



D3.3 - Insights of GEPs improvement

WP3 - Designing GEPs for systemic institutional change

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MINDtheGEPs
gender equality in research

MINDtheGEPs (Modifying Institutions by Developing Gender Equality Plans) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no 101006543.

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Abstract

This report aims at summarizing the main advancements of the GEPs of the MINDtheGEPs implementing partners after one year of the official approval of the strategic documents in each organization (see for reference the official GEP approved in the D3.2). In addition, we analyze the steps of the implementation in each organization highlighting facilitating and hindering factors of the ongoing structural change. The report provides an overall assessment of the progress, considering the entire process of structural change including context analysis, creating the transformative actors, designing relevant GEPs in relation to the identified challenges and gender balance. The main source of data and the information gathered for drafting this report were discussed during the Belgrade project meeting (held in May 2023 at ETF, Belgrade Serbia) along with an online bilateral meeting and updating the measure’s implementation on an excel file provided to each partner. The report shows relevant steps forward in the implementation of the project GEPs although structural change actions will require far more than the 8 months covered by the report. The MINDtheGEPs project teams will follow working in the next 24 months to straighten and consolidate the GEPs measures.

Document history

Version	Date	Description	Reason for change	Distribution
V0.1	26 June 2023	Deliverable structure		CNR
V0.2	20 July 2023	First draft		All partners
V0.3	25 July 2023	Second draft		All partners
V 0.4	11 August 2023	Third draft		All partners
V 0.5	23 August 2023	Fourth draft	ETF comments	CNR

Information in this report that may influence other MINDtheGEPs tasks

Linked task	Points of relevance
T3.7 Setting up conditions for GEPs beyond the life of the project	The current state-of-the-art concerning the GEPs within the consortium is the initial point for the D3.4 GEPs White Book and Final Sustainability Plans.
T4.1 Supporting women in their careers: the EMPOW_LAB, submodule KA2	Sharing partners’ strategies to support women in their career.
T4.2 Supporting caregivers in their careers: WORK-FAMILY MEASURES	Sharing partners’ strategies to support women in the work-life balance.
T5.1 Supporting women in their self-selection into leadership: the EMPOW_LAB, submodule KA1	Sharing partners’ strategies to support women in their career.
T5.3 Breaking down structural barriers to women’s participation in decision-making bodies	Sharing partners’ strategies to support women in their career.
T7.3 – Monitoring and evaluation exercise: phase 1	Supporting the monitoring and evaluation phase through addressing the strengths and criticisms as a consortium.
T4.4 Evaluating implemented actions (Month 44-46) Leading partner: JU;	The final stage of WP4 is assessment of the short-term impact of specific actions in recruitment, retention and promotion



Deputy: ITT – Participating partners:
all.

within the implementing RPOs. Particular attention will be paid to the evolution and/or change in attitudes and/or in organisational plans for recruitment and balance after the intervention. Feedback from training session participants (both at the top and at the bottom) will be collected by means of questionnaires and interviews (D4.4) (MS14). Analysis of the impact of the intervention planned within the organisations will be conducted in close connection and cooperation with K&I (see WP7). The task will provide inputs and recommendations that will be later included in D.3.3 (MS15).



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1. Aim and introduction

This report aims at summarizing the main advancements of the GEPs of the MINDtheGEPs implementing partners after one year of the official approval of the strategic documents in each organization (see for reference the official GEP approved in the D3.2). In addition, we analyze the steps of the implementation in each organization highlighting facilitating and hindering factors of the ongoing structural change. It is important to underline, however, that the actual implementation does not correspond to the halfway point of the implementation process of the GEP (as underlined in D7.2). The first part of the project, including T7.3, was dedicated to phases such as context analysis, participatory design, mobilization of actors, and the introduction of new (or renewed) key bodies and roles for gender mainstreaming in the governance and leadership of the 7 institutions, as well as preparation for the implementation of the GEP (analytical design/detailed planning). So, we provide an overall assessment of the progress, considering the entire process of structural change (which, of course, includes context analysis, creating the transformative actor, designing relevant GEPs in relation to the identified challenges and gender balance, however, it is important to be aware that the stage of implementing actions has only been initiated a few months ago.

The document also offers a reference to the three ongoing transversal work packages (WP4, 5, 6) that are supporting the implementation process. The discussions and the information gathered for drafting this report were discussed during the Belgrade project meeting (held in May 2023) along with online bilateral meeting and updating the measure implementation on the excel file provided to each partner. This results in a valuable occasion of sharing information about strengths and weaknesses in the implementation process that has been shared with our support partners K&I in charge of the evaluation. The report also aims at initially identifying structural changes in the implementing organization toward a sustainability of the GEPs far behind the MINDtheGEPs project.

2. Deliverable structure

The document is organized as follows: a general overview of the GEPs improvements is presented at the beginning of Section 3 with a table summarising the main advancement in the implementing partners. Section 3 briefly reports advancement in each implementing organization: CNR, CTAG, ETF, JU, MTU, UG, and UNITO. For each partner an advancement of measures and activities are reported following the Key Area of reference of the project (where relevant) along with an additional section focusing on facilitating and hindering factors. Finally section 3.8 reports strengths and critical issues among the Consortium.

3. GEPs improvements

Following the GEPIB establishment within the organisational structure of each partner (T3.4), and according to the MdG “Guidelines for GEPs implementation” (D3.1), in the “Ex-ante version of the 7 GEPs at each implementing organisation” (D3.2) the structure of the 7 GEPs have been described, detailing objectives and measures have been reported, and the related nature of the actions (cultural or structural) have been specified. Such structure has been applied to the four MdG Key-areas, the additional fifth area “Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment”, recommended by the European Commission, and the two additional Pillars identified in the MdG approach as crucial for the success and sustainability of the GEP: 1. Governance and monitoring, and 2. Training, awareness and communication. A specific reflection about a better integration of intersectional approach/aspects, was triggered/promoted within each core team and within the institution. This section describes the GEPs improvements in the last year (June 2022-June 2023), highlighting the implemented actions with the MdG support and the related KAs.



Table 1: Main GEPs milestones and updates since June 2022 by implementing partner organization

Partner	GEP approval	Covered period	Main updates since June 2022	MdG KAs
CNR	May 2022	2022-2024	- Gender Equality Officer as new key role within the central administrative Presidency office	Pillar 1 & KA1
			- Drafting of the Gender Training Plan for 2023-2024. - Approval and kick off of the training plan on gender equality - Designation of the CNR Consigliera di fiducia (trusted advisor) for sexual harassment and mobbing	Pillar 2 All KA KA5
CTAG	Under negotiation	2024-2029	- Protocol of right to digital disconnection approval	KA3
			- Teleworking agreement	KA3
			- Flexibility and co-responsibility agreements - Training activities with gamification	KA3
ETF	July, 2022	2022-2025	- Gender Equality Officer as a new key-role within the central administrative office - Drafting of the detailed Gender Equality Plan for 2023-2024 - Gender Equality Officer trained on the prevention of sexual harassment	All KA All KA K5
JU	June 2022	2022-2025	- The Safe JU - Department of Security, Safety and Equal Treatment responsible for coordinating, monitoring the implementation and reporting the JU GEP - 4 working groups on GEP tasks	All KA All KA
MTU	June 2022	2022-2025	- Overall MTU GEP to be created in line with Athena Swan Submission whereby recommendations from MINDtheGEPs to be included. - Annual celebratory event around gender awareness hosted April 2023 - Establishment of a gender equality sub-committee of the Governing Body April 2022	All KA KA1 KA1
UG	December 2021	2022-2023	- “Women in science- diversity management and gender equality in social responsibility; - second gender data monitoring in the framework of - Gender equality plan for the year 2022 and 2023 approved;	KA1 All KA
UNITO	July 2023	2023-2025	- Bonus for those departments reducing gender imbalance	KA1
			- Transformative mentoring	KA2
			- Research funds after maternity leave	KA3

3.1 CNR

Since the GEP adoption in May 2022, CNR has implemented two main actions concerning the crosscutting pillars, the appointment of the Gender Equality Officer (GEO) and the drafting of the Gender Training Plan.



According to the new Strategic Plan adopted in November 2022 that will change in the next two years the organisation design in terms of scientific and administrative tasks, the GEO has been introduced in the organisation structure as a consultative key role at the central administrative office under the Presidency supervision (**Pillar 1**). The GEO is both the Gender Equality Manager (GEM) and the Director/Vice-Rector for Gender Equality & Gender in Research and Innovation (GER) for the MINDtheGEPs project. The GEO coordinates the CNR GEPIB (currently under updating) and the GEP implementation; has an advocacy role on gender, inclusion and diversity management issues; is in charge of the GEP monitoring and evaluation processes; and has the responsibility of technical and strategic reports concerning gender issues (such as the Gender Budgeting). The appointment¹ lasts two years (May 2023-May 2025) to close the first GEP edition and plan the following round (2025-2027). On the one hand, such a measure affects the CNR structural design because the Director-General officially appoints the GEO through an internal open competition for all the employees based on a profile detailing skills and competencies regarding gender issues, team-working, project management, and internal and external advocacy skills. Such an accountable process would ensure transparency within the organisation, employees' involvement, raising awareness, and communicating a vision, as well as provide GEO advocacy authority within administrative processes and practices. On the other hand, the new figure can be labelled as cultural action, too, because it can raise awareness of gender equality issues in research organisations among the organisation's administrative staff who operationally manage administrative processes.

In parallel, the CNR core team has developed the Gender Training Plan (GTP) for employees and fellows for 2023-2024 with the support of the central training unit (**Pillar 2**). The GTP is part of the CNR Training Plan, released annually. Being designed for all staff (employees and fellows, researchers and technologists, technician and administrative staff) in a multidisciplinary institution, the GTP covers, with five online modules, the basic concepts (biological sex, gender, gender identity) and enters into the specifics of gender issues in R&I through specific modules on GEP, gender budgeting, and gender stereotyping. Additionally, three in-presence workshops will focus on identifying gender-based discriminations in the workplace and what strategies can be adopted to overcome them, and the fourth in-presence workshop will focus on how to write a research proposal with a gender approach (gender innovations). The GTP is part of the CNR EMPOW_LAB (T4.1).

In **Key Area 2**, "Balancing Recruitment and Career Progression", CNR has pushed to develop a short training course for the internal competition committees tackling the implicit bias in the evaluation process. Such cultural action aims to raise awareness among committees members about the different implicit biases we might have about the gender expectations and stereotypes present in its cultural context (e.g., Ageism, Perception bias, Height bias, Contrast effect, Halo effect, Horns effect, Attribution bias, Attractiveness bias, Conformity bias, Confirmation bias). The recorded video (5 min ca.) is now under production. As soon as it is available, the training course will be compulsory for every committee member to access the online personal area and all the documents (e.g., procedures, candidates' applications, reports) of the competition. The video will be tested for the first time during the next autumn career progression competition.

In **Key Area 4** "Gendering Research and Teaching", the CNR core team supported two cultural actions. In February 2022, CNR signed a Memorandum of Understanding coordinated by RAI – Radiotelevisione Italiana to support the European Campaign "No Women No Panel", aiming to reach the gender balance in scientific and communication panels and put an end to the so-called "manel". Therefore, a dedicated working group developed a web app to collect data on scientific events organised by the CNR (e.g.,

¹ <https://www.cnr.it/sites/default/files/public/media/attivita/gender-equality/43.pdf>



scientific or press conferences, symposiums) regarding the kind of event and the number of men and women by type of involvement, such as facilitator, expert role, institutional role. Such a web app will monitor the gender balance with the CNR events, providing information about the need to tailor specific organisational policies. The second activity at an advanced implementation stage is the gender award “Athena of the CNR” for the best research applying the gender innovations approach, according to T6.4 “Promoting gender-sensitive research”. MdG will award the best research output developed by a single unit of personnel or a research group, within each European Research Council panel (Physical and Engineering, Life Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities), in line with CNR’s multi- and interdisciplinary feature. Research output means a variety of outputs, e.g., paper, book or chapter, working or technical paper, technical procedure or methodology, art installation or exposition. The research output must have been finalised in 2020-2022 and can be proposed by a single or group of researchers, technologists, technicians or fellows employed at the CNR. An international commission will select the three best outputs.

Currently, **Key Area 1** and **Key Area 3** are on standby due to on-going organisational change at CNR, i.e., the new Strategic Plan, the organisation is experiencing.

On KA5 the official procedure for harassment reporting has been finalized and is now fully in operation. The “Consigliera di fiducia” (Trusted Advisor) was formally appointed in May 2022 following a selective procedure. The new profile is an institutional person external to the organization, tasked with providing consultancy and assistance to employees who are subject to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or bullying. The Trusted Advisor is responsible for providing consultancy and assistance to employees who are subject to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and bullying, as well as initiating procedures outlined in the “Code for the Prevention and Counteraction of Harassment at CNR”. The profile also acts as the point of contact for the Listening Desk, which employees can approach to receive information about the Code itself, report situations of work-related discomfort, psychological distress in the workplace, conflicts, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and bullying.

Facilitating and hindering factors

The MINDtheGEPs project fostered open dialogue and collaboration with the central administrative offices in different areas through cooperation in the GEPIB. Regarding the two crosscutting pillars, the great cooperation with the Information and Communication Technologies and Statistics offices is moving the administrative data collection processes towards a gender approach, implementing new procedures every year to disaggregate data on different topics under a sex/gender breakdown. In parallel, the great involvement of the Central Training and Welfare Unit has to be underlined, which is fully supporting the integration of the organisation’s training offer with the GTP. The appointment of the new central key role, the GEO, is supported by the Presidency, and the Officer is starting to manage the GEPIB and advocate central offices on gender issues. The new Officer could provide more officiality and authority to the requests, proposals and actions of the GEPIB, thus positively influencing the structural change of the organisation in the following months and years till the end of the current GEP cycle.

However, there are some important hindering factors to highlight. First of all, the new Strategic Plan approval (November 2022) came six months after the approval of the GEP. This policy document, which radically alters the structure of the central administration, the scientific network composed of Departments and Institutes, and the individual research groups, is necessarily slowing down the work of the two areas most concerned with structural change. In fact, before proposing measures that will impact the organisation’s roles, commissions, and official documents, the core team is studying the organisation’s structural changes and looking for alliances to align the GEP’s changes with those of the new Strategic Plan. In addition, the new Strategic Plan and the Next Generation EU Plan are absorbing most of the energies and commitments of the central offices, partly slowing down the implementation



of the GEP's actions that should most involve the central offices. Finally, the GEPIB and GEO have yet to identify the best way to increase awareness and involvement of top management in the GEP: the two external events (New Strategic Plan and NextGenerationEU) are currently the organisation's priorities, and structural change related to gender issues remains at the margins of discussions.

3.2 CTAG

The last GEP of CTAG has expired, and the MdG core team has drafted the new Gender Equality Plan for 2024-2029, starting from the expertise developing within the MdG consortium. The new GEP is currently under negotiation with the top management. The MdG core team is not fully updated on the recent status of the negotiation stage (i.e., any changes, additions, or suggestions) because this procedure is confidential according to CTAG internal regulations. However, the GEP 2024-2029 should be approved by the end of the current year. While the process of approval will be finalised, anyway the CTAG MdG core team went ahead in the promotion of MdG actions on which it was anyway possible to progress.

For **Key Area 1** "Decision-Making Bodies: Gendering Leaders and Institutions", the CTAG core team started to deliver training for the Breaktop_lab (crosscutting WPs 4, 5, and 6): involving an external expert, a participatory workshop on gender issues in Research & Innovation was held targeting the top management. In addition, some synergies outside the MINDtheGEPs project were activated. The organisation won the STRADA project², funded by EIT Manufacturing, aiming to provide women in manufacturing environments with the necessary skills to start and grow their businesses or develop their professional careers, whether in academia or industry, rising to management and leadership positions.

During 2022 and the first six months of 2023, several measures of the 2019-2023 GEP related to the **Key Area 3** "Improving work-life balance", have been implemented. After the experience lived in recent years with the implementation of urgent prevention, containment and coordination measures to face the health crisis, CTAG considers that the advances in digital technology have brought great advantages such as greater flexibility in the management of work times, a capacity for self-organization, autonomy in management and improvement in the possibilities of reconciling work and family life, favoring the development of projects, the commitment of people and alignment with the defined challenges. Different agreements were approved towards a better conciliation of private and working life for the personnel, but specifically for those – men and women – having care responsibilities. For all these reasons, CTAG deemed it opportune to create a collectively regulated framework to specify the conditions of application of this new formula for carrying out work (Teleworking agreement). In this way, this type of work provision is promoted, without prejudice to the necessary guarantee of face-to-face activity when the nature of the services provided so requires. In parallel, the "Protocol of Right to digital disconnection" in which CTAG and the Legal Representation of Workers recognize the right to privacy in the use of digital devices of workers, the right to digital disconnection and the right to privacy in the use of video surveillance devices and geolocation as rights applicable to workers, including management personnel, regardless of the modality in which they provide their services or the type of working day. The "Flexibility and Co-responsibility Agreement" has been approved, aiming to better reconcile the work commitments with private lives and to share the caring burden between the members of the couple.

Through past GEP cycles and national legislation, the organisation already has numerous procedures and initiatives to address gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Facilitating and hindering factors

² <https://stradawomen.eu>



The core team is finding much support in implementing the current GEP and designing the new GEP cycle, especially the HR department. The support from this relevant organisational ally made it possible to deliver the Breaktop_lab and supports the development of the Empow_lab by creating a virtual "gamification" experience on gender differences addressed to all the organisation's staff. The STRADA project is enabling the expansion of knowledge and skills in gender equality in STEM subjects for the organisation's staff, although it is demanding a high level of involvement and commitment with a large utilisation of human resources.

It is worth mentioning that another facilitating factor was employee engagement. Delivering the Breaktop_Lab showed us, in general, engaged employees likely to support and participate in gender equality actions.

However, as always when addressing these issues, hindering factors emerge. Among them, it is worth mentioning the established gender stereotypes and the unconscious biases that have been tried to reduce in actions such as those carried out during the Breaktop_Lab.

Also, the core team is questioning how to develop and support gendered innovations within the organisation's research activity because projects are developed on specific orders from industry, and often the freedom of action as researchers is not as supported as in the public sector.

3.3 ETF

The ETF has officially adopted its GEP 2022-2025 in July 2022 (see D3.2 for reference) and following the approval the Gender Equality Officer, as a new key-role within the central administrative office, has been appointed. The profile task includes advisory role on gender, inclusion, diversity management issues, and the prevention of sexual harassment. The appointed person is also in charge of the coordination of the GEP implementation and its monitoring and evaluation. The person, along with the GEPIB, is responsible for drafting technical and strategic reports on the GEP implementation and other gender related documents

On KA2 "Balancing Recruitment and Career Progression" a special GEP launch event was organized. On the "ETF Day", the ETF Dean announced the adoption of the GEP and underlined the MINDtheGEPs project support in that process

On KA3 "Improving Work-Life Balance" the ETF leadership, building on results of MdG survey and interviews, supported a Remote Working Policy and a Teaching and management system that encourage flexible working. A specific measure was also designed to support a funding scheme for all ETF employees for the in-vitro fertilization.

On KA4 "Gendering Research and Teaching" a specific ETF Award for Contribution to Gender Equality in Science and Education was established. . The Award is open both to the students and employees and in the call for proposal a specific attention is devoted to inclusive/ gender-sensitive language (<https://www.etf.bg.ac.rs/sr/konkursi/2023/08/etf-nagrada-za-doprinos-rodnoj-radnopravnosti-u-nauci-i-obrazovanju>). The Award promotes a gender-sensitive approach, demonstrates an understanding of gender issues and has the potential to influence the way we think about gender. It can, for example, be work in computer science, robotics, biomedical technologies, or any other discipline, whose approach takes gender characteristics into account. In addition to the recognition and prestige of winning this Award, the Award also includes a monetary part, as well as the opportunity to present the work to the public through the communication channels of the ETF and also of the MINDtheGEPs project. In May 2022 the second Train the Trainer workshop was organized by the ETF in Belgrade, and ETF employees were invited to join the training.



Facilitating and hindering factors

An important novelty, that can be seen as a facilitating factor, is that there is now the Serbian national Law on Gender Equality. The Law requires periodic reports, specific actions, and monitoring activities to be made. Now, given that the ETF has been equipped with a GEP before Law came into force, it might be needed to make some adjustments to it. Therefore, in the coming months, the ETF GEP will be assessed against the new regulation and amended to align with it, if necessary.

3.4 JU

Jagiellonian University approved its GEP on 30 June 2022 by Ordinance No. 94 by the Jagiellonian University Rector. The Safe JU - Department of Security, Safety and Equal Treatment is responsible for coordinating, monitoring the implementation and reporting the JU GEP. As for now the plan applies to the Jagiellonian University and Jagiellonian University Medical College - Collegium Medicum with an implementation period that will run between 2022 – 2025. The main advancement is related to the establishment in the early 2023 of four working groups: anti-discrimination procedures, employee satisfaction, standards of work-life balance and gendering teaching and research, operating since April 2023.

KA1: DECISION MAKING BODIES: GENDERING LEADERS AND INSTITUTIONS

- first report on gender at the university: "Gender at Poland's oldest university". An analysis of quantitative representation at Jagiellonian University".
- BreakTop Lab planned in the 2nd half of the 2023 - awareness raising seminar for female and male organisational authorities, decision makers and the members of recruitment/promotion commissions.

KA2: BALANCING RECRUITMENT AND CAREER PROGRESSION

- establishment of working groups on: employees' satisfaction survey tool, anti-discrimination procedure.
- setting up a survey based on the GEAM tool reviewing working conditions in the context of equal treatment.

KA3: IMPROVING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- establishment of a working group discussing most important work life balance issues and developing new measures.
- providing private healthcare service- medical packages - for employees (partially refunded).
- adjustment of working regulations related to remote working conditions.

KA4: GENDERING RESEARCH AND TEACHING: difficult due to the omission in the document

- establishment of a working group discussing most important issues concerning implementing gender dimension into research and teaching and developing new measures.
- introduction of an award for the best MA/PHD thesis on gender issues/ including gender perspective (planned in the second half of 2023).

Regarding the general process, it was confirmed the positive participatory process and the general mobilisation of key people promoted by the UJ core team inside the University, through the establishment of the 4 WGs. They were all activated (also the 4 th on Gendering content was finally



established and the 1st meeting was held in July). A second meeting of these groups will be promoted before the summer break. The people remain in the process loop also through virtual updates provided by the core team, so even if someone is not able to attend in person, can be attached to the itinerary. The core team invited people to join on a voluntary basis, admitting the committed people for the concerned thematic areas in these spaces of discussion and self-reflection. The process is positive so far. The core team will figure out how to go ahead in this process after the summer break, also in consideration of the feedbacks received, and reflecting about how to foster connection with other relevant people at the moment missing in the process, who did not join voluntarily (e.g., group involved in UNISAFE project).

Facilitating and hindering factors

Main facilitating factors are a wide network of cooperation at the university and extensive experience in implementing gender initiatives. The MtG team cooperates in the formula of working groups (dedicated to specific tasks at GEP) with many people from various academic and administrative units of the Jagiellonian University, including UJ Ombudperson, HR central department, Learning Support Centre, Inclusion Centre, Student Support and Adaptation Centre.

The main hindering factor has been the underutilization of the knowledge and expertise produced by the MINDtheGEPs project. Equality policies have also generally low priority for the JU decision-makers. In addition there has been a lack of two crucial thematic areas in the GEP: integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content and measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment. The MdG team will follow supporting actions with a more intersectional perspective.

3.5 MTU

As already stressed in D3.2, following the merger of Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tralee on the 1st of January 2021, the newly-formed Munster Technological University continues to experience a complex reorganisation. The merger remains ongoing, with the proposed new leadership structures to be implemented pending approval of new roles by the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). The progress of the merger has been delayed by the timing with the pandemic, and further challenged by a cybersecurity breach across the Cork campuses in February 2023 that prevented access to key systems for all staff and students, the impact of which is still being experienced many months later. Such a long and challenging process has delayed the drafting and implementation of a GEP at University level. However, it is important to note that development of gender equality issues remains of paramount importance to the University, as the newly proposed structure has incorporated a Vice President for People & Culture within the organisation chart, with responsibility of an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion central unit. The objective of this unit is to create an inclusive and respectful environment for staff. In the interim, to contend with the circumstances related to the ongoing merger, the MdG core team have made a decision to concrete their efforts on a research unit within the university rather than create a university-wide GEP. Instead a GEP will be created for the CircoBio research unit (<https://circbio.ie/>), a growing research group featured with multi-disciplinary backgrounds, research topics, and projects. The development of the CircoBio GEP will focus on cultural actions only, given that the unit does not have the authority and independence for implementing structural changes. CircoBio research group components have already been involved in the MINDtheGEPs WP2 activities, therefore they are sensitive to the topic and open to change. The underway CircoBio GEP is to be considered a pilot strategy for the whole organisation, it will be developed as soon as the new general management will be approved and appointed.

In parallel, the MTU core team is managing the Athena Swan Bronze Award application for the University. The submission is expected in November 2023. The Athena Swan Award submission will



enable the university to create a University-wide GEP, which will include components from the MINDtheGEPs project. Additionally, the MTU has applied to the Aurora mentoring programme and the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) of Ireland as well, aiming to mutually support the GEP and the above-mentioned processes.

For the **Key Area 1** “Decision-Making Bodies: Gendering Leaders and Institutions”, the MTU core team had fulfilled the action related to the establishment of a gender equality sub-committee of the Governing Body, the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) unit within the “People & Culture” VP. Such an establishment regards the student component appointment within the EDI unit too (action under the **Key Area 4** “Gendering Research and Teaching”).

Regarding the **Key Area 3** “Improving work-life balance”, in 2023 a new policy has been approved for MTU staff concerning ‘Surrogacy Leave’. The policy provides paid leave to men and women who are undertaking surrogacy. With regards to improving work-life balance, the university has recently approved a pilot remote working policy which allows staff to work remotely up to two days a week.

Concerning the **Key Area 4** “Gendering Research and Teaching”, the MdG core team is developing the gender award for the School of STEM (T6.4). The general approach is to create an awareness of gender and EDI within STEM research among students and early-career researchers. The award will ask students to create a mock research proposal that encourages the inclusion of gender in innovative systems.

Facilitating and hindering factors

The MTU core team is facilitating the cultural and structural change towards a more inclusive work organisation bringing together several ongoing processes related to gender equality, i.e., the GEP, the Athena Swan Bronze Award, the Aurora mentoring, and the SALI of Ireland. These actions and initiatives are aiding in creating an inclusive environment for MTU staff, whilst facilitating a wider network of stakeholders within the university. A further facilitating factor can be found in the establishment of the EDI unit within the “People & culture” VP, putting the ground for an intersectional approach to gender equality issues within MTU.

However, at the same time, the key hindering factor relates to the ongoing merger of the two institutions, Cork Institute of Technology and the Institute of Technology Tralee. The lack of an executive structure and the difficulties in coming to a consensus regarding senior leadership positions makes it difficult to create progress with the University, it undoubtedly reduces the negotiation power of the MTU core team.

3.6 UG

The University of Gdańsk has implemented a relevant number of measures in the year of GEP implementation. The UG university also had an important recognition for their effort on gender equality by advancement in the world rankings and the team participation at the “Women in Tech Summit 2023” with the presentation: *How to build a gender-balanced ecosystem with the support of European projects?* on the session: Gender Equality Plans in Action - Diversity and Inclusion in Research and Higher Education”. Regarding the ranking advancement the University of Gdańsk solidifies its leading position in Poland in the prestigious comprehensive and evolving world rankings Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings. In one year, they moved up 200 positions in the gender equality ranking, from 201-300 to 13th place. This is the highest ranking of any Polish university.

Under KA1 an important advancement was the appointment of the Gender data manager and gender budgeting. The Gender data manager became operational in March 2023 and was therefore able to take initiatives to monitor gender balance data. Other relevant action has been creating subsites at the UG



website “Women in science” with information on i) women’s presence in key roles and bodies at UG, ii) strategies for gendering research and allocation of funds, iii) gender budget data collected by Rector's ombudsperson for gender equality monitoring at UG iv) interviews with female scientists.

In this KA an open-air exhibition dedicated to the profiles of outstanding female researchers, pioneers and leaders associated with the Fahrenheit Universities. In the event panel discussions took place on the role of women in the development of Gdańsk universities (December 2022 and March 2023)

Under KA2 in September 2022 a second women Vice-Rector was elected at the UG and this supported gender balance at Rector’s collegium. With Professor Sylwia Mrozowska appointment as UG Vice-Rector for Cooperation and Development there has been an increase of the proportion of women in the UG leadership positions and the Rector's Collegium.

Under this KA a training in leadership skills and training to eliminate gender bias among managerial and executive staff was introduced in spring 2023. The main topics covered by the training have been gender in careers and recruitment, team management in the context of gender, gendering research design and project preparation.

Under KA3 and extension of the UG Staff Development Policy mentoring was piloted. This targeted staff employed in research and didactic and research positions. The first edition 2022/2023 of Mentoring Programme to support work-life balance and career progression at the UG consisted of individual mentoring for academics at different stages in their career (before PhD, habilitation or professorship). The mentoring programme, developed in cooperation with UG Centre for Teaching Excellence and Tutoring. Mentors - trained on Train the Trainers workshops in Vigo. Mentoring programme supports planning of publications, grants, teaching and other career decisions taking gender equality measures into account also in accordance and as an extension of UG HR development policy. In the period Dec 2022 – May 2023 4 trainers, 12 trainees in training 62 hours of training were performed.

Under KA4 the UG established annual awards for the best MA theses and PhD dissertations - contest for MA and PhD thesis including gender perspective in research content that was launched in 2022. The first edition of annual contest "I include gender in research" for the highest ranked master's and doctoral theses incorporating a gender perspective in the research area was conducted, and two awards given in Nov 2022 during International conference Science and Education for Sustainable Development

Under KA5 a Family room launch at one of the UG units - space opened at the International Center for Cancer Vaccine Science (ICCVS) on 6th September 2022 to support UG staff in keeping work-life balance.

The team is working on the implementation of various actions such as the award, the promotion of parental leave for fathers, and the preparation of the BREAK-TOP lab. As far as the BREAK-TOP lab is concerned, the team is working on the programme, its practical implementation and is negotiating the target of people who will be involved with the rector and the management. The two female vice-rectors of the university were also involved (this is the first time this has happened). The team also gained access to university statistics, thanks to the person who is monitoring the data. The team is working on the graphic presentation of the most significant data.

3.7 UNITO

At the beginning of 2022, UNITO has approved an interim version of its GEP used for progressing in a further stage of institutional and bottom-up consultation with the relevant actors within the organisation, with different passages of consultation and negotiation done until June 2023. The final GEP has been elaborated with the support of the UNITO MINDtheGEPs Network Delegate as well as with the UNITO GEPIB during several meetings and it has been approved by the Academic Senate and the



Board of Directors in June and July 2023, related to the 2023-2025 time span. In UNITO MINDtheGEPs can benefit from a previous project, the PRINN Project GEA-Gendering Academia, that opened the way for drafting as well as advocating the final GEP's proposal to the University governing bodies. Moreover, The Rector appointed a [Delegate to Inclusion, Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality](#), who supports him about gender equality across the University government and is working closely with the MdG core team. So far, the actions already in place come from the Interim (ex-ante) GEP that have been integrated in and are currently part of the newly approved GEP and are addressing all the MdG Key Areas.

Regarding the **Key Area 1** "Decision-Making Bodies: Gendering Leaders and Institutions", the core team introduced in the GEP an innovative action to support the recruitment of professors belonging to the less represented gender at the Department level. Such action is a financial bonus (cost reduction in the recruitment of a new staff unit for the Department) for those departments reducing gender imbalance at the top level (full professorship or Grade A). To achieve the bonus, the department must reach the threshold of 40% of Grade A staff for the least represented gender.

In **Key Area 2**, "Balancing Recruitment and Career Progression", UNITO started to release a transformative mentoring programme for temporary early career male and female researchers (Type A for the Italian system, or Grade C). Together with the H2020 REUNITA project, mentoring started with 8 mentors and 19 mentees.

Regarding the **Key Area 3** "Improving work-life balance", a measure to support women's return to work after maternity leave was included in the new GEP. Following an application, ad hoc research funds will in fact be provided for two years after the return from maternity leave, and within five years of the child's birth. Within the same KA, a communication campaign for fathers working at the University will be launched, promoting a new model of fatherhood based on involvement and caring responsibilities.

Eventually, the **Key Area 4** "Gendering Research and Teaching" has deep roots in the University thanks to actions promoted by the CIRSDe (Research Center for Women's and Gender Studies). Since 2014, several workshops and seminars on annual basis are organised for Bachelors and Master's students from every discipline, with a multidisciplinary approach.

Facilitating and hindering factors

The UNITO core team is facilitating the cultural and structural change towards gender equality bringing together several ongoing projects, i.e., MINDtheGEPs, GEA, and REUNITA, identifying potential overlapping in terms of contents and alliances in terms of human resources among them. The joint work among such projects is expanding the network supporting the gender equality processes, starting to involve people and professionals from other research fields than gender studies. Other important facilitating factors are: the presence in UNITO of many researchers and professors deeply committed with gender equality and the ability of the MINDtheGEPs UNITO team to meet this interest and organize, with the Delegates' network, many meetings for discussing the actions to be included in the GEP.

A potential hindering factor can be identifying within the geographical structure of the University. Indeed, University of Turin is scattered in several campuses and areas within the Municipality of Turin as well as in all the Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta regions. Such sparsity can lead to cultural change being limited to the university's main locations, limiting secondary locations from change unless targeted initiatives are put in place for such situations. To avoid this risk several actions, such as campaigns and other awareness raising measures, provide digital and virtual contents.



3.8 Strengths and critical issues among the Consortium

The University of Turin (UNITO) has made significant strides in implementing its 2023-2025 Gender Equality Plan (GEP) through a collaborative approach, building on previous gender equality projects such as the PRINN Project GEA-Gendering Academia. UNITO has implemented an innovative strategy to promote gender balance at the departmental level by introducing a financial incentive system. This system rewards departments that achieve greater gender balance in senior positions, aiming to create more equitable gender representation in leadership roles. They have initiated a mentoring program that targets early-career male and female researchers. This program provides crucial support and guidance for career development, demonstrating their commitment to equalizing opportunities. Improving work-life balance has been a focus area for UNITO. They have introduced measures to support women returning to work after maternity leave. These measures include providing research funds and launching a campaign that promotes a more involved and caring model of fatherhood among male staff members. In the realm of research and teaching, UNITO has been actively organizing workshops and seminars since 2014. These initiatives are designed for students from various disciplines and aim to promote gender equality within research and teaching, fostering a more inclusive academic environment.

Italian National Research Council (CNR) has taken significant steps in advancing gender equality, including the appointment of a Gender Equality Officer (GEO) with a central role in coordinating GEP implementation and advocating for gender issues. They've also developed a comprehensive Gender Training Plan (GTP) to educate staff on gender-related matters and addressed implicit biases in the evaluation process. CNR supports gender balance initiatives and signed up for the "No Women No Panel" campaign while introducing a gender award for outstanding research. However, CNR faces challenges due to the timing of their new Strategic Plan, potentially causing conflicts in aligning GEP changes with organizational structural changes. Resource allocation to other priorities and engaging top management in GEP efforts are ongoing concerns.

Centre Technologique de l'Automobile de Galice (CTAG) is in the process of developing a new GEP for 2024-2029, leveraging expertise from previous cycles. They've provided gender training to top management and recognized the benefits of digital technology in promoting work-life balance. Measures like teleworking agreements and a "Protocol of Right to Digital Disconnection" aim to support staff in balancing work and personal life. Nevertheless, confidential negotiations for the new GEP limit transparency, and the persistence of gender stereotypes and biases presents challenges. The balance between research freedom and industry demands also remains an issue.

Jagiellonian University (JU) has made commendable advancements in their Gender Equality Plan (GEP) implementation. However, critical aspects that need attention include the absence of measures addressing gender-based violence within their GEP. Ensuring a safe and inclusive environment is paramount, and incorporating strategies to combat gender-based violence should be a priority. Additionally, while JU has improved its gender equality rankings significantly, it must continue to focus on integrating the gender dimension into research and teaching content to foster a more inclusive academic environment.

Munster Technological University (MTU) is facing unique challenges due to its ongoing merger, which has delayed the development of a university-wide GEP. The critical aspect here is the need for a clear and cohesive approach to gender equality, especially during organizational transitions. The absence of an executive structure and difficulties in reaching a consensus on senior leadership positions have hindered progress. To effectively address gender equality, MTU must streamline its efforts and ensure that the merger process does not impede gender equality initiatives. Additionally, the focus on the



CircoBio research unit, while important, should ultimately lead to a broader university wide GEP that encompasses all aspects of the institution.

The University of Gdańsk (UG) has made significant progress in implementing its Gender Equality Plan (GEP). Notably, it has climbed 200 positions in global gender equality rankings, now ranking 13th. UG achieved this by appointing a Gender Data Manager, introducing gender budgeting, and launching initiatives like "Women in Science" webpages. UG also elected a second woman Vice-Rector, Professor Sylwia Mrozowska, in 2022, boosting gender balance in leadership. They introduced gender bias training and initiated a mentoring program to support academics' work-life balance and career progression. UG is actively promoting gender perspectives in research and teaching, with awards for gender-focused theses and dissertations. They've also established a Family Room to support staff in maintaining work-life balance. While UG has made commendable progress, challenges remain in implementing certain actions, including awards and promoting paternal leave for fathers.