



Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together



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RESET aims to address the challenges of Gender Equality in Research Institutions from a diversity perspective with the objective of designing and implementing a user-centred, impact-driven, and inclusive vision of scientific excellence.

Consortium partners





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Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) guidelines

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Abbreviations

CoP	Community of Practitioners
GE	Gender Equality
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
EARMA	European Association of Research Managers and Administrators
GIA	Gender Impact Assessment
PI	Principal Investigator
RRI	Responsible research & innovation
RUL	Research Unit Leader
SGA	Sex and Gender Analysis



Executive Summary

Mainstreaming the gender dimension in research activities and outcomes is a topical challenge related to excellence. The gender dimension in research activities requires an ethically sound process in creating high-quality results. Major research funding organisations are increasingly interested in analyses of the gender dimension in research, thereby challenging researchers to review their research plans accordingly. The Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) aims to tackle this challenge. The GIA is not a strict methodology but rather an approach to be further co-designed by local GIA communities of practitioners (CoPs) to ensure its fit into each academic research setting in aiming to improve equality and quality of the knowledge produced. The GIA approach also effectively supports Horizon Europe's mission-oriented work, in which European research and innovation missions have the objective of delivering solutions to some of the greatest challenges that our world is facing, all of them having gender impact.

The GIA guidelines introduce the approach as an institutional and operational set-up. They describe the institutional structures, processes, and resources needed for successful application of the GIA approach, and identify the key stakeholders within a university that are central for its institutionalization and operationalization — the GIA CoPs. Further, the guidelines propose institutional structures needed for gender impact assessment operations to make them standard procedures in an institution. Local GIA CoPs are in a central position to ensure a perfect fit of the GIA within a particular institutional setting as well as its sustainability. The local GIA CoP holds and manages the institutional knowledge crucial for GIA mainstreaming. Therefore, mutual interaction of the CoP members will be facilitated by scheduling co-design sessions for them. Institutionalization and operationalization of the GIA will be finetuned in local co-design sessions. Follow-up reports will help gain deeper insights into the successes and challenges of the GIA approach in each organization. Consultation sessions arranged for the institutional grant writing and support staff will smooth the path of institutional implementation. As the GIA focuses on research content, the immediate target beneficiaries are researchers and research teams. The GIA of research content will be facilitated with a checklist and a consultation session arranged by the institutional grant writing support staff. Based on experience and collected feedback, the local GIA CoP will finetune the checklist as well as the local institutional consultation practices.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the GIA as an institutional and operational function, a specific protocol will be tailored for the university with the assistance of the GIA CoP. The GIA protocol defines the institutional structures, processes, resources, and conditions for GIA services, as well as tools that are available for researchers to conduct a proper GIA for mainstreaming the gender dimension in research. The responsibilities of the local GIA CoP will be specified in the GIA protocol, which describes the institutional engagement, and will seek prior approval from middle and top management of the university

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1. Introduction to Gender Impact Assessment guidelines

According to the 2018 European Research Area (ERA) Progress Report, some significant efforts have been made to include a gender dimension in research across ERA countries and at the EU level. This has resulted in a higher number of publications incorporating a gender dimension, but the overall level of integration remains low.

Mainstreaming (i.e. institutionalizing and operationalizing) the gender dimension in research activities and products is one of the current challenges related to excellence in research. The gender dimension in research activities appears as an ethically sound process resulting high-quality research results and gender-responsible innovations. Increasingly, major research funding organisations are requiring analyses of the gender dimension in research projects, research data and publications, challenging researchers to assess their research plans accordingly.

The RESET consortium aims at tackling this challenge by mainstreaming Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) into the design of new research projects of the partner universities, following up and evaluating the GIA approach and producing related policy recommendations.

The GIA is not a strict methodology but rather an approach to be further co-designed to fit into each academic research setting, with the aim of improving access, inclusion, and equality in the knowledge production process and quality (i.e. gender responsibility) of the produced knowledge. This also supports Horizon Europe mission-oriented work, in which European research and innovation have an objective to deliver solutions to some of the greatest challenges that our world is facing, all of which have a gender dimension.

The GIA guidelines introduce the approach and its benefits in aim to mobilize laboratories and research units to conduct gender impact assessment. After a general introduction to the GIA approach the following chapter provides an overview on organisational structures resources and processes related to the GIA. The guidelines conclude with some ideas on maximising the benefits of the GIA before ending by the further thoughts on the GIA in relation to responsible research and innovation, RRI. GIA is perfectly aligned with institutional gender equality planning (GEP) process, and it supports the overall process of institutional transformation towards a more gender-sensitive culture. Particularly, the purpose is to mainstream the gender dimension into the design of research activities and products (i.e. research results), such as academic knowledge and innovations.

The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure the effective implementation of the Gender Impact Assessment of new research project proposals in universities. The main objective of the GIA approach is to increase intersectional gender responsibility of new research proposals and thus ensure excellence in research processes and results. The GIA



approach aims to improve the success of new research proposals therefore, motivates laboratories to open their doors and implement the approach.

There are various alternative means for basically the same process in which the prevalence and meanings of sex and gender in the various parts and phases of planned research are examined. Usually a composition of the research group, the research questions presented, research methods, and data, as well as the gender-responsible management of the research are considered in examination (Nilsen et al., 2018).

GIA targets the impact and therefore excellence of results. GIA is the final impact assessment phase finalising the process of preceding sex and gender analysis (i.e. careful analysis of sex and gender and their relevancy in the planned research). We can consider Sex and Gender Analysis (SGA) as a foundation for the research project design and the Gender Impact Analysis as its top layer.

Strengthening the gender perspective in research

WP7 aims to improve scientific excellence by strengthening the gender perspective in research activities. Towards this end, the gender dimension will be introduced for researchers, and its meaning for their own research will be elaborated, together with the checklist and related consultations, in the initial design phase of the research activities and products. Further, researchers may then later use the GIA tools—a checklist and consultation—on a voluntary basis. The initial implementation of the GIA will be carried out by the local RESET team members, who will introduce these tools for the GIA CoP and provide information for their use. Local research grant writing support staff are the key members in the GIA CoP, and they represent the core group for GIA implementation. Grant writing support staff together with local experts will introduce the GIA tools in online or live sessions for the interested researchers, research teams, and laboratories.

GIA as an institutional and operational approach

The GIA guidelines present the Gender Impact Assessment as an institutional and operational approach. These guidelines describe the institutional structures, processes, and resources that are needed for successful application of the approach. They identify the key stakeholders within RESET universities that are essential for the institutionalization of the community of practitioners (CoPs) and propose institutional structures needed for the operationalization of the Gender Impact Assessment as a regular practice.

Institutionalization and operationalization will be further defined in each local context in co-design processes. They will also be monitored carefully. Follow-up reports help to develop deeper insights into the GIA approach for its further development.

Processes of GIA - an overview

The GIA guidelines also describe intended processes for the research content, namely, how to facilitate the Gender Impact Assessment, with tools such as the checklist and consultations. The context-specific GIA tools, such as checklist will be translated into



D7.1 GIA guidelines

national languages presented for the local consultation and determined together with the local taskforce of the GIA CoP. The checklists will also be evaluated and further co-designed in collaboration with the local GIA CoP.

More specifically, the GIA checklist will be translated into national languages and taken for use together with researchers within a GIA consultation session. We will also collect detailed feedback on its appropriateness in various research fields. GIA consultation practice will be co-designed and arranged with the local taskforce of GIA CoPs to ensure the best possible adjustments to the existing organisational culture and institutional setting.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the institutional Gender Impact Assessment operations, a particular GIA protocol will be tailored for each RESET University in collaboration with the GIA CoP and approved by the middle and top management of each university.



GIA APPROACH IN BRIEF

What?

GIA guidelines are assisting for mainstreaming (i.e. institutionalization and operationalization) of the gender dimension in research activities and products at higher education institutions. The gender dimension includes:

- Sex—biological, with socio-cultural influence
- Gender—socio-cultural, with biological influence and
- Diversity—intersections with other social categories

Why?

Sex and gender analysis can provide valuable insights and new ideas at all stages of research—from formulating research questions, deciding on methodological choices, and planning of data collection to high quality and applicable research results, production of sustainable knowledge, and theory building. The question is about gender excellence—equality and quality in research and knowledge production.

How?

Effective implementation of the GIA guidelines within higher education institutions follows an organisational approach. The GIA approach builds on consideration of the institutional structures, processes, and resources. GIA will be institutionalized and operationalized together with the local GIA CoP possessing the tacit knowledge on the institutional culture and management.

When?

An online workshop on the GIA approach will be organised for institutional change agents (RESET partners) during the M5 phase of the project. The GIA approach will be piloted in the RESET project throughout its duration for years 2021–2024. Thus, it will be further tailored to meet the needs of laboratories and associated researchers. The main aim is to facilitate a context-specific co-design for GIA the various laboratories of the institutions.

For Whom?

Laboratories or research units are institutional sub-communities working in a particular research area. They often represent the smallest administrative units at universities. Such labs are at the interface between the research practice and the research administration, and, therefore, the main targets and the main beneficiaries of the GIA services. Consequently, the laboratories or research units are the central interface in efforts to address gender inequality.



2. Gender Impact Assessment as an organisational practice

This chapter provides a brief overview of institutional mainstreaming of sex and gender analysis (SGA) and consequent Gender Impact Assessment (GIA). To ensure the benefits of the overall sex and gender analysis of a research project and the consequent Gender Impact Assessment, efficiency is one of the prerequisites. Therefore, SGA and GIA are presented and elaborated here as an organisational practice. The question is about the institutionalization of GIA as a part of relevant existing institutional operations. Here, we propose that GIA can be introduced within an institution as a new organisational service and a practice offered by the university's grant offices and research support services. The main purpose is to fit in, at least partially, a new institutional function for a research institution.

2.1 Structures

Institutional engagement in mainstreaming of the gender dimension into the research design of research activities and products is essential as it brings in the systematic implementation of such practices. Institutional engagement is a critical success factor and a starting point for mainstreaming the GIA approach.

Top management serves as the institution's strategic level, as far as it provides access to the other levels in the university hierarchy. Although middle management has a central role in sex and gender analysis and GIA, it also functions as an administrative level. Middle management operationalizes the institutional-level instructions and finetunes them for laboratories, research units, and various services. Laboratory heads or research unit leaders have the financial responsibility over the successful management of the unit. Research support services usually provide services for individual researchers to ensure success in acquiring external funding. However, Principal investigators (PIs) are the core group and are thus at the operational level of sex and gender analysis and GIA.

A PI's research project plan will be analysed applying sex and gender as analysis categories upon which gender impact will be assessed. Therefore, PIs' involvement in the GIA CoP and the co-design process of GIA structures is crucial. Furthermore, the participation of grant writers or other research support experts is essential for the actual implementation of the GIA.

Table 1 provides an example of the central intra-institutional actors and their tasks relevant to an institutional setting of the Gender Impact Assessment practice. It also introduces core members of a GIA Community of Practitioners—an institutional body coordinating the institutional implementation of this assessment. It is important to include representatives from top and middle management of research administration and research support services in order to define institutionalization and concrete operationalization of GIA implementation. The GIA CoP may include other relevant actors e.g. gender equality experts from various fields and ICT-specialists that could



contribute to the co-design and programme online checklist practices to serve for GIA purposes.

Table 1. Central organisational actors related to Gender Impact Assessment

LEVEL	POSITION	TASK	DESCRIPTION	MOTIVATION
TOP management	Vice-Rector for research	Strategy	Research strategy and profile at the University level	EXCELLENCE
MIDDLE management	Research Support Services	Services	Institutional support for research grant application preparation.	EXCELLENCE SUCCESS
MIDDLE management	Laboratory Heads; Research Unit Leaders (RULs)	Administration	Administration of the research groups activities e.g. grant applications.	EXCELLENCE SUCCESS ADVANCEMENT
PRACTICE level	Principle Investigator (PI)	Research	Research project ideation, planning, realization, and grant application preparation.	EXCELLENCE SUCCESS ADVANCEMENT IMPACT
GENDER EXPERTS	Gender studies scholars	Research	Gender impact assessment	CONTENT ANALYSIS
ICT EXPERTS		Services		DIGITAL TOOLS
QUALITY management		Quality assurance	Data management, statistics	MEASURES



2.2 Resources

In this chapter we will talk about human resources, namely Communities of Practice CoPs. CoPs are groups of people who share an interest in what they are doing and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better. The GIA approach is profoundly dependent on interested people and their learning.

CoPs are social structures, formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: for example, a group of practitioners working on similar problems and issues; (i.e., gender and equality), a groupe of doctoral students or researchers (i.e., interested in issues of intersectionality), a network of CoPs dealing with the same issues (i.e., CoPs of the EU funded ACT project). People belong to CoPs at the same time as they belong to other organisational structures. In their CoPs, they develop the knowledge that lets them do these other tasks more effectively.

CoPs fulfil a number of functions in respect to the creation, accumulation, and diffusion of knowledge in an organisation (Wenger, 1998): exchange and interpretation of information, retaining knowledge, steward competencies, and provide homes for identities.

Exchange and interpretation of information in knowledge intensive CoPs

The CoP can act as a node for the exchange and interpretation of information. This is because members of the group presumably have a shared understanding and a common domain of knowledge, which both further defines a set of issues handled and creates a sense of common identity.

Inhibitors of information exchange and interpretation within and between CoPs

Within communities, knowledge is continuously embedded in practice and thus circulates easily, while at the same time this practice further helps to generate knowledge and collective know-how. Members of a community implicitly share a sense of what the practice is and what are the standards for judgment, supporting the spread of knowledge.

In RESET project, we can define those communities of practice/practitioners through various characteristics and dimensions. It is important to map those practitioners and experts who are interested and currently engaged in gender equality issues and objectives at universities, in research groups, in faculties, etc., for example, committed through their position, research, or other interest. We shall build up knowledge, understanding and awareness on gender equality issues by exchanging ideas, interest and experiences within CoPs.

GIA CoPs produces and manages knowledge on GIA implementation within an institution. Knowledge management refers to a systemic and organizationally specified process for generating, storing and sharing both individuals' tacit knowledge (those capabilities, know-how), and explicit knowledge (for example, gender perspective being included in project funding instructions and plans) so that an intelligent organization can act on gender to secure its viability and overall success. So, knowledge management



can therefore be defined as the process of creating an environment for organizations to improve their capacity for effective action – where gender equality is embedded in organization's systems, in processes, in strategies, and overall in different levels within organization (individuals, project teams, departments, and administrative levels), and towards society level.

The potential benefits of gender diversity tend to vary across geographical regions, countries and cultures. So, it is required to take into account the factors encouraging the positive effects of diversity at the societal level. Factors that differ across countries include national and supranational policies and legislations, historically and culturally embedded gender norms and ideologies and research-related funding priorities. For example, to develop gender norms promoting equality, to develop policies linking team diversity to funding success.

What kind of resources should a research institution have for Gender Impact Assessment?

In their various forms, SGA as well as GIA have been in use already for some time, especially in women's and gender studies, as well as sex and gender sensitive fields of study. Therefore, some internal expertise related to these matters most likely already exist in the university. The question is how to mobilize it for the benefit of the entire research institution.

However, sex and gender analysis and Gender Impact Assessment may still be new in some research areas, so additional institutional support is needed, such as training, consultation, and checklists for individual use. These will be briefly described in the following chapter. Accordingly, during the RESET project, institutional GIA CoPs will enrich their practical experience by exchanging experiences and receive support from both the RESET team and possibly from other GIA CoPs.

Usually a research institution has a grant office, providing research support services or grant writing assistance. The main task of these services is to provide support for those researchers who are seeking external funding for their research, which is basically everybody. Therefore, these research support services people are the core group responsible for implementation of the GIA.



2.3 Processes

The local GIA CoP will define appropriate processes for the institutional and operational arrangements for GIA. Processes related to SGA and GIA consist of a checklist, a consultation, and a protocol.

2.3.1 Checklist

The GIA checklist will be produced later in M9 (September 2021) of the project and translated into all project languages. It utilizes the SGA and includes crucial points on inclusion of gender perspective in research as well as issues such as gender composition of the research team; division of tasks, when relevant; gender in relation to data collection and its representation in the data, and gender as an analysis category or as a tool of data analysis. The GIA protocol includes procedures that partner organisations will commit to, in assessing new research proposals with the gender dimension as a routine and regular practice of the university.

The GIA of the research plan carried out with the checklist may consist of the following dimensions (mentioned in the RESET survey) and further elaborated by the researcher:

- Ensure gender balance in the project team and in decision-making.
- Formulate research question(s) considering gender diversity.
- Check whether the research problem has different gender impacts.
- Search for studies with a gender perspective when preparing the literature review.
- Avoid projection of stereotypical gender roles throughout the research.
- Use gender sensitive language.
- Disaggregate data by gender.
- Report data in a gender-sensitive manner.
- Ensure that the benefits of the research are gender inclusive.

2.3.2 Consultation

Consultation is a group process in which the whole research idea is discussed with the principal investigator and the research support staff (e.g., grant writer) for the purpose of increasing recognition of sex and gender dimensions in the research and the gender responsibility of the research being planned. The consultation session is based on a detailed analysis of the research plan, preferably sent in advance for the GIA consultation. The GIA checklist will be used as a primary tool for the analysis and session notes for the follow-up purposes. A successful consultation process requires that research funding advisors are trained for SGA and that they are knowledgeable about the impact of gender analyses on the research in each of its critical design and implementation phases. The local RESET team, together with the GIA CoP, will design and arrange together the appropriate training for the research support staff involved in the grant writing process.



2.3.3 Protocol

GIA protocol will be drafted in each RESET university and will define how the institution will maintain GIA services available for researchers during and after the RESET project. The protocol will be produced in all project languages. Its purpose is to enforce the mainstreaming of the gender dimension into the design of research activities and products at the entire university. In practice, this means that the SGA and the GIA will be adopted and institutionalized as a comprehensive institutional system.

Executing the GIA and collecting follow-up data on its implementation will be done to ensure optimal results. A template for a bi-annual follow-up with a special focus on impact will be co-designed together with the GIA CoP. A transparent system for data collection will be established with the aim of monitoring the GIA implementation. Two follow-up reports on GIA implementation will be issued at M24 and M36. These follow-ups will include updates to the GIA guidelines.

3. Maximizing the benefits of the Gender Impact Assessment

The benefits and impact of the GIA will be maximized by precisizing the GIA guidelines based on the feedback received from each GIA CoP. These CoPs will be also in charge of establishing a local follow-up mechanism to collect data on the implementation of the GIA checklists and consultation sessions, developing training for the younger generation of researchers, and ensuring sustainability by institutional GIA protocol, policy recommendations, and dissemination via extensive networks such as EARMA - European Association of Research Managers and Administrators.

GIA AS A SMART PRACTICE

Following criteria generally defines the GIA approach:

- Specific**—mapping possible impact and selecting the targets
- Measurable**—quantifying/qualifying sex and gender in the research
- Achievable**—considering the extension of the projected impact
- Relevant**—increasing quality and applicability of research results
- Time**—bound—effective

Specifying the GIA guidelines

The GIA approach will be implemented and mainstreamed as a regular institutional practice during the RESET project. Follow-up data from the GIA CoP at each RESET university will be collected. The GIA guidelines will be updated twice during the project in M24 and M36. The second update will be published as a part of the deliverable D7.3 GIA Implementation Report.



Measuring GIA results

Institutional arrangement for a follow-up of projects that received GIA consultation and used a checklist will be co-designed in the GIA CoP. This will be conducted in a way that respects the PIs' research design process. Feedback related to an improvement in scientific gender excellence, such as summaries from grant application evaluation reports, will be collected. Our conclusions will be compiled for a RESET GIA Implementation Report. This final report will be a deliverable of the whole WP7.

Achieving GIA

GIA online training for the younger generation of researchers following Master's and PhD programmes will be developed and implemented in months 37 to 45 of the RESET project. This novel GIA training is not included in WP4 but will be designed by UOULU and UŁodz and delivered in WP7 in collaboration with WP4 for all RESET universities. The aim of the GIA training is to ensure new researchers' knowledge of the GIA approach. The training will illustrate the benefits of GIA for research in general and their own research in particular. GIA training will facilitate development of GIA skills necessary for responsible research and innovation (RRI).

Relevance of GIA

University of Oulu, in cooperation with Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (WP3), will identify necessary digital tools for follow-up mechanisms and to support GIA policymaking. At the end of the project, D7.4, GIA policy recommendations for new research proposals will be published and disseminated within European university rectors' network. Dissemination of the GIA on a practitioner level will be carried out via EARMA to contribute to their activities.

Time Bound

Findings on the implementation phase of the GIA approach, M1 - 48 of the RESET project will inform the design and drafting of policy recommendations (deliverable D7.4. GIA policy recommendations) published at the end of the project.



4. Further thoughts

GIA relates with the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), which provides a broader ethical policy formulation and criteria for high quality research. RRI is an approach that anticipates and assesses potential implications and societal expectations with regard to research and innovation, with the aim to foster the design of inclusive and sustainable research and innovation. RRI is a 'cross-cutting issue' in Horizon 2020; it is a key action of the 'Science with and for Society' objective. RRI is firstly, involving society in science and innovation 'very upstream' in the processes of R&I to align its outcomes with the values of society; and secondly, a wide umbrella connecting different aspects of the relationship between R&I and society: public engagement, open access, gender equality, science education, ethics, and governance. According to Von Schomberg (2011; 9), RRI is a: "... *transparent, interactive process by which societal actors and innovators become mutually responsive to each other with a view on the (ethical) acceptability, sustainability and societal desirability of the innovation process and its marketable products (in order to allow a proper embedding of scientific and technological advances in our society)*". RRI seeks to align technological innovation with broader social values, and to support the institutional decisions concerning the goals of research and innovation in conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity. RRI aims to engage public and responsible actors in the science and innovation field to produce ethically acceptable, sustainable and socially desirable research and innovation outcomes.

- Diversity and Inclusion, involving a wide range of actors in all stages of R&I policy development will strengthen science and innovation.
- Anticipation and Reflection; discussing the kind of future we are working towards and how research and innovation may shape that future.
- Openness and Transparency; opening the processes by which decisions are reached and science is conducted, so all can see and understand them.
- Responsiveness and Adaptive Change; responding to new knowledge, views and circumstances – both in terms of behaviour, thought, and structure of organisations.

RRI is a challenge but a great opportunity for universities - Gender-aware policies have a positive impact on the excellence and efficiency of research. Gender Equality is about promoting gender balanced teams, ensuring gender balance in decision-making bodies, and always considering the gender dimension in R&I to improve the quality and social relevance of the results.



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