



## **Novel Strategies to Fight Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Crimes and Protect their Victims**

**H2020 – 101021801**

[www.heroes-fct.eu](http://www.heroes-fct.eu)

### **D1.6 Gender Action Plan**

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<b>Abstract (for dissemination)</b>	
This deliverable includes an analysis of the gender dimension within the consortium and a list of actions to be implemented to improve gender equality	
<b>Keywords</b>	Equality, gender action plan, gender balance, gender dimension, HEROES, H2020.

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## Executive summary

This deliverable describes the actions carried out under task T1.6 - "Gender dimension plan" – part of Work Package 1 "Project management and coordination".

The purpose of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) is to address the requirements for Gender Equality in Horizon 2020. Gender is a cross-cutting issue in Horizon 2020 and is enshrined in the core documents that established Horizon 2020. Also, alongside the European strategy for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human beings, HEROES recognises gender as a critical dimension for THB, CSA/CSE and for how society can prevent, investigate these crimes, and support and protect victims, including using technology. In this way, this deliverable provides guidelines to address and prevent potential gender biases that could occur within the HEROES in all gender sensitive activities. Besides, HEROES will encourage two approaches:

- Gender balance in research teams at all levels and in activities carried out during the whole project cycle.
- Gender balance in decision-making, allowing opinions, positions, and views to be equally represented in the project's decision-making and scientific work.

This Gender Action Plan should ensure that the needs of people of all gender identities that may suffer from discrimination are considered when developing solutions and interacting with citizens or any other HEROES activities. A secondary objective is to support capacity building of consortium members on gender mainstreaming and gender equality, so that the guidelines presented in this document are adopted by the widest possible audience.

The report discusses the relevance and applicability of the requirements for Gender Equality in Horizon 2020 to HEROES, and sets out the measures to address these requirements, in a Gender Action Plan for HEROES project. This Plan consists of a detailed gender-neutral work plan of the participants involved in HEROES and measures to identify and monitor the gender balance in it.

In addition, this document reiterates the recognition of the importance of gender aspects in HEROES and the commitment given at the outset of the project to respect this issue and endeavour to address this as far as possible.

It is appropriate to clarify why reference is made throughout the document to the GEP and not to the GAP. Experts point out that in practice the GAP has become delinked from the goal of gender equality and the policy frameworks that underpin it, leading to its side-lining (or neglect) by senior management [O'Connell, 2013]. In order to overcome the challenges identified and to enhance the opportunities to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming in a transversal way, it was considered appropriate to undertake this task as GEP following the instructions of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

## Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence.
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
CSA/CSE	Child Sexual Abuse/Child Sexual Exploitation.
CSAM/CSEM	Child Sexual Abuse Material/Child Sexual Exploitation Material.
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council.
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality.
GA	Grant Agreement.
GAP	Gender Action Plan.
GEP	Gender Equality Plan.
KEQs	Key evaluation questions.
R&D	Research and Development.
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal.
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time related.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
WP	Work Package.



## Definitions and Concepts

**Sex:** Is a set of biological and physiological characteristics that generally define human beings as female and male. These characteristics are not mutually exclusive as there are people who possess both.

**Gender:** Is a social and cultural construct associated with being ‘female’ and ‘male’. Gender does not necessarily correspond to sex, nor falls within its binary. On the contrary, gender can be fluid, meaning that gender can change over time and people might experiment, switch, and/or choose amongst divergent gender preferences and identities, including feminine, masculine, queer, bi-gendered, and transgendered desires, clothing, and body parts.

**Gender Equality:** Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities between women and men. Gender equality is a core value of the EU, a fundamental right<sup>1</sup> and key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>2</sup>.

**Gender Mainstreaming:** Is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that the systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations, and needs of women, men and non-binary people are central to all policies and action, including research.

**Gender dimension in research:** Means integrating gender analysis into all phases, from the design of research, its priorities, objectives, and methodology, to data gathering, analysing results and evaluation.

**Gender-sensitive research:** Considers the differences between women, men, and non-binary people in all aspects of the research. Apart from integrating gender into the content, gender-sensitive approach strive to provide equal participation in decision-making and at all levels of the research team, that is scientific work.

**Gender-blind and gender-biased research:** Refers to research that does not consider the gender dimension as a significant category for addressing and interpreting research problems.

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<sup>1</sup> See Articles 2 and 3(3) TEU, Articles 8, 10, 19 and 157 TFEU and Articles 21 and 23 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/social-summit-european-pillar-social-rights-booklet\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/social-summit-european-pillar-social-rights-booklet_en.pdf).

# 1. Introduction

Gender mainstreaming was established as a major global strategy for the promotion of gender quality and the empowerment of women and girls on the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 [United Nations, 2002]. The ECOSOC agreed conclusions (1997/2) defines gender mainstreaming as:

*“...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally an inequality is not perpetuated. The goal is to achieve gender equality.”*

Although research has been typically regarded as a male domain, a shift of perspective has later occurred. In particular, in the European Union, gender equality in research has been addressed since 1999 through the establishment of the Helsinki Group and the first Communication on Women and Science (European Commission 1999). And right now, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) gender is a cross-cutting issue, ensuring a more integrated approach to research and innovation.

Gender equality in research plays a pivotal role in the HEROES project for three reasons

First, Trafficking in Human Beings is a highly gendered domain, and vulnerability, experiences of and consequences for victims vary greatly by gender. Trafficking is therefore gender specific, harms from trafficking are gender specific (e.g. differ between sexual exploitation or labour exploitation); identification of victims needs to take account of this gender specificity; specialised service provision needs to be gender specific and take into account intersection with other forms of disadvantage and vulnerability [Walby et al, 2016]. *“Women and girls are overwhelmingly (96%) the victims of trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation and the majority (75%) of victims of trafficking for all purposes, while being 26% of those trafficked for labour exploitation and 52% of those trafficked for other forms of exploitation”*, according to data for 2012 from Eurostat.

Second, policing is also strongly affected by gender differences. Europol recognises the importance of gender diversity for effectiveness, analytic capacity, and performance of the law-enforcement [Europol 2013].

And third, both Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital forensics suffer from the same gender-related recruitment pipeline, career progression, and retention issues as related STEM disciplines [Wagstaff et al 2018] [Crawford, 2019].

Algorithmic detection methods can be exposed to numerous forms of gender. Nonetheless, because risks, vulnerabilities, and needs which are shaped by gender often vary drastically for different groups, it is essential to adopt an intersectional approach, where gender is not separated from other factors, such as ethnicity and age. For CSAM/CSEM detection, databases of missing and abused children disproportionately contain images of white children; non-white children are statistically less likely to be reported as missing or have extensive case files of data. The result is forensics tools less accurate at detecting non-white children [Mitali, 2018].

This potential bias also applies to offender recognition efforts. If certain groups are less accurately detectable, more indistinguishable, and more likely to generate false positives, offender recognition in child abuse cases can also be biased [Bernstein, 2007].

While some recent studies sought to remove bias from learned algorithms, they largely ignore decades of research on how gender is deeply embedded in language. Awareness of this research and incorporating it into approaches to ML from text would help prevent the generation of biased algorithms [Leavy, 2018].

Abusive language detection models tend to have a problem of being biased toward identity words of a certain group of people because of imbalanced training datasets [Park, 2018]. The gender dimension will be examined during the whole cycle of the HEROES project.

According to Article 33.1 Obligation to aim for gender equality of the Grant Agreement, which states that “*The beneficiaries must take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action. They must aim, to the extent possible, for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including at supervisory and managerial level.*”

HEROES consortium is fully committed to the Article to the Article 33.1 of the Grant Agreement (GA) and consequently, commitment to gender equality is a priority for the HEROES project. For this reason, and the others explained previously, it has been decided to develop a Gender Equality Plan (GEP). The objective is to incorporate the gender perspective in a transversal way through action axes according to the identified needs and supervising the development of the project.

## 2. Gender Equality Background Framework

With Horizon Europe, the European Commission reaffirms its commitment to gender equality in research and innovation. An eligibility criterion guaranteeing gender equality in research projects is to have a Gender Equality Plan (GEP).

In designing a Gender Equality Plan, attention should be paid to gender equality from different angles in terms of human resources and research content. In addition, the Gender Equality Plan should be a guide to provide hands-on guidance on the correct incorporation of gender perspective in a transversal way during fieldwork, analysis, and presentation of results.

This Gender Equality Plan is deeply rooted in a common understanding of the human rights of young women and girls, as well as gender equality in research at the international level, European Union, and national level of each of the HEROES partner countries.

The European Commission's 2018 Report on Gender Equality established that: "*Gender equality concerns us all. It is a fundamental right as well as an internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goal*". Exactly Goals N° 5 is Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The commitment of institutions to promote gender equality is crystallized in main global standards shown in Table 1 [OHCHR, 2021][UN Women, 2021].

Table 1: Main global standards for gender equality

Year	Standard
1945	United Nations Charter
1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1951	Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others
1954	Convention on the Political Rights of Women
1962	Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages
1965	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
1966	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
1966	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
1974	Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict
1979	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
1993	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW)
1993	Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA)
1993	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
1995	Beijing Platforms for Action
1995	World Program of Action for Youth (WPAY)
2000	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organize Crime
2001	Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA)
2011	Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

This GEP is aimed at mainstreaming gender equality in the HEROES project. However, each of its partners must act in accordance with national legislation referring to gender equality. Table 2 shows a list of the Constitutional provision of 17 member countries of the Consortium.

Table 2: Constitutional provision of 17 member countries of the Consortium.

Year	Standard
Austria	All nationals are equal before the law. Privileges based upon birth, sex, estate, class or religion are excluded. No one shall be discriminated against because of his disability (Article 7(1)). [Austria, 2009]
Bangladesh	All Citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of the law (Article 27 of the Constitution), The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth (Article 28(1)), Women have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and public life (Article 28(2)). [Bangladesh, 1972]
Belgium	No class distinctions exist in the State. Belgians are equal before the law; they alone are eligible for civil and military service, but for the exceptions that can be created by a law for particular Cases. Equality between women and men is guaranteed (Article 10). [Belgium, 2021]
Brazil	Everyone is equal before the law, with no distinction whatsoever, guaranteeing to Brazilians and foreigners residing in the Country the inviolability of the rights to life, liberty, equality, security and property. Men and women have equal rights and duties under the terms of this Constitution [Brazil, 2017]
Bulgaria	(1) All persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights. (Article6(1)) (2) All citizens* shall be equal before the law. There shall be no privileges or restriction of rights on the grounds of race, national or social origin, ethnic self-identity, sex, religion, education, opinion, political affiliation, personal or social status or property status (Article6(2)). [Bulgaria, 2005]
Colombia	All individuals are born free and equal before the law, shall be granted equal protection and treatment from the authorities, and shall enjoy the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities without any discrimination on account of gender, race, national or family origin, language, religion, or political or philosophical opinion (Article 13). [Colombia, 2021]
France	France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs (Article 1). [France, 1958]
Greece	Constitution (1975, amended 2008) [Greece, 2008]
Ireland	All citizens shall be held equal before the law (Article 40.1 of the Constitution). [Ireland, 2016]
Latvia	All human beings in Latvia shall be equal before the law and the courts. Human rights shall be realised without discrimination of any kind (Article 91). [Latvia, 2016]
Lithuania	All persons shall be equal before the law, courts, and other state institutions and officials. Human rights may not be restricted; no one may be granted any privileges on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions, or views (Article 29). [Lithuania, 2019]
Peru	Every person has the right to equality before the law. No person shall be discriminated against on the basis of origin, race, sex, language, religion, opinion, economic status, or any other distinguishing feature (Article 2), [Peru, 2009]
Portugal	Every citizen shall possess the same social dignity and shall be equal before the Law (Article 13). [Portugal, 2005]
Spain	Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March for effective equality between women and men [Spain, 2007]
Switzerland	Every person is equal before the law (Article 8(1)) Men and women have equal rights. The law shall ensure their equality, both in law and in practice, most particularly in the family, in education, and in the workplace. Men and women have the right to equal pay for work of equal value Article(8(2)). [Switzerland, 2021]
United Kingdom	The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status (Article 14). [United Kingdom, 2013]
Uruguay	Law 18.104 of March 15, 2007. National Strategy for Gender Equality 2030 [Uruguay, 2017]

All the above prove that commitment to gender equality is real and this GEP aiming to be a tool for that global purpose.

### 3. Analysis and Assessment of the Gender Equality State-of-Play in the HEROES Project.

To determine the gender equality state-of-play in the HEROES project, an internal gender survey was carried out within the HEROES consortium. The gender survey was structured with a double objective: On the one hand, to determine the number of men, women and other non-binary people participating in the project and, on the other hand, to obtain a general image of the structure, composition, and gender training of the HEROES team. The questionnaire was completed by all consortium partners.

#### 3.1. Questionnaire

**3.2. The generated questionnaire consists of sixteen questions distributed in two sections: (i) Information about the organization structure, and (ii) Information about gender training. Nine questions required each partner indicate the number of women, men and other gender identity participating in HEROES under various headings, such as age, level qualification and functional diversity. The final five questions are more specifically focused on the staff gender training to facilitate the integration of gender dimension plan on HEROES' research activities. The questions posed in the survey were as follows:**

##### 1. Information about the organization structure:

- Q1. How many researchers in your organisation are involved in HEROES?
- Q2. How many other workforces than researchers in your organisation are involved in HEROES?
- Q3. Age of the researchers and other workforces involved in HEROES.
- Q4. Age of women researchers and other workforces involved in HEROES:
- Q5. How many HEROES researchers and other workforces are PhD qualified?
- Q6. If not PhD qualified, what other third level qualifications do they have?
- Q7. How many HEROES researchers and other workforces are EU nationals?
- Q8. How many HEROES researchers and other workforces are from outside the EU?
- Q9. How many HEROES researchers and other workforces were recruited specifically for HEROES?
- Q10. Are there people with functional diversity involved in HEROES?
- Q11. If YES, please indicate the number of researchers and other workforces with functional diversity.

##### 2. Information about gender training:

- Q12. Do you consider your team to be multidisciplinary? Please justify your answer.
- Q13. Do the HEROES' working group leader have gender training?
- Q14. How many HEROES researchers and other workforces have gender training?
- Q15. Does your organization have a gender equality plan?
- Q16. If not, under which gender equality regulations does your organisation carry out its work?

### 3.3. Consortium Status at Outset of the Project

Survey results are presented in this section for the consortium as a whole. The individual responses from each partner are not provided.

#### 3.3.1. Consortium Organisation Structure

HEROES gathers 27 partner institutions from 12 European member countries, 4 American countries, and 1 Asian country. Within the project team of HEROES 47% of the workforce is female. A summary of the gender balance within the HEROES project is shown in Table 3. It can observe that half of the consortium partners has a percentage of female employees higher than 50%, and none of the partners includes non-binary people in its team. This finding, however, should be read with added caution since employees are usually not required to disclose their gender identity and might prefer not to do so, in order to avoid the risk of discrimination and stigmatisation at the workplace.

Table 3: Total gender involved in HEROES consortium by member

Partner	Total number (%) of females in the workforce	Total number (%) of males in the workforce	Total number (%) of females in the workforce
UCM	67%	33%	0%
UNIKENT	33%	67%	0%
VUB	57%	43%	0%
INRIA	0%	100%	0%
KEMEA	64%	36%	0%
ICMPD	86%	14%	0%
ICMEC CH	70%	30%	0%
IDENER RD	0%	100%	0%
ARC	29%	71%	0%
TRI	75%	25%	0%
CWCS	43%	57%	0%
KOPŽI	100%	0%	0%
APAV	67%	33%	0%
Renacer	67%	33%	0%
GCR	0%	100%	0%
Asbrad	100%	0%	0%
ESMIR	0%	100%	0%
HELLENIC POLICE	0%	100%	0%
SPL	100%	0%	0%
GDCOC	33%	67%	0%
SIEE	33%	67%	0%
Polícia Federal	33%	67%	0%
PRF	0%	100%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>0%</b>

Table 4 shows details of the gender balance by type workforce involved in HEROES project.

Table 4: Gender of researchers and other workforce involved in HEROES project

Partner	Number (%) of female researchers	Number (%) of male researchers	Number (%) of other gender identity researchers	Number (%) of females in the workforce other than researchers	Number (%) of males in the workforce other than researchers	Number (%) of other gender identity in the workforce other than researchers
UCM	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
UNIKENT	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
VUB	14%	7%	0%	43%	36%	0%
INRIA	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
KEMEA	45%	18%	0%	18%	18%	0%
ICMPD	71%	14%	0%	14%	0%	0%
ICMEC CH	40%	10%	0%	30%	20%	0%
IDENER RD	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ARC	29%	71%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TRI	50%	0%	0%	25%	25%	0%
CWCS	29%	14%	0%	14%	43%	0%
KOPŽI	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
APAV	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%
RENACER	56%	22%	0%	11%	11%	0%
GCR	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ASBRAD	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ESMIR	0%	56%	0%	0%	44%	0%
HELLENIC POLICE	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
SPL	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
GDCOC	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SIEE	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
POLÍCIA FEDERAL	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%
PRF	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>0%</b>



The current gender representation in the HEROES subcommittee is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Gender representation in the HEROES Subcommittees

Committee	Females	Men	Other Gender Identity
Steering Board	48%	52%	0%
Communication and Dissemination Team	14%	86%	0%
Ethics Advisory Board	50%	50%	0%
External Experts Advisory Board	40%	60%	0%
Ethical, Societal and Legal Committee	44%	56%	0%
IPR and Innovation Committee	20%	80%	0%
Security Advisory Board	0%	100%	0%
Scientific and Technical Committee	29%	71%	0%
Work Package Leader	55%	45%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>0%</b>

Table 5 shows the current status of gender equality in all committees. Data appear to show an unequal presence between women and men, but this is due to factors external to the project. Accordingly, the GEP will recommend that, throughout the development of the project, more women (and other gender identities) be incorporated into the committees and/or that all members have gender equality training. Training is a strategy to effect individual and collective transformation towards gender equality by raising and gender awareness [UN Women Training Center, 2015; EIGE, 2016].

Regarding the type of R&D position covered Figure 2a shows that the percentage of participation between male and female is well-balanced, approximately 48% men and 52% women, like the total workforce involved in the HEROES shown in Figure 1. In this case, no other gender identities contributed. The other workforces than the researchers shown in Figure 2b involved in HEROES are made up of approximately 60% men and 40% women.

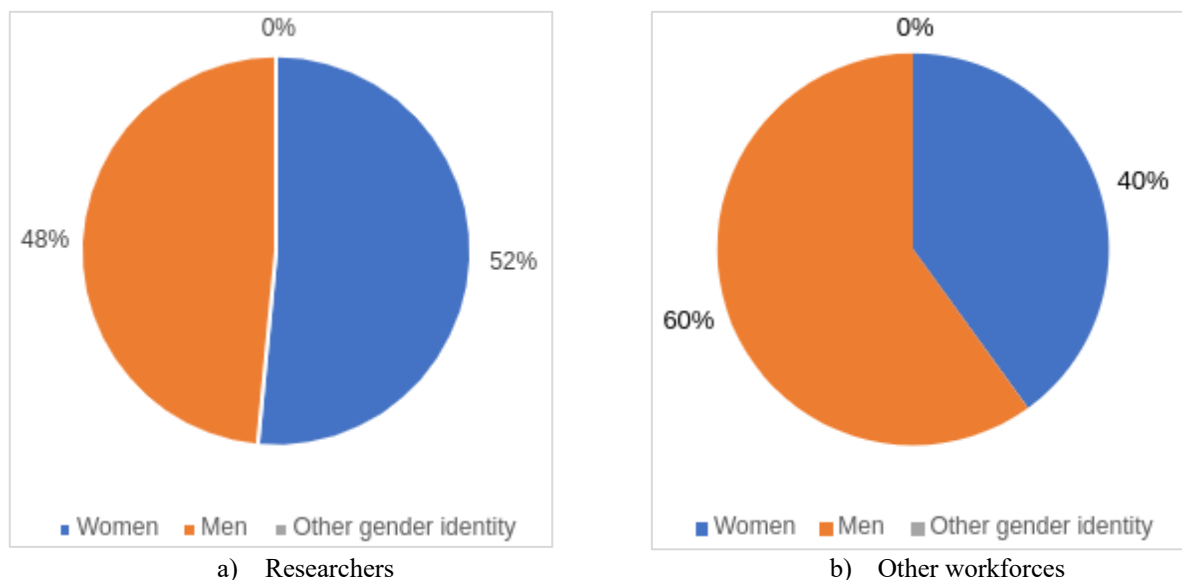
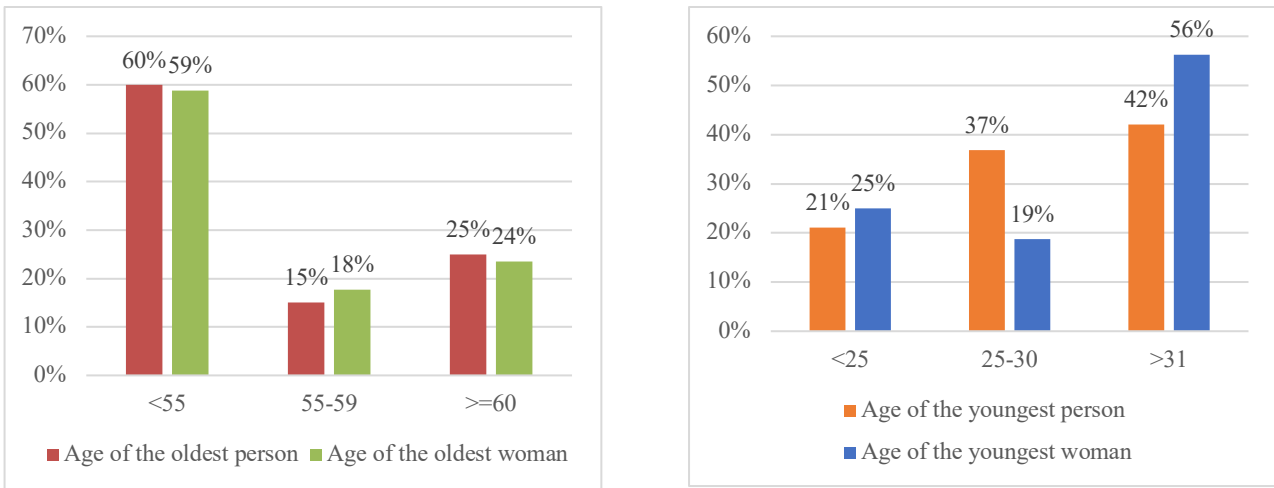


Figure 1: Percentage Men, women and other gender identities workforces involved in heroes

Regarding the gender gap by age of the researchers and other workforces involved in HEROES, Figure 2.a shows that the percentage of participation between older men and women is well-balanced. However, this gap increases considerably among the younger researchers and other workforces, especially in the 25 to 30 age range reaching a 19% (see Figure 2.b).



a) Youngest workforces  
b) Oldest workforces  
Figure 2: Age of the youngest and oldest researchers and other workforces involved in HEROES.

About third-level qualification of researchers and other workforces, as illustrated in Figure 3, we found that 44 (29%) of them are PhD qualified, out of which approximately 48% are men and 52% are women.

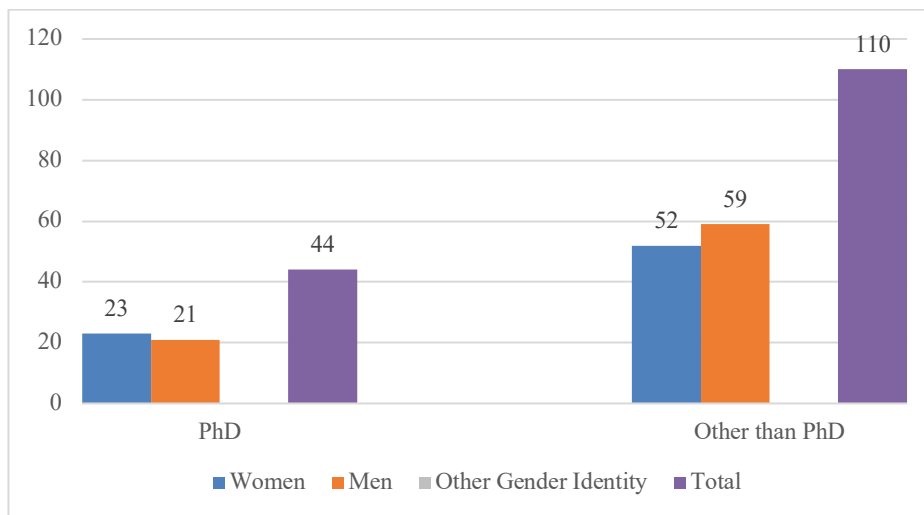


Figure 3: Men, women and other gender identity researchers and other workforces by level qualification

Figure 4 shows the 71% remaining has third-level qualifications other than a PhD. The third-level qualifications, other than a PhD, have been separated into two groups, BSc and MSc/MEng. The results presented in Figure 3 show that 43% (or 25) women has third-level qualifications other than PhD were qualified with MSc/MEng and 57% (or 33). Out of the total number of people qualified at the level of BSc, 47% (or 17) of the are male and 53% (or 19) are female. Finally, there are 16 researchers qualified in other third-level qualifications, with 43% women and 57% men. These results indicate that, in case of level qualifications percentage, of participation between male and female is well-balanced.

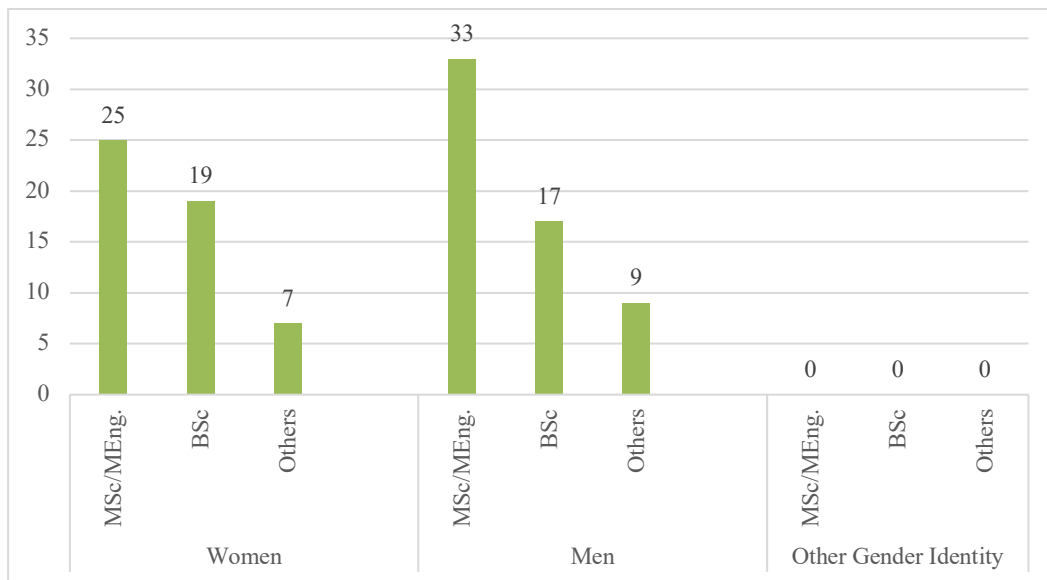


Figure 4: Male, female and other gender identity researchers and other workforces with other than PhD qualification

The analysis of the nationality of the project participants is shown in Figure 5. In Figure 5.a we can see that the total of participants, 45% are EU nationals (42% of female and 58% of male), and 55% are from outside the EU with 52% woman and 48% men as shows Figure 5.b. However, if we focus on the 17 EU partners, only, the percentage of participants from outside the EU is reduced to 19% (see Figure 5.c) with 65% of women and 35% of men as can we see in Figure 5.d.

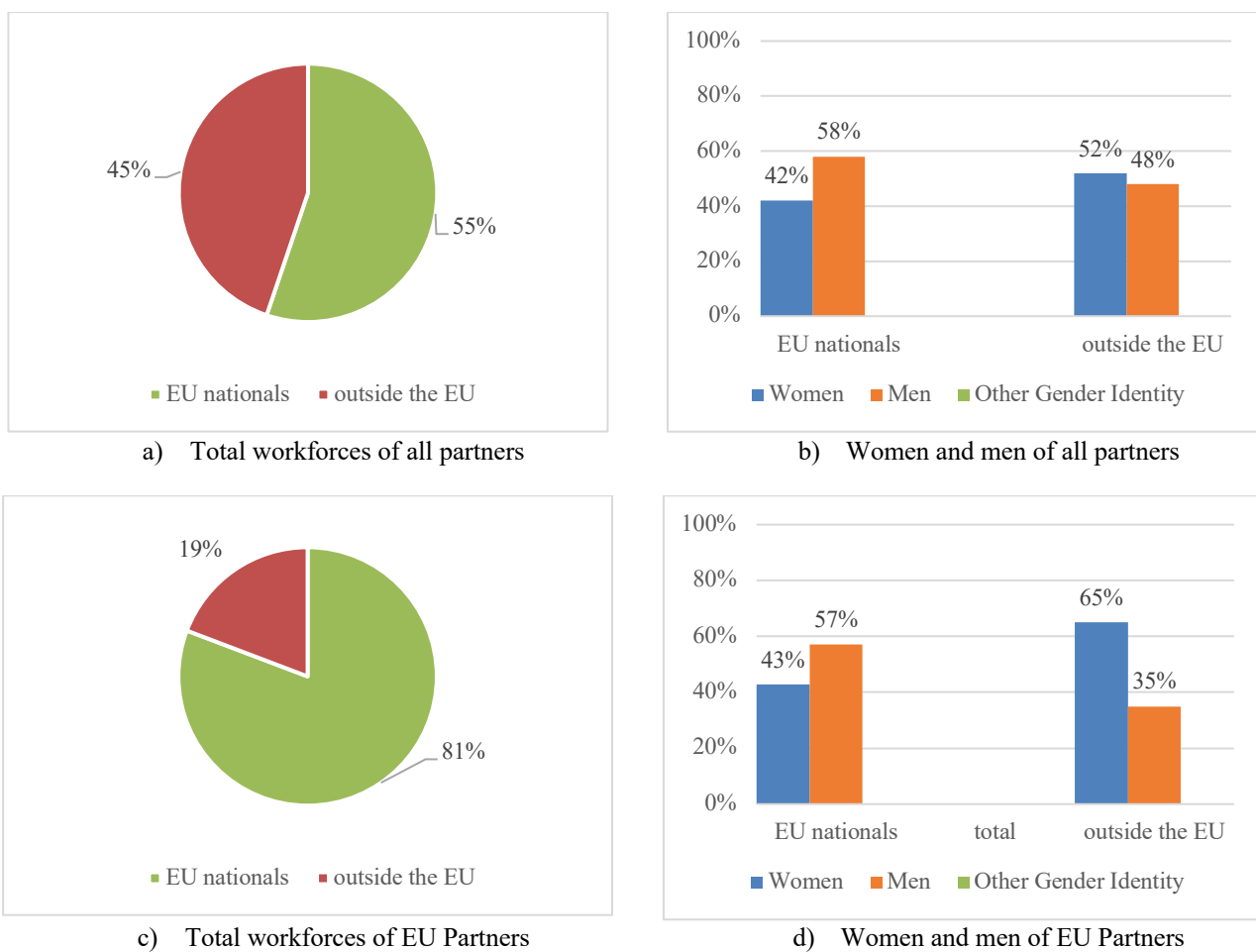


Figure 5: researchers and other workforces nationalities.

Regarding to the number of recruited workforces specifically for the project, Figure 6.a shows that only 12% of employees were recruited in these first two months. As illustrated in Figure 6.b, almost half of the recruited employees, or 42% of them are female and 58% of them are male.

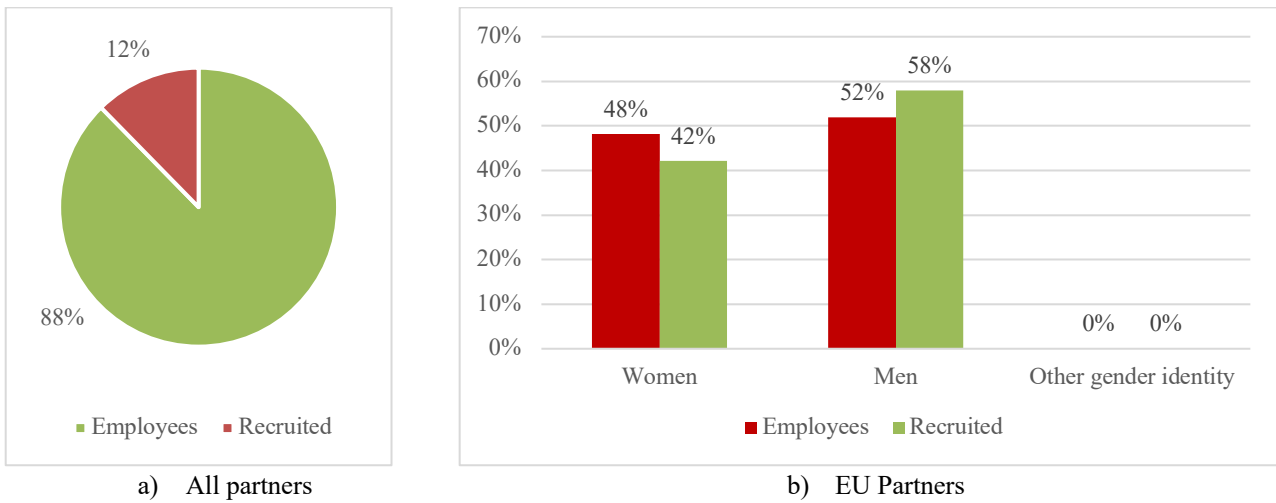


Figure 6: Number of recruited researchers and other workforces.

The functional diversity is another type of gender diversity in team processes that we examine in HEROES. As show in Figure 7, at least two partners, of 27 participating in the project, have people with functional diversity involved in HEROES (the question was not answered by 5 partners). Out of the total number of people with functional diversity 50% (or 3) of the are male and 50% (or 3) are female.

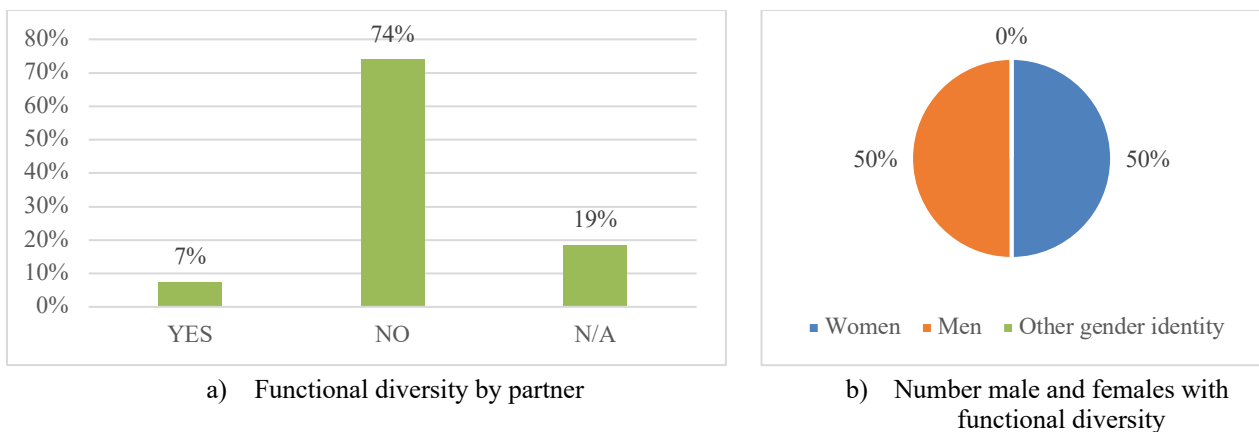


Figure 7: Number of researchers and other workforces with functional diversity.

A multidisciplinary team is a prerequisite to achieve the main HEROES project objectives, as well as to develop a holistic solution victim-centred that allows multi-stakeholders to have the resources to prevent, investigate and prosecute THB and CSA/CSE crimes. In this sense, the HEROES consortium is composed of researchers and other workforces with multidisciplinary expertise in the diverse work areas of the project. At least 70% of consortium partners has in their team a multidisciplinary workforce (see Figure 8). The HEROES project team of these partners has a multidisciplinary character because it involves not only THB and CSE/CSA experts, but also persons with other background as political science and international relations, social workers, lawyers' criminology, psychologists, law enforcement, computer forensic, electrical & computer engineer, among others.

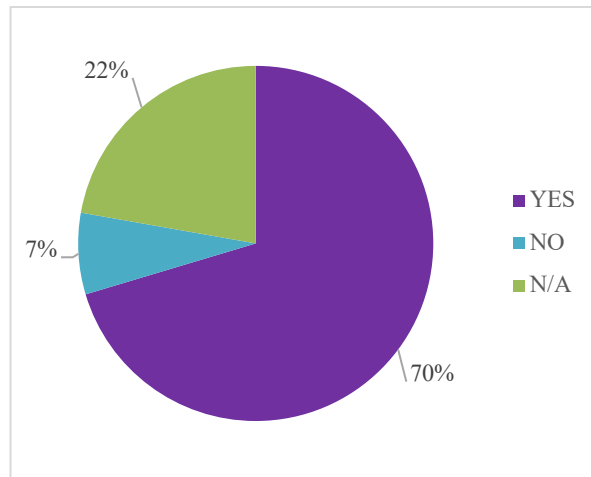


Figure 8: Number of multidisciplinary teams.

### 3.3.2. Consortium Gender Training

To ensure an effective gender action plan during the whole cycle of the HEROES project, it is necessary to know the skills and knowledge on gender equality of consortium. Figure 9.a shows that almost 59% of working group leaders of each partners has training on gender equality, frameworks, and regulatory environments to effectively contribute to gender equality within their work role in the project. In the same way, Figure 9.b shows that of 27 partners in the project, at least 55% (or 15) have researchers and other workforces with gender training involved in HEROES, 60% of them are female and 40% of them are male.

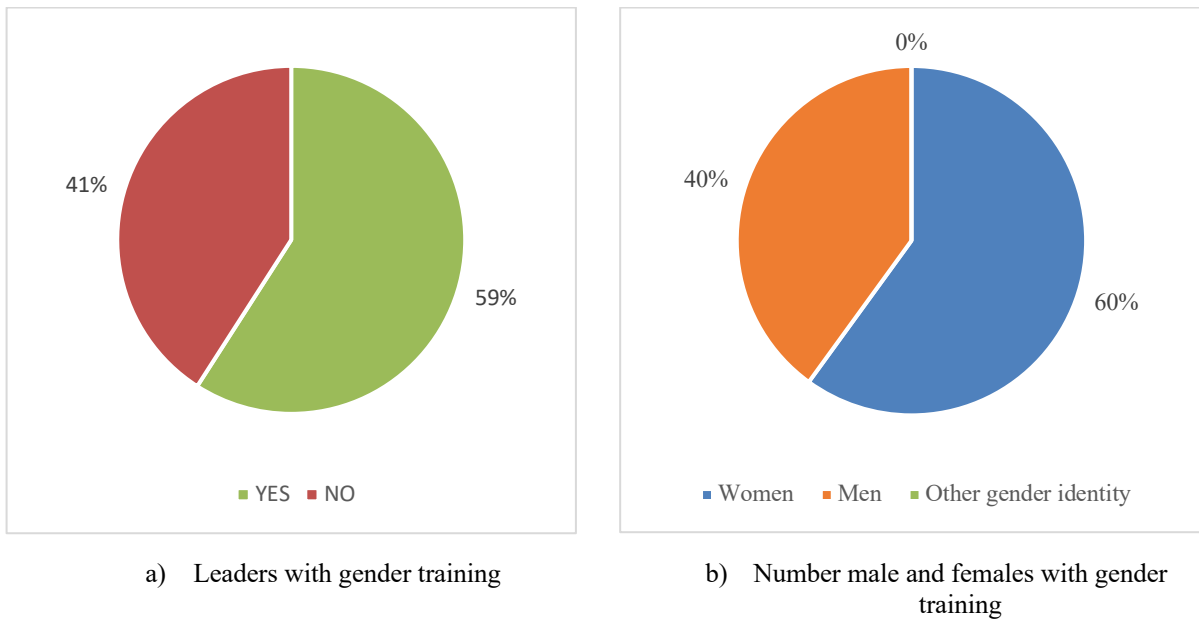


Figure 9: Percentage of gender training of HEROES’ consortium members.

Finally, Figure 10 shows that 54% of consortium partners have a Gender Equality Plan in their organization. However, the remaining 46%, who do not have an officially implemented Gender Equality Plan in their organization, follow national gender equality frameworks, and some of them have also a gender equality clause in the code of conduct and in the rules on recruitment of staff.

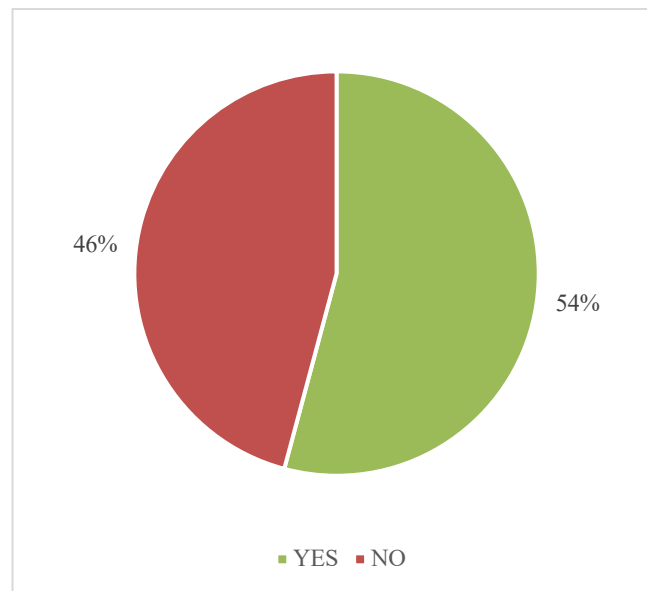


Figure 10: Organization percentage with a gender equality plan.

### 3.4. Gender Dimension in the Project Implementation

The gender dimension will be examined during the whole cycle of the HEROES project. The project takes gender into account in the following ways:

- The gender dimension is part of the requirements gathering and use case definition work in Work Package 2 (WP2).
- Gender is taken into account in the examination of potential ethical issues, evaluation of repurposed tools and datasets (e.g. for gender bias), and ethical design support in WP3.
- Gender perspectives are central to understanding the social, psychological, and economic factors, as well as barriers, remedies, and harmful practices in relation to victims in WP4.
- Included in the content and design process of the training, online prevention programmes and awareness campaigns in WP5 and as part of the trauma-bonding work in WP7.
- The digital forensics tools developed in WP6 includes gender estimation tools responding to this specific identified need. Synthetic face image generation will also cover different genders. The project's work on natural language processing (WP8) includes a consideration of gender bias in language analysis.
- End-user engagement, piloting, and evaluation work in WP9 will be designed to promote diversity and inclusion of different experiences and perspectives.

## 4. Gender Action Plan

The Gender Equality Plan is a statement of the HEROES project’s commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. It focuses on equal participation, the gender perspective, and the well-being of all those involved. The development of the GEP has required an in-depth analysis of the current gender equality situation to identify weaknesses and establish axes of action. Importantly, objectives and measures of the GEP have been defined to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time related (SMART).

### 4.1. Setting up the Gender Equality Plan

#### 4.1.1. AXE 1 - Gender Training

- **Specific Objective:** To avoid gender bias.
- **Operational Objective:** To ensure the balanced participation of women and men in training activities.
- **Area of Intervention:** Formation

Table 6 shows measures, and indicators for axe 1.

Table 6: Measures and indicators for area of intervention of formation

Measures	Timeline	Target	Division of responsibilities	Indicators
1.1 Provide spaces for reflection on Gender and Equality	Permanent	A. Sensitize the team on gender equality. B. Promote commitment to gender equality. C. Raise awareness about gender bias and the effects of re-victimization	All partners	Number of persons with gender training
1.2 Design a workshop on gender equality and the gender perspective in research	In the first 18 months		UCM	Number of persons who have attended.
1.3 Encourage the HEROES’ working group leader training in gender equality	Permanent		All partners	Number of persons with gender training
1.4 Recommend collecting open access resources on gender equality and gender studies	The first six months		All partners	Number of persons with gender training
1.5 Value diverse training to promote multidisciplinary teams.	Permanent		All partners	Branches of knowledge and academic training of the team

#### 4.1.2. AXE 2 - Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

- **Specific Objective:** Stimulating an equal working environment.
- **Operational Objective:** To balance the presence of women and men at different levels and groups.
- **Area of Intervention:** Equal representation

Table 7 shows measures, and indicators for equal representation of axe 2.

Table 7: Measures and indicators for area of intervention of equal representation

Measures	Timeline	Target	Division of responsibilities	Indicators
2.1 Establish the equal presence of women and men in the Committees and WPs	Permanent	B. Promote commitment on gender equality  D. Equal opportunities for women and men	UCM	Number of women and men in positions of responsibility
2.2 Favours under-represented sex in the event of a tie between members of a committees or WPs	Permanent		All partners	Number of women and men in positions of responsibility
2.3 Balance the number of women and men at all levels or groups	Permanent		All partners	Number of women and men at all levels or groups
2.4 Include positive actions in the bases of the selection or promotion processes when there is imbalance or under-representation of a sex	Permanent		All partners	Number of women and men at all levels or groups

- **Operational Objective:** Diversity and inclusion.
- **Area of Intervention:** Inclusive participation

Table 8 shows measures, and indicators for inclusive participation of axe 2.

Table 8: Measures and indicators for area of intervention of inclusive participation

Measures	Timeline	Target	Division of responsibilities	Indicators
2.5 Promote intergenerational work at all levels and groups	Permanent	E. Multidisciplinary team  F. Multicultural team	All partners	Age of the youngest person and age of older person
2.6 Promote the equal participation of women, men, and other gender identities	Permanent		All partners	Number of women, men, and persons of other gender identities at all levels and groups
2.7 Encourage the participation of people with functional diversity for equal participation.	Permanent		All partners	Number of people with functional diversity at all levels and groups
2.8 Promote the participation of workforces from outside the EU	Permanent		All partners	Nationality or residence of all workforces

- **Operational Objective:** Work-life balance.
- **Area of Intervention:** Work conditions

Table 9 shows measures, and indicators for work conditions of axe 2.



Table 9: Measures and indicators for area of intervention of work conditions

Measures	Timeline	Target	Division of responsibilities	Indicators
2.9 Introduce the gender dimension in occupational risk prevention.	Permanent	B. Promote commitment to gender equality	All partners	Gender indicators included
2.10 Promote telework and flexible working	Permanent		All partners	Working time and flexibility
2.11 Promote a good working environment, prohibiting all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination.	Permanent	G. Take care of your own team	All partners	Self-perception of the team

### 4.1.3. AXE 3 - Gender Mainstreaming

- **Specific Objective:** Gender-sensitive research.
- **Operational Objective:** Incorporate the gender perspective.
- **Area of Intervention:** Project implementation.

Table 10 shows measures, and indicators for equal representation of axe 3.

Table 10: Measures and indicators for area of intervention of equal representation

Measures	Timeline	Target	Division of responsibilities	Indicators
3.1 Review and correct, from a gender perspective, all tasks, and activities	Permanent	B. Promote commitment to gender equality	UCM	Number of corrections made
3.2 Incorporate the sex/gender variable in all databases and studies	Permanent		C. Raise awareness about gender bias and the effects of re-victimization	All partners
3.3 Use images without sexist or stereotyped connotations.	Permanent	H. Gender mainstreaming		All partners
3.4 Consider sex/gender differences in analysis, tool design and prototypes.	Permanent		All partners	Number of women and men involved in its development

## 4.2. Implementing the Gender Equality Plan

UCM is the responsible for the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan, who could be in the form, responsibility, and tasks of an equality commission.

The GEP will be sent to all partners, who will be also invited to an online meeting to present the intervention axes and motivate the staff involved. A team committed to gender equality will maximize the impact of the Plan’s actions.

To achieve the proposed goals, the team responsible for the implementation will need to continue engaging stakeholders on an on-going basis, throughout the development process of the HEROES project, recalling the benefits of gender equality in research, intervention, and victim assistance.

At this point it is important to note that the GEP is not static, it evolves on a continuous basis. Which means it could adopt to the needs identified during the development process. Equally important, its design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation are carried out with the active participation of all stakeholders involved.

To ensure the sustainability of the GEP, a timetable is drawn up indicating the actions and recommended time frames for executing all activities to be implemented the GEP. This timetable is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Implementation timeline of Gender Equality Plan

Description of the activities	Recommended time frames
1. Publication the GEP on the HEROES repository.	February 2022
2. Send the GEP and relevant information to all project partners.	February 2022
3. Enable a communication channel between the UCM equality commission and all project partners.	March 2022
4. Organize an online meeting to present the GEP and clarify the doubts that partners (at least one representative per WP) may have after reading the information sent.	In the first 4 months
5. First review and correct the absence of a gender perspective in tasks and activities.	In the first 6 months
6. Evaluate the GEP (see Section 5).	In the first 12 months
7. Organize and conduct the training workshop on gender equality.	In the first 18 months
8. Publish progress reports.	In the first 18 months
9. Incorporate the identifies improvement into the GEP.	Constantly updated
10. Evaluate the GEP and its impact.	At the end of the project.

The correct and successful implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) reflects the project's commitment to gender equality.

## 5. Monitoring Progress and Evaluating the Gender Equality Plan

The team that has developed and implemented the plan will also be responsible for monitoring its progress and evaluating the Gender Equality Plan (GEP). Regarding the timing, the implementation will be done in the 6 months, the GEP will be evaluated in month 12 to disseminate the results in a deliverable and finally, monitoring will be carried out permanently during the development process of the HEROES project.

The monitoring and evaluation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) shall be carried out in accordance with the following guiding principles:

1. **Transparency and honesty,**
2. **Active involvement,**
3. **Proportionality between benefits and risks,**
4. **Prioritizing human well-being,**
5. **Professional ethics, attended to standards and regulations.**

The GEP is meant to address several issues at once, monitoring and evaluation instruments are to be seen as tools supporting effective actions and creating accountability. However, the priority is to improve, identify weaknesses and recognize strengths of the GEP.

### 5.1. Monitoring

Well-thought-out monitoring mechanisms can help identify new needs and/or needs not initially foreseen. In this sense, the active participation of all stakeholders and their transparency, are key to monitoring actions once they are under way.

Effective monitoring of the GEP will depend on developing relevant quantitative and qualitative indicators for each measure included in the GEP. The responsible team has human resources with knowledge and experience in monitoring the implementation of the GEP. The proposed strategy for monitoring the implementation of the GEP consists of:

1. Efficient communication: active listening and joint reflection on the suggestions of the stakeholders.
2. Open and in-depth interviews with stakeholders or leaders of the WP to learn about the status of gender equality and gender perspective. Anonymous and voluntary participation.
3. Online survey to collect information like the collected through the questionnaire (see Section 3.1) to develop the section on analysing and assessing the state-of-play in the GEP.

This GEP is based on comprehensive diagnoses, what could be understood as an ex-ante evaluation (or baseline assessment). This approach to the current situation of gender equality in the HEROES project helps secure support and mobilize stakeholders.

### 5.2. Evaluation

The key principles for gender-responsive evaluation at HEROES project are:

1. **Usefulness:** evaluation should be useful so that the results are not merely a report but considered both for the purpose of the evaluation and for future proposals.
2. **Feasibility:** evaluation should be realistic, and its management or development should be based on prudence and cost-effectiveness.

3. **Ethics and legality:** evaluators should conduct the evaluation in an ethical and lawful manner, paying attention to the well-being of the people involved and affected by the evaluation. Evaluators shall respect the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation (2008).
4. **Transparency:** just as the purpose to be assessed should be transparent, the evaluation itself must reflect an attitude of openness and transparency.
5. **Accuracy:** evaluation from a methodological point of view should be accurate and provide sufficient information on the methodology used both for the collection of information and for its subsequent analysis from a gender perspective.

### 5.2.1. Process Evaluation, Improvement-Oriented

Evaluation is an active component of change management through the practical application and methodological rigor. The UCM will evaluate the GEP in the first 12 months.

The process evaluation is useful because it provides an early warning for any problems that may occur, and it evaluates both the content of the GEP and its implementation. Besides this, the evaluation allows to understand whether the GEP is reaching its goals, the extent to which the GEP has been implemented following its original design and whether the GEP is accessible and acceptable for all people involved.

The methodology of the evaluation will be carried out from a logical model with a systemic and gender perspective [ONU Woman, 2015]. A logical model incorporates the next elements: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. The content and implementation of the GEP will be evaluated through a participatory methodology that seeks to identify key actors within each partner. Changes made or needs identified during the months of implementation will also be recorded [Ligero Lasa, 2008/2019].

### 5.2.2. Final Evaluation, Results-Oriented

At the end of the HEROES project, the UCM will evaluate the latest version of the GEP in comparison with the initial proposal. That is, the improvements made, the recommendations of the first evaluation and the final status of gender equality in the HEROES project will be considered.

An increase in the number of women participants and sex-disaggregated data is not sufficient [Fletcher, 2015]. For this reason, the key evaluation questions (KEQs) must be precise and sufficient. The methodological design is thought of as a non-experimental design which looks systematically at the evidence using qualitative and quantitative techniques. Evidence measures the impact (observed results) that the GEP has had on the development of the HEROES project.

Gender-sensitive indicators will be developed for all evaluation questions. As for the technical used, an online questionnaire is proposed that will be completed anonymously and voluntarily by all the stakeholders involved in the HEROES project.

## 6. Conclusions

This document shows the importance of gender mainstreaming and how this will be addressed within the HEROES project.

As a starting point, some concepts and their definitions were introduced to ensure understanding of the following paragraphs. For the same purpose, the introduction has pointed out the importance of developing a GEP, which is supported by international and national standards on gender equality.

Subsequently, an analysis has been carried out of the gender equality state-of-play in the HEROES project. The results have guided the axes of action or in other words, the strategic lines proposed to incorporate the gender mainstreaming transversely. In order to successfully implement the GEP, a schedule of specific tasks has been established.

Finally, it is detailed how the GEP will be monitored, and it is recommended to carry out two evaluations to check its implementation and results within the project.

In short, the GEP encourages gender equality at all levels, sensitizes the actors involved and monitors gender mainstreaming throughout the development of the HEROES project.

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