

INSPIRING ERA Factsheet - Equality Monitoring in the European Research Area

From diverse national-level reporting to a lasting policy framework

Policy without monitoring limits the ability to track the impact and make future evidence-based policy decisions.

Data and monitoring are essential for ensuring evidence-based policymaking, impact tracking, and continuous policy feedback.

Gender equality has been a European Research Area (ERA) priority since 2012. The 2025-2027 ERA Policy Agenda shifts the focus from adoption to **implementation, monitoring and impact** of inclusive GEPs, gender dimension in R&I content and gender-based violence, while expanding the scope of thematic areas also to **intersectionality in research and innovation policies, mainstreaming of other ERA Actions and structural policies and gender budgeting.**

At this moment, the monitoring in place includes triannual statistical report [She Figures](#) presenting comparable indicators, [ERA monitoring reports and tools](#), as well as outcomes from Horizon Europe projects such as [UniSAFE](#), [GENDERACTIONplus](#), [GenderSAFE](#) and [INSPIRE](#). These monitoring efforts cover the implementation of ERA inclusive gender equality priorities partially or on an ad hoc basis.

EU-LEVEL MONITORING FRAMEWORK INSPIRATION

Since 2012, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) ensures EU-wide comparable monitoring of institutional mechanisms for gender equality to track the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action, as well as in the EU “GBV” Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Important components of the successful monitoring system include:

- **Political ownership and accountability:** Clear mandate, responsible body and accountability is a must;
- **Human resources:** Dedicated staff at national and EU level is necessary;
- **Operational system:** Coordination structures, tools as well as consultation and validation mechanisms need to be in place;
- **Gender statistics and communication:** Regular data production and effective dissemination is important part of monitoring framework.

In terms of the content, agreed set of indicators, including intersectional data, definitions and guidance must be drafted and be part of refinements.

Equality monitoring examples in selected countries

Policy-cycle performance monitoring (Czechia)

OBJECTIVE: Track progress in implementation of Gender Equality Strategy through the institutional monitoring, not ad-hoc reports.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Strategy is translated into an implementation matrix: each measure has action(s), deadline, indicator, responsible body
- Permanent reporting cycle: annual analytical report + biennial implementation report
- Built-in performance control: external evaluation + two revisions during the cycle
- Evidence-to-policy loop: 1–1.5 year revision with consultations + roundtables

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADOPT

- Schedule at least one external evaluation mid-cycle
- Introduce periodicity of monitoring, e.g. how rapid are changes or implementation.

Multi-level coordination (Belgium)

OBJECTIVE: Ensure national monitoring when competences are fragmented across governance levels.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Inclusive Gender Equality platform (GEP) Commission International Cooperation (CIS).
- Functions: national ERA positioning, exchange of monitoring practices and alignment across levels
- Informal, at the Federal level, Internal Diversity, Inclusion and Equality (IDE) network: bottom-up follow-up of GEP actions (HR, working conditions, accessibility)

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADOPT

- Set up a standing coordination platform that produces: shared templates, shared timelines, shared learning
- Build an institutional network that turns implementation issues into monitoring evidence

Legal obligation and transparency enforcement (Denmark model)

OBJECTIVE: Use law and annual public scrutiny to ensure implementation and accountability.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Three pillars: legal mainstreaming obligation, annual national plan/report, and official statistics
- Annual report submitted to Parliament; annual debate enables questioning and follow-up
- Soft enforcement through transparency; accountability is political and dialog-based

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADOPT

- Make equality reporting an annual, public, parliamentary moment
- Tie national reports to EU frameworks and funding obligations

Implementation support-based monitoring (Norway model)

OBJECTIVE: Strengthen organizational implementation and monitor real institutional change.

KEY ELEMENTS

- National implementation support body (KIF-type): site visits, guidance, tools, workshops, annual plan collection
- Evidence mix: existing statistics, survey data and commissioned studies
- Focus of assessment: responsibility allocation, tracking structural measures, integration into ordinary processes

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADOPT

- Create a national “implementation support hub” with annual plan collection and hands-on guidance
- Use targeted studies to evaluate measures that indicators miss

Key recommendations:

European Commission (strategic level)

- ❖ Consider establishing a **permanent ERA equality monitoring coordination mechanism** (common indicators + reporting logic + peer learning)
- ❖ Provide EU-level guidance enabling lawful, ethical collection of sensitive equality data (to address “GDPR misinterpretations”), published recently as [“Collecting and using equality data in full compliance with EU General Data Protection Regulation and national data protection rules”](#)
- ❖ Further integrate intersectional perspectives into ERA-level monitoring expectations and funding instruments
- ❖ Fund capacity building

Member States (national system level)

- ❖ Move from “policy documents” to **implementation mechanisms**: mandate, staff, budget and data system
- ❖ Choose one governance pathway
- ❖ Ensure regular validation rounds (mid-cycle evaluation + revision mechanism)
- ❖ Integrate monitoring with public expenditure tracking to enable gender budgeting

RFOs (operational / funding level)

- ❖ Link equality monitoring to funding logic: targeted calls, conditionality, post-award follow-up
- ❖ Require outcome-oriented indicators (culture change, leadership diversity, gender dimension in content), not only plan existence
- ❖ Provide practical reporting guidance and templates to reduce compliance burden and improve comparability

RPOs (institutional level)

- ❖ Institutional monitoring: equality unit/contact point, baseline and routine data production and use
- ❖ Track “hard” measures (culture, integration into ordinary practices, GBV handling) with mixed methods
- ❖ Use monitoring results to adjust measures before the end of the GEP cycle (continuous improvement logic)

Effective European Research Area equality monitoring relies on strong cooperation between national and EU levels, supported by political commitment and adequate resources.