

## **Coordinated Research Infrastructures Building Enduring Life-science services - CORBEL -**

Deliverable D1.3

CORBEL Equal Opportunities Survey and Recommendations

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*"Employers and/or funders of researchers will not discriminate against researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition."*

*The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruiting Researchers, p. 16*

## Purpose of this document

This document a) aims to give an overview of the current state of Equal Opportunities Policy in the research infrastructures (RIs) involved in CORBEL, b) provides recommendations for setting up Equal Opportunities policies.

The status quo of Equal Opportunities Policy in CORBEL was assessed using a survey of existing or planned equal opportunity or diversity measures taken among the CORBEL RIs. Following the survey, a set of recommendations was created from a best practices examples. These recommendations cover the CORBEL RIs individually and in their cooperation within the CORBEL project.

## Project objectives

With this deliverable, the project has contributed to the following objective:

- a) Develop and facilitate the implementation of an BMS RI wide equal opportunities programme within the project

## Detailed report on the deliverable

### Background

The CORBEL cluster project aims to establish a collaborative and sustained framework of shared services between the different ESFRI Biological and Medical Research Infrastructures (BMS RIs). This framework will have a transformative effect on European biomedical research – from basic biological research to applied and translatable medical breakthroughs. On their own, the individual services offered by these RIs are crucial for their own user communities but collectively, these services will offer unparalleled opportunities to European researchers to work on complex multi-disciplinary biomedical projects.

One of the core strategic pillars of CORBEL is propagating a culture of equal opportunities in order to ensure that the RIs impartially utilize the capabilities of the entire European biomedical research work force. CORBEL acknowledges that gender equality includes: gender balance in research teams; gender balance in decision-making; and integrating gender/sex analysis in R&I content . The known underrepresentation of women in higher-level positions in the natural sciences is evident also in the CORBEL consortium, where there is a marked gender imbalance at the PI, work-package and task leader level.

One of the dedicated tasks within the management work package (WP1 Task 5) is to address this issue by developing recommendations and guidelines for the BMS RIs to adopt sustainable strategies for building a diverse work force. Some of the BMS RIs involved in the project are in a start-up phase, setting up their organisational and administrative structures and fine-tuning their processes. This is a key period in the infrastructure development to establish a lasting environment of equal opportunity for all qualified personnel. On the other hand, several COREL RIs are fully operational and have already implemented their equal opportunity policies, providing a good source of best practice examples and recommendations. Therefore, the present state of implementation of the life science research infrastructures involved in CORBEL presents a unique opportunity to address this issue in a forward-looking, progressive manner that has a higher chance of having real impact than more short-term measures.

Based on these equal opportunities policies, the critical platform of shared services developed in CORBEL will also allow indiscriminate access to users, which is in accordance with the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures.

## Description of Work

### Formal Equality of Opportunity

According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy<sup>1</sup>, 'Formal equality of opportunity requires that positions and posts that confer superior advantages should be open to all applicants. Applications are assessed on their merits, and the applicant deemed most qualified according to appropriate criteria is offered the position.' In other words, formal rules should by no means exclude persons from achieving specific goals or career aspirations by referencing their race, socio-economic status, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

According to Eurostat's figures for 2016<sup>2</sup>, more than 9 out of 10 EU residents, living in the EU-28 countries, had been born in the country of residence while 4.1 % of the total number of inhabitants were born outside the EU and 3.1 % born in another EU Member State. These numbers are expected to rise in the upcoming decades resulting in significant changes to European demographics and workforce composition. These changes will be in addition to other severe socio-economic challenges like aging demographic, shrinking workforce, rise in unemployment etc.

The Equality of Opportunity has the potential to harness this diversity and meet the aforementioned challenges by contributing to economic growth, creating new jobs, fostering

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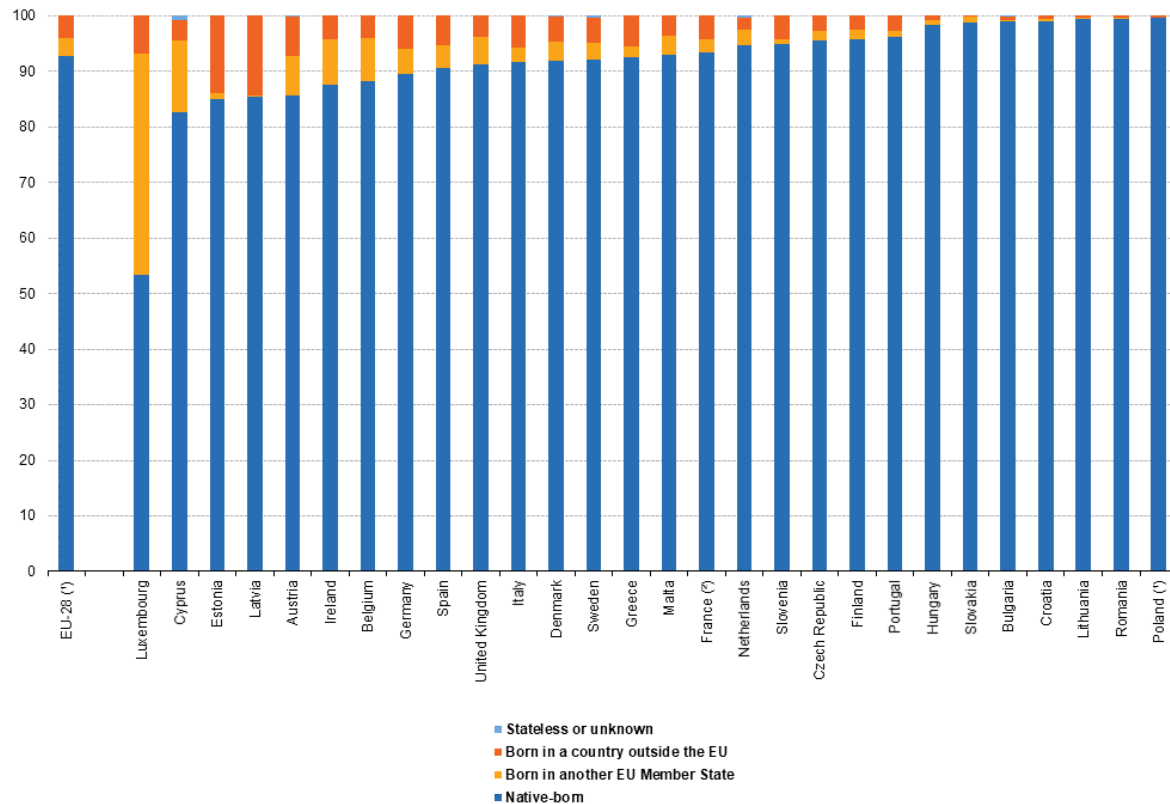
<sup>1</sup> Equality of Opportunity, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/equal-opportunity/>

<sup>2</sup> People in the EU - statistics on origin of residents,

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=People\\_in\\_the\\_EU\\_-\\_statistics\\_on\\_origin\\_of\\_residents](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=People_in_the_EU_-_statistics_on_origin_of_residents)

competitiveness and encouraging innovation. This ideal is strongly reflected in the following excerpts from the European Charter for Researchers:

‘Employers and/or funders of researchers will not discriminate against researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.’



(\*) Estimates.

(\*) Provisional.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr\_pop1ctz)

Figure 1: Population by birthplace in 2016 depicted as percentage of total population.

## Formalised gender balance policy

According to the European Charter and Code, “Employers and/or funders should aim for a representative gender balance at all levels of staff, including at supervisory and managerial level. This should be achieved on the basis of an equal opportunity policy at recruitment and at the subsequent career stages without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence criteria. To ensure equal treatment, selection and evaluation committees should have an adequate gender balance.”

One of the main challenges facing gender balance in research is the ‘leaky pipeline’ phenomenon which refers to the lack of retention of women in academic careers and their significantly lower likelihood to reach top academic positions than men. Other serious issues

hampering career development of female academics include a highly varied spectrum of gender climate at institutions, disparity in gender-specific rank and leadership, gender-based inequity in compensation and a disproportionate burden of family responsibilities.

Based on this information, Carr et al.<sup>3</sup> used the Bronfenbrenner socio-ecological model to develop strategies at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, academic community and policy levels (Figure 1). These strategies include addressing implicit gender bias, lack of access and support of mentors, compensating the gender gap etc.

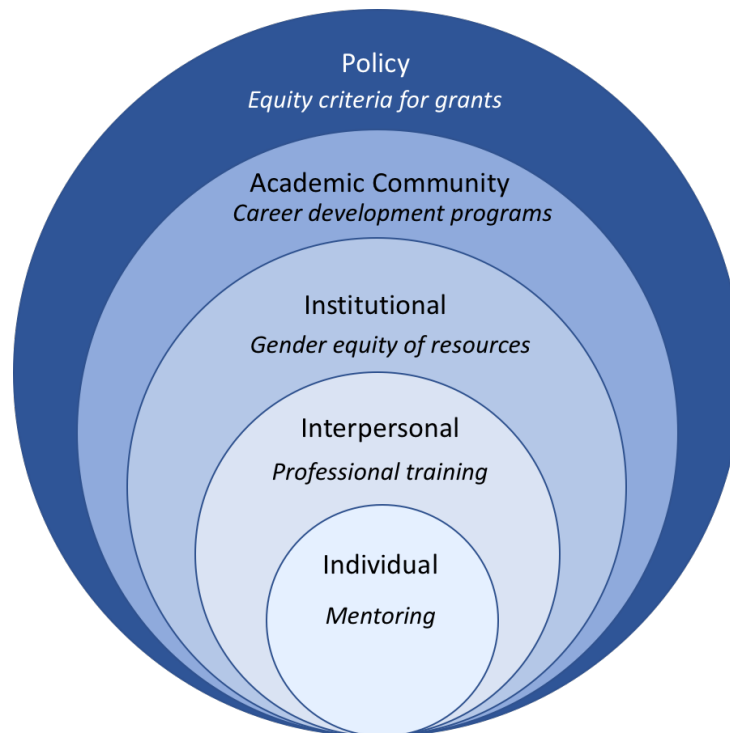


Figure 2: The potential levels of interventions for gender Equity in biomedical sciences. Adapted from Carr et al.

RIs operate at the Community/Policy levels and some of the relevant strategies for gender balance include:

- Support and expand career advancement programs.
- Abolish implicit gender bias.
- Close the gender pay gap.
- Promote career flexibility and a healthy work-life balance.

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<sup>3</sup>Carr et al., A Summary Report from the Research Partnership on Women in Science Careers, PMID: 30003480

## CORBEL Equal Opportunities Policy Survey

The following are the results of the survey conducted by INFRAFRONTIER GmbH among the CORBEL RIs. A total of 11 RIs (out of 13) responded to this survey, a majority of which were already operational ('full operation' and 'construction/operation'). The survey questionnaire can be found in the annex and the results can be obtained upon request from the authors.

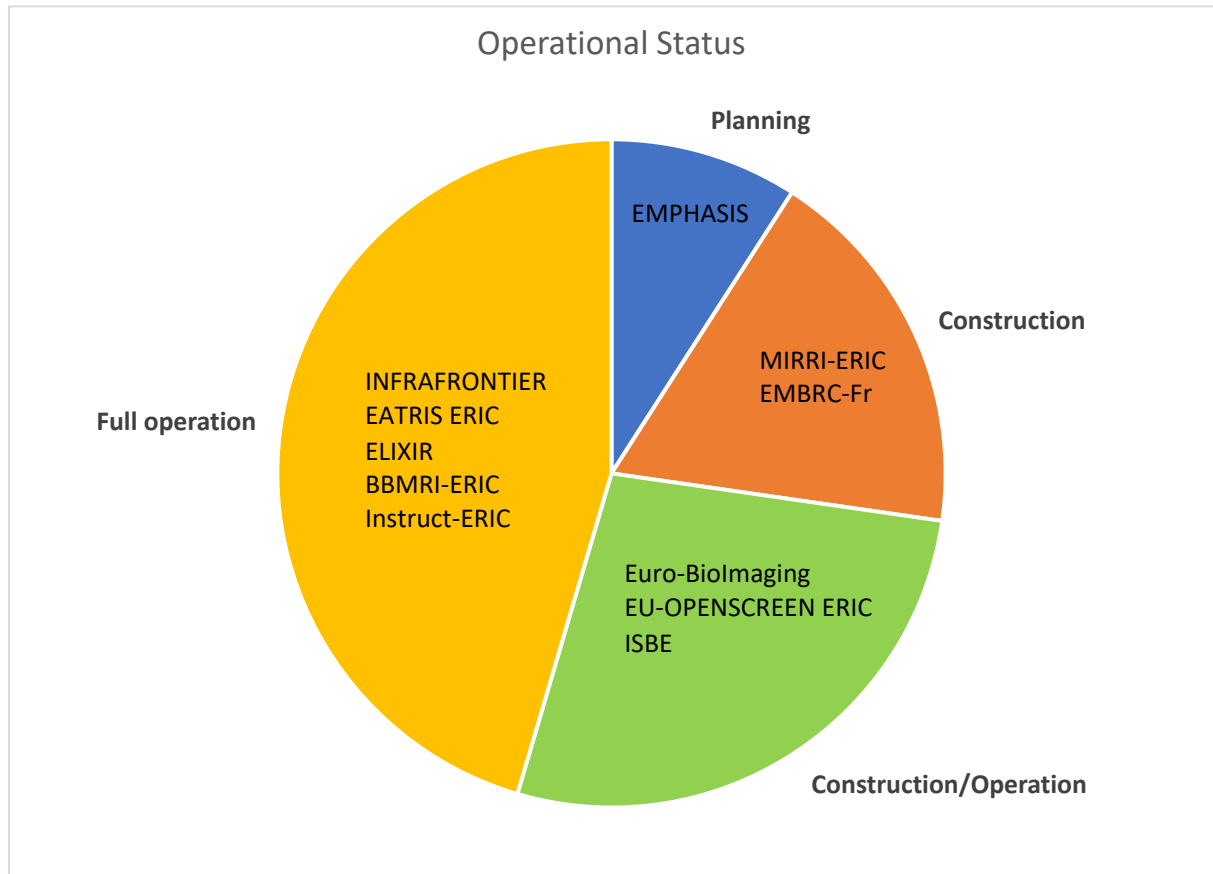


Figure 3: Operational statuses of 11 CORBEL RIs that participated in the survey

## Presence of a formalised Equal Opportunities Policy

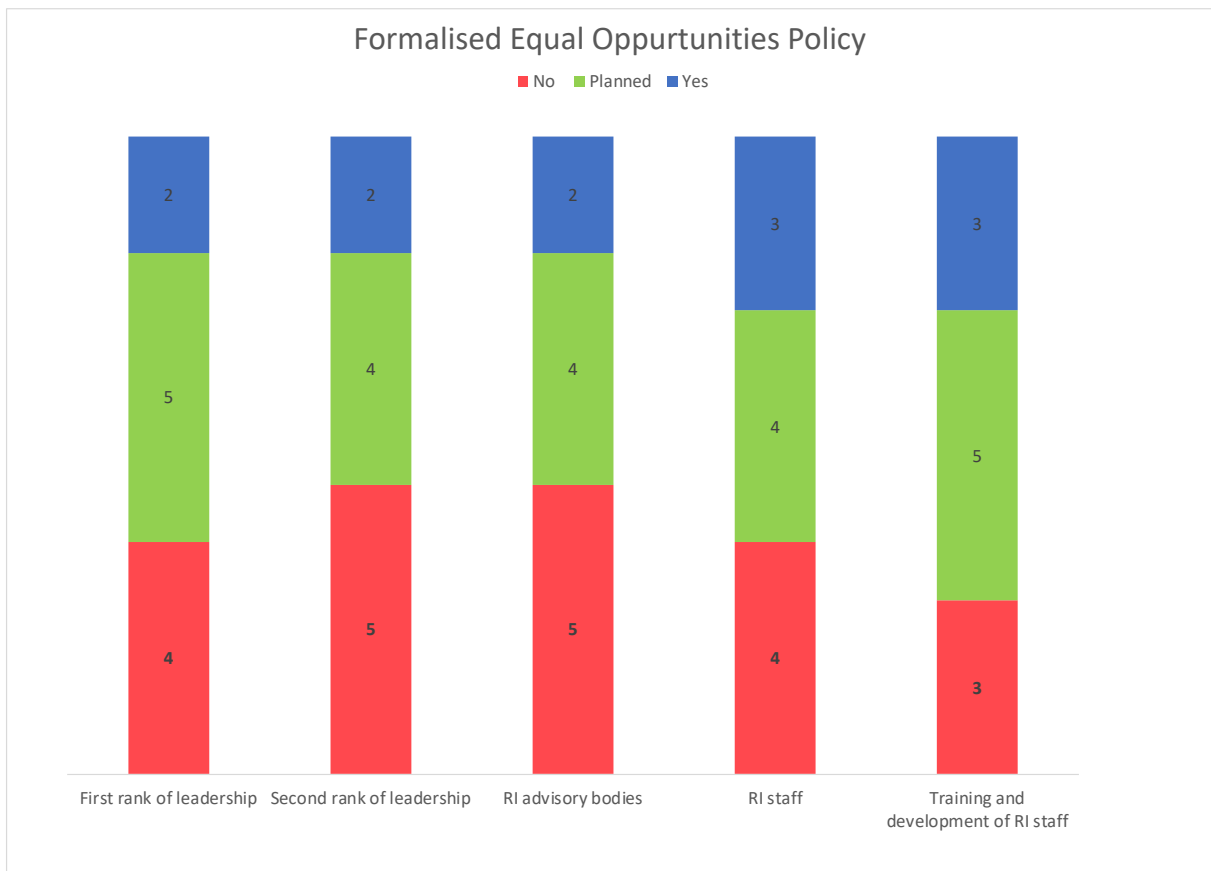


Figure 4: Response to the presence of a Formalised Equal Opportunities Policy from 11 CORBEL RIs

A clear minority of RIs have an Equal Opportunities Policy already in place and all these RIs belong to the 'fully operation' class of RIs.

Several RIs are planning to implement such a policy and a similarly large proportion of RIs completely lack it. Most of the RIs in the 'construction' and 'construction/operation' phase belong to the latter group that lack a policy for equal opportunities.

Therefore, this deliverable aims to assist the implementation of a formalised Equal Opportunities Policy among the majority of the CORBEL RIs that are under construction and are planning or lacking a formalised Equal Opportunities Policy.



## Presence of a formalised policy or other guidelines for gender balance

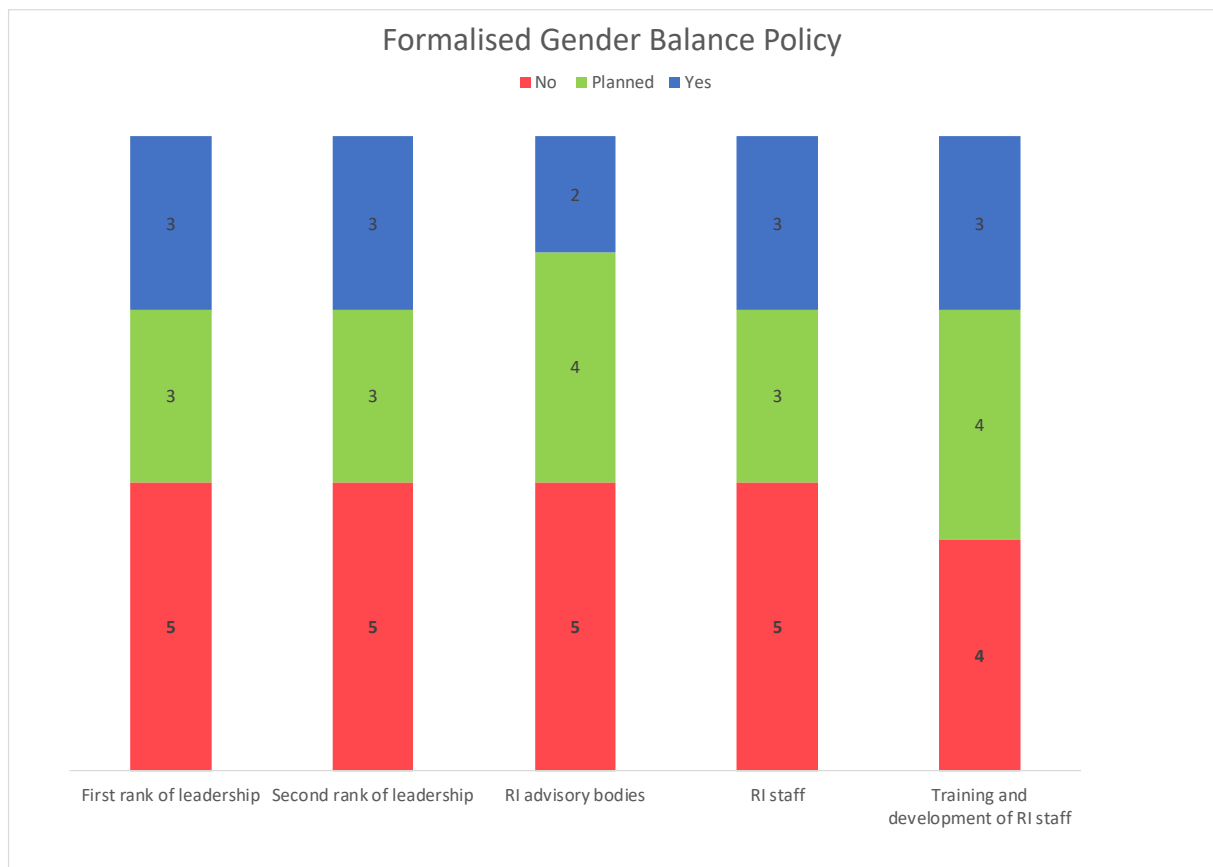


Figure 5: Response to the presence of a formalised Gender Balance Policy from 11 CORBEL RIs

The results for the presence of a formalised Gender Balance Policy is similar to the previous result on the presence of a formalised Equal Opportunities Policy, however the proportion of RIs that so far lack such a policy is slightly higher. This may be partly explained by the fact that 'gender balance' is an implicit goal of 'equal opportunities' and may therefore not be seen as a separate policy to be drawn up.

As in the previous question, RIs that are in the planning and constructing phases are more likely to lack a formalised Gender Balance Policy.

## Distribution of gender balance

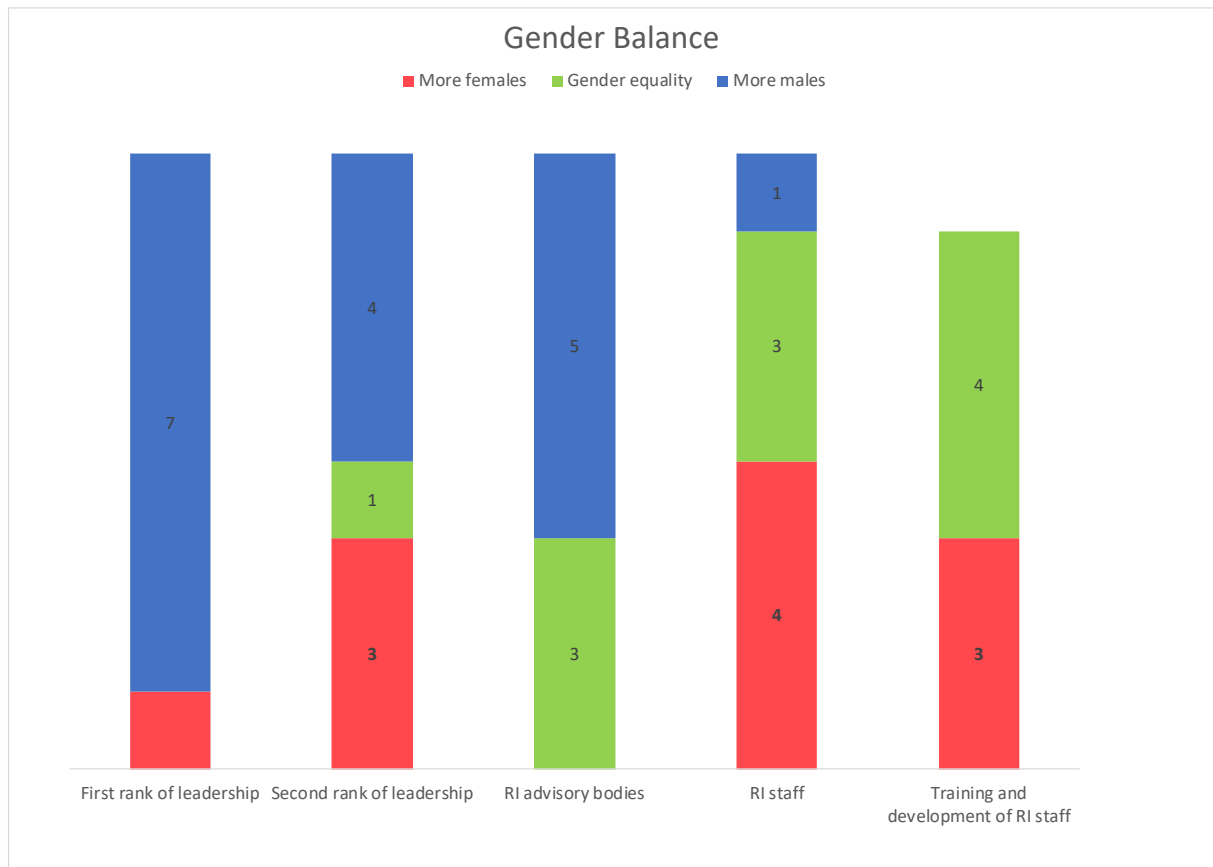


Figure 6: Gender balance among 7 - 8 CORBEL RIs

The 'leaky pipeline' phenomenon (see section 2.2) is also present among the CORBEL RIs, similar to other academic fields, with a larger proportion of males at higher career levels (first and second rank of leadership) and a larger proportion of females among the middle levels (RI staff). In other words, gender equality becomes less prevalent among higher career levels compared to lower ones in the CORBEL partners as well.

### *Presence of other measures of diversity beyond gender*

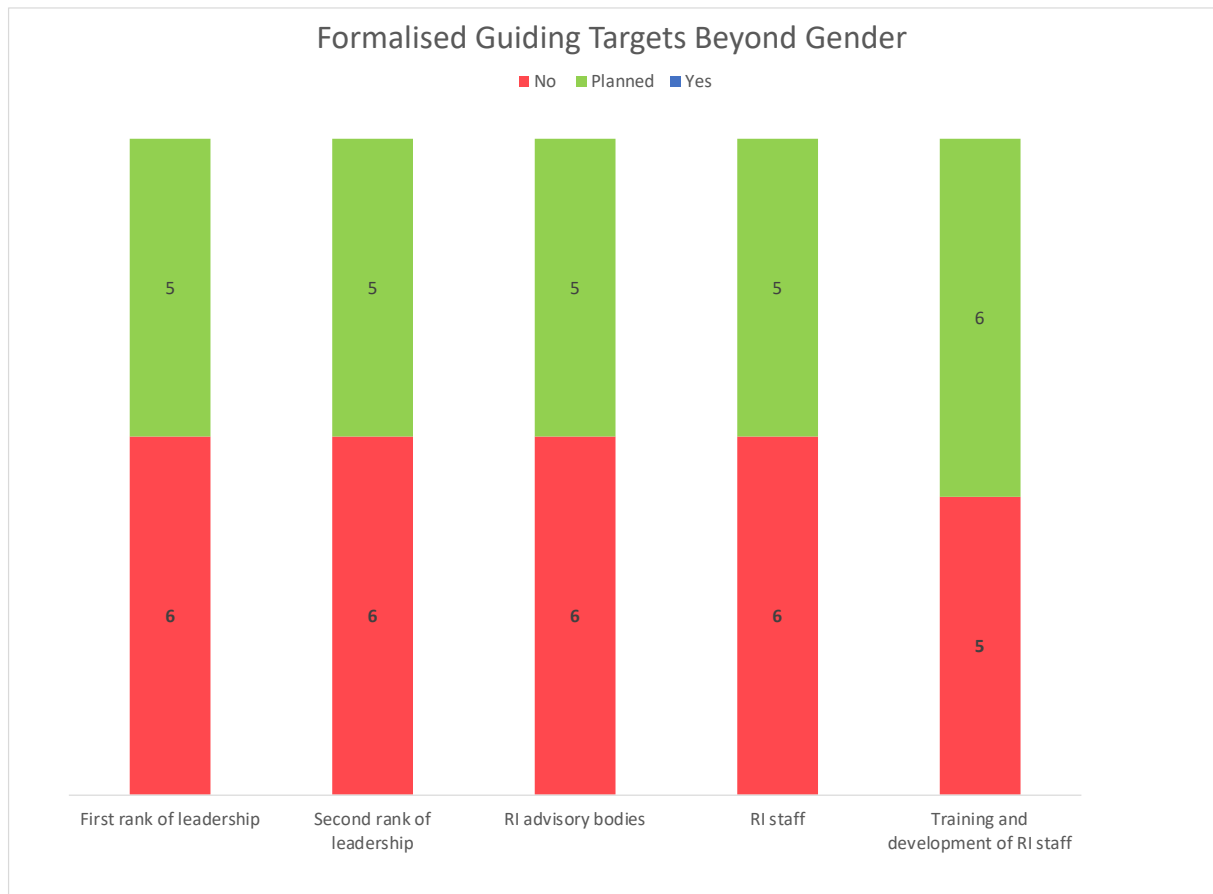


Figure 7: Survey response from 11 CORBEL RIs to the presence of other measure of diversity beyond gender.

There was a clear lack of guiding targets for other measures of diversity beyond gender like age, race or nationality among the CORBEL RIs. However, nearly half of the RIs plan to implement such policies implying that they are aware of future challenges concerning a non-diversified RI workforce.

### *Presence of a formalised policy for RI staff recruitment*

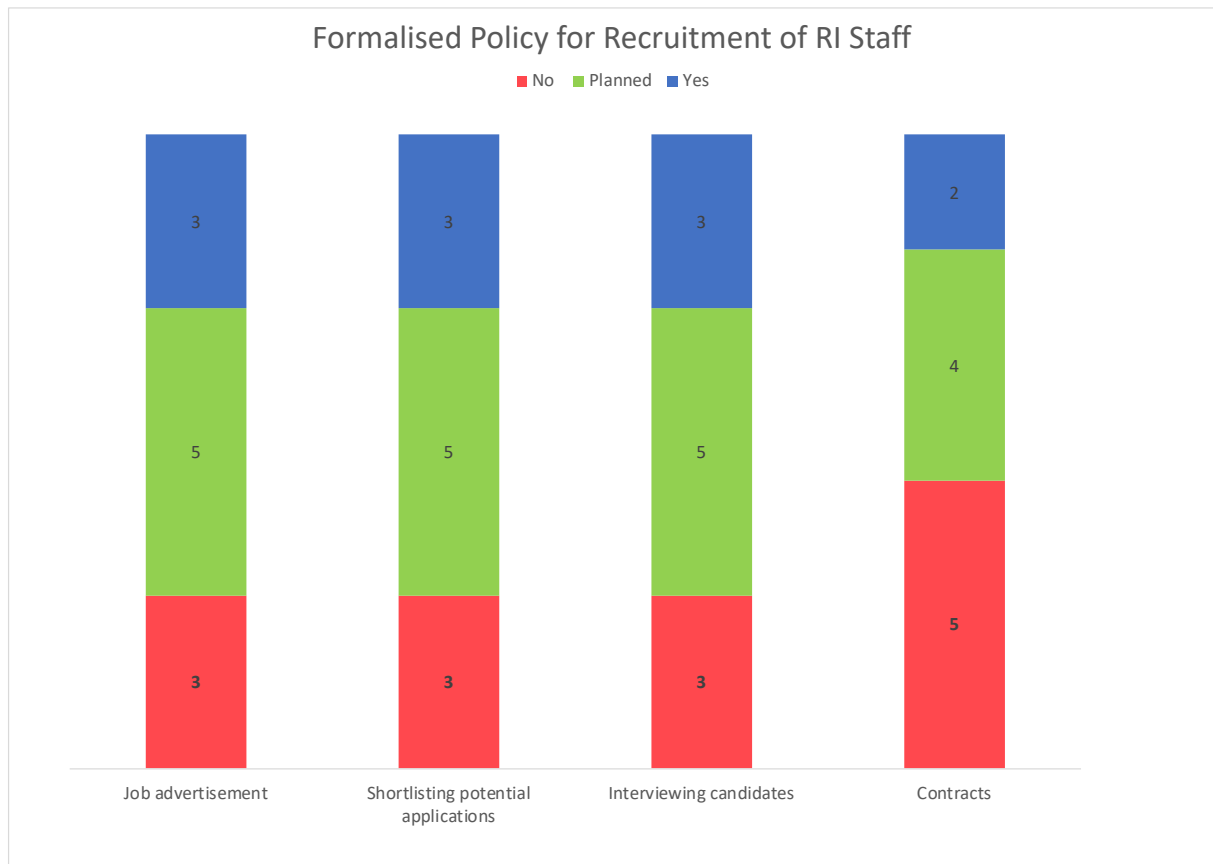


Figure 8: Survey response from 11 CORBEL RIs regarding the presence of a formalised policy for staff recruitment

The presence of a formalised Recruitment Policy reflects the presence of an Equal Opportunities Policy with most of the RIs lacking such a policy belonging to the ‘construction’ or ‘construction/operation’ phase while the fully operational RIs plan and/or possess one. Interestingly, a formalised policy for staff contracts was missing in nearly half of the RIs.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Each of the RIs in the CORBEL project are recommended to have their own Equal Opportunities Policy.**
2. CORBEL RIs are encouraged to implement Equal Opportunities Policies not only at the level of the central coordination (**hubs**), but also to take into consideration those policies already existing at their constitutive members (**national nodes**) or support the development of such policies where they do not yet exist.

3. CORBEL RIs and their constitutive members should review **staff recruitment processes** to eliminate the impact of unconscious bias, for example by following the recommendations in the LIBRA Handbook<sup>4</sup>.
4. The CORBEL RIs are recommended to consider diversity balance and under-representation during the appointment processes of **governance and advisory bodies** and other working groups on the governance level.
5. Organisers of **training and events** should ensure that speakers and participants are diverse and include a representative balance with regard to gender, ethnicity, race, age, disability and sexuality, for example. This should include invited speakers, session chairs, committees and training staff, in order to **increase the visibility of women** and other under-represented groups at all stages of scientific careers. The same is true for **training events organised by CORBEL**.
6. **RI online tools and services** should aim to comply with industry accessibility standards, such as the W3C standards<sup>5</sup> in order to ensure that they are **fully accessible to people with disabilities**. This also holds true for all online tools and services provided within the context of CORBEL.
7. CORBEL RIs and their respective members are recommended to **collect diversity data on applicants to their organisations, their staff and users** on an annual basis in order to **monitor the impact of diversity actions**.
8. All RI related events (including events organised in the context of CORBEL), such as training events, conferences and large meetings should collect **diversity data on speakers, instructors, attendees, programme committee members and session chairs**. Events should also be fully accessible to people with disabilities.
9. Collection and processing of these diversity related data by CORBEL RIs must be **compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018)** when personal data is included.
10. **CORBEL open calls** for research projects should consider diversity in all aspects of the proposed projects. In addition, applicant diversity data is also recommended to be collected for these open calls in order to assess the diversity dimension of the proposed projects and to improve the same for future calls.

### Further reading / Best-practice examples

- DFG Toolbox (in English): <https://instrumentenkasten.dfg.de/faq.html>
- ELIXIR Equal Opportunity Strategy, contact: [susanna.repo@elixir-europe.org](mailto:susanna.repo@elixir-europe.org)
- EATRIS-ERIC, Rules of Procedure, contact: [frankdeman@eatris.eu](mailto:frankdeman@eatris.eu)

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.eu-libra.eu/sites/default/files/article-files/libra\\_recruitment\\_guidelines\\_second\\_edition\\_0.pdf](http://www.eu-libra.eu/sites/default/files/article-files/libra_recruitment_guidelines_second_edition_0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.w3.org/WAI/>

- LIBRA Recruitment Handbook: [http://www.eu-libra.eu/sites/default/files/article-files/libra\\_recruitment\\_guidelines\\_second\\_edition\\_0.pdf](http://www.eu-libra.eu/sites/default/files/article-files/libra_recruitment_guidelines_second_edition_0.pdf)
- Carr et al., A Summary Report from the Research Partnership on Women in Science Careers, PMID: 30003480

## Publications

N/A

## References

N/A

## Delivery and schedule

The delivery is delayed: There were delays in the feedback of the different RIs and we decided to extend the timeline to gather as much feedback as possible rather than finalise the deliverable in time.

## Adjustments made

None

## Appendices

**Appendix A: Survey Questions**

**Appendix B: Example rules of procedure (EATRIS)**

General Information

**“Employers and/or funders of researchers will not discriminate against researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.”**

***Code of Conduct for researchers, p. 16***

1. Your name

2. Name of the research infrastructure

3. Your position in the research infrastructure

4. Research field

5. Operational status

- Planning
- Construction
- Construction / operation
- Full operation

## Formalised Equal Opportunities Policy

6. Does your research infrastructure have a formalised equal opportunities policy referring to:

	Yes	No	Planned
The first rank of leadership (directors, general-directors, coordinators)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The second (and if existent third) rank of leadership (heads of units, group leaders, other functions where staff reports to)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The research infrastructure's advisory bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The research infrastructure's staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The professional training and development of research infrastructure staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments



## Policy for Gender Equality

**7. Does your research infrastructure have a formalised policy or other guidelines for gender balance referring to:**

	Yes	No	Planned
The first rank of leadership (directors, general-directors, coordinators)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The second (and if existent third) rank of leadership (heads of units, group leaders, other functions where staff reports to)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The research infrastructure's advisory bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The research infrastructure's staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The professional training and development of research infrastructure staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

**8. Please indicate the gender balance among:**

	More males	More females	Gender equality
The first rank of leadership (directors, general-directors, coordinators)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The second (and if existent third) rank of leadership (heads of units, group leaders, other functions where staff reports to)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The research infrastructure's advisory bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The research infrastructure's staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The professional training and development of research infrastructure staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Other Measures of Equality

9. Are there formalised guiding targets for other measures of diversity beyond gender (e.g. age, ethnic, national or social origin) in:

	Yes	No	Planned
The first rank of leadership (directors, general-directors, coordinators)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The second (and if existent third) rank of leadership (heads of units, group leaders, other functions where staff reports to)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The research infrastructure's advisory bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The research infrastructure's staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The professional training and development of research infrastructure staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

## Unbiased Recruitment Policy

***Diversity is a key feature of a modern and successful workplace. It allows access to a larger talent pool, increases the number of viewpoints and experiences in a team, which results in improved productivity and the personal growth of all team members. To increase workplace diversity, it is important to assess and restructure recruitment processes to ensure objectivity and inclusiveness.***

**- LIBRA Recruitment Handbook**

10. Does your research infrastructure have a formalised policy or other potential guidelines for recruitment of RI staff in regard to:

	Yes	No	Planned
Job advertisement (e.g. job description, advertisement content)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shortlisting potential applications (e.g. CV assessment, selection strategy)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interviewing candidates (e.g. invitations, interviewer panel)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contracts (e.g. contract offers, negotiations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

## Rules of Procedure

### 1. Staff, recruitment procedures, job call texts and contract templates

#### Recruitment Directors

The Board of Governors is responsible for the attraction, recruitment and retention of the EATRIS Scientific and Business & Finance Directors.

Taking recommendations by the Board of National Directors and Product Group chairs into account, the Board of Governors appoints the directors.

#### Procedure

The job description is distributed among the EATRIS governors, national directors and PG chairs and published in EU scientific journals, recruitment magazines and/or online publications.

From the CV's received, a shortlist of candidates will be selected. Governors, national directors and PG chairs rank the candidates based on their CV's and all or selected ranked candidates will be invited for an interview. After the first two rounds of interviews 1 candidate is selected and nominated for appointment by the Board of Governors.

#### Recruitment staff

The scientific director and the business and finance director are responsible for the attraction, recruitment and retention of C&S staff.

For the scientific staff, the recommendations by the Board of National Directors and Product Group chairs will be taken into account. The Executive Directors appoint staff members.

#### Procedure

For the scientific staff, the job description is distributed among the EATRIS national directors and PG chairs and published in EU scientific, recruitment magazines and/or online publications.

From the CV's received, a shortlist of candidates will be selected. National directors and PG chairs rank the candidates based on their CV's and all or selected ranked candidates will be invited for an interview. After two rounds of interviews, or if necessary more, 1 candidate is selected and nominated for appointment by the executive directors.

#### Contracts

Contracts are signed by the executive directors and administered through the third party, payroll administrator.

#### HR international and diversity policy

EATRIS has a HR diversity policy aiming to recruit staff across gender, cultural and nationality divides.

## **2. Country contributions, secondment, meeting locations**

EATRIS member states pay a yearly country contribution as agreed upon by the Board of Governors. Every year the Board of Governors approves the operational plan and budget for the upcoming year.

In principal, country contributions are paid in cash. Member states may request to pay part of its contribution in kind and/or secondment of staff. Such in kind contributions can be granted if these support one or more line items of the budget as approved by the Board of Governors.

### **Meeting locations**

EATRIS meetings can be organized in the host country as well as in one of the EATRIS member states. In general, meetings of the Board of Governors and National Directors will be organized in the host country.