



ACTonGender Policy Brief

Reflections on scaling-up Communities of Practice

In this Policy Brief we will address different aspects of scaling-up CoPs. We start with shortly describing the concept of scaling-up, its aims and dimensions, followed by presenting scaling-up activities implemented within the ACT-project. The focus here will be on the ACT [Matching Events](#) in 2020, which were our main action in terms of scaling-up, and to discuss the impact of those actions. This will lead to suggestions and ideas on how to scale-up. The last section will discuss and reflect on the impacts of said actions, lessons learned, what to consider for future scaling-up activities, and how to sustain

Introduction

Within ACT, we aimed at strengthening and scaling-up the seven CoPs. In order to facilitate scaling-up, we developed a targeted support scheme with a coordination group per ERA priority (Careers, Gender Dimension and Decision-Making). The ERA groups were composed of CoP members, Core- and Seed partners. These coordination groups provided a forum for exchange knowledge and experiences between CoPs on the ERA priorities but also on transversal issues such as COVID-19 and the Horizon Europe GEP requirement. As the CoPs originally started off from different points and had differential scopes, another focus was on effectively scaling-up the CoPs to the next (national, transnational, or ERA) level to increase the visibility, scope, and impact of the CoPs.

Activities, analyses, implementations

In order to promote scaling-up, we organized several activities. First, we held e-discussions on the ERA priorities Decision-Making and Careers in March and April 2020 on the GenPort platform. Second, based on these discussions, topics that were of interest to the audience, such as organizational response to sexual harassment and the role of targets and quotas to create more gender fair decision-making bodies, were identified and used as input for the ACT Matching Events. The Matching Events were specifically organised to support the scaling-up of the CoPs by providing a platform for exchange, expansion, and promoting the CoPs.

Both the e-discussions and the Matching Events showed that there is a high interest in gender equality actions in research organizations in general, as well as in the work of the ACT CoPs and the CoP approach in particular. The participants appreciated the opportunity to exchange, discuss, and learn from each other. The fruitful discussions led to new insights, cooperations, and expansion among CoPs as well as outside actors and institutions.





Policy implications and recommendations

Today, as an essential element of human rights, gender equality is becoming more important in respect to developing awareness on biases and existing inequalities. Equality has been recognised as a societal value that impacts the quality of life of its members. GEP is a tool that facilitates this process for institutional and social implementation. This *Policy Brief* is a short fundamental outcome of the activities taken by the GEinCEE CoP and presents the conclusions adopted on the basis of the Gender Equality Auditing and Monitoring (GEAM) survey provided in 12 RPOs and HEIs. Policymakers, research funders, leaders, and individuals may find information here about the major biases and issues identified regarding career advancement, work-life balance, decision-making process, mobbing, and sexual harassment. A set of specific solutions in the areas of equality, inclusion, awareness, diversity, and supporting activities with a list of related actions is recommended. They give very practical methods and measures that can be applied step by step in a given organisation. Considering the lessons learned, the benefits that can be gained by implementing gender equality measures are described, too.

Based on our experiences with scaling-up in ACT, we have identified several ideas for and tools to support scaling-up:

- Provide platforms for exchange: Whether in the form of e-discussions, virtual events or face-to-face meetings, a platform for exchange is needed to expand and promote the CoPs and their activities. Such platforms need a time, a space, and an agenda.
- Define target groups: In order to scale-up CoPs to a certain level (e.g., national, transnational, European, or international levels), the desired target audience for scaling has to be identified. Only then, targeted 'matching' is possible.
- In addition to promoting CoPs and their activities, it is also helpful to promote the underlying CoP-approach. Other institutions or disciplinary associations in the target audience might be interested in using this approach for GE activities.



CoP/ ERA priority	Lessons learned & successes
FORGEN/ Careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with international funder groups working in similar areas to scale-up and enhance impact • Working on building the CoP nationally as well • Resources of members to participate in the CoP have been limited (due to Covid-19), whereas resources are crucial for the sustainability of the CoP • Suggestions: Working with and establishing international contacts and building a network through all funders around the globe → brings a lot more strength and power especially when talking about structural change and implementing policies at a larger scale
LAC CoP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing tools and experiences in the CoP to scale-up • Strengthening visibility through publications and presentations at HE conferences, aim for a dedicated paragraph or Ministerial statement on gender equality in conference resolutions • Creating a CoP environment that allows reflection and criticism • Suggestions: Get CoP members to share ideas and to reflect critically on planning and implementing their own GEPs
Gender dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending collaboration to other projects • Establishment of a new CoP (NOGAFem) after the ACT Matching Events • The work of CoPs such as GENERA or FORGEN show the importance of integrating the gender dimension • Suggestions: Being more proactive and using a bottom-up approach, by making alliances with the new generation entering university/ ECRs

Sustainability

The scaling-up activities have led to different impacts in regard to CoPs and beyond:

⇒ E-discussions

Platforms for exchange are a helpful tool not only to exchange knowledge and experiences but also to hear from other actors working on similar topics, as a fruitful base for new collaborations (e.g. on measuring and improving working conditions in research organizations). These collaborations can ensure the continued existence of CoPs but also of the work done in a specific field or on a specific topic.



⇒ Matching Events

This event series lead to new synergies between the CoPs and interested actors. In addition, the CoPs have been inspired by the presentations of the other CoPs but also by the presentations from invited speakers (e.g., [DORA](#)). Through promoting the CoP approach, the ACT CoPs not only gained visibility and expanded their reach but also new members and spin-offs (e.g. a new CoP). These aspects, in terms of sustainability, foster the positioning and establishment of the CoPs in the ERA. Furthermore, the events have inspired others to take action on ERA priorities, COVID-19 response, and the GEP requirement. The ACT CoPs promoted their value as well as the value of the CoP approach in these events, which was the basis for future collaborations and actions.

All in all, scaling-up has contributed to sustainability by promoting CoPs (to the next level) and ensuring their standing and establishment within the community.





PROJECT INFORMATION

<i>PROJECT NAME</i>	Communities of Practice for Accelerating Gender Equality and Institutional Change in Research and Innovation across Europe
<i>ACRONYM</i>	ACT
<i>COORDINATOR</i>	Dr. Jörg Müller, Fundació Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC), jmuller@uoc.edu
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<i>DURATION</i>	May 2018 - October 2021 (42 months)
<i>WEBSITE</i>	https://act-on-gender.eu/

