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First validation of scenarios with key stakeholders

Synthetic descriptions of the concept scenarios



Concept scenario 2/Gender Equality Strategy for Researchers (GES4R) as a sister scheme to the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

STRATEGIC CHOICE BEHIND SCENARIO SETUP

This concept scenario builds on an already well-known European scheme (the HRS4R) and integrates it with a separate but connected GECAS devoted to gender equality. It would still be possible to apply to HRS4R without also applying for the GES4R, as this would represent a complementary scheme. The rationale of this scenario resides in its very practical nature, that acknowledges that many institutions throughout Europe are currently engaged with the HRS4R, and a connected scheme focused on gender-equality would be more attractive for many, in so far as some basic operational mechanisms remain the same. It was the opinion of most participants in interviews and co-creation activities that it would be very difficult to expand the HRS4R to include gender equality to a satisfying extent. Instead, creating a new scheme sharing some basic setup options with the HRS4R, which would make it easy to combine them, was considered a reasonable balance of change-oriented goals and practical ones. It could be an accessible choice for less experienced institutions and countries, and could also help to keep resistances and backlash at a manageable level.

On the other hand, the link with the HRS4R setup, while potentially increasing attractiveness and feasibility, may also limit the scope of change, and special efforts would be needed to avoid “Tick the boxes” exercises (that is, aiming for mostly formal, on-paper achievements).

This concept scenario covers all four mandatory GEP (Gender Equality Plan) building blocks requested to access funding under Horizon Europe, as well as all five recommended content areas (find them here: [Gender Equality Plans as an Eligibility Criterion in Horizon Europe](#)). However, its typical focus on Human Resources could make the area of the integration of gender dimension in research more difficult to practically implement.

MAIN FEATURES

This concept scenario shares some basic features of the HRS4R scheme, even though, differently from this, it would adopt an **intersectional perspective**. Besides, it shares with Scenario 3 the choice of an **assessment process combining self-assessment and peer review**, but other features are exclusive (with respect to the other two concept-scenarios). The following can be set out (for the full list of the features, see the reading materials sent along with the questionnaire):

- It foresees a simple pass/fail assessment instead of different levels of achievement
- It is only applicable at the level of the whole institution
- It focuses on process and policy (not outcome) of GEP implementation
- Support would be provided, as in the HRS4R, by national authorities through the Euraxess network, envisaging that Euraxess members are linked to gender experts in each country.



ARCHITECTURE

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

What

Major adaptation to present scheme



Recognition award

(endorse EU charter for researchers + Code of conduct for recruitment of researchers of the EC)

Change:

A separate charter should be developed to include non-academic staff and students.

GEP process building blocks need to be incorporated. This is feasible but needs adaptations to be adequately covered. Two building blocks would be covered together with HRS4R:

Public Commitment of Institution

Dedicated resources

Two building blocks would be covered through GES4R as specific modules:

Data collection and monitoring (gap analysis to cover GE)

Capacity building (training & development part specifically on GE)

Content needs to cover the following recommended areas:

Gender equality in recruitment and selection

GBV can be incorporated in ethical/professional conduct code

Organizational culture

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Gender in research content and teaching

GE and non-discrimination are included as in HRS4R - **intersectionality would be integrated in GES4R**

To stay in line with HRS4R both Process and Policy are considered - **not outcomes**

How



Validity for 3 years, renewable

Renewal is based on absence of regression. If there is no change compared to the 3 years before, the award stands. Progression beyond compliance/award is not incentivised.

Combination of self-assessment and peer review

Self-assessment is done coordinated by the HR department, but with input from gender experts (internal or external).

Harmonised approach to cover the whole EU

Voluntary scheme

Static

The recommended areas and the criteria for awarding are not renewed.

How levels



Candidacy

A score based on intention (gap analysis), areas of action.

Application

A go/no go score on action plan towards institutional change (with direct link to the GEP incorporated).

Who



Higher education institutions and RPOs from the EU and associated countries.

This scheme would apply to the whole institution, not a department or faculty. GES4R is always linked to HRS4R. An institution can get HRS4R award and not the GES4R.

Having an option to have a specific award/certificate for RPOs seems too far away from HRS4R and GES4R to be considered feasible.

Certification authority



Newly established GES4R commission/panels with GE experts that would complement the existing HRS4R panels.

Role of national authorities



National authorities have the same role to play in the scheme, its promotion or to organize support as it is today through the Euraxess network. Euraxess members would be linked with gender experts in each country.

Synergies with existing initiatives



No specific synergies. GES4R is expected to better cover the specific GE dimensions for RPOs than existing national and international schemes.

Award (Prize)



Works as an award scheme.

Roll-out options



European wide roll-out.