

Project

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Formative Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)

Document

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Executive Summary

One of the **main objectives** of the Baltic Gender project is to support the partner institutions in setting up and **implementing new gender equality plans**, or revising existing ones in order to achieve **structural changes towards gender equality**. To implement gender equality plans/measures effectively, it is important to learn from the work and the progress (or lack thereof) that has already been experienced by the partners. This learning is facilitated by the Formative Evaluation, which provides interim feedback about how the implementation is proceeding. It is a diagnostic check, to ensure that the work on the gender equality plans is on track to meet this main objective by the end of the project. Baltic Gender is an ambitious effort to achieve fundamental institutional change. The Formative Evaluation is a contribution to that change; it provides lessons learned and recommendations so far, to enhance the implementation of the gender equality plans for the final part of the project, which will be evaluated by the Summative Evaluation at the end. The report presents the *qualitative* component of the Formative Evaluation of the gender equality plans; it also includes a summary of the *quantitative* component, with selected gender-sensitive indicators.

The following **key questions** were addressed in the Formative Evaluation:

1. What changes were achieved regarding practices and routines that the gender equality plan aims to influence?
2. What new innovations, measures and tools were adopted in recruitment, leadership, project planning & management, routines, communication, family-friendly strategies and human resources policies?
3. Regarding the organisation-specific adoption process of the gender equality plans, what has evolved smoothly and what not? What have been the main sources of resistance (practical, material, political)?
4. Does the institutional “culture” seem to be changing towards a better understanding of gender equality and a diminishing of gender bias, or not? How does the change date back to the gender equality plans?
5. What are the key lessons learned? What actions should follow at different levels of the partner organization in the future?

The data-collection for the qualitative assessment was via on-site, face-to-face interviews, conducted on visits to the partners in November 2018 and January 2019. The interviews were aimed at respondents in several categories, thus contributing to an actor-, structure- and “culture”-oriented range of focuses. The respondents included not only higher management and gender equality plan implementation teams, but gatekeepers, scientists (both senior and junior), administrators, HR staff, technical staff and project managers. The Formative Evaluation completes the continuous monitoring of the progress of Baltic Gender, such as the database of gender-segregated data (handbook of indicators), institute-specific recommendations from the different work packages as well as the brochure on best-practice examples.

Contents of the report

In the full report, Chapter 1 describes the background, data collection and methods; Chapter 2 summarizes the results of the quantitative assessment, while Chapter 3 presents the specific results of the qualitative interviews, via sections for each partner. The sections include a description of the partner’s situation regarding the gender equality plan work, followed by two sub-sections to answer the above mentioned five questions: first, “Institutional culture” – a brief report and analysis of what the interviews reveal about the impact of working with gender equality plans on the institutional culture – Did it proceed smoothly? Was there resistance, practical, material, or political? Second, “Key lessons learned,” which discusses what has been learned about the process institutionally and the



actions that could or should follow from it. Finally, Chapter 4 collects from each of the sections whatever might be treated on a more general level, presenting it as reflections and lessons learned for further consideration and inspiration by the partners and other interested stakeholders.

General conclusions and reflections

Each of the Baltic Gender partners has, at the very minimum, an intense relation to the issue of gender equality plans. Whatever the stage of their involvement in producing a plan, each partner has distinctive conditions and particular reasons for its current state of affairs. It is striking, but upon reflection understandable, that no two institutions are alike in their progress, neither in the components nor background to their work on gender equality. The needs of the respective institutions also vary greatly.

None of the individual members can be faulted in the general character and quality of their work in creating and implementing a response, usually in the form of a gender equality plan, which attempts to do its best in reflecting the stance of their institutions towards the issue of gender equality. Two of the Baltic Gender partners, Klaipėda and UT-EMI, have recently finished their first ever gender equality plans. One partner, Kiel UAS, had completed their new gender equality plan just prior to Baltic Gender's inception and is considering how a future edition will benefit from Baltic Gender. Yet another partner, Kiel CAU, is overdue but still on track to finish its new plan. Three of the partners, GEOMAR, IOW and SYKE, were all in the midst of concluding their new gender equality plan processes as the interviews were being conducted. Finally, one partner, Lund University, is focused on implementing gender mainstreaming and thereby integrating a gender perspective in all actions and decisions without requiring a specific plan for gender equality.

Conclusions/Remarks

1. Gender equality plans should be living documents, vital to the evolution of equitable workplaces and used on a daily basis, lying "open on the desk," to be acted upon.
2. The gender-sensitive indicator database developed for Baltic Gender is an excellent way to monitor and improve gender equality progress in the partner institutions and should be sustained.
3. Goals and measures from the gender equality plan should be developed with and communicated to the staff of the partner institutions on a regular basis.
4. Baltic Gender focuses on Marine Sciences; the long cruises are a critical issue for the sea-going institutions, in particular for young parents that are on the career development track. Family-friendly and workable solutions should be provided to sea-going scientists.
5. The progress and experience of Klaipėda and UT-EMI in producing gender equality plans for the first time are genuine and serious achievements of Baltic Gender.
6. The interviews conducted by an external evaluator for the Formative Evaluation helped the partner institutions to actively reflect about their individual situations and how to sustain gender equality measures beyond the lifetime of Baltic Gender.
7. No matter how far an institution has come in evolving its approach to gender and other forms of equality, there are still balances to maintain, between the need for individuals and institutions to be productive and achieve the goals of their work, and the concern for providing just, fair and equally available opportunities for everybody.
8. A continuous inclusion and awareness-raising of all staff (through regular workshops or trainings on "unconscious bias" etc.), but in particular new and early career scientists, is one key to a successful structural change.



9. Baltic Gender can/should use its considerable weight and reputation to lobby the EU/EC regarding the response to the situation when personnel in a project become pregnant; most often, the *duration* of the project cannot be *prolonged* accordingly, and the pre-established deadlines remain unchanged. The result is that personnel cannot follow-through on their portions of the project (since someone else steps in), and thus lose the opportunity to gain the experience that would promote their careers. While it is understandable that there are reasons for the current situation, there was a call among the respondents for an intense brainstorming on how to solve this, and surprise that funders aren't already working on it.

10. There is an unending and increasing need for communication and dissemination of the products of the project's activities. Communication is at least as essential internally as externally. The stakeholder analysis of Baltic Gender will help to enhance the communication and dissemination activities towards the final phase.

11. A "one-pager" summary of the gender equality plan may help to improve awareness and knowledge about the existence and measures in the plan. In addition, a gender equality officer should be available to provide advice on how to implement the actions.

