



Systemic  
Action *for*  
Gender  
Equality



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# **GENDER EQUALITY PLANS (GEP) IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

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The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, under Grant Agreement no. 710534.

<b>Call identifier:</b>	<b>H2020-GERI-2015-1</b>
<b>Type of Action:</b>	<b>Coordination and Support Action (CSA)</b>
<b>Project n<sup>o</sup>:</b>	<b>710534</b>
<b>Project Acronym:</b>	<b>SAGE</b>
<b>Project title:</b>	<b>Systemic Action for Gender Equality</b>
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<b>Start Date of Project:</b>	<b>01/09/2016</b>
<b>Duration of Project:</b>	<b>36 Months</b>
<b>Website:</b>	<b><u><a href="http://www.sage-growingequality.eu">www.sage-growingequality.eu</a></u></b>

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Work Package: 3 – Mentor-Led Construction of GEPs

**Deliverable 3.1**

**Gender Equality Action Plans,  
Implementation Guidelines.**

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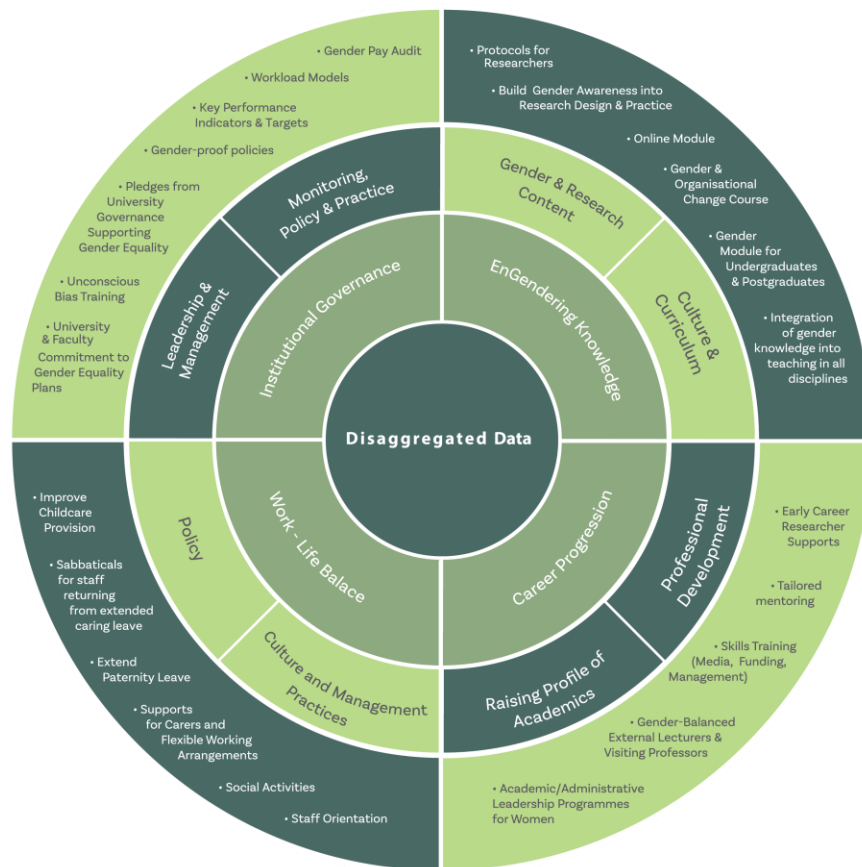
# 1. Introduction and General Guidelines

The objective of Work Package 3 is to ensure institutional buy-in to tailored GEPs. This requires consultation in the Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) construction phase for localised and coordinated action plans.

The first stage has been for mentor institutions (TCD and QUB) to formulate and agree a GEP template for 'newbie' institutions and, following testing, provide a blueprint for post-SAGE project RPOs to follow. This template draws upon the analysis and findings of the data collection and audits to inform and guide the construction of localised Gender Equality Plans that include: success criteria; timescale; and responsible person(s)/body.

The SAGE Wheel Model for Gender Equality Plans provides the concept and template from which specific and tailored GEPs can be produced, following the necessary and in-depth data collection and analysis which has formed the first phase of SAGE activity. The SAGE Wheel is the starting point, which is transformed by each university into a practical, detailed plan with measurable outcomes, specific timelines and responsible actors.

**SAGE Wheel**



The SAGE goal is to promote GEPs, particularly in Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and Research Funding Organisation (RFOs) that do not yet have them. The GEPs will incorporate ambitious, realistic and achievable goals, drawing upon the experience of SAGE partners and from experience at EU and abroad, matched with a detailed awareness of the situation at local/national level.

GEP design builds on the experience of the SAGE coordinator, TCD, in the FP7 INTEGER Project, as well as learning from other FP7 projects involving institutional transformation for gender equality, Athena SWAN Charter principles and practices and international good practice, including NSF ADVANCE in the United States.

At this stage, implementing partners have engaged in drafting GEPs tailored to their own institutions to ensure that each can implement their GEPs in a way that works within their institutional context, optimises time/energy and minimises any risks of low compliance, while aiming to increase the benefits from the GEPs.

This guide aims at helping partners to plan and manage their GEP implementation projects to realize increased gender equality and minimize organisational and compliance problems associated with the implementation of the GEP.

As such, this guide is developed as part of the Mentor-Led Construction of GEPs (WP3) – and will primarily be used by partners during the Implementation phase (WP4) which begins towards the end of the GEP construction phase (with some overlap, to allow for continued adjustments to the GEPs as they are implemented).

The component actions of the GEPs will incorporate gender in:

- Policies, Procedures and Practices
- Decision-making and Leadership;
- Core Values and Respect

This will be done along four main Key themes (represented in the four quadrants of the SAGE Wheel):

- Engendering Knowledge
- Career progression
- Work Life balance
- Institutional governance

The GEP implementation phases include each of the following steps, to be addressed by all implementing partners in the SAGE project, and are recommended to anyone embarking upon institutional transformation for gender equality:

- Identification of negotiation strategies within relevant offices of partners' Universities
- Detailed and localised GEP specifications, including scope, activities, milestones, and resources involved
- Risk assessment and risk mitigation plan
- Establishment of GEPs Core Implementation Team (M7-8)
- Establish defined GEP processes, including workflows, improvements, and changes
- Define roles and responsibilities in GEP implementation
- Formal presentation of GEPs to the senior decision-makers in each partner organization

## 2. Implementation Strategy: Ensuring Sustainability

Building a structure for implementation of GEPs will help to ensure that they continue to be enacted beyond the short term, which is particularly important in the context of structural change for gender equality – by its nature a long-term process.

This section outlines some key considerations and strategies for developing a sustainable structure within an institution.

### Context

In order to ensure that GEP implementation is conducted in a sustainable manner, which is essential to achieving lasting advancements in gender equality, it is vital that the approach taken is responsive to the specific cultural and structural conditions within the operating environment. Where possible, GEP actions and themes should be aligned with institutional strategic plans and policies, and national and relevant EU policies.

### Shared Learning

There is a considerable wealth of information and learning now available to institutions newly embarking on this process from those that have already undertaken such efforts. Similarly several previous EU gender equality and structural change have produced valuable resources which can inform current and future work. Good practices can be drawn from these and adapted to the needs of each institution.

### Composition of Implementation Teams

An implementation team will drive the application of the GEP, setting targets, monitoring progress, and ensuring engagement and support from key stakeholders. It is thus important that the members of the team be representative of the institution/department/unit which it represents. It is furthermore critical that the team contain individuals with the capacity to ensure successful implementation, e.g. through their role within the institution (hence the need to engage critical actors in this process).

Implementation teams should strive for gender-balance, and should comprise a mix of academic and professional staff, as well as of senior and junior grades (though this may be more appropriate for departmental or local implementation teams). Teams should have a Champion who will act as they key driver.

### Set Priorities and Build Momentum

Once established, the implementation teams should begin working with/on the GEPs, and identify priority, achievable actions to target at the outset. This step helps build momentum by delivering 'quick wins' early on in order to demonstrate success and generate support for further action. Realistic targets should be set for short, medium and longer term actions.



### 3. Overcoming Barriers and Engaging Key Stakeholders

It is to be expected that efforts to orchestrate significant change will be met with at least some resistance. This resistance can take many forms and come from an array of quarters. Therefore when designing gender equality initiatives and GEPs it is important to anticipate barriers and plan strategies to overcome them. This section outlines some approaches which might prove useful.

#### Evidence based approach

A fundamental tool in persuading any stakeholders, particularly those for whom achieving gender equality is not a primary agenda, is therefore ensuring that actions are data-driven, and that this can be clearly demonstrated. Reliable, gender-disaggregated databases are not only fundamental to the task of gender equality planning, but also as a persuasive tool for engaging stakeholders and validating the argument for support of gender equality initiatives. This will feed into the decision-making process.

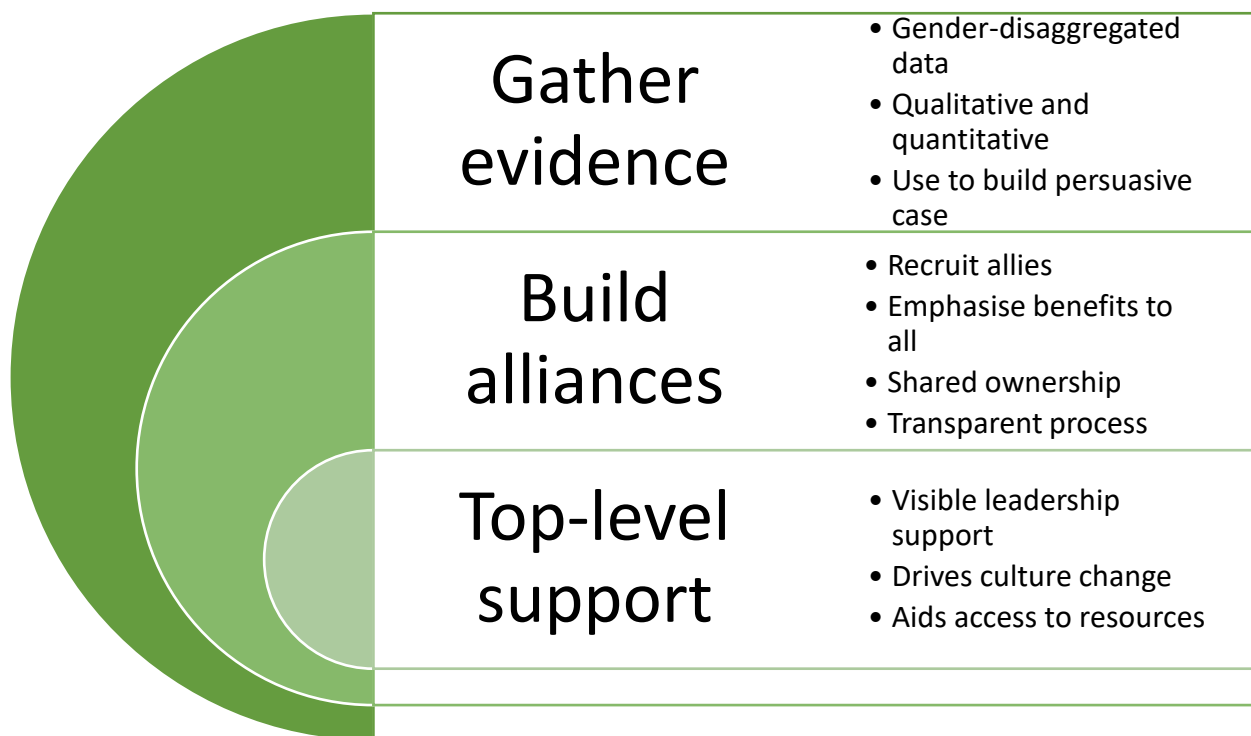
#### Build alliances

Support can and should be sought from a variety of quarters, both inside and outside of the institution. An inclusive and transparent process is more likely to gain additional support, engage more people and reduce resistance, while having a greater number of individuals and offices involved in the efforts creates more ownership, increases commitment and helps ensure sustainability.



### Support of senior management

Support from the leadership figures of the institution is critical, and will be essential to ensure necessary changes can be implemented. This support needs to be visible. It will therefore help to set the tone for how others in the institution respond, thus paving the way for easier adoption of new measures. Arranging for the head of the institution to speak publicly (e.g. via videos, interviews, statements, etc.) about the institutional commitment to gender equality sends a powerful message. Ultimately, support from senior leadership will also be required to access the necessary financial resources to implement identified actions.

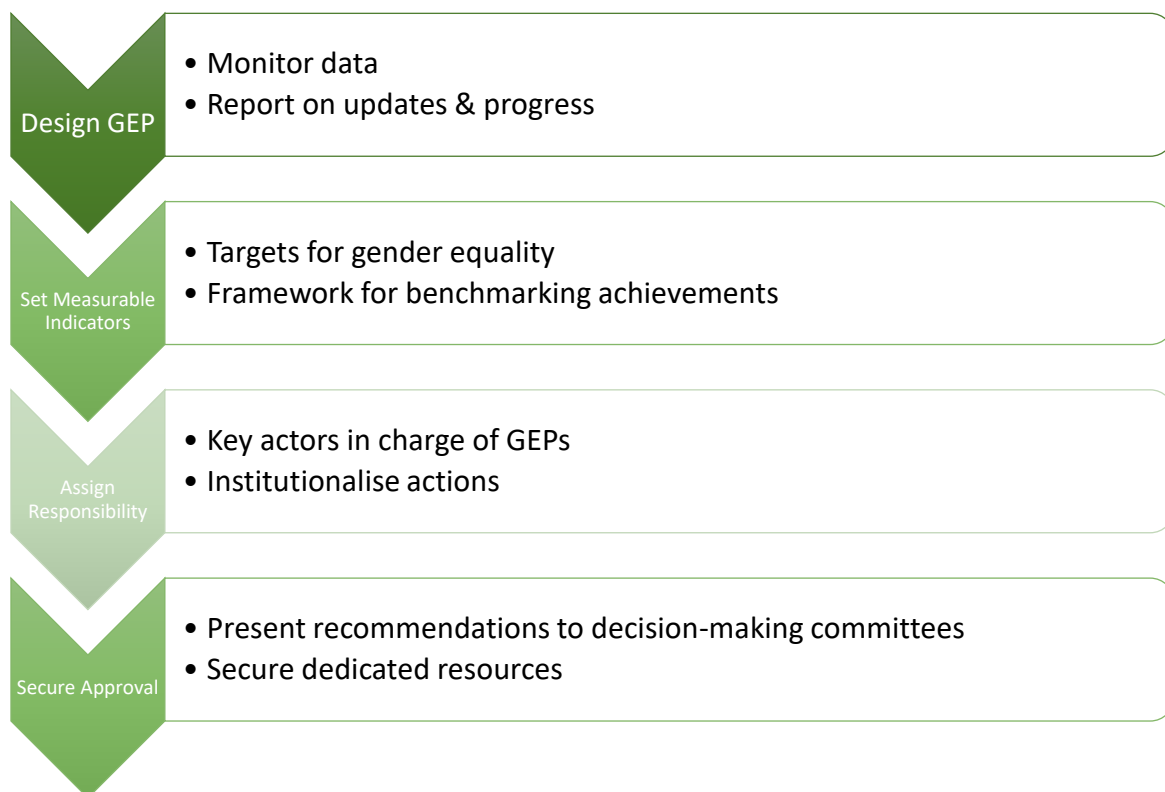


## 4. Adoption and integration of GEPs

Following the initial design of a GEP, and the early pilot implementation phase, attention must turn to sustainability and formal adoption within the institution. Having a well-designed and data-driven GEP will greatly assist this. For SAGE GEPs, designed within the context of a time-specific project, a challenge remains to ensure that gender equality work can continue beyond the lifespan of the project, and once the project funding is no longer available.

Therefore when designing the GEPs, responsibility for individual actions should be carefully assigned to key actors or offices that will continue to oversee them into the future.

A formal process of validation of the GEPs should be enacted, via presentation to, and endorsement by, key institutional committees (e.g. Human Resources, Finance, Governing Committees).



## 5. Support for Implementing GEPs - Template

A copy of the template is reproduced in the Appendix to this document, below.

When filling in the template it is important to remember that:

- More than one action may be required to address an identified issue, therefore lines can be added
- Responsibility should be clearly assigned to a named individual (or at least function)
- Measures of success need to be clearly defined
- Assessment of impact is meant to describe change due to actions taken
- The two columns to the right are very important: “problems encountered during implementation” and “strategies to solve them”.

## 6. Further reading

GEP are currently implemented in numerous organisations all over Europe. Resources to help organisations in supporting GEPs are available on the Internet and on the Online Library in our website: <http://www.sage-growingequality.eu>. They may be precious for organisations not yet expert in the field.

We recommend in particular:

- The GEAR action toolbox can be read or downloaded at the [SAGE website](http://www.sage-growingequality.eu) and at <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>. The tool is provided by EIGE, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality.
- The Study: Gender Equality Plans in the private and public sectors in the European Union, released in March 2017 for the DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES, POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIR. This research paper was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. The study aims to map existing Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in the public and private sectors in the EU Member States, as far as data are available. It aims to analyse how GEPs have both impacted and are impacting the economic situation of women in the EU, analyses national legislation and collective agreements in connection with GEPs, analyses the impact of the crisis and subsequent austerity on GEPs. It can also be reached in the online library at the [SAGE Website](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583139/IPOL_STU(2017)583139_EN.pdf) and at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583139/IPOL\\_STU\(2017\)583139\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583139/IPOL_STU(2017)583139_EN.pdf)



8	Career progression	Professional development	Tailored mentoring								
9	Career progression	Professional development	Skills Training (Media, Funding, Management)								
10	Career progression	Raising profile of academics	Gender-Balanced External Lecturers & Visiting Professors								
11	Career progression	Raising profile of academics	Academic/Administrative Leadership Programmes for Women								
12	Work-Life Balance	Culture & Management Practices	Staff Orientation								
13	Work-Life Balance	Culture & Management Practices	Social Activities								
14	Work-Life Balance	Culture & Management Practices	Supports for Carers and Flexible Working Arrangements								
15	Work-Life Balance	Policy	Extend Paternity Leave								
16	Work-Life Balance	Policy	Sabbaticals for staff returning from extended caring leave								

17	Work-Life Balance	Policy	Improve Childcare Provision								
18	Institutional Governance	Leadership & Management	University & Faculty Commitment to Gender Equality Plans								
19	Institutional Governance	Leadership & Management	Unconscious Bias Training								
20	Institutional Governance	Leadership & Management	Pledges from University Governance Supporting Gender Equality								
21	Institutional Governance	Monitoring, Policy & Practice	Gender-proof policies								
22	Institutional Governance	Monitoring, Policy & Practice	Key Performance Indicators & Targets								
23	Institutional Governance	Monitoring, Policy & Practice	Workload Models								
24	Institutional Governance	Monitoring, Policy & Practice	Gender Pay Audit								