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RFOs as change agents and learning organisations for gender equality

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Formal policies related to grant allocation (WP5)

- The aim of WP5:
 - to provide the contextual background for the study of how policies are being implemented and practiced in grant allocation processes
- Objectives:
 - Map national research funding landscapes
 - Map regulations and policies and especially gender equality policies
 - Assess the potential of specific policies to promote gender fair grant allocation
 - Identify factors which may lead to gender bias
→ perform a gender bias risk analysis



Driving change towards gender equality in the research funding landscape

- Policy development globally, regionally, nationally, organisationally
- EU - gender and science policy
- Important **change drivers**:
 - Gender equality and equality understood as an **important quality aspect** in research
 - **Research intensive** national contexts and **overall societal emphasis** on gender equality
 - **Cross-national collaborations** between funders, e.g., Global Research Council, *Gender-Net Plus Consortium* etc.



RFOs as change agents for gender equality and diversity



Contributing to change in research funding and beyond:

- Early and long tradition of working on gender equality promotion (Austria, Sweden)
- Recent rapid advancement on gender equality promotion (Ireland)
- Emerging engagement (Poland, Slovak Republic)



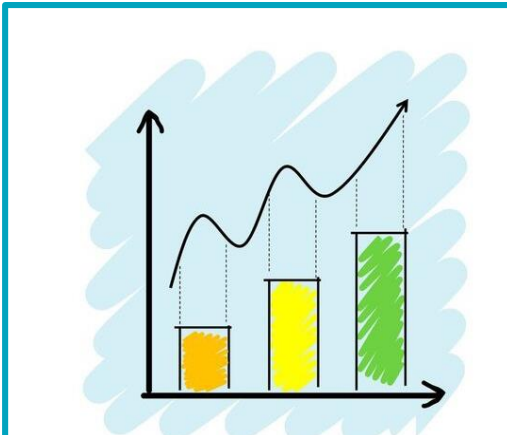
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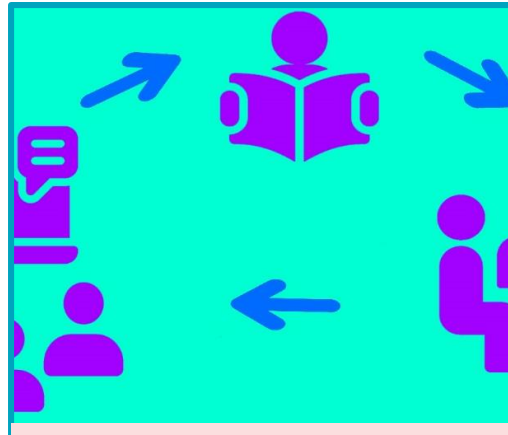
RFOs policies addressing gender equality on three levels

Fixing the numbers



- More female applicants
- More female reviewers
- More gender balanced panels
- More female grantees (quota)
- Re-ranking applicants
- Making mentoring plan a mandatory element of the application

Fixing the organisation



- Detailed guidelines for panels
- Replacing national reviewers by international
- Limiting panels' responsibility to assess the quality of reviewers
- Gender observers
- Observation studies
- Assessing Narrative CVs

Fixing the knowledge



- Limited number of publications reported
- No metrics (e.g., signing DORA)
- Narrative CV
- Gender-in-research-and-innovation (GiRI)



RFOs as learning organisations on gender equality and diversity

- To optimize the assessment process, RFOs **continuously develop** and implement new policies/strategies/measures - and monitor and evaluate them
 - Learning from each other
 - RFOs with emerging GE policies learn from experiences of advanced RFOs
- Developing their **awareness** and understanding of gender equality
 - Co-producing knowledge and participating in research projects
- **Knowledge production on gender equality:**
 - GE observation reports in panels (SRC)
 - Extensive analysis of funding outcomes (FWF)
 - First Polish survey on GE in research (NCN)



Gender bias risk – no quick fix!

- **Policy silence around gender** a significant risk – not addressing and not monitoring
- **Seven risk areas identified**
 - Strategy
 - Structure
 - Communication and Language
 - Criteria (Evaluation, Eligibility)
 - Transparency
 - Accountability
 - Monitoring

STRATEGY
RFO has no GE strategy
GE aims and goals vague and/or general
RFO has no operational GE action plan
Accountability of GE actions within RFO not defined
STRUCTURE
Funding process vaguely structured
Decision-making bodies not gender balanced
Panels/reviewers not gender balanced
No active search for female panellists/reviewers
COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE
GE policy not visible on the RFO website
Call texts language not gender sensitive
Call texts do not mention GE policy
Gender stereotypes in visual material on web & call doc.
CRITERIA (Evaluation, Eligibility)
Evaluation criteria & their weight not clearly defined
Ambiguous criteria included
Eligibility criteria do not take into account parental leave
Biological age used instead of academic age
Gender dimension in research content not addressed
Guidelines for panellists/ reviewers do not address GE and unconscious bias
No GE training for panellists and/or reviewers

Risk areas for gender bias in the funding process



Remaining challenges

- Central-Eastern European Countries – still emerging approach to gender equality (Poland, Slovak Republic)
- Binary approach to gender predominant
- Intersectional approaches to gender equality only emerging
- Diversity and inclusion not (yet) strongly included in policy focus
- Understanding gender dimension in research content – implementation and evaluation in progress
- Tension between gender sensitivity vs. gender neutrality in implementation of advanced policies
- Transferring policies into practice...

→ WP6



Thank you!

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