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Gender and International cooperation

INTRODUCTION

In this part of the toolkit, we take a closer look at how gender is relevant in the specific field of *International cooperation* in FP7.

A first section briefly points out the broad **relevance of gender within the field**. The toolkit continues with a more specific discussion of the topics which have been put forward by the European Commission in the field's work programme. This is followed by suggestions regarding gender-relevant issues which may be taken up by the teams.

To illustrate how projects in the field of *International cooperation* can be made gender-sensitive, **three real-life examples** of projects are included. Each case consists of a short text presenting the project and a discussion of the gender-relevant issues in relation to the planned work, both in terms of equal opportunities and in terms of the content of the work. These examples are based on project summaries as they can be found on the *CORDIS FP7 website*¹ and relate to different topics within the field's work programme.

Finally, a selection of **useful references** dealing with gender in the field of *International cooperation* is provided.



¹ http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/projects_en.html

GENDER AND THE *INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION* FIELD

FP7 and *International cooperation*

In FP7, international cooperation aspects form part of three programmes: Capacities, Cooperation and People. Theme-oriented international cooperation actions will be carried out under the Cooperation programme, international actions in the area of human potential will be carried under the People programme and horizontal support actions and measures with a focus other than a specific thematic area will be implemented under the Capacities programme.

Objectives of International cooperation under the FP7 Capacities programme :

To become more competitive and play a leading role at world level, the European Community needs a strong and coherent international science and technology policy. This international policy has three objectives:

- To support European competitiveness through strategic partnership with third countries in selected fields of science and by engaging the best third-country scientists to work in and with Europe;
- To enhance the production of knowledge and scientific excellence by enabling European universities, research institutions and firms to establish contact with partners in third countries, thereby facilitating access to the research environment outside Europe and promoting synergies on a global scale;
- To address specific problems that third countries face or that have a global character, on the basis of mutual interest and benefits.

How is gender relevant to this field?

Activities within the Capacities programme are about human networking and working cooperation and as such are gender-relevant, particularly in terms of equal opportunities.

International cooperation – Capacities work programme

The activities undertaken in this field will support:

- **Bi-regional coordination of S&T cooperation including priority-setting and the definition of S&T cooperation policies**

Supporting bi-regional dialogue that will:

- Promote and structure the participation of third countries in the activities of FP7;
- Promote regional integration and lead to the identification and prioritisation of common research areas of mutual interest and benefit;
- Facilitate the uptake and use of common research areas identified, and the monitoring of performance and impacts of international S&T cooperation across the specific programmes of FP7.

The aspects of dialogue, implementation, dissemination, monitoring and review should be considered as complementary.

- **Bilateral coordination to enhance and develop S&T partnership that will:**

- Improve the process of providing information on programmes and funding designed to promote the cooperation of third countries in FP7;
- Better identify and demonstrate mutual interest and benefit in S&T cooperation between the EU and specific third countries;
- Share best practices via joint fora.

- **Supporting the coordination of the national policies and activities of Member States and Associated States in international S&T cooperation.**

- **Other activities, such as evaluation and supporting transnational cooperation among NCPs.**

How is gender relevant to these topics?

- *When collaborating across EU borders, researchers should be aware of how gendered (cultural and economic) differences between consortium partners may influence their perspectives on capacity building, networking, the potential research question(s) and methodologies.*
- *In FP7 special attention will be given to bi-regional coordination of S&T cooperation including priority-setting and definition of S&T cooperation policies; bringing together policy-makers, the scientific community, civil society and private-sector stakeholders from the EU and third countries to identify priorities and define policy orientations; implementing specific activities dedicated to strengthening participation from targeted countries and regions in FP7, including support for information points in the third countries. This means that policy-makers and civil society will be involved. These two actors can be very influential in empowerment and in changing existing gender structures, mechanisms, roles, etc. Researchers should therefore be aware of how gender is relevant in their research content so to make recommendations that help raise gender awareness and stimulate empowerment policies.*
- *Women and men use different techniques and strategies for networking. Virtual computer networks have a gender dimension: access to and control over the network, the role of the 'gatekeeper(s)' and all stakeholders involved are gender constructs. Ensuring equal access to all is important.*

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*Gender and International cooperation***THREE EXAMPLES****Case 1*****S&T dialogue between the EU and Latin America*****Project outline**

The project is a four-year coordination action whose main goal is to strengthen bi-regional dialogue on S&T between EU Member States (MS), Associated States (AS) and Latin American Partner Countries (LAPC) at policy, programme and institutional (research entities) level, thus contributing to a threefold objective:

- promote the joint identification, setting up, implementation and monitoring of priorities of mutual interest for future work programmes across the specific programmes of FP7
- jointly define S&T cooperation policies
- support and stimulate the participation of LAPC in FP7

The project will establish a coordination platform bringing together the key EU and LA policy-makers and programme managers, as well as representatives of research entities, universities and the private sector, eminent researchers and representatives of civil society, to set up dialogue fora at different levels, leading to the identification of S&T policies and priorities and defining specific activities to promote, support and stimulate the participation of LA researchers in FP7 and to strengthen international S&T cooperation. These activities will be aimed at strengthening the EU-LA Knowledge Area.

As political background, the project will consider and develop the ongoing EU-LA dialogue on S&T, since the Rio Summit in June 1999, the ALCUE's Brasilia Action Plan for S&T Cooperation, the Guadalajara Declaration to set up the EU-LA Knowledge Area and finally the Vienna Summit in 2006 and the conclusions of the preparatory senior officials' meeting in Salzburg, taking it as a basis to go further in the practical implementation and updating of the existent policy guidelines.

The project will also consider the achievements of existing cooperation programmes. In this respect, major objectives are:

- Facilitating a bi-regional (and in the case of Mexico, Central America and Andean Countries, a complementary bilateral sub-regional) dialogue, involving stakeholders from policy-making, the science community and industries. The dialogue will address each other's S&T potentials, policy goals and demands to define common priorities and to develop joint scenarios and implementation strategies for strengthening S&T cooperation both at sub-regional and bi-regional levels;

- Facilitating the recommendations of the Brasilia Action Plan reiterated by the Salzburg senior officials' meeting;
- Implementing strategic analysis based on evaluation, impact assessment and scenario studies, in order to provide a knowledge base for the bi-regional/ bilateral dialogue and to support priority-setting and scenario development;
- Strengthening the participation of LAPC in the 7th EU Framework Programme with emphasis in the "Cooperation" part of the programme;
- Supporting the coherence and coordination of S&T cooperation activities with other EU policies (external, environmental, innovation etc.) concerning the LAPC, with an emphasis on the EU-LA dialogue on S&T to set up the EU-LA Knowledge Area and the Education Policy (Lifelong Learning Programme);
- Ensuring sustainability of the coordination and cooperation activities and building of joint ventures between MS, AS and LAPC;
- Setting up S&T-related activities addressing the challenges of the globalisation of research and achieving the global Millennium Goals.

In a concern to increase efficiency, to avoid duplication, to ensure the sustainability of successful activities of the past, and to learn lessons, the project will consider relevant previous and ongoing activities both inside and outside the EU RTD Framework Programme, as well as links with other EU policies.

The consortium is composed of relevant stakeholders that have worked in recent years on several actions aiming to analyse and support European Union-Latin American Scientific Research and Innovation Cooperation.

The coordination action is structured around a number of work packages (WPs) (= on-line workgroups).



Identification of relevant gender issues

Equal opportunities for women and men

This project aims to set up a platform to support and encourage joint research, so equal opportunities for men and women in this platform are very relevant.

It can be assumed that the coordination platform will have different management levels, so not only do we need to make sure that both women and men participate in the platform, but also participation of both men and women should be encouraged whenever possible at all levels of decision-making. For example, when organising meetings, each organisation can be asked to appoint one female and one male delegate as its nominated representative and his/her deputy.

By ensuring a balanced participation by men and women at all levels in the project, the conditions are created for higher gender-sensitiveness of the work that will be performed, which will in turn improve the quality of the project's outcomes.

Since the project will involve a lot of countries, it would be interesting to exchange equal opportunity good practices among these countries.

It is clear from the summary that this network will build upon a lot of previously made cooperation agreements. It would be interesting to examine how gender-sensitive these agreements are with regards to equal opportunities issues.

Gender in the project content

The central task of the coordination platform will be to set up research priorities of mutual benefit and interest. The research priorities should be developed in a gender-sensitive manner, taking into account both men's and women's research needs. It can also include gender-specific topics: setting up a research agenda is an ideal opportunity to incorporate gender topics that have not yet been studied.

The literature in the field of gender theory developed in the EU Member States and in LA countries respectively might give useful inspiration for joint further research, which would usefully complement the existing knowledge base. Such research would furthermore make the link with the EU gender equality policy. The following may be interesting topics for analysis and debate in the project: gender and networking strategies, gender and research topics, gender and (research / industry) workforce statistics.

One of the work packages is dedicated to dissemination, an activity where it is important to reach men and women equally by using dissemination methods that are not gender-biased, to address men's and women's concerns and needs equally, and to produce publications that do not contain gender-stereotypical representations (e.g. pictures of 'scientists' should show both men and women, and not only men). It might also be a good idea to organise a specific event on gender in research.

Case 2

ICT cooperation among the EU, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Project outline

The project, based on the sound outcomes of and lessons learnt in the previous project implemented in Russia in 2006–2008, will expand the experience to the Eastern Europe & Central Asian countries, identifying and promoting the visibility of mutual RTD potential and collaboration opportunities.

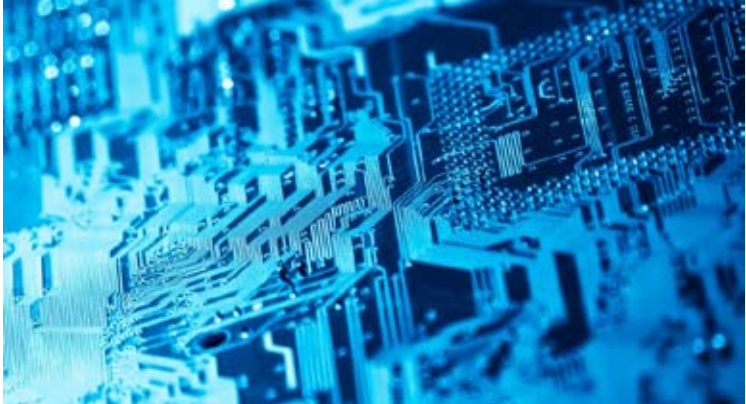
The project will:

- promote the EU ICT programme and raise awareness of the benefits of mutual collaboration;
- identify the potential for R&D ICT collaboration between the European Union and nine countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
- expand the EU-Russian ICT research community to four targeted countries (Ukraine, Belorussia, Armenia and Kazakhstan) through the opening of a competence platform and implementing pilot actions such as networking and brokerage events and assistance with integration into the European Technology Platforms and Networks of Excellence;
- provide support to research teams from the targeted countries with the goal of increasing the number of ICT FP7 partnerships between researchers from Europe and targeted countries.

The project activities will be carried out in collaboration with national stakeholders and other relevant cooperation projects with a view to exploiting synergies and maximising impact.

Several ICT projects will be started deploying the Grid technology. Grid technologies and supercomputing help structure the scientific community and therefore play a key role in the construction of an efficient research and innovation environment.

As an example, the ‘health grid’ is an innovative way to support broad access to rapid, cost-effective and high-quality healthcare. In particular, the areas of health-care provision and research that can be beneficially affected by Grid technology include: medical imaging and image processing; modelling the human body for therapy planning; pharmaceutical research and development; epidemiological studies; genomic research and treatment development.



Identification of relevant gender issues

Equal opportunities for women and men

The project outline does not provide details of the composition of the project team. Since it can be understood that organisations from the EU, Eastern Europe and Central Asia will be networked in the context of this project, it makes sense to draw participants' attention to the importance of a balanced involvement of men and women in the project's activities as well as in future research activities.

The historical backgrounds of the countries involved in terms of gender roles and the combination of family and work are very different. An exchange on these issues, including on the respective policies in the various countries, would probably be helpful to clarify the existing situation and to identify the problems that need to be addressed.

In order to promote equal opportunities and balanced participation, it would therefore be a good idea to provide for a distinct activity in the project, including an exchange of good practices regarding equal opportunities in the workplace.

Since this project builds upon the experience of a previous project, it would be good to look at the workforce statistics of that project and see if there is an evolution on the number of males and females participating according to rank and type of job.

Gender in the project

The project's focus is on the promotion of the EU ICT programme, through all types of activities.

Gender is very relevant in ICT, and much research has been done on this theme which can provide useful input for the planned work. Among the general public, there exist gender differences in computer literacy, in access to ICT, in its use and in its perceived usefulness. And not only are there such gender differences, these are to an important extent subject to other variables: employment status, level of education, income, age, etc. For example, the rate of computer illiteracy is higher among unemployed women than among employed women. It would be laudable if the project undertook specific actions to close (part of) these ICT gender gaps, for example by stimulating projects focusing on such topics. Improving women's access to, knowledge of and use of ICT are important ways to empower them.

Another relevant dimension is women's under-representation in the ICT sector, a sector which is typically regarded as 'male'. This gendered image is explained by the stereotypical association of technology with men. This is a well-known phenomenon which not only has been researched, but has also triggered efforts to attract more women to enter ICT professions. Such initiatives were oriented for example towards convincing more girls to study ICT, or to changing the masculine image of the sector. In light of women's low rate of participation in the field of ICT, it is important to consider the interrelations between gender, work, time and technology. Efforts to redress existing imbalances should thus take into account this broader context and also address the standard gendered patterns, roles and relations.

It would be very interesting and useful if a specific event were organised on 'gender and ICT'. Such an event would not only raise awareness of these important issues, but could also trigger gender-specific ICT initiatives which could be funded through the EU RTD Framework Programme.

Case 3

Research cooperation between Europe and Australia

Project outline

Objectives and approach

The project is dedicated to facilitating effective research cooperation between Europe and Australia. It serves the entire Australian research and innovation community, and plays an active role in facilitating European-Australian research and innovation cooperation.

The overall objectives of the project are to maximise the likelihood that:

- opportunities for attractive and feasible research cooperation are exploited effectively
- Australian researchers can exploit attractive and feasible cooperation opportunities with the far larger European research, development and demonstration effort

This particular project is pioneering the application of a suite of methods and technical tools designed to lead to more effective decision-making. This includes carrying out analyses using quantitative indicators of research and innovation performance, in order to map collaborative activity and to inform the policy community of the benefits arising from support for international research collaboration.

The underpinning rationale for the project is that research and innovation cooperation between Europe and Australia will be enhanced by providing evidence-based answers to the following questions:

- Why collaborate? – Defining collaboration value propositions
- What to collaborate in? – Defining thematic priorities for collaboration
- How to collaborate? – Assessing and recommending strategies and tactics
- Who should collaborate? – Providing advice appropriate to different career stages

Implementation and dissemination activities

Key aspects of the implementation of the project are:

1. **Making Australian R&D capability visible and known:**
 - Providing key information on those aspects of major thematic areas in which the Australian R&D capability is competitive at a global level.
 - Increasing the likelihood of competitive Australian capabilities being recognised and involved in EU FP7 R&D.
 - Providing sufficient resources to enable effective outreach, information and communication.

2. Promulgating best practice strategies and tactics:

- Maximising the benefits and minimising the risks associated with European-Australian R&D cooperation by disseminating appropriate decision-support information for academia and industry.

3. Support activities:

- Developing a website with timely information on EU RTD cooperation opportunities.
- Developing an online database of collaborative projects.
- Providing helpdesk support.
- Planning and delivering collaboration agenda-setting workshops in response to emerging opportunities.

4. Developing a software-based impact monitoring system:

- Developing a software-based method for tracking research engagement across the full life cycle from initial concept/opportunity through to collaboration outcomes.
- Providing an auditable means of demonstrating the project's added value.

As regards dissemination, experience has shown that the most effective means of disseminating information is via opinion pieces written by the Executive Director and placed in national newspapers and professional periodicals. Newspapers and periodicals are keen to publish such pieces provided that they address topical issues. It is usually possible to link a discussion of a particular topical issue with a more general discussion pertinent to enhanced Australian-European research and innovation collaboration.

Significant findings from the project's work on quantitative research and innovation performance indicators will be reported in working papers aimed at the policy community and in relevant peer-reviewed academic journals.

Expected impact

The expected impacts of the project are:

- improved S&T cooperation between Europe and Australia by providing information and by identifying priorities and best partners for collaboration;
- a measurable increase in the number of effective collaborations;
- improvements in mutual understanding of the research systems in Europe and Australia, and in the reciprocal benefits to be obtained from cooperation.



Identification of relevant gender issues

Equal opportunities for women and men

Since this is an ambitious and large-scale project in which a lot of people will be involved, special attention will need to be paid to providing equal opportunities for men and women.

The international mobility of researchers is an important issue that needs to be addressed, especially in the light of the EU-Australian collaborations which the project is pursuing. Different career stages involve different opportunities and constraints regarding mobility, and there are important gender differences in this respect. Consequently, it is important to take these into account and to accommodate a satisfying work-life balance for all, so that male and female researchers can equally contribute to and benefit from the possibilities offered by EU-funded research.

As the project aims to reach many EU and Australian researchers, it might become a platform for exchange on initiatives fostering equal opportunity in the research community.

Gender in the project content

There are four sets of activities in this project: communicating about research and research opportunities, identifying and disseminating best practices, support activities and an impact monitoring system.

In view of the fact that this project promotes collaboration between the EU and third countries, it is especially important to communicate the gender equality objectives in the EU RTD Framework Programme. Concerns about the participation of women in research and the gender dimension in the content of work should thus be explicitly addressed.

Setting up cooperative research projects involves important choices and decisions. The thematic priorities and the composition of the team are two such decisions. Both have a gender dimension which should be communicated and explained to the research community which the project seeks to engage in EU-funded research.

As regards the choice of the thematic priorities, the research community is recommended to reflect critically on the different ideas:

- How do the priorities relate to women's and men's lives respectively, and whose needs do they seek to address?
- May the results of the collaborative action favour one sex more than the other, and if so, can this be justified?
- Does the body of existing knowledge about the possible future thematic priority subject contain references to gender? If not, this might be a prompt towards novel and highly relevant future research.

The management of diverse teams is a challenge, and can constitute a specific issue on which good practice can be identified.

The outline mentions that 'collaboration agenda-setting workshops' will be organised. It is important that both men's and women's interests and research needs are considered in such workshops, and that men and women can contribute equally in them. Moreover, 'gender in research' could be a specific theme of such workshops.

The impact monitoring system that will be set up should track women's participation in research (ideally distinguishing among the different academic levels), as well as identifying those research projects which contribute to building knowledge on gender issues, so that the added value of the project in terms of promoting gender equality can be demonstrated.

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USEFUL READING

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For further information and useful links, please consult the Gender in Research Toolkit and Training website under www.yellowwindow.com/genderinresearch.

