awareness by means of posters and other forms of communication.
- Set up a complaints service (e.g. helpline) for individuals who believe that they have been the victims of harassment and investigate the matter.

SECTION 2. TOOLS AND EXAMPLES

2.1. TOOL FOR GENDER SCREENING OF HR PROCESSES¹²

RECRUITMENT	What is currently in place?	Does this help promoting equality? Does this reinforce inequality?	Which data/information do we need to monitor change?	Suggested Measures and Changes
Aspects of Selection				
Aspects of Induction				
Aspects of Orientation				
RETENTION	What is currently in place?	Does this help promoting equality? Does this reinforce inequality?	Which data/information do we need to monitor change?	Suggested Measures and Changes
Performance Management				

¹² Adapted from EC(2009) *Break Gender Stereotypes, Give Talent a Chance: Tips and Tools for Smart HR Managers*.

Pay & Conditions				
Work & Family/Private life Reconciliation				
Training & Career Development				
RELEASE	What is currently in place?	Does this help promoting equality? Does this reinforce inequality	Which data/information do we need to monitor change?	Suggested Measures and Changes
Conflict Management & Staff Relations				
Exit Strategy				

2.2. THE HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS¹³

The European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers were adopted by the European Commission as a Recommendation to the Member States. The 'Charter & Code' address researchers as well as employers and funders in both the public and private sectors. The Charter provides a framework for the career management of researchers, while the Code promotes open and transparent recruitment and appraisal procedures. Together they are aimed at developing an attractive, open and sustainable European labour market for researchers.

The Charter and Code of Conduct are interesting from a gender perspective because by promoting transparent and objective recruitment and appraisal procedures they pose a particular attention to non-discrimination in hiring procedures, a revision of the "traditional" assessment methods, the need to achieve gender balance among researchers and to support them in their need to reconcile work and family.

The "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers" is a tool that helps employers and funders to put the principles of the Charter & Code into practice. It has the following features:

- It is implemented by individual research institutions and funding organisations on a voluntary basis;
- It is based on an internal self-assessment and respects the autonomy of the institutions;
- It is as simple and light in terms of administration as is possible, avoiding cumbersome procedures and recognising the variety of situations across institutions and national research systems;
- It is not a prerequisite for participating in the EU Research Framework Programme;
- It is a transparent approach that provides easily accessible public information on the actions of participating institutions and organisations to implement the Charter & Code principles.

The "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers" is articulated in five main steps:

- An internal analysis by the participating research institution or funding organisation, involving all key players, to compare policies and practices against the Charter & Code principles;
- On the basis of the results of this analysis, the participating institution or organisation develops its own HR strategy for researchers which should include a concrete action plan. This document is made public;
- The analysis and action plan are then reviewed and acknowledged by the European Commission. The acknowledgement implies the right to use the 'HR Excellence in Research' logo;
- Progress in the implementation of the strategy and action plan is subjected to a self-assessment after 2 years;
- An external evaluation is carried out at least every 4 years.

Euraxess website provides a standard template for internal analysis which can be adapted to the specificities of each organisation (<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/rights>).

¹³ <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/strategy4Researcher>

Hundreds of leading research organisations in Europe have adopted the EU Charter and are actively working to change their institutional practices in order to full comply with its provisions.

Awards at national level have also been established to encourage institution not only to formally adopt the Code but to engage in actions that are truly building more equitable research environments. *As an example* The Athena SWAN Charter recognises and celebrates good employment practice for women working in science, engineering and technology (SET) in higher education and research. Any university or research institution which is committed to the advancement of the careers of women in SET in higher education and research can apply for membership, and then, provided certain equality requirements are met, be awarded different levels of awards. <http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/html/>

2.3. CASE STUDY: TROMSO UNIVERSITY'S SIX STEPS TO BECOME A MORE DIVERSE ORGANISATION¹⁴

"It's easy to become a more diverse organization. And it's smart, too.

I've seen one example of dramatic change right here at the University of Tromsø: In 2007, only 18% of our full professors were women. Four years later, as a result of deliberate and explicit programs, we've increased that number by 50%! We now find [over 27%](#) of our professorial positions filled by women, well ahead of the [18% percent in Europe](#) but lagging slightly behind the [30% documented in the United States](#).

Maybe the next example of dramatic change will be in your organization. Could 2012 be the year in which you and your colleagues take a big step forward in diversifying your workforce? Is this the year you will see more women at the top?

If you're ready to act, the following six steps will move you in the right direction.

1. Know the facts. What is the situation in your organization? How are the various job categories at your workplace divided between men and women? Are some already reasonably balanced? Are leadership positions as a category more skewed than others? How does your organization compare to its competitors in the same industry or sector?

If you're going to try to fix a problem, you must first be able to describe it. You have to know what the numbers were yesterday if you want to change them today.

2. Recognize that gender balance is not exclusively a women's issue. Convince yourself that the entire organization benefits when its workforce is more diverse.

This is a crucial step, and there are many resources you can use to develop your own thoughts. As I noted in [Why hire \(wo\)men?](#), important starting points include McKinsey's four WOMEN MATTER reports ([WM1](#), [WM2](#), [WM3](#), WM4), Avivah Wittenberg-Cox's [books](#) WHY WOMEN MEAN BUSINESS (with Alison Maitland) and HOW WOMEN MEAN BUSINESS, and recent research on the relationship between [gender balance and problem-solving skills](#) in groups.

¹⁴ (SOURCE WWW.CURTRICE.COM)

Additional resources include the [Consensus Report](#) from the European Commission's [genSET](#) project, Norway's [Talent at Stake](#) book, and the many good references in all of those works.

3. Get the leadership of your organization on board. It's crucial that leadership at the highest level embraces the importance of this issue. One of the central findings in *MAKING DIVERSITY WORK ON CAMPUS: A RESEARCH BASED PERSPECTIVE*, is that [diversity must become policy](#). "A first step in signaling an institution-wide commitment to diversity is for the top campus leadership to issue statements of support, purpose, and action."

Anthony Walesby echoes this when he writes in [HigherEdJobs](#), "The first and most important key to an effective and successful diversity office is institutional commitment." If the top leadership of your organization doesn't see the value of increased diversity, your road towards an improved workplace and improved performance is going to be much longer. This is why it's important to spend time on step #2, assimilating the best and most relevant arguments you can find.

4. Set specific and concrete goals. If your top leadership people come to see better gender balance as a tool for more effectively meeting the organization's objectives, they should articulate explicit goals. At my university, the Board of Directors set a goal of having 30% women in our top academic positions by 2013. They settled for 30% because their period as board members ends in 2013 and they considered this challenging but realistic when the goal was set in 2009. I hope the next Board will go for 40%!

When your institutional leadership sets explicit goals, the rest of the organization understands that action must be taken to try to meet those goals. Programs must be developed and implemented; progress must be measured. Goals such as BECOME BETTER or INCREASE OUR NUMBERS are not enough to trigger action. Get your leadership to use specific [equality targets as leadership tools](#).

5. Identify individuals who are motivated to advance and invest in them. Gender imbalance in organizations usually increases as we move higher in the organization. Yet, the importance of gender balance in leadership teams is particularly well documented in the research mentioned above. To improve gender balance at higher levels, individuals who are motivated to move up must be identified. Who is qualified, or close to qualified? How can your organization create the necessary support structures around them so that promotion becomes realistic?

Gender imbalance at higher levels in organizations is not mysterious. I've suggested before that [there are only 3 reasons women don't make it to the top](#). The most significant barriers are structural, such as [the subjectivity of peer evaluation](#) or the implicit prejudice yielding a [motherhood penalty](#). Identify individuals who are motivated to advance, and then develop strategies for maneuvering past structural barriers.

6. Create contexts for accountability. Organizations should share their diversity numbers. Simple agreements with sister organizations to report to each other annually can increase their focus on achieving gender balance.

But reporting is not enough. Systems should be developed in which the achievement of goals, or not, has consequences for organizations. There must be accountability.

In Norway, to take one example, an accountability carrot has been introduced in the form of a prize for the institution of higher education showing the greatest progress in the past year. Your organization can propose a coalition for mutual reporting and a system of accountability that

will motivate gender balance work. If the steps above have been taken, a competitive institutional leadership may even be eager to create contexts for accountability. (UPDATE: [Norway's gender equality prize goes to the University of Tromsø!](#))

Increasing gender balance in organizations is about improving the quality of the workplace for everyone. Improving the quality of the workplace feeds institutional goals across the board. Making the value of diversity in a workforce visible must become an integral part of leadership development programs.

Of course, investing in women is not the only way to make organizations improve. We must invest in men, too. But it's clear from the skewed numbers at the top that women and men face different challenges in career advancement. It's clear, too, that men have managed to overcome their challenges more successfully than women.

We might speculate on why. Maybe men meet fewer challenges, or maybe theirs are easier to overcome. Maybe organizational structures created by men actually favor men.

Whatever the historical explanation may be, the forward looking questions are compelling and clear:

Is 2012 the year you will increase your focus on the other 50% of our human resources? Is this the year you will move more boldly towards gender balance in your organization?

It isn't hard. Six simple steps will get you far. Are you ready for the challenge?"

www.curtrice.com