



Deliverable D1.2

Gender & ethical requirements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Deliverable D1.2 is to provide gender and ethical issues guidelines including reference to GDPR provisions, in compliance with EU and Horizon Europe regulations and strategies, with specific reference to the Research Area. This concerns the work done in the Work Package 1 Coordination and management and all project activities and content delivery process.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Consortium Agreement
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GER	Gender and Ethical Requirements
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
R&I	Research and Innovation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
WP	Work Package



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Gender

Gender equality is a core EU value and gender mainstreaming a core EU strategy. Despite the efforts of the European Union in recent decades on the adoption of legislation on equal treatment, gender mainstreaming and specific measures for the promotion of women, the gender gap remains significant and women are still over-represented in the labour market in the lowest paid sectors and levels, while they are underrepresented in decision-making and leadership positions.

These are the key objectives of the European **Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025**:

- ending gender-based violence,
- challenging gender stereotypes,
- closing gender gaps in the labour market,
- achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy,
- addressing the gender pay and pension gaps,
- closing the gender care gap ,
- achieving gender balance in decision making and in policy.

Referring to the gender in research, the **2021 Declaration of Ljubljana on Gender Equality in R&I** reaffirms the commitment of the Member States and the European Commission to the implementation of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the new ERA and outlines priority areas to be addressed to foster an inclusive ERA for all.

The priority areas are the following:

- Ensure fair, open, inclusive and gender equal career paths in research, and consider intersectional perspectives on gender inequalities;
- Facilitate mutual learning opportunities through form-follows-function robust governance;
- Employ existing and newly developed tools, such as Gender Equality Plans, to facilitate systemic institutional change and remove institutional barriers;
- Address and counteract gender-based violence;
- Support active monitoring and evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- Leverage synergies to enhance gender equality achievements within the ERA, but also within complementary fields such as the European Higher Education Area,



Cohesion policy funds, innovation ecosystems, as well as in international cooperation.

- Underpinning the above priorities and activities, fully acknowledge gender mainstreaming as a horizontal principle.

As the **ERA Progress Report 2018 and latest *She Figures*** clearly show, there are still persisting gender inequalities in the R&I system across Europe, and a gap still exists between the adoption of policies and strategies at EU and national level and their implementation at institutional level.

Reporting from the **Overview of actions of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024** Action 5 “PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND FOSTER INCLUSIVENESS, TAKING NOTE OF THE LJUBLJANA DECLARATION”, concrete actions that can lead to reduce the gaps are:

- ensure that women and men receive equal pay for the same work or for work of equal value;
- put the European Union's rules on work-life balance into practice for working women and men by ensuring that Member States transpose and implement the rules;
- promote equal use of family leave and agreements on flexibility;
- improve the balance between women and men in decision-making positions, including on Boards of Directors and corporate management bodies and in politics;
- address the digital gender gap with reference to the updated Digital Education Action Plan.

In particular, there is a need to better address gender-based violence in academic settings and to open gender equality policies to inclusiveness and intersections with other diversity categories and potential grounds for discrimination, such as ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

Horizon Europe is therefore strengthening gender equality provisions, and sets the requirement to have in place a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) as an eligibility criterion for funding, for all public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments from Member States and Associated Countries.

As for the ERA_FABRIC project, all the partners meet the criteria of the obligation to have a GEP declared that they have one, therefore they undertake to comply with it within the



project, taking also the opportunity for continuous improvement. The other partners are however required to comply with the requirements established by the project and where possible to work towards the adoption of their own GEP.

1.2 Ethics

Ethics is given a high priority in EU funded research and activities carried out under Horizon Europe must comply with ethical principles and relevant national, EU and international legislation, such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights.

The **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity** lays out reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability as fundamental principles of research integrity. “Good research practices are based on fundamental principles of research integrity. They guide researchers in their work as well as in their engagement with the practical, ethical and intellectual challenges inherent in research. These principles are:

- reliability in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, the methodology, the analysis and the use of resources;
- honesty in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way;
- respect for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment;
- accountability for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.

1.3 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the law on privacy and security, based on regulation no. 679/2016 entered into force on May 25, 2018 concerning the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. GDPR defines personal data as any information which is related to an identified or identifiable natural person. This means any information that would individually or collectively allow to identify someone directly or indirectly - a name, address or location data, identification number, commercial identity, IP address, etc. - are personal



data. Any personal data being lost, stolen or changed can be considered as non-compliance.

Failure to follow GDPR guidelines comes with hefty financial penalties and can put at risk future grants and EU funding. GDPR requires not to store or transfer data through countries outside the European Economic Area that do not have equivalently strong data protection standards.



2. Gender requirements in ERA_FABRIC

ERA_FABRIC acknowledges that pursuant to the Grant Agreement the beneficiaries must carry out the action in compliance with Annex 5 specific rules Article14 “Values” Gender mainstreaming: “The beneficiaries must take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action and, where applicable, in line with the gender equality plan. They must aim, to the extent possible, at a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including at supervisory and managerial level”.

Moreover, in accordance with EU’s Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 of the European Commission, SDG#5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” and with the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 actions, ERA_FABRIC aims at integrating the gender dimension into its global approach and content delivery process.

Therefore, sex and gender aspects are considered in all research and innovation phases:

- identification of a problem
- design of a solution
- implementation
- data collection and analysis
- communication and dissemination
- monitoring and evaluation.

ERA_FABRIC puts special emphasis on the role of gender regarding the economic, environmental, social, ethical, technical and financial perspectives of societies in order to explore whether and how the ERA Hub model may affect or concern women and men differently.

Activities are carried out through a balanced mix between female and male researchers as well as representatives from partners. Special attention has to be paid during the implementation of WP2 (ERA Hubs as Knowledge Ecosystems) and WP3 (ERA Hubs as Multi- Stakeholder Platforms) to the involvement of all genders in the thematic working groups (WP3) and in the survey activities (WP2).

Based on individual responses and preferences, ERA_FABRIC aims also at investigating what gender norms, relations, or identities are relevant to the specific policies and instruments identified within WP4 (ERA Hubs as a transformative set of measures and



Tools) and highlights social and behavioural patterns, barriers and drivers for all genders in the forthcoming ERA Hub movement.

Evidence-based analyses on gender-related peculiarities and conclusions for the relative importance and social acceptance of proposed tools to all genders are part of the dissemination activities included in WP7 (Communication, Dissemination and Public Engagement) as well as of the management activities.

Concerning the dissemination of ERA_FABRIC results, special attention is dedicated to:

- a) reporting sample characteristics by gender, sex, and relevant intersecting variables and how information on gender identity was obtained, by avoiding over emphasising gender differences;
- b) disaggregating reported results by sex and gender and reporting all results: positive and negative;
- c) ensuring that gender variations are properly reported in tables, figures, and conclusions;
- d) referring to SAGER publication guidelines Implementation and checklist (EASE, 2016)

WP1(Coordination and Management) is built upon the integration of the gender dimension in the execution of the project in order to ensure gender balance in research and decision-making towards the implementation of the activities, evaluation panels and other relevant advisory boards/groups of experts and foster women's empowerment according to Horizon Europe Requirements. Therefore, the gender dimension is covered in the periodic plans and reports produced by all WPs.

As stated in the CA Article 6.6 the External Advisory Board (EAB), appointed and steered by the Steering Committee, is composed of up to 5 experts in compliance with gender equality criteria.

The following table outlines the gender requirements by WP, indicating partners involved and reference persons.



Table 1 - ERA_FABRIC gender requirements crossing in WPs and partners responsibilities

<i>Gender Requirements</i>	<i>WP</i>	<i>Involved Partners</i>	<i>Reference person</i>
Gender Balance in partners staff and Governance structures	1	ALL	Partners' project coordinators
External Advisory Board appointed in compliance with gender equality criteria and committed to paying attention to the gender dimension in research activities	1	ART-ER	Maria Grazia Zucchini
Risk assessment and mitigation measures related to gender balance, neutrality	1	UNIST	Petra Jelic
Gender equality compliance supervision, monitoring and evaluation (including KPIs and metrics)	1-5	ART-ER MU	Maria Grazia Zucchini Blanka Bilíková
Gender attention towards stakeholders/Gender dimension in Survey	2	CNR TTP	Andrea Filippetti Lars Reyes-Gjølme
Thematic working groups gender dimension and balance in participation	3	UNIST ADRVN ECOPLUS	Petra Jelic Ioana Pavel Simone Hagenauer
Investigate what gender norms, relations, or identities are relevant to the specific policies and instruments and highlight social and behavioural patterns, barriers and drivers for all genders in the forthcoming ERA Hub movement.	4	EURECAT	Lluís Viñé
Model sustainability and policy recommendations including gender dimension	6	INESC TEC ART-ER	Ricardo Miguéis Maria Grazia Zucchini
Gender dimension, neutrality against stereotypes in communication and dissemination activities (key messages, images, photos, videos, brand, web and social communication)	7	WUT	Krzysztof Mieszkowski



3. ERA_FABRIC Compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations (GDPR)

3.1 Ethical principles

ERA_FABRIC acknowledges that pursuant to the Grant Agreement (Article 14 — ETHICS AND VALUES 14.1 Ethics and Annex 5 specific rules), the project partners must carry out the action in compliance with:

- a) ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity as set out, for instance, in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and including, in particular, avoiding fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other research misconduct);
- b) applicable international, EU and national law.

3.2 Ethical dimension of the objectives, methodology and likely impact and GDPR compliance

On a general level, the project doesn't raise any ethically sensitive issue.

The handling of personal data is limited to 4 cases:

- 1) softly identifying the respondents to the online stakeholders' survey described in WP2;
- 2) softly identifying the participants in the discussions within the thematic working groups described in WP3 and WP4;
- 3) interacting with the partners and external third parties in the context of the data collection exercise for monitoring and evaluation purposes described in WP5;
- 4) interacting with stakeholders in the context of the project's communication and dissemination activities of WP7, including the creation of a web platform and social media groups.

In all the above cases, informed consent forms are prepared and withdrawn from all natural persons keeping the collection and storage of personal data at minimum. No sensitive data have to be collected and no personal data used for commercial purposes.



Regarding the web platform and the possibility of having some users registered therein, the only requirement is a valid email address for security purposes.

Compliance with GDPR will be ensured at all times.

In the above cases labelled as 1) and 3) the survey's prior information notice documents compliance and defines the perimeter and rationale of data collection in full.

In the case labelled as 2) the participants are natural persons belonging to the respective regional innovation systems of the partners and their contributions to the debates are public and do not even require anonymization/pseudo-anonymization.

In the case labelled as 4) there are indeed security reasons suggesting to store the email addresses of registered users but the requirement of identification will be stopped at the level of an email address.

The following table outlines the project activities dealing with personal data with evidence to WP, responsible partner and GDPR compliance.

Table 2 - ERA_FABRIC project activities dealing with personal data, responsibilities and tool/procedure

Activity dealing with personal data	WP	Responsible partner	GDPR compliance
EU-wide online stakeholders' survey on the characteristics of knowledge ecosystems (target > 100)	2	TTP	Informed consent sheet on data processing
Identifying the participants in the discussions within the thematic working groups described	3-4	UNIST	Public debate and contributions, release in case of publication of photos, videos or other materials on the web and social networks. More information in the Communication and dissemination plan (WP7)/IPR rules
Interacting with the partners and external third parties in the context of the data collection exercise for monitoring and evaluation purpose	5	MU	Informed consent sheet on data processing



Activity dealing with personal data	WP	Responsible partner	GDPR compliance
Interacting with stakeholders in the context of the project's communication and dissemination activities of WP7, including the creation of a web platform and social media groups.	7	WUT	Identification limited to e-mail address. Release and consent to the publication and transmission of images, videos and contents. More information in the communication and dissemination plan (WP7)/IPR rules

3.3 Data Processing

ERA_FABRIC acknowledges that pursuant to the Grant Agreement (Article 15.2 “Data processing by the beneficiaries”), Partners must process personal data in compliance with the applicable EU, international and national law on data protection (in particular, Regulation 2016/679).

They must ensure that personal data are:

- processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subjects;
- collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes;
- adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
- kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the data is processed and processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the data.

Partners may grant their personnel access to personal data only if it is strictly necessary for implementing, managing and monitoring the project. Partners must ensure that the personnel is under a confidentiality obligation.

Moreover, pursuant the Consortium Agreement Article 4.4 “Specific responsibilities regarding data protection”, Partners where necessary *shall cooperate in order to enable one another to fulfil legal obligations arising under applicable data protection laws (the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on*



the free movement of such data and relevant national data protection law applicable to said Party) within the scope of the performance and administration of the Project. In particular, Partners shall, where necessary, conclude a separate data processing, data sharing and/or joint controller agreement before any data processing or data sharing takes place.

Additional provisions and requirements are defined in the Data Management Plan (WP1 - Deliverable D1.3) including Informed consent sheet on data processing.

3.3.1 Personal Data Protection Compliance

3.3.1.1 Privacy accountability

The partition of the activities envisaged in the various WPs must be considered as a starting point from a GDPR perspective. In this regard, the close relationship between the processing of personal data related to the aforementioned activities and the related responsibilities, in terms of compliance with the legislation on the protection of personal data, assumes critical relevance.

Therefore, the partners establish that each WP Leader is controller pursuant art. 4 n. 7 of the GDPR with reference to the processing of personal data related to the WP they are responsible for. In fact, the responsibility each WP Leader holds over the assigned WP requires the said WP Leader to define the most effective organisational and technological measures to protect the rights and freedoms of the interested parties. Additionally, each Partner holds responsibility over the identification of the legal bases relevant to the data processing which is carried out within their own organisation. In fact, given the different legal status of the consortium partners, it would be unfeasible to define a "homogeneous" legal basis for the processing of data across WPs and Partners.

3.3.1.2 Sharing of the collected data with the Project Partners

When the Partners collect personal data, they acquire the consent from the data subjects for sharing the same data with the Project Partners.

The activities carried out within this project are all aimed at homogeneously raising awareness and giving the widest possible dissemination and therefore to obtain a solid community of interest among Quadruple Helix stakeholders.

The personal data provided, which do not fall within those indicated in Articles 9 and 10 of the GDPR, are treated exclusively in compliance with the above. And it is for this reason



that a single consent for the sharing of data between the project partners is considered in line with the GDPR.

3.3.1.3 Personal data collection through forms and Privacy Notices

Whenever a personal data is collected through a form on ERA_FABRIC website (directly accessible or linked in a webpage), the data subject must agree with the storage and processing of their personal data in accordance with the ERA_FABRIC Privacy Policy and must provide therein their consent to their personal data processing for the purposes and terms indicated in the linked Privacy Notice provided by the member of the ERA_FABRIC Consortium responsible for that specific data processing.



4. Monitoring and evaluation

ERA_FABRIC includes a Work package WP5 - Monitoring, evaluation and standards, dedicated to carry out a systematic monitoring and assessment of project activities, results and impacts.

Gender and ethical requirements have to be included in KPIs and metrics and therefore monitored and assessed.

Refer to: **D5.1 - Monitoring and Evaluation methodology**.

5. Communication

Inclusion and equal opportunities also pass through the use of language and internal and external communication that pays attention to gender differences, representing people and social and work roles in a plural and non-stereotyped way. Public communication plays a fundamental role in promoting cultural changes and in contrasting discrimination and gender stereotypes.

The communication and dissemination plan shall include as objective the awareness of the importance of a spoken, written and visual language suitable for the ethical objectives of communication.

ERA_FABRIC, pursuant to the European Parliament Guidelines “GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE in the European Parliament” acknowledges that *gender-neutral language is a generic term covering the use of non-sexist language, inclusive language or gender-fair language. The purpose of gender-neutral language is to avoid word choices which may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory or demeaning by implying that one sex or social gender is the norm. Using gender-fair and inclusive language also helps reduce gender stereotyping, promotes social change and contributes to achieving gender equality.*

Considering English as a common project language, ERA_FABRIC also adopts the United Nations “Guidelines for gender-inclusive language in English”.

Refer to: **D7.1 Communication and dissemination plan** that will include also indications about release and consent to the publication and transmission of images, videos and contents



6. References

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