



Fraunhofer Gesellschaft

Guide

to writing a Gender Action Plan
for submission with proposals
to the European Union's
6th Framework Programme

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6th Framework Programme (FP)

Gender mainstreaming is more than just a political buzzword. The consideration of gender mainstreaming will become more important for the funding of future European research projects.

Therefore proposers in FP6 should consider gender mainstreaming aspects during the preparation and implementation of research projects.

These guidelines aim at helping proposers of Integrated Projects (IPs) and Networks of Excellence (NoEs) to integrate gender mainstreaming in their research project proposals.

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1 What is gender mainstreaming?

Definition

“Gender” describes the sexually defined roles of men and women in a social and cultural context. Gender mainstreaming means identifying and integrating the different circumstances and interests of women and men in every project with a social or political dimension, both in advance of and at regular intervals during its implementation. Individual measures applied in the interests of gender equality should be accompanied by the objective of removing the need for them in the long term.

Explanation

In appreciation of the fact that the perception of equality between the sexes is an ongoing process, the present trend is to turn away from an approach to equal opportunities based on positive discrimination, and to replace it with efforts to raise awareness of the wider issues involved. The promotion of women does not mean applying the same assumptions and equivalent measures as the support of men. In traditionally structured European society, it is usual to regard men’s needs, situations and characteristics as the norm and apply the same criteria to women. The objective of gender mainstreaming is to consider the differences between men’s and women’s life patterns and to use them as a starting point for all actions.

The success of this approach has been confirmed, for example, in the first health report for women, which concluded that, due to a lack of female test subjects, female heart patients were being treated with incorrect doses of medication. Women need different doses of aspirin for blood dilution than men. Failure to account for these differences has led to verifiable fatalities in the past. In the field of drug research today it is increasingly self-evident to consider the needs of both sexes.

Including gender aspects is no great innovation, as the evidence shows in many sectors of the economy. Women represent a distinct customer group with its own market requirements, which are by no means limited to the choice of vacuum cleaners. Many manufacturers are seeking to attract the spending power of this new flourishing market. In many other areas of life, politics remains the driving force behind initiatives that assess the consequences of various actions on the life of women, who after all represent more than 50 percent of the population. This also applies to research and public research funding.

The European Union has established a new set of standards in the Treaty of Amsterdam. Government institutions and the scientific community in the Member States will be expected to follow suit.

2 Why these guidelines?

The European Commission pronounced its commitment to a strategy of gender mainstreaming in 1996, according to which all political activities are expected to contribute to the promotion of gender equality. The Commission pursues the following objectives in the area of research:

- to increase the participation of female researchers in research projects,
- to increase representation of women scientists in evaluation, consultation and implementation processes; for FP6, a quota of at least 40 percent is required for either sex on these panels,
- to re-orient research so that it addresses the needs of both women and men.

To implement these objectives, the European Commission requires that the scientific community should deal with gender issues while preparing a research proposal. This should be documented in a short action plan on gender mainstreaming.

The documentation is demanded of proposers of IPs and NoEs. Further information can be found in the respective work programs and in the “Guide for Proposers”. The consideration of gender aspects has been introduced in the evaluation as a soft criterion. We nevertheless recommend the adoption of a serious approach to this part of the application, given that the Gender Action Plan is likely to play a significant role with regard to the anticipated oversubscription

3 Gender Action Plan: Requirements for FP6 projects

The submission of a Gender Action Plan is a compulsory requirement in applications for Integrated Projects (IPs) and Networks of Excellence (NoEs). It consists of the following two sections:

- Measures to support equal opportunities (see 3.1)
- Consideration of gender aspects in the contents of research (see 3.2) ¹

Besides the final project report, another report should be presented to the Commission, referring to the accomplished measures for gender equality and their success at the end of the project. The following examples are intended to help you with the preparation of an action plan, but you are strongly encouraged to add your own ideas.

3.1 Gender Action Plan, part I: Promotion of equal opportunities

In the first part of the Gender Action Plan, the applicants are expected to describe systematic measures for the promotion of women. These may include e.g. the number of participating female scientists and managers, or the provision of childcare facilities by the institute. The main points to be considered are listed below as subheadings. Examples of measures that have been implemented in the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft and which could be adopted by your organization can be found in the Annex.

Quantitative statistics

- Introductory statement on the number of participating women in comparison with the number of female graduates in the respective scientific fields
- Breakdown of staff according to salary groups, full-time equivalents, contract duration

Work / life balance ²

- Childcare facilities provided by the institute
- Opportunities for part-time working and working from home
- Availability of further infrastructures for the compatibility of family and job

¹ See Annex 4 in "Guide for Proposers", <http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/calls.cfm>

² Measures for the compatibility of professional and personal life.

Networking / recruitment

- Integration of female doctorates within the project
- Creating a network of female scientists within the framework of the project
- Networking of universities and schools in order to raise girls' interests in research, scientific work and education, e.g. a "Girls' Day", female engineering days, internships
- Analytical investigations, studies, seminars and workshops devoted to gender-related topics

Gender in language use

- The change of awareness should also be reflected in the language used in your research proposals and reports. It is advisable to avoid vocabulary that implies an exclusively male readership, or suggests that the research findings apply only to men. It may be important to emphasize aspects of specific relevance to women. Project proposals are mainly written in English, which makes fewer distinctions between male and female speech forms than other languages. Care should be taken to make specific reference to women whenever it is necessary to express female needs and life situations.

Gender representative

- Nomination of a person to supervise and attend to the consideration of gender aspects throughout the duration of the project

3.2 Gender Action Plan, part II: Consideration of gender aspects in the research project

Gender mainstreaming in research means integrating gender aspects in the whole research project. Gender aspects must be taken into consideration while formulating and designing the research concept. This is the only way the scientific work can be orientated towards gender aspects. The needs of women are different from those of men and are rarely considered explicitly, as most research is carried out by male scientists and innovation is generally viewed from a male perspective. Hence, before starting out on any research project, it is appropriate to reflect on the consequences of the research findings for each of the two sexes, in order to eliminate all gender discrimination from the outset.

4 Example of a Gender Action Plan

The following imaginary gender action plan is based on a real research project conducted by the Fraunhofer IMS, the so-called “Intelligent House”. Certain paragraphs might usefully serve as “modules” for incorporation in your own proposal. Others can be adapted to your specific project or supplemented by your own ideas.

Abstract

The objective of the proposed research project is to design a network linking the technical equipment installed in a domestic environment and to equip the home with smart features. This network will be based on convergent technologies derived from the fields of embedded wireless Internet and intelligent building services. These technologies will be applied in the context of the smart environment provided by the Duisburg “inHaus” infrastructure. The various applications employ technologies derived from the fields of multiservice terminal devices, multimedia infrastructures, sensors and actuators.

The Applications Center focuses on new location-based services, new teleservices and new navigation functions for localization and indoor navigation in buildings.

Example of a Gender Action Plan for use in FP6 IP and NoE applications

Part I: Measures for the promotion of equal opportunities

Module: Establishing equal opportunities is a strategic objective of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. The following goal has been set as part of the organization’s corporate strategy for 2003–2005:

“...The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft aims to become a leader in the establishment of measures to promote equal opportunities and to create a balanced equilibrium between the demands of family commitments and professional work. ... As part of this policy, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft aims to bring more women into applied research.”

The realization of this corporate objective requires greater commitment on the part of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, both internally and externally. It can only be achieved through a greater willingness of its managers. Since its inception in the 1990s, the policy of equal opportunities adopted by the organization has

produced tangible results. The proportion of women scientists has risen steadily each year to a present level of 15.1 percent in 2003.

The compatibility of leisure time, family and job has a high priority for both female and male staff. To be an attractive employer, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft has to offer every employee the possibility to organize his / her work in flexible terms. The part-time and teleworking models already offered by the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft as well as the little-used opportunity for sabbaticals³ will be systematically extended.

Note: At this point, the proposal-writer could insert general examples referring to the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, such as those quoted in the Annex, or provide examples from his / her own institute, e.g. participation in an in-house mentoring program.

Quantitative statistics

In the context of the “Intelligent House” project, the proposing institute has paid appropriate attention to ensure a balanced task distribution (where possible) between female and male scientists working for the institute.

The researchers selected to work on this project are qualified in the fields of information science, mathematics and electrical engineering. The national average rate of women graduates in these disciplines is approximately x percent⁴ per year. The number of female scientists engaged in the “Intelligent House” project is 12 percent (see Table page 15).

³ Sabbatical describes a 3-to-12-month period of unpaid leave granted to employees wishing to further their education, realize a personal project, or recover their physical and intellectual resources.

⁴ Insert the appropriate figures for your project.

Composition of the "Intelligent House" research team

	Total	Men (total)	Women (total)	Women with children	Women on part-time contracts	Men with children	Men on part-time contracts
Scientific staff	38	36	2	1			
Technical staff	6	3	3				
Management	6	5	1	1			

	Female employees		Male employees	
	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent
BAT 2a / 2	3		9	
BAT 2a		2	24	6
BAT 1b		1	1	
BAT 1a			4	
BAT 1				

The women members of the "Intelligent House" project team are principally qualified in the fields of information science, electrical engineering, and mathematics.

Measures to improve work / life balance

Module: For a better compatibility of professional and private life, all participating research institutes operate a system of flexible working hours. Part-time working schemes are offered by all project partners, including industry partners.

Networking / recruitment

In order to increase women's participation in the project, the project coordinators have contacted the "European Academy for Women in Politics and Economy Berlin" (EAF), a European female scientist network⁵. A workshop dealing with "gender-specific issues in the intelligent environment" was held at the University of Dortmund on February 1, 2003 in collaboration with the EAF. Further workshops will be held at nine-monthly intervals.

⁵ The EAF is an association run by women for women working in science and research. One of its main activities is offering consulting on the content, methods and targets applied in a variety of scientific and research fields. The overriding aim of the EAF is to establish true equality of the sexes in the professional and educational environment. The EAF pursues the goal of increasing the number of women at all hierarchical levels in the scientific and research community.

There are plans to recruit a woman doctoral scientist to the project through the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft's women's doctorate program. Five Fraunhofer Institutes and three European project partners took part in the "Girls' Day" event (April 2003) with a workshop on "girls and the intelligent environment".

Seven project partners (Motorola, Nokia, Alcatel, Tele Danmark, TNO, Infineon Technologies and Deutsche Telekom) have offered to sponsor work experience assignments for the duration of the project. Five of them intend to give preference to female applicants.

Gender in language use

In order to raise awareness of gender issues in the everyday working context, the Fraunhofer IMS intends to pay greater attention to discriminatory use of language, also in dealings between members of research teams.

Gender representative

To guarantee continuous monitoring and surveillance of gender aspects, the coordinating Fraunhofer IMS has elected a women's representative for the duration of the project. Her tasks will include coordinating the networking with the female scientist networks and checking project documentation for gender aspects. This formal procedure is already having a positive effect on the project work by stimulating constant awareness on the part of the male members of the team.

Part II: Consideration of gender aspects in the research project

Great emphasis was placed on the consideration of gender aspects during the conception of the "Intelligent House" project. A systematic survey of 100 persons (50 percent women, 50 percent men) working in the fields of electronics, microelectronics and telecommunications was conducted by means of a questionnaire designed to gather data on gender-related preferences and attitudes.

As a result, the original research plan was modified as follows:

1. Gender-specific user interfaces

The particular needs and living situations of men and women have to be considered during the product design phase. In contrast to men, who tend to be more interested in technology (gadgets), women prefer applications with a clear emphasis on functionality and clarity. User interfaces must be designed to accommodate the respective demands and expectations of both user groups, and be easily adapted to the particular user.

For example, special attention was paid to the ideas expressed by the women interviewees when designing the user interfaces for the planned intelligent shutters.

This aspect will be taken into account in the plans for all user interfaces in the project, e.g. remote control for space heating and sauna. The idea is being taken a step further by creating adaptive graphical user interfaces which adapt automatically to the gender-specific behavior patterns of the user. This self-learning capability allows intuitive operation by each individual user.

2. Families with children

Evaluation of the questionnaire revealed that warning functions in the domestic area are judged as essential by families with very young children (e.g. identification of persons approaching the kitchen stove). As a result, additional motion detectors and coupled alarm systems have been installed in those areas of the home that represent a danger to small children, e.g. domestic appliances (coffee machine, kitchen hob, oven), electric heaters and sauna. Smart sensors are able to identify different family members in the home and activate an alarm only if a child is approaching a potential hazard.

3. Women and technology

The purpose of this project is to develop an infrastructure that provides interactive and high-performance services. The shared use of infrastructure in a smart environment will make it possible to provide services which until now were rarely considered as realistic, due to high costs. In particular, it will open up new possibilities in the domain of teleworking. Women will be the first to benefit from the ability to work from home equipped with a full range of professional facilities, given that they still carry the main burden of childcare responsibilities.

4. Men and technology

The integration of the remote-controlled garage gateway was specially tailored to the demands of men. This was rated “essential” by almost all men who took part in the survey.

Further remarks on the preparation of a Gender Action Plan for your project proposal

Further suggestions concerning the integration of gender mainstreaming in your research project:

Methods for gathering data to differentiate between needs

A suitable method for gathering data on gender-specific preferences and attitudes is the use of questionnaires, which should be filled out by equal proportions of women and men. There is no need to undertake specific measures to determine such factors if, for example, women scientists are adequately represented in the composition of the project team.

Gender-specific differences can be easily discerned if the questionnaire is worded appropriately. Two possible answers should be offered for each question, in order to avoid the neutral stance which, according to behavioral research, women have a tendency to prefer. It is advisable to appoint a person within the project or to obtain the assistance of an external expert to assess the whole project for conformance with gender issues.

5 Conclusion

The consideration of gender aspects in research projects is a relatively new approach which still presents certain problems with respect to implementation. While gender aspects are clearly evident in some areas, e.g. in therapeutic medicine, the necessary problem awareness, knowledge base and methodologies are often lacking in other areas, especially in technology and the natural sciences.

The purpose of these guidelines is to suggest ways of incorporating gender aspects in research proposals. The concrete issues and scope of action vary from project to project, depending on its content and composition. The most important factor is that an attempt is made to assess each project for possible gender relevance and to integrate this aspect in the project. Even if the content of the project appears to offer no evident points of reference for gender-related issues, measures for work / life balance and equal opportunities can always be applied (see Annex). The examples given in this guide are merely provided for reference, and are by no means to be regarded as complete. You are free to omit those that do not correspond to your requirements.

On the basis of past experience, we are aware that researchers find it hard to accept the necessity for such time-consuming and apparently pointless demands. But please bear in mind that your future EU project proposals will be evaluated by a panel consisting to 40 percent of women.

6 Female contacts

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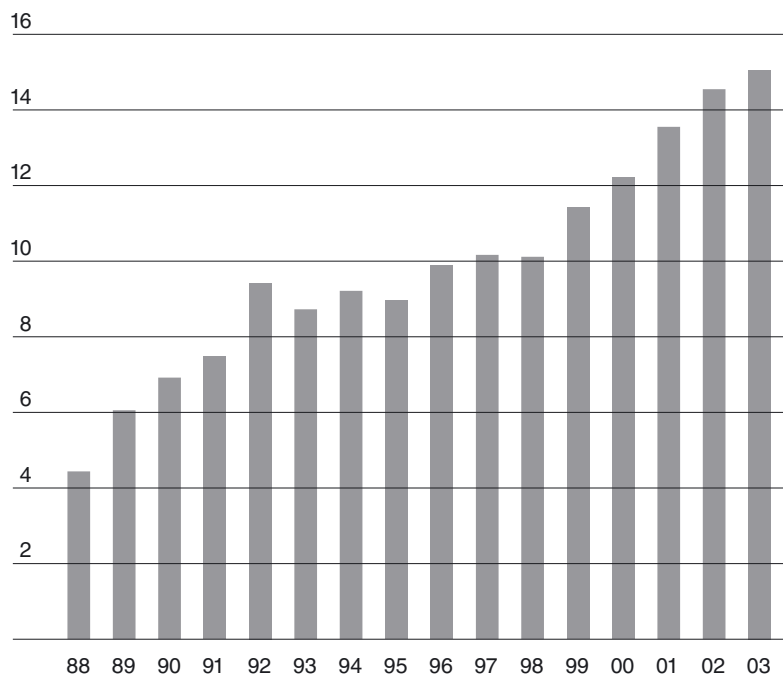
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Work / life balance, gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities in the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft aims to be a leading organization in realizing equal opportunities and the compatibility of job, family and leisure time. This corporate objective demands a strong commitment from the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in its internal and external relations. This can only be achieved through a greater willingness on the part of management.

Involving more women in applied research is an important objective of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. Women's participation has to be increased in all areas where their participation is currently low. The decision taken in the 1990s to give emphasis to equal opportunities as an integral part of human resources policy has been very successful. The proportion of female scientists has risen continuously to reach 15.1 percent in 2003:

Percentage of women on the scientific staff at Fraunhofer



Nevertheless, the goal of achieving a well-balanced gender distribution in the working environment has yet to be achieved. In terms of gender mainstreaming, the different life situations and needs of men and women have to be considered from the

beginning and continuously reviewed in every project and program. The resulting findings are used to improve gender equality aspects in personnel recruitment and throughout the whole period of employment of women. The compatibility of leisure time, family and job has a high priority for both female and male staff. To be an attractive employer the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft has to offer every employee the possibility to organize their work in flexible terms. The part-time working schemes and teleworking models already offered by the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft as well as the little-used possibility of sabbaticals will be consequently extended.

Best practice activities in the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

Many Fraunhofer Institutes offer special work experience opportunities and open days to encourage more young women to take up an interest in technical subjects and thus widen their range of possible career choices. The “Girls’ Day” project, sponsored by two German ministries, has become a permanent institution within the Fraunhofer Institutes since the year 2002.

The female doctorate program contributes to the promotion of future scientists within the scope of equal opportunity policies. The Executive Board of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft introduced this program in 1999 to motivate and reward Fraunhofer Institutes to engage more female junior employees. The selection criteria are the quota of female scientists, equal opportunity policies in the institutes and faculties (preference given to faculties in which women are under-represented, such as physics, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering). A seminar on “career planning for junior women scientists” was elaborated for the participants to help them with the planning of their future career.

Like other organizations, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft employs mentoring programs as a means of helping women to make progress in their careers. Each junior candidate is supervised by an experienced manager. Some mentoring programs allow students to take an inside look at the world of research, others are designed as internal programs. The cross-mentoring program in Munich takes a more unusual approach: The mentor and “mentee” come from different companies. This allows them to speak more freely about problems and weaknesses than if they were from the same company. A new initiative is offered by the mentoring program “TANDEM...plus”. The Aachen University of Technology, the University of Karlsruhe and the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft cooperate to support junior women scientists on their way to professorship. This program offers universities and research institutions a platform through which to conduct international exchanges of high-potential students, with the long-term aim of achieving gender equality in top academic posts.

Another important part of the Fraunhofer equal opportunities policy is the implementation of the Gender Equity Law: The application of this law and the appointment of a gender representative are intended to avoid discrimination in recruitment activities. Furthermore, these regulations aim at a better compatibility of family and job.

Awards for outstanding human resources policies underline the significance accorded to equal opportunities by the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

In 2000, the Fraunhofer IME was the first institute to obtain the audit certificate for “family and job”, awarded by the non-profit Hertie foundation. More flexible working hours, also for managers, alternating telework and sabbaticals are only a few of many family-friendly possibilities that are offered by the Fraunhofer IME in Aachen and Schmallenberg, and which are meanwhile being emulated by other Fraunhofer Institutes. In 2002, the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO won the TOTAL-E-Quality award.

More and more Fraunhofer Institutes now provide childcare facilities to help staff balance the demands of family and job. The Fraunhofer Institute centers in Stuttgart and Birlinghoven, the Fraunhofer Institute for Integrated Circuits IIS, the institutes in Karlsruhe and the Fraunhofer headquarters all provide nursery and crèche facilities. Similar facilities will be available in Kaiserslautern when the new institute building opens. In 2004, the offer of childcare was extended by the “Stuttgart research holiday”, an offer of research-related activities for children during the long vacation on the Stuttgart campus.

As a research organization the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is predestined to work on research projects dealing with gender aspects, e.g. “Roberta – Girls conquer robots”. This project, sponsored by the German federal ministry of education and research, introduces girls to the intriguing world of robots. The course instructors are specially trained for the task, and use experimental teaching material designed to appeal to girls.

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