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As reported in a previous UKRO article, a gender equality plan will be mandatory under those Horizon Europe calls opening in 2021 with deadlines in 2022. The plans must be produced by beneficiaries established in Members States/Associated Countries, which are public bodies, research organizations or higher education establishments.

UKRO understands that the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility (SWGGRI) and the European Research Area (ERA) will be developing and launching knowledge and support facilities, such as guidance documents and factsheets to help organisations develop gender equality plans. They will also provide dedicated training opportunities beginning in March and extending throughout the summer. Moreover, UKRO understands that legal entities will need to complete a detailed questionnaire designed to ensure the institutions gender equality plan meets certain minimum requirements, as highlighted in a dedicated UKRO article. The questionnaire will only need to be completed once by the Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR), unless the status of the organisation changes. At the proposal stage, those beneficiaries that are required to have a gender equality plan will also need to complete a gender equality plan self-declaration (see previous UKRO article) and the Commission will check that the gender equality plan is in place during the Grant Agreement Preparation (GAP) phase. The content of the gender equality plan will not be 'evaluated' but failure to comply will result in a breach of compliance with regards to organisational eligibility.

The Commission is also looking into the possibility of developing a prize for organisations with the most advanced gender equality plans and who has made the most progress in developing and implementing these. They are also looking at the possibility of developing an accreditation system for organisations, although no time frame for this activity is known at this time.

For those looking for additional information on how to develop a gender equality plan, the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool is based on Framework Programme 7 (FP7) and Horizon 2020 projects that focused on issues related to gender, and has been designed to provide universities and research organisations with practical advice and tools to support the development and implementation of gender equality plans.

Finally, the Commission has developed a new 'Gender equality in research and innovation' page and has recently published a new factsheet that sets out the main novelties of how they will tackle gender inequality under Horizon Europe.

Horizon Europe, Gender