



ACT Matching Events

Summary report:

Plenary Session –

Gender Equality as eligibility criteria for Horizon Europe Funding

12th of October 2020

15:00-17:00 (Brussels time)

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Plenary Session – Agenda:

12th of October 2020

15:00-17:00 (Brussels time)

15:00-15:10	Welcome and Introduction – Jörg Müller (UOC)
15:10-15:30	<u>GEP as eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe funding.</u> Dr. Anne Pépin, Senior Policy Officer, European Commission
15:30-15:45	<u>Emerging insights regarding potential supporting measures.</u> Insights from ongoing consultation organized by the EC and the ACT project regarding possible support measures Dr. Jörg Müller, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
15:45-16:00	Q&A
16:00-16:20	<u>First insights from CASPER project regarding EU wide Award/Certification Scheme.</u> Results from the stakeholder consultation process regarding existing gender equality award and certification schemes in Europe. Dr. Anne Laure Humbert and Dr. Charoula Tzanakou, Oxford Brookes University, UK
16:20-16:30	Q&A
16:30-16:50	Risks, challenges and concerns Audience contribution regarding the analysis of challenges ahead and how these might be addressed by the EC but also new and forthcoming projects.
16:50-17:00	Summary and closing of session

Introduction

(Jörg Müller)

This session, that has been organised together with the European Commission, with 62 participants (including the speakers) started with a short introduction of the ACT Matching Events Series and the [ACT project](#) itself by the project coordinator Dr. Jörg Müller (UOC).

Reference is given to the other Matching Events that have been organised within the ACT project addressing the ERA priorities decision-making, gender dimension and careers. The ACT project is on Communities of Practice on Gender Equality in Europe.

This session specifically targeting GEPs as an eligibility criterion has been organised in order to introduce the most recent news in regard to this and to discuss the next steps.

GEP as eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe funding

(Anne Pépin)

Anne Pépin (Senior Policy Officer for the European Commission, DG Research and Innovation) talked about the developments in regard to GEPs as an eligibility criterion in order to receive funding in Horizon Europe. This session has been set up to learn and talk about the most recent news in this matter as well as to discuss the next steps.

Starting the presentation, Anne Pépin gave an overview over the latest developments on the policy side on GE in R&I and on the new eligibility criterion on GEPs.

Policy Context: New EC Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (released on 5 March 2020):
Communication on 'A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025':

- The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 is part of a wider approach on a 'Union of Equality', which entails strategies on anti-racism, LGBTQ+, among others. The strategy on Gender Equality was the first that has been launched in March.
- This strategy features R&I and Horizon Europe in particular with the possibility of requiring a GEP from applicants.
- Other actions are also being referred to, e.g. an initiative to increase the number of women-led technology start-ups as well as support and funding for gender and intersectional research, which is namely mentioned in the strategy.
- Focus on digitalisation and AI: Information on gender biases in Artificial Intelligence is also part of the strategy.

→ The emphasis will be on the possibility to require GEPs from applicants.

New European Research Area framework:



Until September 30th this year the applicable ERA framework came from the initial communication from 2012. On September 30th the Commission has adopted a new strategy: 'A new ERA for Research and Innovation', entailing a set of priorities, with a continuous and strong focus on gender equality, which is seen as vital to strengthen the European R&I

potential. The communication recognises that there are persisting gender inequalities in European R&I systems. These inequalities are very visible in the ERA progress report. It shows that there has been some progress across the member states but there still is heterogeneity between member states. SheFigures (2015-2018) show that there still is an underrepresentation of women in STEM fields and that only 24% of top academic positions in this field are occupied by women. Among patent holders, numbers are even lower (less than 10 %). There is a clear awareness about the importance of addressing gender-based violence and the level of integrating sex/ gender analysis in R&I content is still very low.

What's new in this ERA strategy? There is a need to open to other inclusiveness or diversity issues and to intersect social categories, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, age, social origin. Furthermore, it is important to look at inclusiveness within the innovation sector and even inclusiveness on a geographical level. There is one big action that is defined in the ERA communication: **'propose as of 2021, in line with the Horizon Europe programme objectives, the development of inclusive gender equality plans with Member States and stakeholders in order to promote the EU gender equality in R&I'** (new ERA communication). This is an umbrella action that opens the door to many actions that can be taken in particular supported through Horizon Europe.

Horizon 2020 – Science-with-and-for-Society Work Programme:

Overview over the Horizon 2020-SwafS Gender Projects, that have been funded until now (since 2014). The GEP projects, supported for the implementation of GEPs: GENERA; LIBRA, PLOTINA, SAGE, EQUAL-IST, Baltic Gender, TARGET, GEECCO, CHANGE, SUPERA, R-I PEERS, Gender-SMART, GEARING-ROLES, SPEAR, CALIPER, LeTSGEPs, EQUAL4EUROPE, TARGETED-MPI and GENDER STI (will be launched soon). Support actions and research projects that support the core strategy on the implementation of institutional change through GEPs. So, there is a lot of experience and good practices & tools that have been developed through these projects, some of them listed in the GEAR-tool, which is currently being updated.

Horizon Europe:

Supporting Actions that will be funded under Horizon Europe are located under the section 'Reforming and Enhancing the European R&I system, the programme part that is called 'Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area'. New is that there will be funding under the section 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society' for gender research and intersectional approaches in gender studies and the integration of the gender dimension will most likely become mandatory for all clusters unless it's justified that it is not relevant for a specific topic. By default, it will become obligatory to integrate sex and gender based analysis in content.

Legal basis: There is a specific article in the framework regulation (like for Horizon 2020):

Article 6a.5 (Principles of the Programme) of Framework Regulation sets the legal basis

"The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion of equal opportunities for all, and the implementation of gender mainstreaming, and of the gender dimension in the research and innovation content and shall aim to address the causes of gender imbalance. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring to the extent possible gender

balance, in evaluation panels and in other relevant advisory bodies such as boards and expert groups.”

Article 2 of Specific Programme sets gender as a cross-cutting priority

“The Specific Programme has the following operational objectives: (ca) strengthening the gender dimension across the Programme”

Article 4.3d of Specific Programme sets gender as a specific issue of the Strategic Plan

“Specific issues, such as (...) gender equality, including the integration of gender dimension in the R&I content;”

Article 2 defines gender as a cross-cutting priority and the need to strengthen the gender dimension across the programme and it's also something that needs to be addressed in the strategic plan, which is the document that lays out the directions/ the orientation for the first years of Horizon Europe. The next step then is the actual work programme, so the actual topics in the different programme parts (article 4.3d). Commission is now working on the programme for the years 2021, 2022.

Eligibility criterion:

- Will be required from public bodies, research organisations and higher education institutions
- These institutions need to have a GEP in place to have access to funding in Horizon Europe.
- It will be a gradual approach → Now: considering a grace period of one year and then in the next strategic plan maybe more organisations will be required to have a GEP in place.

Workshop on Fostering institutional change through GEPs and the way forward towards Horizon Europe:

To help EC to build this strategy and to ensure that this new provision is effectively implemented there has been a series of consultations with stakeholders, e.g. the Workshop on March 4th 2020. It has been discussed and agreed upon what could be considered as the building blocks of GEP, which areas need to be covered and that recruitment and career progression should be in GEPs as well as leadership and decision-making having a gender balance. Work-life-balance and organisational culture was very important, the integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content as well as addressing gender-based violence including sexual harassment. An essential aspect here was also that the GEPs are publicly available and endorsed by the highest level of the organisation. There need to be dedicated resources to implement it and that there would be data collection and monitoring (sex/gender based disaggregated data) as well as training on unconscious bias in particular. It was also agreed upon that there has to be a strong support package to help applicants to implement this criterion the best way possible and to be ready for this strategy to be implemented.

European Research & Innovation Days (September 22nd – 24th 2020):



- Co-design Session "Get ready: A new ERA for Equality is calling"
(22 September 17:00-18:00)
Recording available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meUy6VtQzXM>



The most recent information after the adopted ERA communication has been presented there including a specific session addressing gender equality: 'Get ready: A new ERA for Equality is calling'. The recording is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meUy6VtQzXM>

Commissioner Mariya Gabriel: 'Excellence and Inclusiveness are the two sides of the same coin.'

Key points:

- Strong support for Horizon Europe's strengthened approach for gender equality (including having a GEP as an eligibility criterion)
- There is a need for an intersectional approach in general to the gender equality policy but particularly into the integration of the gender dimension, so the intersectional sex and gender analysis and that the work that has been developed by the gendered innovation expert groups and the recommendations in there can be very helpful because there was a specific focus on intersectional analysis as well
- Horizon Europe need to support umbrella actions
- Key role of Member States in supporting national organisations
- Impact of Covid-19 on women researchers' careers needs to be better addressed

Poll (conducted during the session) results:

'Organisation I'm working for': Higher education establishment (31,3%), Research organisations (23,4%), Public bodies (15,6%), Private for -profit entities (12%), Others (10,9%) and Civil society organisations (5,2%).

'Does your employing organisation have a GEP?': Yes (55,8%), No (44,2%).

'Which of the following schemes are the most needed?' (in number of times the option was selected): Tailored training and capacity building (55), Advancement of knowledge policy and practice on gender equality and intersectionality in R&I (48), Support/mentorship schemes to less advanced organisations (47), Policy advice to Member States and Associated Countries

(35), Award schemes for organisations (25) and Specific actions for the innovation sectors (22).

Highlights from the Chat:

Next step: making all the EU-funded research content gender-sensitive with a justified opt-out system → which is being put into place now.

What is the time frame for GEPs as an eligibility criterion to be introduced? → 1-year transition period before this requirement becomes fully implemented.

Promote integration of intersectional sex-gender analysis into R&I content → has been heard by the EC and the gendered innovation report will help with that

SUPERA survey: preliminary results confirm a huge gender gap in the effect of COVID-19: Female faculty staff have had much harder times, more time on care and domestic tasks, but also on academic tasks, rather than writing papers and publishing.

Highlights from the Q&A:

Need to set criteria for the GEP, so that it won't be a box ticking exercise.

Need for capacity building: needed expertise is not 'just' on gender, but also to have the capacity to create change in a complex organisation.

What happens if a RPO has a GEP but there is no change or improvement or if a RPO doesn't have a GEP but shows improvement in gender equality → EC doesn't check the actual implementation or improvement in an institution but it's already a very strong political move to require that from all applicants to have a GEP. If an organisation shows improvement it's because they're putting in place some actions, it's not happening by itself, so in a way they have a plan.

There's a need to ensure gender balance in evaluation committees and among evaluators and that there have to be gender experts among evaluators.

Gendered Innovations Expert Group:

[Gendered Innovations report](#) with new case studies in different fields building on Horizon 2020 funded projects, with refined methodologies on the integration of sex/gender-based analysis, and intersectional analysis in R&I content and evidence-based policy recommendations for Horizon Europe as well as awareness raising materials will be released later in 2020.



Questions in the plenary session on October 12th 2020:

1. Reactions of Member states to GEP as eligibility criterion because it's unequally distributed, in eastern European countries the institutions almost never have GEPs: Discussion is still ongoing, not many member states are contesting it, accept it, mainly widening countries asked for transition period, they are asking who will check the plan, questions regarding to what the criterion will be applied (project or whole organisation). Overall, not a lot of contestation, some countries ask to open it up to diversity, ask for legal basis. This might change when the news is more widespread.

2. How is intersectionality and gender dimension will be balanced, how to keep the balance (1)? Will there be guidelines from the EC to Universities and organisations(2)?:
(1) Gender dimension hasn't been fully implemented yet and it might be too much to go to intersectionality now, but for the GEP requirement there is no intersectionality, it's not in the building blocks, it's in the new ERA strategy. Survey showed that this is really important and there needs to be done more in this area. (2) National Contact Points (NCPs) will be trained in regard to the new criterion, applicants need to fill out a questionnaire if they fulfil all aspects of the building blocks in the EC's participant portal. If they don't, they won't have access to funding. This will not be in place within the first year, this will be a process.
3. GEP as eligibility criterion great step, but in the end, you come up against the system, which is hypercompetitive. When looking for excellence people will be selected who can survive that system. A lot of people leave the system because they can't survive in this hypercompetitive environment. Research organisations can't change the system themselves, so we need the EC and national funders to think about what we value how we can an inclusive environment and how we can have excellent research in an environment that includes everybody. How could that be changed? It is arguable if we can get anywhere by only implementing GEPs (although it definitely is a step in the right direction): The idea of a GEP is to address the system. Covid-19 revealed that this is affecting gender equality, it is affecting women researchers more than men researchers, something definitely has to change in the system. The need for more drastic changes is premeating from what's happening now. Surveys on the impacts of Covid-19 in a couple all resulted in scenarios with worsened situations. The idea of the new ERA is promoting excellence and inclusiveness.

Emerging insights regarding potential supporting measures

(Jörg Müller)

The consultation on Support Measures is based on an online session organised by the EC on May 28th 2020 (follow-up to the session on March 4th) and an online survey organised by the EC and the ACT project from September 18th -30th 2020).

Results of the survey:

- Response rate: 62 responses.
- Socio-demographics: Academic/ Researcher (46.8%), Technician (16,1%), Administrative staff (14,5%), Other (5%) and N/A (14,5%).
- Country: Spain (54,8%), Austria (6,5%), Portugal (4,8%), UK (4,8%), Iceland (3,2%), Netherlands (3,2%), Denmark (3,2%), Hungary (1,6%), Ireland (1,6%), Norway (1,6%) N/A (14,5%) → Survey is therefore not at all representative.
- Disciplines: Biosciences (29,0%), Other (22,6%), Earth, marine and environmental sciences (17,7%), Sociology (9,7%), Business and management studies (6,5%), N/A (14,5%).
- Organisations: Research organisation (51,6%), Public body (12,9%), Higher education establishment (9,7%), Other (4,8%), Private for-profit entities (1,6%), N/A (19,4%).
- GEP in the employing organisation: Yes (37,1%), No (30,6%), I don't know (12,9%), N/A (19,4%).
- Employing organisation plans to design and implement a GEP: Yes (41,9%), No (16,1%), I don't know (16,1%), N/A (25,8%).
- The most needed support measures: Advancement of knowledge, policy and practice on gender equality and intersectionality in R&I (74%), Support or mentoring schemes to less advanced organisations (49%), Tailored training and capacity building (49%), Policy advice to Member States and Associated Countries (37%), Stronger partnership between research funding organisations (35%), Award schemes for organisations (21%), Specific actions for the innovation sector (21%). Award schemes in organisations seem to not be really popular, which is interesting.

About Support Measures



Which of the following schemes do you think are most needed to support the effective implementation of this eligibility criterion?

- Answers to open text questions:
 - Effective support measures on the organisational level (experiences): (1) Resources to do gender equality work (under-staffed and under-funded), (2) Training and capacity building (need for an established infrastructure for exchange of experiences, learning from each other, provision of training on all organisational levels...) and (3) Mechanisms of enforcement (award schemes, quotas, targets (should be linked to funding), legislation).
 - Effective support measures on the national level: (1) Training, awareness raising, capacity building (infrastructure to support research organisations and HE institutes guided by concrete standards provided by the EC), (2) Resources (funding and resources to have dedicated staff) and (3) Enforcement (Quotas linked to funding, legislation).

EC Workshop (May 28th 2020):

- Building Blocks as the basis for the guidance provided by the EC.
- Network of competence centres, especially at the national level, that can support the organisations in implementing meaningful GEPs.
- CoPs at the national level to facilitate the exchange of experience and best practice.
- Yearly conference to support the process.
- Award and certification scheme.

Division of contribution between the ongoing EU-projects:

- Genderaction: Awareness raising on the national level
- ACT: Setting up CoPs and exchange of knowledge and experience
- GE Academy: Training and capacity building, materials
- CASPER: Award and certification schemes based on existing schemes across Europe
- EIGE: Maintaining and updating GEAR tool

First insights from CASPER project regarding EU wide Award/ Certification Scheme (Anne Laure Humbert and Charoula Tzanakou)



Certification-Award Systems to Promote Gender Equality in Research

Dr Anne Laure Humbert
Dr Charoula Tzanakou

www.caspergender.eu #caspergender



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 872113

Gender Equality Policy landscape: Even after two+ decades of gender equality policy in R&I, there are still too few women in science and research decision-making, slow career progress and a lack of gender perspective in teaching and research content. The EC could be a 'catalyst for change' through GEPs as a mandatory precondition for Horizon Europe funding. It is important in regard to this GEP requirement to think about the meaningful implementation of GEPs and not just their development. CASPER project will be making recommendations that can go a long way towards ensuring this.

Overview over certification and accreditation systems (on the supranational level but predominantly on the national level): Athena SWAN, JUNO (disciplinary focus on Physics), Gender Equality Award in Norway, Total E-quality in Germany and many more.

The overall aim of the CASPER project is to examine the feasibility of establishing a European Award or certification system for gender equality in research organisations. Within the project alternative scenarios and options will be devised based on an assessment of existing relevant systems.

Key insights from the assessment of existing award and certification schemes:

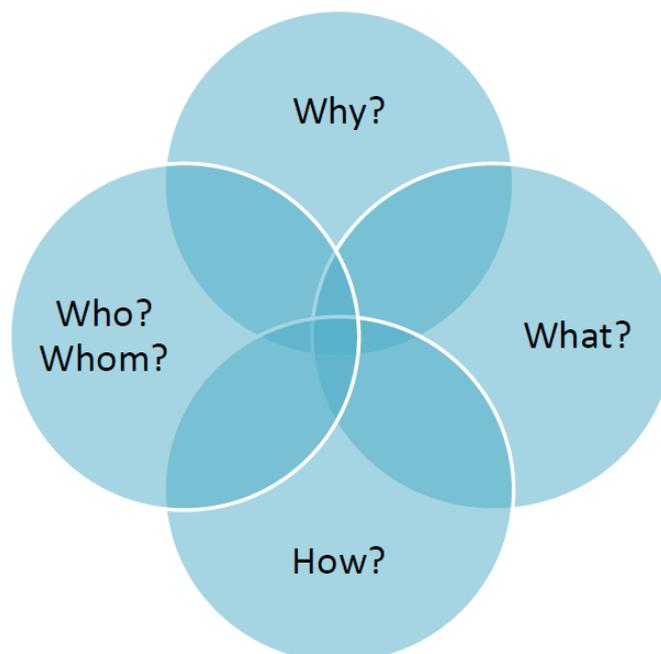
- Methodology: 67 interviews with 74 participants across Europe (and some stakeholders in Australia and the US) covering around 32 different certification and award schemes.

- Concern among stakeholders how certification schemes differ from award schemes: Certification schemes are setting an intention for improvement in advance, whereas awards are often focused on achievements in the past.
- Criticism toward the administrative burden of existing schemes. The criticism is directed at the administrative effort when writing a successful application and a GEP rather than at the implementation of the GEP and GE actions.
- Schemes need tailored support and guidance throughout the process.
- There are several enablers and drivers of certification and award schemes such as the wider national discourse about GE or linking them to legislation etc.
- Transparency in regard to evaluation criteria.
- Many schemes based on quantitative approaches, but more and more integrate a qualitative dimension as well.
- Impact mostly limited to raising awareness. Impact limited by the lack of resources.

Architecture of a Europe-wide scheme – Why, What, How, Who/Whom:



Architecture of a Europe-wide scheme



- Why would organisations engage: For international recognition, prestige, attractiveness, for access to incentives (funding, reducing workload) and for learning and support.
- What? The main debate was on if the schemes should focus on gender or if they should include a broader perspective. Most stakeholder prefer to certify processes rather than outputs, as outputs take time to become visible.
- How? Consensus among the stakeholders on providing support and feedback, having a timebound character and taking a progressive approach. Discussions emerged in regard to having harmonised schemes or schemes tailored to the geographical context,

if they should be mandatory or voluntary and if the assessment should be peer-reviewed or self-assessed.

- Who/Whom? Should all organisations be certified or only stakeholders in HE and research? Should an EU institution be responsible for certifying to provide more legitimacy? Who should bear the cost? If the applicants are paying themselves, they are more committed, if a third party pays, institutions with fewer resources can be included.

Based on those findings, three different award/certification scenarios will be designed and their feasibility will be assessed. In addition to that there will be a fourth no-action scenario.

The feasibility study showed that a Europe-wide scheme would be a complex undertaking but Stakeholder expressed the need of such a scheme on an EU-level. Existing schemes have been reviewed rather critical but the view towards the feasibility of a Europe wide scheme is rather positive and optimistic.



Q&A:

- How will the EC evaluate and monitor the GEPs (will it just be the questionnaire when applying for grants or will there be a follow-up?)? If an EU-wide certification scheme exists, then applicants would know that they need this certificate in order to apply for funding.
- Timeframe of the EU-wide certification schemes, to avoid redundancy after a couple of years. Knowing that this can happen in advance, should this still be started? There is the danger of reaching a plateau. If that happens, should there be another level of certification scheme? There is still a lot to be done, for example systemic issues, that the schemes are not addressing, so the danger of reaching a plateau soon is very small. If the scheme is able to be adapted to the evolution (e.g. like Athena Swan), then it won't come to the point of redundancy or a stagnation easily. If in 15 years it is redundant, then it can be stopped. The scheme is supposed to be a temporary measure, to make sure that change is happening. Redundance would then be even good news! Redundance more in a sense of saturation (because everyone is having the certificate) → not a sign of change, more a stamp on a website.
- Including the certification in academic rankings of HE institutions. Is there something planned in this direction (what parameters are included in assessing the quality of a University)? The definition of excellence, which is materialising the rankings does not necessarily represent good science in the way that it should be. Having a certification scheme on a European level could be an alternative voice to communicate what we value and what we want. Karolina: Why not communicate with the ranking institutions and ask them why they don't include GEPs as a parameter. Anne Pépin: SDG rankings? SDG5 as an instrument. Charoula Tzanakou: Most interviewees don't want to have the certification scheme combined with ranking and most interviewees didn't mention that. There is an award scheme in Spain that is linked to the SDGs.
- How would peer-review work in the European context, learning from UK, US, Canada, Australia and Thailand in the case of Athena Swan the legitimacy of these

schemes is ensured by the fact that GEPs are not reviewed by a central authority but by a peer-review panel. One way could be to have national agencies and contact points working along with experts in the field. But peer-review needs to be coordinate on a national level to some extent.

- Whether or not some assessors will require internal or external GE audit (prior elaborating a GEP). Self-assessment might be put in doubt by assessors. GEP can have different dimensions (e.g. including students), the 1-year transition period would not be enough when other dimensions would be included. Anne Laure: Do we just want to have box-ticking GEPs or do we want to have meaningful GEPs? The aim of CASPER is to provide solutions to make sure that GEPs are meaningful. CASPER will only make recommendations for the EC. Anne Pépin: EC will not be assessing the GEPs if organisations declare that they have them in place. There will be reviewer checks during the duration of the programme whether it's true that they're addressing the key building blocks and if the organisations have their GEP public and visible on their website endorsed by the highest authorities. That is the level of assessment that the Commission will have. If there is a certification scheme, then of course it will be different. Recommendations from the CASPER project will be very welcomed at the EC. The building blocks are concise there will be more information on what the different activities entail and there will be an explanation that gender-based violence can be in between students, faculty staff, faculty staff and students... There are basic components that a GEP should cover but the whole point is to tailor that to your institution and your national context
- How can the implementation of an EU-wide certification scheme be linked to the GEP criterion? How and if you foresee the implementation of such a scheme and how that could be linked to the eligibility criteria. It's a bit early to answer that. Can only be answered when the commission has the full assessment and the recommendations from the CASPER project but they consider it seriously and it could be funded under Horizon Europe.

Organising support in regard to the GEP requirement

How can such a support be organised? The EC is an important driver of this requirement and many countries will react to that, so an infrastructure needs to be put in place that supports the local actors and people working in research organisations and HE organisations specifically.

1) How do you develop standardised support infrastructure that responds to different national and policy context? National stakeholders need to implement it in their national context and need to respond to it, so they need to be fully clear about its implications. There are different award schemes in place in the Member States which are different from another. Standardising the requirements across Europe will be quite difficult. When organising the support, we face a similar problem.

Claartje Vinkenburg (Portia Ltd.): Netherlands perspective: GEP saturation rate is very low, few institutions have a formal GEP. Maybe we need a help desk or even a CoP for people who are the linking pin between the GE officer and the knowledge transfer or grant desk. It is more useful to have a contact at the institutional level rather than a national contact point because applications will be done on the institutional level, so they need to know what to do.

Anne Pépin: Having expertise at the national level and within institutions is really important which the EC will support and to have that within institutions and make the link between the GE office or even gender researchers and people in charge of EU affairs/ grants this makes a lot of sense. In Swafs work program there has been an amendment to have a knowledge and support facility to prepare for the implementation of the GEP eligibility criterion. Participant's question: Does this address singular institutions or consortia or networks? This is of interest because it is important to have a network of experts from various European countries including widening countries because implementation of GE measures depends on knowing the local context. Anne Pépin's response: The pilot in the amendment of Swafs programme the scheme is a framework contract, so it can only be organisations (consortia) that have signed a framework contract with the commission already. The EC aims at including widening countries represented there. Feedback on what is needed is very much welcome.

2) How do you scale support? It might be feasible to set up a National contact point specifically for the GEP requirement, supporting research organisations, but what happens if the person is overwhelmed by the demand? How will the support be scaled up to the different demands?

3) What role do you foresee for an award/ certification scheme in this overall framework?

Participant's comment Support infrastructure often depends on the size of the country. In regard to the certification scheme: Applying for certification takes time and money, so a unified certification system would be helpful. And a national contact point is very important! Reply by Anne Pépin: CASPER can tell which existing schemes on a national level can qualify as an equivalent to the GEP requirement. So, some awards can be used as an equivalent and these institutions don't have to prove again that they have a GEP in place.

Anne-Sophie Godfroy (CNRS): In France: All institutions need to have a gender action plan in place before December 31st 2020. If not, there is a financial penalty. Requirements are in line with European requirements. CoPs are a good place to implement action plans. Response by Anne Pépin: What France is putting in place is a great example. The EC aims at finding equivalence between the different schemes. If the HRS4R is strengthened with respect to gender equality, it could be some kind of equivalent.