



European Research Council
Scientific Council

Established by the European Commission

ERC Scientific Council Gender equality plan 2014 – 2020

ERC gender policy and objectives

The promotion of gender equality in research and innovation is a commitment, enshrined in the core documents establishing Horizon 2020¹ with the following gender-relevant objectives identified:

- Gender balance in research teams;
- Gender balance in decision-making;
- Integrating gender/sex analysis in research and innovation content.

The ERC's view is that women and men are equally able to perform excellent frontier research. Moreover, the ERC aims at taking into account and confronting structural gender differences, so that it can fulfil its mission to support excellent frontier researchers across Europe, irrespective of nationality, gender or age.

Therefore, the *ERC Scientific Council's Gender Balance Working Group*² established the ERC gender equality plan 2014-2020³, with the following objectives:

- i) To continue raising awareness about the ERC gender policy among potential applicants;
- ii) To improve the gender balance among researchers submitting ERC proposals in all research fields and within the ERC teams;
- iii) To continue identifying and removing any potential gender bias in the ERC evaluation procedure;
- iv) To continue monitoring possible differences in gender specific careers and academic posts, following the ERC grants;
- v) To embed gender awareness within all levels of the ERC processes- from creating awareness about the ERC to grant signing- while keeping the focus on excellence.
- vi) To strive for gender balance among the ERC peer reviewers and other relevant decision making bodies, aiming at a minimum participation of the underrepresented gender while taking into account the situation in the field of the action. Also, the proportional representation of genders should be at least equal to that of the applications by the underrepresented sex in the Advanced grants in the same area, aiming at the level of 40% in the future;

¹ REGULATION (EU) No 1291/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC - ERC is part of the Excellence pillar.

² The Gender Balance Working Group is a permanent structure under the ERC Scientific Council. It was created in July 2008 to monitor gender equality throughout the entire ERC process.

³ The ERC Gender Equality Plan 2014-2020 is a continuation of the ERC Gender Equality Plan 2007-2014.

Implementation of ERC Scientific Council gender equality plan

The subsequent sections list actions to advance the ERC towards its gender objectives.

Awareness and submission rates

Submission patterns of women and men will be continuously monitored. Measures will be taken to increase the awareness about the ERC among top-researchers of underrepresented gender and encourage them to apply for ERC grants. The ERC will also create a broad awareness about its gender equality work and strategy.

Steps to achieve objectives:

- Publish the ERC gender equality plan on the web.
- Continue monitoring submission rates of women and men by country, research domain and panel.
- Continue taking active part in gender equality networks and workshops.
- Continue making targeted visits to scientific meetings and workshops addressing gender topics, to inform about open ERC calls. Also promoting the importance of taking into consideration gender differences from the earliest stages of the research project.
- Continue including gender statistics and ERC's work to achieve gender balance in all general presentations on the ERC.
- Continue including successful grantees of both genders as role models in communication activities, such as brochures, posters, videos etc.

Evaluation processes and granting

A gender fair evaluation process is essential to the ERC, ensuring that the best researchers get funded irrespective of if they are women or men. Any potential sources of gender bias in the evaluation process will be challenged together with and at the level of the review panels. A substantial part of the ERC grants will support post-doc and PhD-students, thus training of future generations of researchers. This wider impact of the ERC grants should also be enclosed in the gender statistics.

Steps to achieve objectives:

- Continue ensuring eligibility and evaluation criteria are designed to encompass the situation of both women and men in research.
- Continue monitoring success rates and granted amounts for women and men and publish gender statistics from ERC evaluations in long term time series and by ERC domain. In particular, *submission rates* and *requested amounts* should be compared to *granting rates* and *granted amounts* for women and men respectively.
- Sensitise ERCEA staff and ERC panel members to *gender balance*.
- Raise gender awareness during briefings of the ERC panel chairs and at the beginning of the evaluation panel meetings.
- Include reference to the ERC Scientific Council gender equality plan in the ERC Guide for peer reviewers.

- Continue collecting and analysing gender data on PhD students, post docs and any other researchers funded through ERC grants.
- Address gender-related topics during visits to Principal Investigators in the course of their project.
- Address gender-related topics during visits to Host Institutions (e.g. child care, moving with a family etc). Highlight good practice and ‘role model’ host institutions.
- Analyse long term effects of the ERC presence and practice on gender structures in research careers and academic posts.

Gender balance among ERC peer reviewers

The ERC peer reviewers are panel members (including panel chairs) and external referees (who can be remote or members of other panels). The medium term goal is to achieve gender balance in each ERC evaluation panel as well as among the panel chairs. This may take time, and will also depend on the overall gender balance in particular research fields. In a first step, the ERC will aim at a better gender proportionality in each ERC evaluation panel as compared to that panel's relevant scientific communities.

Steps to achieve objectives:

- Set up panel specific goals for gender balance, based on information from relevant scientific communities and/or the ERC pool of applicants⁴.
- Monitor the gender balance of each ERC panel. If the panel specific goal has not been reached this should be reported, together with an analysis on how the situation can be improved.

⁴ The pool of ERC applicants may not necessarily reflect the actual proportionalities of women and men in each and every scientific community; however it yields panel specific reference points.