

How to address gender equality in Horizon 2020: the applicant's perspective

Gender equality concerns **all parts** of Horizon 2020. When drafting your proposal, you need to pay attention to gender equality from different angles, in terms of:

1. *Human resources*: balance and equal opportunities between women and men in the research teams who will implement your project
2. *Content*: analysing and taking into account the possible differences between men and women, boys and girls, or males and females, in the research and innovation content of your project.

1. Gender balance in research teams at all levels

When **applying** for a grant under Horizon 2020, you are encouraged to promote gender balance and ensure equal opportunities at all levels in your teams and in management structures. Applicants should seek at having a balanced participation, as close as possible to 50/50, of both men and women in the teams and among the leading roles.

At the **evaluation stage**, gender balance in staff responsible for carrying out the project, is the final ranking factor when prioritising the proposals above the threshold with same scores. When it is used, evaluators need to compare the proportions of men and women in the personnel named in the proposals (in Part B, section 4.1, of the proposal template) and they will rank higher the proposal with the proportion closer to 50/50.

[More on the use of gender balance as a ranking factor \(see General Annex H of the Work Programme\)](#)

2. Integrating the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation

When **applying** for a grant under Horizon 2020, you are invited to explore whether and how the gender dimension is relevant to your research. In the proposal template (section 1.3), you are asked to “, describe, where relevant, how sex and/or gender analysis is taken into account in the project's content”.

The way sex and/or gender analysis is taken into account in your proposal will be **assessed by the evaluators** alongside the other relevant aspects of the proposal. This is even essential for proposals submitted to a topic where gender-related issues are explicitly mentioned in the topic text.

[All H2020 research topics with an explicit gender dimension](#)

Why is it important to take the gender dimension into account?

Integrating the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation is an added value in terms of excellence, creativity, and business opportunities. It helps researchers question gender norms and stereotypes, to rethink standards and reference models. It leads to an in-depth understanding of both genders' needs, behaviours and attitudes. It enhances the societal relevance of the knowledge, technologies and innovations produced. It also contributes to the production of goods and services better suited to potential markets.

What does it mean?

To integrate the gender dimension in research and innovation content means taking into account the biological characteristics of both females and males and the evolving social and cultural features of both women and men, girls and boys.

The gender dimension invites researchers to conduct sex and gender analysis in the research process, when developing concepts and theories, formulating research questions, collecting and analysing data and using the analytical tools that are specific to each scientific area. Depending on the field of research, an analysis of gender, sex or both is needed.

Gender is a key analytical and explanatory variable in research. It refers to cultural values and social attitudes that together shape and sanction "feminine" and "masculine" behaviours, and also affect products, technologies, environments, and knowledge. Gender assumptions often go unquestioned and can unconsciously influence scientific priorities, research questions, and choice of methods.

Sex refers to biological characteristics of women and men, boys and girls, in terms of reproductive organs and functions based on chromosomal complement and physiology. As such, sex is globally understood as the classification of living beings as male and female, and intersexed. Sex differences relevant to the research and innovation should be investigated and addressed.

How can you integrate the gender dimension in your proposal?

- Determine the relevance of integrating sex and gender analysis in your research. Are there any sex differences that should be investigated and addressed? Have you questioned the gender assumptions that can influence your scientific priorities, research questions, and methods? Do you expect that your research findings affect differently male and females, women and men, girls and boys?
- Use [checklists](#) as provided for example by the Gendered Innovations project
- Refer to existing evidence
- If more knowledge on gender dimension needs to be generated, include *specific studies on gender* in your activities. They are eligible costs! 
- Engage scientists with gender expertise among your key research staff. You can also include *trainings on gender dimension* in your proposal, as eligible costs, in order to help researchers develop and share gender expertise in relation to your project. 

Links:

[Gendered Innovations project](#)

[Gender toolkit](#)

For further information or questions please contact RTD-GENDERINRESEARCH@ec.europa.eu