

Gender Equality in Agriculture Higher Education and Research

Promoting gender equality (GE) in Higher Education and Research is crucial for social progress, economic development, sustainability, justice, and equity. GE fosters social diversity, leading to fresh perspectives, ideas, and solutions to various challenges and problems. Additionally, diverse research and student communities contribute to scientific progress and innovation. They highlight less visible or neglected research areas, which can lead to innovative approaches and solutions for societal and scientific challenges.

When it comes to fairness and equal opportunities, education and research should promote equality by providing all talented and ambitious individuals with the chance to develop their skills and reach their full potential, regardless of gender. The presence of both male and female role models can inspire younger generations and encourage more women to participate in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Despite female students outnumbering male students globally, significant challenges exist in achieving gender equality in the STEM field. While universities have policies and services that promote gender equality, the challenge of gender equality is nuanced. Girls continue to face biased and discriminative processes, which significantly contribute to their decreasing participation in PhD programmes and research careers. In addition, women still face significant shortfalls and discrimination in the labour market not just in developing but developed regions.

Gender disparities in tertiary education and job opportunities demand urgent actions, particularly in STEM and agricultural sectors.

Why do we need a special focus on Agriculture?

Agriculture is one of the most widespread activities in the world and has a crucial role in food production, environmental protection, landscape preservation, rural employment and food security. Agriculture is not uniform throughout, there are different elements, such as:

- the scale of farming
- crop and livestock combinations
- intensity of farming
- ways and means of disposal of farm produce
- the level of farm mechanisation (small-scale farmers/informal small-scale agriculture, commercial farming/plantation agriculture, self-sufficient farming, organic farming etc.).

From a gender point of view, there are significant gaps between women and men¹. For example, women farmholders have significantly smaller farms than men farmholders. Moreover, the share of female farmholders is particularly high on farms with no clear specialisation in livestock rearing or crop production. Indeed, 71% of EU farms with livestock are run by male farmholders, and only 27% by

¹ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/performance-agricultural-policy/studies-and-reports/analytical-briefs_en

female farmholders (the remainder belongs to legal persons). Organic farming is practised by around 2% of all EU farmholders, regardless of gender. In 2013, women represented 24% of EU farmholders in organic farming, and they occupied 13% of the EU area devoted to organic farming.

While agriculture is the major food-producing sector, rural development is related to the promotion of the vitality of the countryside and the well-being of rural communities. Rural areas provide food, raw materials, jobs and a wide range of environmental goods and services such as cultural landscapes, biodiversity, carbon storage, water and soils. More than half of the EU's land area is classified as being predominantly rural (51.3% in 2012), whereas 22.2% of the European population is living in these areas.²

Participation of women in employment and economic growth is crucial for reaching the EU 2020 strategy goals, and in this respect, agricultural and rural areas could make a contribution. In 2014, in the EU-28, agriculture was the seventh largest employer of women (3.3%). Agriculture is more important for men in terms of providing employment (5.2%). Meanwhile, these data do not cover the informal rural economy, in which women are still involved. Beyond being professional farmers, women play significant roles in rural families, communities and economies. In addition to paid farm work, women still assume the main share of unpaid responsibilities involved in the running of families and communities.

There is also under-reporting of women's work, as women tend to classify and report themselves as not in employment, particularly when undertaking unpaid agricultural work. In fact:

Nevertheless, rural areas are crucial for the attainment of the Europe 2020 headline target of reaching an employment rate of 75% of the population aged 20 – 64³. Predominantly rural regions generate 22% of total employment in the EU-28, but the employment rate in these areas is lower than in other types of regions. This is especially the case among women, older people and low-skilled workers. Generally speaking, this is mainly due to the lower level of employment opportunities and the lower level of education among the workforce in rural areas. According to the European Commission, women can be at the forefront of innovation and diversification in rural areas by developing new activities, production lines and services, such as agro-tourism activities, artisan food and drink production, craft enterprises, telecommunication and caring services. Women often have the added advantage of an awareness and knowledge of local needs, and specific interpersonal and communication skills⁴.

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² https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Rural_development_statistics_by_urban-rural_typology

³ https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwimuOae78CCAxW02gIHHQcRC8sQFnoECBoQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fsocial%2FBlogServlet%3FdocId%3D21893%26langId%3Den&usg=AOvVaw0n19wzkNK-mN3gyX_VVJe&opi=89978449

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/3/t1815e/t1815e01.htm>

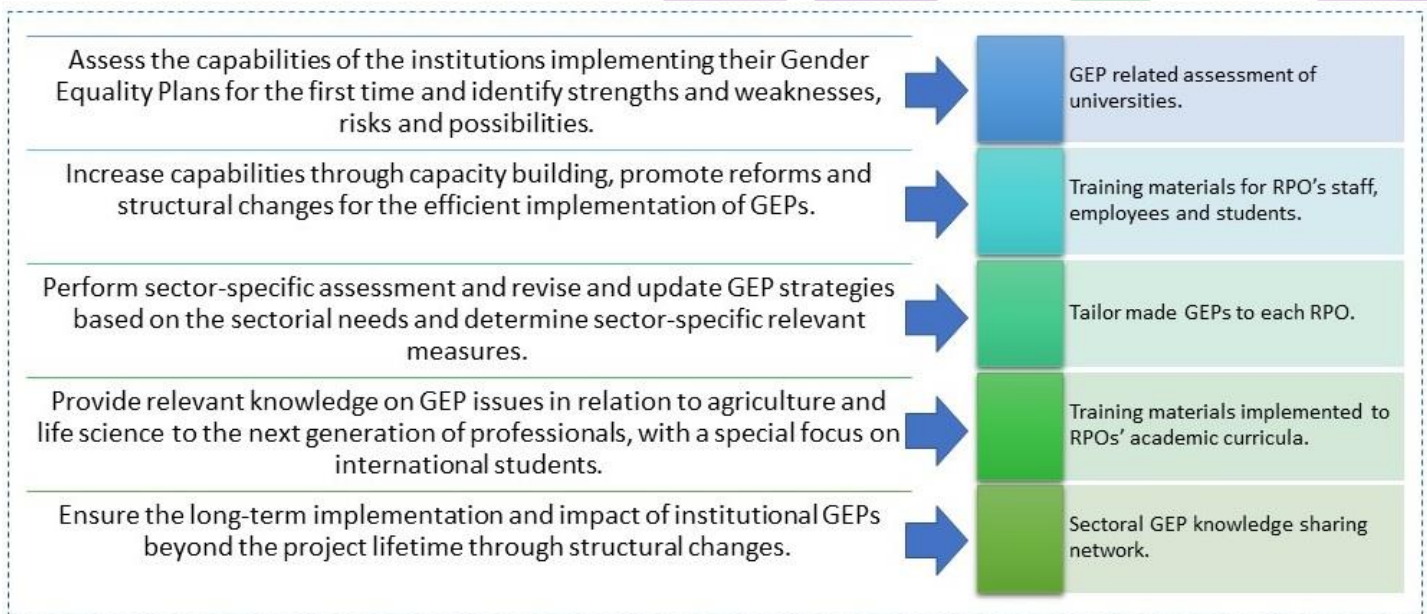
Main Issues of Gender Inequality in the Policy Area

- Unequal participation of women and men in agriculture and rural development
- Ageing and masculinisation of rural areas
- Invisibility of women's role
- Under-representation of women in farm ownership and agriculture decision-making

Gender Equality policy objectives at the EU and international level

The Commission, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP) on 26 June 2013, contributing to its design. One of the legal approaches to gender equality issues in rural areas at the EU level was the Council of Europe Recommendation No. 1321 (1997) on improving the situation of women in rural society. Moreover, Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a bill on women's human rights, specifically deals with rural women. Gender equality is central to the mandate of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This is to help achieve food security for all by improving agricultural productivity, nutrition levels and rural populations' lives.

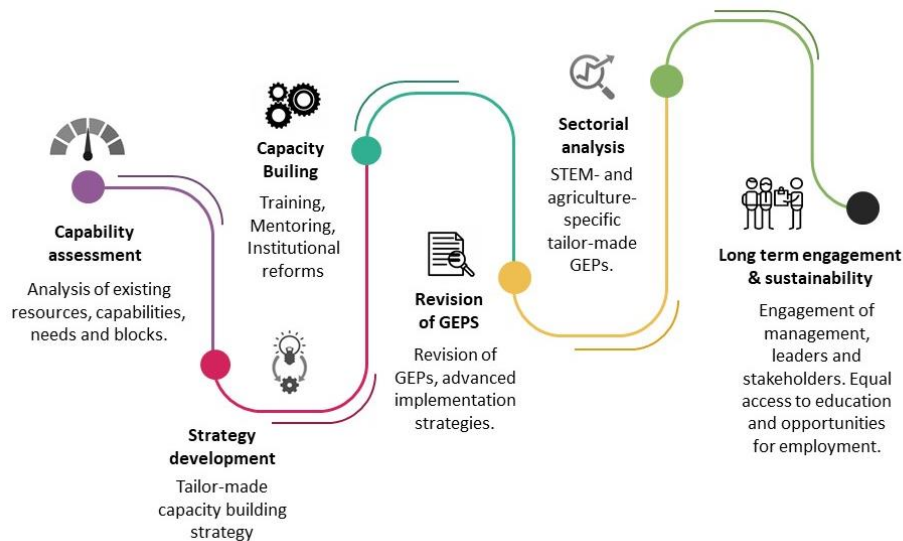
OBJECTIVES of the AGRIGEP project:



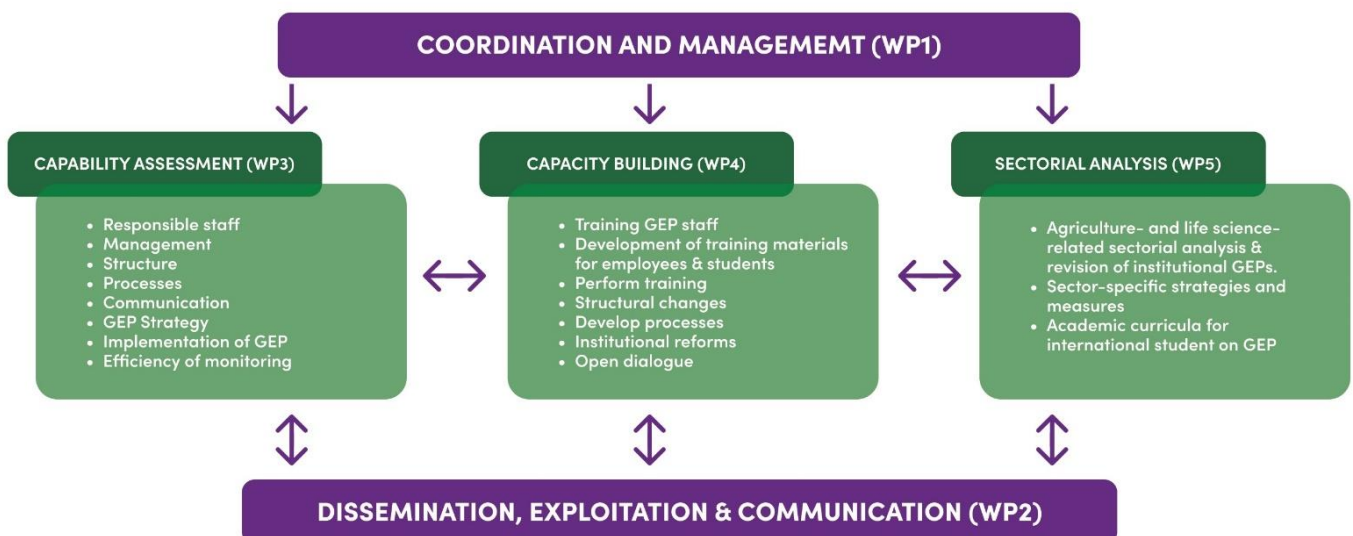
MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Perform a responsible assessment of widening research partners organisations' current status on Gender Equality Plan (GEP) implementation;
- Improve capabilities through intensive capacity building;
- Develop and implement agriculture and life-science targeted GEP with sectorial-specific measures and strategies;
- Integrate GEP targets into the academic training materials of Research Performing Organisations (RPOs);
- Foster and support long-term structural changes of RPOs.

ROADMAP TO REACH OUR GOALS



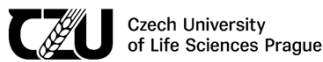
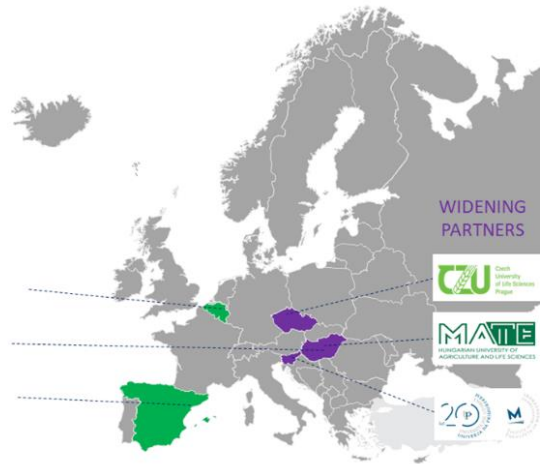
WORK PACKAGE STRUCTURE



PARTICIPANTS



The **Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences** (MATE) is the largest agriculture and environmental science-oriented higher education organization in Hungary, founded in 2021. Its legal predecessor was Szent István University, with decades-long existence. The University offers more than 50 diploma and degree courses as well as 52 MSc programs with a total of over 13000 students, and 14 Doctoral Schools with 756 PhD students.



Czech University of Life Sciences (CZU) is a leading educational and research centre in the Czech Republic. It encompasses more than one hundred years of tradition with the newest technologies, progressive science, and research activities in agriculture, forestry, bioeconomy and biotechnologies, landscape architecture, environment, food, wood sciences, economics and business, management, ICT, rural development, mechanical engineering, and pedagogy.



University of Primorska (UP) was established in 2003 as a third public university in Slovenia. It consists of 6 Faculties, 1 Research Institute, 1 Student Residence and the University Library. The vision of UP is in building and consolidating its position through its scientific research, educational and artistic activities and its commitment to the local and wider society, as a respected and excellent university in the global academic arena.

Mentors:



Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya BarcelonaTech (UPC) is a public institution of research and higher education in the fields of engineering, architecture, sciences and technology. The university offers more than 66 diploma and degree courses, 81 MSc courses and 45 PhD Programmes among its 9 campuses.

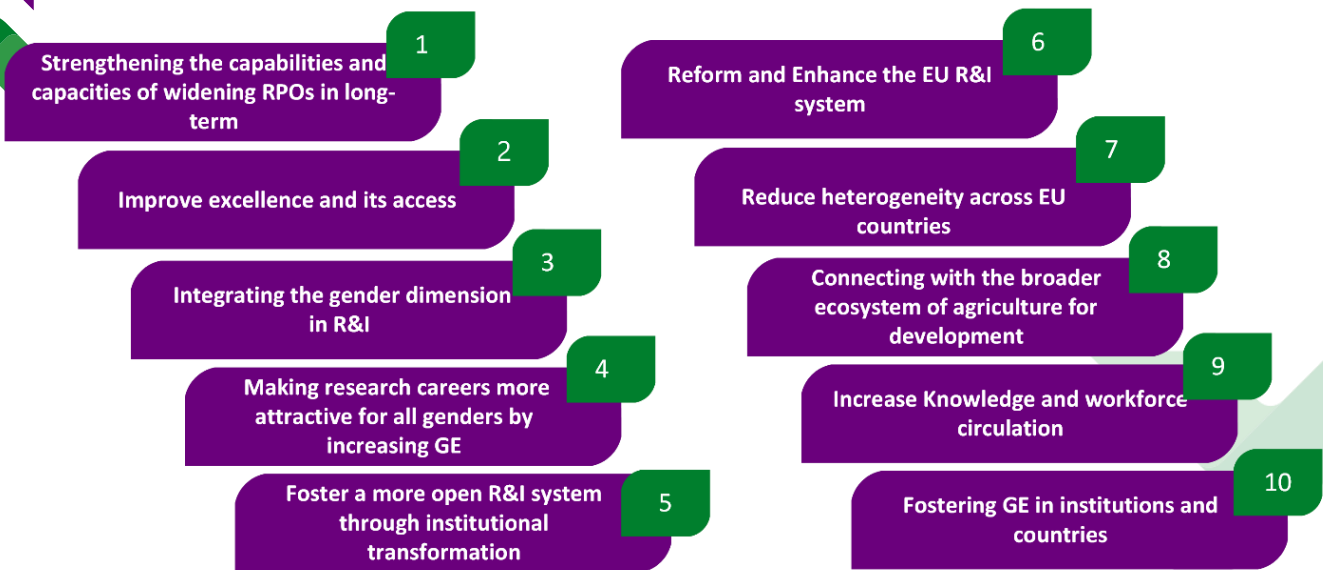


Association for Hungarian Women in Science (NaTE) is a leading Hungarian NGO promoting gender equality (GE) in the field of R&I in Hungary. NaTE has wide experience through national and international projects, processes of social innovation and network building, as well as in conducting both quantitative and qualitative research and also in delivering GE training.



Yellow Window is a multi-disciplinary consultancy specializing in product, service and policy design, with considerable expertise in the fields of gender equality and social innovation. They have extensive experience in designing research methodologies, collecting and analysing complex and comprehensive data, drafting thorough and accessible reports communicating the research findings, and translating them into concrete (policy) recommendations.

THE EXPECTED IMPACT



OUR SISTER PROJECTS



SUPPORTER “SecUring sPORTs Education thRough innovative and inclusive Gender Equality Plans” advances inclusive gender+ equality within the European Research Area (ERA). It supports 8 higher education institutions from Central and Eastern Europe to develop tailored intersectional, innovative, inclusive and impactful gender equality plans (4I-GEs). It also explicitly addresses gender-based violence including sexual harassment (GBV). Building on state-of-the-art knowledge and the expertise of advanced gender+ equality institutions, SUPPORTER co-creates an innovative capacity-building and mutual learning programme, delivering support and mentoring towards the development of the 4I-GEs.



BUDGET+IT Building Gender+ Equality Through Gender+ Budgeting For Institutional Transformation (Budget-It) is a three-year project designed to use gender+ budgeting to transform institutions to advance inclusive gender+ equality and enhance the reputation, inclusiveness, and research excellence of the widening countries of Bosnia, Serbia and Turkey assisted by leading university counterparts in Italy and Spain.



NEXUS Twinning Research and Innovation Institutions to Design and Implement Inclusive GEPs. NEXUS co-designs, implements, monitors and evaluates innovative and targeted actions aimed at bridging inclusivity gaps in nine research organisations and their respective R&I ecosystems with the aim to bolster institutional change through the development of inclusive Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in intersectional and intersectoral directions.