



ACTonGender Policy Brief

September 2021

Reflections on scaling-up Communities of Practice (CoPs) – draft version

In this Policy Brief we will address different aspects of scaling-up. 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 hereby will be on the [ACT Matching Events](#) in 2020, which were the biggest action on scaling-up and 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 scaling-up effects.

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 provide 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 a different scope, 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 topics in general, as well as in the ACT project, 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 extension of the boundaries expansions among CoPs as well as outside actors and institutions.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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 in the target audience might be interested in using this approach for GE activities.

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, which is 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 to that have the CoPs been inspired by the presentations of the other CoPs but also by the presentations from invited speakers (e.g., [DORA declaration](#)). Through promoting the CoP approach, the ACT CoPs not only gained visibility and expanded their reach but they also gained 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
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<i>CONSORTIUM</i>	Open University of Catalonia (Spain), Portia (United Kingdom), NOTUS (Spain), Joanneum Research Forschungsgesellschaft mbH (Austria), Advance HE (formerly Equality Challenge Unit) (United Kingdom), Loughborough University (United Kingdom), Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) (Argentina), Technical University Berlin (Germany), Karolinska Institute (Sweden), Science Foundation Ireland (Ireland), Federal Environmental Agency (Germany), Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (Germany), Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) (France), Fundació Centre de Regulació Genòmica (CRG) (Spain), Jagiellonian University (Poland), ZRC SAZU (Slovenia) and University of Iceland (Iceland)
<i>DURATION</i>	May 2018 - October 2021 (42 months)

