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**First validation of scenarios with key stakeholders**

Synthetic descriptions of the concept scenarios



## Concept scenario 3/Europeanisation of a national GECAS - Athena SWAN

### STRATEGIC CHOICE BEHIND SCENARIO SETUP

This concept scenario explores how the well-known Athena SWAN scheme could be adapted to become a Europe-wide scheme. The reason behind this proposal is that Athena SWAN represents one of the most advanced experiences at the international level, with high levels of participation and an extremely rich set of resources, tools, and materials, as well as a continuously growing capital of experience. Moreover, and because of its success, Athena SWAN is already in the process of internationalisation, with new countries adopting it. This concept scenario integrates both ambitious objectives and practical solutions, based on its extensive implementation.

On the other hand, participants in interviews and co-creation activities have also frequently highlighted – besides the many advantages – the risk that a scheme very specifically tailored on the characteristics and features of the Anglo-Saxon higher education and research system (which is also the area of its greatest expansion) might be more limited in terms feasibility, effectiveness and acceptability in different national contexts. In addition, its ambitious setup is likely to trigger resistances and backlash in specific national contexts, as well as make it less accessible for some countries in terms of resources (financial, human, expertise-related).

This concept scenario would cover, with minor adaptations, all the four mandatory GEP (Gender Equality Plan) building blocks requested to access funding under Horizon Europe, but – currently – only four of the five recommended content areas (find them here: [Gender Equality Plans as an Eligibility Criterion in Horizon Europe](#)). Covering at least three areas – as the minimum requirement to apply for funds – will lead to a basic-level certification. The missing area is the integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching content, and the scheme would need to be modified to include it.

### MAIN FEATURES

Among the most significant features of this concept scenario (for the full list, please check the reading materials sent along with the questionnaire), its focus on **both process and outcome** in the implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) can be singled out, as well as its **participatory approach** to GEP design and implementation, with representation of all levels and categories of staff, the (recently introduced) adoption of the **intersectional perspective**, broadening the set of potential inequality grounds that are actively addressed, the possibility to apply at the level of **the whole organisation and/or at Department/Faculty** level. The **assessment process** is accomplished through self-assessment and external assessment, the latter from peer-review panels

A set of **features are unique to this concept scenario**, as compared to the other two:

- It predefines three levels of progressive achievement (bronze, silver, gold)
- It foresees that support is mostly provided to applicants by national-level structures to be created ad-hoc, with the support of the European Commission.



ARCHITECTURE

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

**What**



**Certification scheme with adherence to a charter.**

There is a link to GEP through the coverage of building blocks and recommended areas. Having the certificate is a proof of compliance with eligibility criterion:

GEP process building blocks need to be present:

- ✓ Public Commitment of Institution
- ✓ Dedicated resources
- ✓ Sex disaggregated data collection and monitoring
- ✓ Capacity building

Content needs to cover at least 3 of the following recommended areas:

- WLB and organisational culture
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- Integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching content (adaptation will be needed)
- GBV and sexual harassment

Both process and outputs are considered.

Gender+ approach used (need for adaptation)

**How**



✓ Validity for 3-4 years, renewable

✓ Voluntary scheme

**OPTION A**  
Peer review panels (AS)

**How levels**



Three levels (As in **AS UK**)

**Bronze:**  
Recognise that the institution has a solid foundation for eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff.

**Silver:**  
Recognise a significant record of activity and achievement by the institution in promoting gender equality and in addressing challenges across different disciplines. Applications should focus on what has improved since the Bronze institutional award application, how the institution has built on the achievements of award-winning departments, and what the institution is doing to help individual departments to apply for Athena SWAN awards.

**Gold:**  
Institutions should be beacons of achievement in gender equality and should champion and promote good practice in the wider community. A Gold institution award recognises a significant and sustained record of activity and achievement by the institution in addressing challenges across the full range of the institution and promoting gender equality within and beyond the institution.

**Who**



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

Departments and faculties can apply as can the whole institution.

**Certification authority**



**Independent scheme organiser having a license agreement with Athena SWAN.**

**Role of national authorities**



**Organize support structure for applicants at national level.**

**Award (Prize)**



**None**

**Roll-out options**



Start with Bronze and Silver in all the EU and associated countries.

Extension to more countries and to private sector after X years.

Advanced level would be proposed from X years after the first intermediate certificates would be used.