INSPIRE

Support Package 1 – Guidance Document

How to set up a Community of Practice for inclusive Gender Equality

January 2024

Authors		Role
Gloria Bonder	Women, Science and Technology in Latin America - UNESCO Regional Chair/ FLACSO Argentina	Coordinator
María del Carmen Tamargo	Women, Science and Technology in Latin America - UNESCO Regional Chair/ FLACSO Argentina	Researcher

Disclaimer

While INSPIRE is funded by the European Union, views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the European Research Executive Agency (REA) can be held responsible for them.

Document History			
Version	**Date**	**Summary of changes**	**Revised by**
01	30.09.2023	First full draft	Gloria Bonder
02	31.01.2024	Published version	INSPIRE consortium

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101058537.

Page **1** of **34**

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

This document provides concrete guidance to create and develop a of Community of Practice (CoP). Although CoPs can be created on any topic, we focus specifically on CoPs which aim for the design, implementation and evaluation of inclusive gender equality plans and policies (GEP) in higher education institutions, research performing organisations and other research and innovation organisations.

The content of this hands-on manual is based upon the experience of the creation and support of eight Communities of Practice during the Horizon 2020 ACT project (see https://www.act-on-gender.eu). As such it builds not only on a wide variety of bibliographic references but also on the concrete insights generated in the field by more than 140 organisations over a period of 2 years working on a variety of topics and throughout geographic regions. In particular, the content draws upon the Latin American CoP, which was created and coordinated by the Women, Science and Technology UNESCO Chair of FLACSO Argentina. Twenty representatives from fourteen universities and research centres[1] in LAC participated in that CoP. Its purpose consisted of the identification and analysis of the diverse expressions of gender inequality in these organisations and based on that information, the design, implementation and evaluation of plans and policies aimed at reversing such expressions, taking into account the specifics of each organisational and social context.

2. What makes a Community of Practice special?

1.1. What is a Community of Practice?

According to Etienne and Beverly Wenger (2015: 2), a Community of Practice is a "a group of people who share an interest, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and deepen their knowledge and expertise on that topic through ongoing interaction that strengthens their relationships".

Its members agree to interact regularly in a safe environment that encourages dialogue, the identification and analysis of problems, the exchange of ideas, and the drafting of proposals and resources to solve them. The three key dimensions of a CoP are, according to Wenger (2015): mutual commitment, a joint purpose and a shared background of knowledge and resources. (See Resource **1.1**).

---

[1] The following universities and research centers participated in the LAC CoP: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM); Universidad de Chile (UChile); Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú (PUCP); Universidad de los Andes -Colombia; Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica; Universidad de la República Uruguay – UDELAR; Universidad de Buenos Aires- Argentina; (UBA) Universidad Nacional de Rosario-Argentina (UNR); Universidad Nacional de Río Negro – Argentina (UNRN); Universidad Nacional de San Martin – Argentina (UNSAM); Universidad Nacional de Quilmes- Argentina (UNQui); Universidad Federal de Rio Grande do Sul- Brasil; CONICET- Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones científicas y técnicas- Argentina; FLACSO Argentina.

This methodological approach is characterised by going beyond established organisational structures by promoting links between organisations and encouraging the creation of networks and/or other ways of articulation. These processes are broadened when the CoPs are developed in virtual environments, as they enable connections between many geographies (cities, countries, regions), cultures and diverse historical and organisational networks.

A CoP promotes a sense of belonging. At the same time, it requires coordination, planning and management based on a consensual and collaborative work plan. It also should be flexible and allow for changes in its agenda according to the needs of its members and the context dynamics.

"Communities of Practice are dynamic social structures that require "cultivation" so that they can emerge and grow"[2]

Several authors (Jubert, 1999; Wenger and Snyder, 2000; Vásquez Bronfman, 2002; Lesser and Storck, 2001; Seely Brown, 1991) have contributed to broaden and deepen the concept of CoPs. Among other aspects that characterise CoPs, the following stand out:

- Group work.
- Common goals and interests.
- Sense of belonging.
- An environment that fosters exchange and mutual learning for the generation of action-oriented knowledge.
- Sustainability over time based on a systematic and agreed-upon work plan.
- Creation and implementation of practices or tasks to achieve agreed proposals. For example, preparing, implementing, evaluating and/or discussing the results of a questionnaire; sharing and analysing the expressions of gender inequalities expressions in academic organisations; discussing documents or theoretical and/or methodological approaches; preparing presentations for conferences or other events related to its main aims, etc.
- Enhanced reflexivity on practices – individually and as a group.

According to Palmen and Müller (2023), some of the aspects that make CoPs unique are:

- They are based on learning processes developed through interaction and participation, in which knowledge is built on action and action is built on knowledge.
- Their internal logic is not a top-down transfer (from the more experienced to the less experienced), but rather they generate an environment of exchange and shared learning.

---

[2] Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, & William Snyder, Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002).

- They adopt non-hierarchical relationships: their members recognise each other as peers, valuing horizontality in the exchanges and decision-making (see elements of a CoP, below).

- Implied horizontal management and conflicts are seen as part of all relationships. Hence the central role of CoP coordination is to achieve the commitment and conviction of their members as well as valuing their experiences and achievement.

- Each CoP should establish its common purpose and motivate a sense of belonging of all its members.

- Understanding and dealing with the diversity of its members (which may pose a challenge for the CoP's existence and sustainability) is fundamental. CoPs may be integrated by people belonging to different areas/sectors of the same organisation (intra-organisational CoPs). Or they may be integrated by people representing different organisations (inter-organisational CoPs).[3]

    (See Resources **1.2** and **1.8**)

The academic organisations that make up a CoP have different histories, cultures, resources and political visions, and this diversity may pose a greater complexity for the definition of a common agenda. Yet at the same time, it offers a wealth of experiences and knowledge that adds value to the construction of ideas and innovative practices.

> "Findings also show that when CoPs were transnational, multiorganisational, and interdisciplinary, their heterogeneity did raise some challenges in relation to the divergence of members' contexts and geopolitical idiosyncrasies and that this should be considered when designing CoPs which transcend national and organisational boundaries." (Thomson et al. 2022: 3) (See Resource **1.4**)

1.2. Sense of community

Both CoP modalities (intra/inter-organisational) require building bonds of trust and collaboration. The second type requires merging and/or negotiating different organisational experiences, values and cultures. Therefore, it is essential to encourage mutual learning and exchange to create a sense of community and support each other.

In this sense, belonging to a space made up by peers in HEIs and RPOs and R&IOs who are trying to promote ideas, actions, and proposals for change in their organisations can contribute to legitimise them. (See Resource **3.1**)
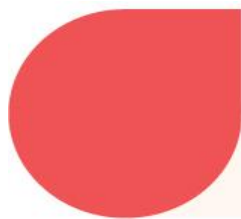
---

[3] This Support Package 1 is aimed at inter-organisational CoPs, i.e., including representatives from different universities and research centers, located in different social, political, cultural and economic contexts.

CoPs and other types of groups:

A CoP is not a research group or a work team that follows a pre-established plan of action for the achievement of expected and common results. In a CoP, its members agree to participate in a series of meetings to share experiences, knowledge, analyze obstacles, identify facilitators and define strategies to improve institutional dynamics and cultures.

A CoP is not a network based on individual interests and occasional participation. CoP members agree to participate according to a collaboratively defined program developed through a series of meetings in which they share ideas, present their experiences and formulate proposals to improve their institutions and their own practices.

The development of the CoP is a process of exchanging experiences, knowledge, concerns, reflections and proposals of its members. It usually creates cooperative bonds among participants with common interests mutual trust and shared objectives.

Elements of a CoP:

Source: edited from Creando comunidades de práctica y conocimiento en la Universidad una experiencia de trabajo entre las universidades de lengua catalana", Zoia Bozu y Francesc Imbernon Muñoz, http://rusc.uoc.edu (See Resource **1.1**)

Inter-organisational CoPs are valuable for:

- Identifying, creating, and sharing good practices and conditions for their replicability.

- Collaborative learning with emphasis on practice (learning by doing): planning interventions, designing resources, and evaluating strategies, etc.

- Documenting the generated knowledge.

- Promoting horizontal collaboration by strengthening links and relationships between work teams from different organisations.

- Providing a shared context for people to communicate and share information, stories, and personal experiences in a way that builds understanding and insight.

- Enabling dialogue between people who come together to explore new possibilities, solve challenging problems, and create new, mutually beneficial opportunities.

- Stimulating mutual learning activities by serving as a vehicle for authentic communication, mentoring, coaching, and self-reflection.

- Capturing and sharing existing knowledge to help people improve their practice by providing a forum to identify solutions to common problems and a process to collect and evaluate best practices.

- Introducing collaborative processes to groups and organisations as well as between organisations to encourage the free flow of ideas and exchange of information.

- Helping people organise purposeful actions that deliver tangible results.

- Generating new knowledge to help people transform their practice to accommodate changes in needs and technologies[4]

  See Resource **1.6**

How to achieve these objectives?

"One size does not fit all": Each CoP has to decide or even create the type of activities that can help it achieve its objectives. Among other factors, this decision will depend on: the phase of its development (start, intermediate, final), the defined priorities and main issues; also the institutional contexts, needs and experiences, as well as the professional profiles of their members; the expertise of the CoP facilitator(s) in the use of certain group learning resources; the commitment to innovative practices to achieve change.

Considering these specific characteristics, some examples of activities that can be carried out to benefit from working in a CoP are: mutual learning; role-plays and dramatisation of problematic situations; peer discussions and exchanges analyse those experiences, among others.
See Resource **2.2**

---

[4] Cambridge, D. & Suter, V. (2005) Community of Practice Design Guide A Step-by-Step
https://library.educause.edu/resources/2005/1/community-of-practice-design-guide-astepbystep-guide-for-designing-cultivating-communities-of-practice-in-highereducation

1.3. CoPs as collaborative environments to promote and/or strengthen inclusive gender equality policies in HEIs, RPOs and R&IOs

Why is the strategy of setting a CoP positive for the achievement of inclusive gender equality in HEIs and RPOs and R&IOs?

The starting point of the CoPs that aim to promote and/or foster inclusive gender equality policies in HEIs and RPOs and R&IOs organisation is that "universities are no strangers to the reproduction of a patriarchal order that, in recent decades, is being questioned, especially by students, teachers and the feminist movement as a whole" (Bonder 2022: 5). Therefore, the goal of a CoP is to contribute to promote and/or strengthen "the organisation of the gender equality approach in the framework of university policies and governance structures and the mainstreaming of the gender equality approach (in its various meanings) in all university practices" (Bonder 2022: 3).

The activities developed by each organisation with this purpose find in a CoP an environment for the exchange of experiences and the creation of strategies that legitimise transformational processes of the bureaucratic structures and organisational cultures that reproduce multiple expressions of gender inequality in these organisations. In this sense, these CoPs are double as disruptive because:

a) they stimulate the visibilisation and questioning of the power structures and dynamics that reproduce gender inequalities through explicit and subtle forms of discrimination against women and people with non-binary identities and other social groups, proposing and promoting actions to reverse them.

b) they function as non-hierarchical environments that foster collaborative learning and the creation of strategies and interventions that promote individual and collective change, in the short and long term.

c) their goals include reviewing, from an inclusive gender equality perspective, the composition of all levels of institutions: the decision-making bodies, their policies and their main processes, as well as the interpersonal relationships that contribute to discrimination and are particularly detrimental to women and other discriminated social groups.

In other words, to promote sustainable change, all these three objectives need to interact. According to Bonder (2022: 3), "It is clear that the current context demands a structural transformation of higher education, therefore, it is a moment of "opportunity" to take advantage of learning about values, competencies, interpersonal relationships and organisational cultures and knowledge of social, cultural and economic issues that have generated research and gender equality policies in these areas". (See Resource **1.9**)

This requires building **alliances with feminist and diversity movements** in order to give legitimacy and strengthen transformative proposals.

CoPs working for inclusive gender equality necessarily trigger processes that are both political and technical. According to Palmén and Müller (2023), the members of CoPs are "agents of change" who propose alternative formal and informal organisational strategies and procedures, and in this sense are "catalysts" of "disruptive practices for real change".

> In summary, a CoP is a strategic commitment to promote and/or strengthen inclusive GEPs, with focus on promoting collaborative work and learning between various organisations, supporting the production and dissemination of knowledge about their progress and results, obstacles and challenges to build fairer and more egalitarian organisation HEIs and RPOs and R&IOs: *"CoP Members go beyond current practice to explore the cutting edge of the domain, to innovate"* [5]

2. Concrete steps for setting up a Community of Practice

How to design and develop CoPs for inclusive Gender Equality? This process involves different stages: planning, implementation and evaluation over a defined period of time. During this process:

- Organisations that make up a CoP must assume the commitment to carry out a joint work plan, through the exchange of knowledge, experiences and purposes.

- It must be **facilitated** by a team responsible for its development and the achievement of the expected results. This team may number two or three people, with academic training in the field of gender studies and/or experience in organisational processes and/or the design and planning of (inclusive) gender equality policies.

- It is recommended that a **time scope** for the lifetime of the CoP is clearly defined, which could be between 1 and 2 years, establishing intermediate results to achieve the objectives of the CoP. This temporal dimension will certainly have to be reviewed and agreed upon in the first meetings, but this definition is important for planning and to provide an idea of the timeframe from the outset.

Important!

This guide provides orientations and input for the creation of a CoP focused on the planning and implementation of Gender Equality plans and policies. It does not imply the adoption of a single model to be followed rigorously.

In fact, "one size does not fit all". Each CoP has to decide or even create the type of activities that can help it achieve its objectives. Among other factors, this decision will depend on: the phase of its development (start, intermediate, final), the defined priorities and main issues; also the institutional contexts, needs and experiences, as well as the professional profiles of their members; the expertise of the CoP Change Catalysts in the use of certain group learning resources; the commitment to innovative practices to achieve change.

---

[5] Cambridge, Derren. & Suter, Vicki. *Community of Practice Design Guide A Step-by-Step.* EDUCASE
https://library.educause.edu/-/media/files/library/2005/1/nli0531-pdf.pdf

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101058537.

Page **9** of **34**

Hence, the development of CoPs should be based on a flexible working methodology that is sensitive to the needs, experiences and demands of the participants and of their organisation and social contexts.

It is recommended that each group develops its own work plan, establishing short and midterm objectives, defining a program of activities and expected results organised, revised and adjusted according to an implementation schedule.

See Resource **2.2**

Stages in establishment and development of a CoP for inclusive Gender Equality (on-site or online)

Stage 1
Identification and call for potential organisations to integrate a CoP.

Stage 2
The first step: getting to know each other's experiences, needs and expectations to start building a sense of community.

Stage 3
Description and analysis of the state of progress and challenges of the GEPs in the organisations that are part of the CoP.

Stage 4
Elaboration/design of the CoP work plan: objectives, actions and schedule.

Stage 5
Implementation of the work plan and regular assessments.

Stage 6
Collaborative self-assessment of the CoP's work process.

Source: Prepared by the authors

Stage 1: Identification and call for potential organisations to integrate in the CoP.

✓ **Mapping of existing R&I organisations** in a defined area (geographical, socio-economic development, cultural features, etc.) that are developing plans and/or policies for inclusive gender equality, or that are interested in initiating this process.

✓ **Identify organisations that show interest in participating in a CoP** to develop and/or strengthen their inclusive Gender Equality initiatives.

For organisations that are developing inclusive Gender Equality plans/programs/policies, it is important to find out:

● Date of initiation of their GEPs.

- Objectives and action plan.

- Status within the organisational structure.

- Allocated budget.

- Number and professional profiles of the responsible team.

- Activities developed since its creation and materials produced (publications, workshops, videos, etc.).

- Evaluations carried out and its results.

✓ **Define and apply eligibility criteria** for the selection process of the organisations that will be part of the CoP.

✓ Elaborate the **list of selected organisations and the areas/persons to be contacted**.

✓ **Engage in communication** with organisations that are potential members of the CoP in order to present its proposal and action plans. The offer should be clear and stimulating, explaining its general objective, its working plan, the commitment required in terms of time, activities, responsibilities of each member, etc. Also providing information on the convening organisations and the means of contact for queries. It is important to establish a time limit for receiving responses.

Stage 2: The first step: getting to know each other's experiences, needs and expectations to start building a sense of community.

- The CoP develops its work plan through regular and **periodic meetings**, to exchange information, knowledge, experiences and positions on gender equality in higher education organisations. It is advisable to establish an agenda of topics to be addressed and discussed at each meeting in order to increase interaction and exchange of ideas or proposals in specific topics.

- It is essential that during the **firsts meetings the group gets to know the basic characteristics, objectives and dynamics of a Community of Practice** aimed at strengthening inclusive Gender Equality in HEIs, RPOs and R&I organisation eco-system. Emphasise the sense of **horizontality, trust, cooperation, reciprocity, innovation and collaborative creation.**

- Establishing **agreements and commitments** is necessary: regular attendance to meetings, participation in defining a work plan and common interest issues. Confirmation of the commitment to participate in the CoP for a determined period of time is recommended in order to give the CoP time to consolidate and collaborate, e.g., two years. This is also formalised through the signing of the MoU (See Template 1, Memorandum of Understaning).

- It is recommended to maintain **permanent and systematic communication** among all members. This is the CoP facilitator's responsibility.

Suggested initial activity in the CoP

Share the history of inclusive gender equality programs/plans in each of the CoP member organisations:

- *Who initiated their development?*

- *Which are their objectives and their place within the organisational structure?*

- *Which activities does your organisation implement to promote and/or integrate inclusive Gender Equality (awareness plans, training programs, protocols, curriculum content reviews, creation of specific areas or units within the organisational structure, etc.)?*

- *Which are the main achievements of these interventions?*

- *Which were the obstacles/resistances encountered and how are they addressed? (See Resource 3.2)*

- *How many members make up the organisational Gender Equality team and what are their professional profiles?*

- *How are these measures valued by the different actors of the organisation; Are there units or actors that reject it or ignore those plans or policies?*

- *Do the organisations have relations with others that develop similar projects, and if so, how do they evaluate this experience?*

For systematic organisational analysis, see Template **2**, CoP Fact Sheet.

Stage 3: Analysis of the state of progress of the GEPs in the organisation that make up the CoP

The information gathered in the first steps of the CoP will facilitate the identification of common or specific problems, resistance, advances and facilitating factors that affect the creation and development of inclusive GEPs in organisation HEIs, RPOs and other R&I organisations. It will also enable the definition of issues that require more complex theoretical and methodological approaches to be understood and solved.

The CoP facilitators can facilitate the development of the community by:

- Elaborating **an agenda for each meeting**, with specific guidelines/tasks and time for joint reflection on members' experiences, cases, practices, dilemmas (see Resource **2.3**).

- Elaborating and sharing reports of main topics discussed at each meeting.

- Designing and completing **fact sheets (see Template 2 for the CoP Fact Sheet 2.) with relevant information** on the progress of GEPs in each organisation, including statistical data (see Resources **2.1** and **3.3**).

- Organising **a bibliography repository** consisting of research reports, evaluations, papers, etc. about different dimensions of the organisation of inclusive GEPs in organisation HEIs, RPOs and other R&I organisations.

- Creating and managing a repository (e.g., common cyber-platform) to compile documents produced by all members of the CoP.

Stage 4: Elaboration/design of the CoP development/working plan: objectives, actions, and schedule.

At this stage, shared decisions are made, regarding:

- **Significant issues** to analyse and discuss throughout different moments / phases of CoP development. See the examples of issues for CoPs, below.

- Each organisation decides how to use its **budget** to implement the CoP work plan.

- The CoP might elaborate a **Work plan** to be developed by all CoP members, or by some of them. For example: a collaborative publication, research, or innovation projects on issues of common interest, audio-visual production material for dissemination of the experience and its results, participation in networks at national, regional and/or international level, organisation of forum or conference to present articles related to their experiences and learning processes within the CoP.

See Template **3**, CoP Work Plan.

Elaborate an **Operational Plan** (see Template **4**, CoP Operational Plan) to organise these activities and results, taking into account:

- time and resources needed (human, economic, logistical, etc.).

- indicators to follow up on what was planned and to be able to measure / record the achieved results.

- analysis of risks and definition of mitigation measures.

Examples of issues for the CoP to address:

Conditions for the creation and first actions of inclusive gender equality policies, plans and programs.

Enabling factors and obstacles for gender equality policies, plans and programs development due to the organisational structure and/or culture.

Mainstreaming gender and intersectionality approaches in the curriculum and teaching practices as well as in research and innovation content.

Organisational commitment to the financing of inclusive GEP's (access, sustainability, critical situations, etc.).

Visions ad proposals for assuring the continuity and improvement of inclusive GEP's in each organisation and/or country.

Methodologies for evaluation and improvement of inclusive GEP's.

Attitudes, assessments, resistance of different sectors within each organisation and its environment/context.

The influence of Socioeconomic and political contexts on the emergence and development or withdrawal of inclusive GEP's or similar across the R&I eco-system.

Stage 5: Work plan implementation

Throughout the CoP lifetime, documenting the process is useful: progress and achievements of each organisation, obstacles, conflicts and unforeseen situations, etc.

Dissemination of the CoP objectives and its working methodology is also useful to increase its visibility and similar activities.

During the CoP-lifetime, it is recommended to hold regular periodic meetings in Support of the CoP activities as well to exchange information on the progress.

Stage 6: Collaborative self-assessment of the CoP's work process

All CoPs have a life cycle. As Sanz Martos (2010) explains, when a Community of Practice ceases usually it plans other joint activities (a research project, other CoP with different objectives, organising a meeting or conference, publication, etc.).

The experience of ACT Project indicates that an adequate time frame for the lifecycle of a CoP is one to two years, with an activity level of biweekly meetings. Once the CoP has concluded its agreed lifetime, it is recommended that a collaborative self-evaluation is carried out to identify and analyse its contributions for each member and their organisations, particularly regarding the development of inclusive GEPs. Also, they can inspire other organisations to organise and develop similar processes.

Suggested guiding questions for the self-evaluation (can also be adapted to take place midterm):

- What did we intend should happen in the CoP and its member organisations?
- What has actually happened?
- Which barriers, supportive factors and remedial measures were addressed, and which were solved?
- What worked and might be recommended to other organisations with common interests?
- What should be changed or improved?
- What were the most significant lessons learned and recommendations for similar initiatives?

3. Resources and guidance

A) Knowledge Resources	
Included	**Description**
Bibliographic references, with their corresponding access links	Publications (documents, articles, reports) that deal with the concept of community of practice, and other key literature for the design of gender equality policies in academic organisations.
English	
1.1 Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. An introduction to communities of practice: a brief overview of the concept and its uses, 2015. https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice.	The text introduces the definition of the concept of community of practices, describes its characteristic features and points out important issues for its development. It is useful to guide the CoP facilitators in constructing the meaning and objective of said group space and for its development.
1.2 Palmén, Rachel and Jörg Müller . "Reflecting on a Community of Practice approach to organisational change for a greater gender equality in R&I and HE – Policy and practice" in A Community of Practice Approach to Improving Gender Equality in Research. London, European Commission, 2023. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003225546	This paper reflects upon the knowledge, experience and practice gained through taking a unique community of practice approach to fostering gender equality in the sectors of research and innovation, and higher education in Europe and beyond. It considers how inter-organisational collaboration can foster change for gender equality.
1.3 Minna Salminen-Karlsson. *The FESTA handbook of organisational change. Implementing gender equality in higher education and research organisations.* Sweden: Uppsala University, 2016. https://www.festa-europa.eu/sites/festa-europa.eu/files/Handbook%20of%20organizational%20change.pdf	The handbook offers a summary of experiences and general recommendations about the work on gender equality. Proposes the use of statistical information and diagnoses to identify and characterise problems of gender inequality. It also proposes alternatives to create a gender-sensitive culture and transparent mechanisms to promote women's careers.

1.4 Thomson, Aleksandra ; Palmén, Rachel; Reidl, Sybille; Barnard, Sarah; Beranek, Sarah; Dainty, Andrew and Hassan, Tarek. "Fostering collaborative approaches to gender equality interventions in higher education and research: the case of transnational and multi-organisational communities of practice". Journal of Gender Studies 31, no. (2022) 1, 36–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2021.1935804 https://openaccess.uoc.edu/handle/10609/139398	The text analyses experiences of transnational and multi-institutional communities of practice as a strategy for promoting GE initiatives. Prioritises collaborative methodologies and the construction of internal and external alliances to build legitimacy and points out the importance of analysing the particularities of each context.
1.5 European Commission. *The Communities of Practice Playbook: A Playbook to Collectively Run and Develop Communities of Practice*, 2021. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/443810	The manual consists of guidance, good practices and interactive visual dashboards. Provides the tools and processes to create your community. It especially focuses on: vision (¿what is the reason for your community, ¿what are the SMART objectives?; governance (¿how do they work together, with whom and how take decisions?); leadership (¿how will you ensure strong leadership involvement in main groups?
1.6 Cambridge, D. & Suter, V. *Community of Practice Design Guide A Step-by-Step,* 2005. https://library.educause.edu/resources/2005/1/community-of-practice-design-guide-astepbystep-guide-for-designing-cultivating-communities-of-practice-in-highereducation	This guide provides a practical approach to creating communities of practice (CoPs) based on experiences working with corporations, nonprofits, associations, government organisations, and elements that go into educational institutions. It provides a structure to help clarify the most important design defining, designing, launching, and growing CoPs both online and face-to-face
1.7 Bultoc, Daniela. *What Next? Managing the Transition to Independent CoPs: ACT Transitions to Independent CoPs*. https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/transition_to_independent_cops_0.pdf	The article proposes guidelines for the continuity of independent CoPs, focused on analysing and creating conditions for their sustainability. Proposes a co-creation toolkit to choose between participatory methods, such as DAKI, Future Workshop or Critical Uncertainties that can be adapted to each context

1.8 Hodkinson, Phil and Hodkinson, Heather. *A constructive critique of communities of practice: moving beyond Lave and Wenger*. Sydney: New South Wales, OVAL Research, 2004. http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/18014	The authors carry out a critical reading of Wenger, focusing their interest on analysing the incidence of social and economic inequalities beyond the actual place of work and learning; analyse power relations and their influence on formal and informal social learning, addressing these processes from a social/participatory perspective
1.9 The FESTA Handbook on Resistance to Gender Equality in Academia: www.resge.eu	The handbook offers a summary of experiences and general recommendations about the work on gender equality. Proposes the use of statistical information and diagnoses to identify and characterise problems of gender inequality. It also proposes alternatives to create a gender-sensitive culture and transparent mechanisms to promote women's careers
Spanish	
1.9 Bonder, Gloria. La institucionalización del enfoque de igualdad de género en universidades de América Latina: Experiencias, reflexiones y contribuciones para el futuro de la educación superior. Compilated: Gloria Bonder , Coordination: María del Carmen Tamargo, Edition: Anabella Benedetti, Cátedra Regional Mujer Ciencia y Tecnología, FLACSO Argentina, 2022. https://www.catunescomujer.org/nueva-publicacion-la-institucionalizacion-del-enfoque-de-igualdad-de-genero-en-universidades-de-america-latina-experiencias-reflexiones-y-contribuciones-para-el-futuro-de-la-educacion-superior/	The book contains articles whose authors are part of the "CoP of Gender Equality Policies in Universities and Research Centers in Latin America", created in 2019 within the framework of the ACT on Gender Project. The objective is to contribute to the strengthening of the process of creation and implementation of GE programs in higher education institutions in Latin America
1.10 Sandra Sanz Martos: "Las comunidades de práctica o el aprendizaje compartido", , UOC, P07/B0290/02655, https://www.uv.mx/dgdaie/files/2013/04/Sanz-Comunidad-Desde-Practica.pdf	The article reviews different definitions of CoPs, lists their specific characteristics, differentiating them from other forms of grouping. Analyses the contribution of technologies for the development and maintenance of CoPs

1.11 Zoia Bozu y Francesc Imbernon Muñoz. "Creando comunidades de práctica y conocimiento en la Universidad: una experiencia de trabajo entre las universidades de lengua catalana". *Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del conocimiento*, Vol. 5, no. 9, 2009. http://dx.doi.org/10.7238/rusc.v6i1.20	The article states that the constitution of CoPs is a challenge that all education and training professionals must take on, since it is through these communities that new knowledge can be generated and transferred and better praxis can be achieved in research and teaching.

B) Methodological resources & tools for the planning and management of CoPs

Included	Description
Tools for systematising and analysing information on the organisations that are part of the CoP and for the process of creation, development and evaluation of the CoP.	These methodological resources are useful in the organisation and facilitation as well as the planning and evaluation phases of the CoP.
2.1 Gender Equality Audit and Monitoring (GEAM) tool https://geam.act-on-gender.eu/	It enables the collection of basic data on GE in institutions through a standardised survey. Its consistent use allows it to assess the impact of GEPs over time, as well as to make comparative analyses between institutions. It was developed by AdvanceHE, Notus and OUC, in collaboration with ACT project partners. It is available in several languages
2.2 ACT Co-creation toolkit https://zenodo.org/record/5342489/files/ACT_D2.7_Co-creation_Toolkit_Version2.0_31AUG2021.pdf?download=1%3Fdownload%3D1	Compiles a set of participatory methods and tools useful for CoPs to achieve the development of GE measures and promoting institutional change.
2.3 SPEAR CoP-methodology https://zenodo.org/record/8334711	It presents the working methodology of the Communities within the framework of the SPEAR project. This consists of the feedback of two modalities: Communities of Practice and Learning Communities. This is a valuable experience to see the functioning and contributions of the CoPs in the framework of a broader project, such as INSPIRE.

| 2.4 INSPIRE Open Training Units | Co-creation workshops which aim to develop and systematise practice-oriented knowledge and tools for change. They are rather generic and overarching in their subject coverage. They provide introductions and guidance on key themes of GE in R&I. |
| | They will be available on INSPIRE's online training platform and through GenPORT. |

C) Audiovisual resources

Included	Description
Videos	These are useful to inspire and support activities on key themes that will be addressed by CoPs.
3.1 Introducing CoPs as an instrument for organisational change- ACT Project, https://vimeo.com/504769756	Introduction to the definition and characterization of Community of Practice as a way of working for Gender Equality, based on the experience of the ACT on Gender Project. Formed by groups of representatives from HEI, R&IO and RFO, the CoPs are framed in a shared domain of interest that becomes also a source of identification and a sense of commitment to a community.
3.2 ACT on Overcoming Resistance https://vimeo.com/493415371	It presents an overview of the main resistance to the proposal of a structural change, such as GEPs. Resistance to change has been identified as one of the main factors hindering its development, so identifying the different forms and causes of resistance is a first step to overcome them effectively.
3.3 GEAM Tool - An introduction https://vimeo.com/438557308	It presents how the GEAM Tool works, its main benefits for understanding and analysing the development of GEPs in each institution and for comparing between them. It also explains the steps to follow to access it and to use it efficiently.

3.4 The ACT Co-creation Toolkit https://vimeo.com/436466471	Describes the main objectives and benefits of this resource developed in the framework of the Act on Gender Project. Explains how to access it from the project site and its different sections including a Set of tested methods for working in a collaborative manner, specifically useful for the development of communities of practice dedicated to advancing GEPs and promoting institutional change.
3.5 SPEAR webinar on Obstacles, Dilemmas and resistance to Gender Equality Implementation https://gender-spear.eu/e-learning/virtual-materials/presentation/17/obstacles-dilemmas-and-resistance-to-gender-equality-implementation	Workshop given by Eva Sophia Myers in the framework of the SPEAR project in 2020. It presents a theoretical and practical framework for understanding the main reactions to the implementation of GEPs; analyses the dynamics of resistance and its complexity; and provides a support framework for addressing these obstacles.
3.6 SPEAR CoP experiences https://youtu.be/QXAh5KuIpeI	In this presentation SPEAR experts, leaders and advisors share SPEAR's objectives, methodology, outputs and impacts as examples of practices and prerequisites for inclusive gender equality in European Academia.

Template 1: INSPIRE MoU
(Memorandum of Understanding)

INSPIRE – European Centre of Excellence on Inclusive Gender Equality in Research & Innovation: Creating Knowledge & Engaging in Collaborative Action

This memorandum is a draft. Please tailor it to the specific needs of your Community of Practice (CoP).

FUOC as INSPIRE Coordinator on behalf of the INSPIRE Consortium

and

members of the Community of Practice (CoP) [CoP name]

jointly referred to as "INSPIRE Coordinator" and "CoP members" have reached the following understanding on [date]:

Background

INSPIRE is dedicated to advancing inclusive gender equality plans and gendered innovations in academia, research, funding organisation, and companies. It fosters collaboration, identifies best practices, and shares lessons learned through Communities of Practice. Serving as Europe's sustainable centre of excellence for gender equality in research and innovation, INSPIRE connects scholars, experts, practitioners, and trainers, enabling resource-sharing and strategic partnerships with public and private institutions within and beyond the European Research Area. Led by leading academics and practitioners, four Knowledge & Support Hubs (KSH) support 12 Communities of Practice in implementing Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and gendered innovations by promoting innovative practices, tailored training, and pan-European data collection.

1. Purpose of this MOU

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding, hereinafter the "MoU", is:

1.1 Define the role and commitments of the Consortium and the CoP members.

1.2 Confirm that CoP members are interested in being a member of an INSPIRE COP and in receiving support from the INSPIRE Project to carry out a) gender equality actions and/or improve gender mainstreaming in research and teaching; b) gendered innovation policies or implementation of gendered innovations.

2. INSPIRE Consortium Commitments and role

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding, the INSPIRE Consortium commits to

2.1 support the activities of the "Communities of Practice" where possible and in particular to provide support in the form of two support packages selected by the CoP, notably by making experts available and by providing access to online resources in the Knowledge Sharing Hub.

2.2 In addition, the KSH lead partners will support the CoP facilitator in managing the CoP, if needed, attend the kick off, conduct the CoP needs assessment, support in defining the objectives and work plan, attend meetings and support processes if the CoP asks for their support.

2.3 The KSH will create exchange opportunities between the KSHs so that CoPs can also benefit from knowledge generation on the topics of the other KSHs. The KSH leaders will keep the CoP informed about relevant activities happening in INSPIRE, enable their involvement in INSPIRE activities and distribute CoP results or outcomes in INSPIRE and beyond.

3. Membership

3.1 Members of [CoP name] refer to the institutions signing this MoU, hereinafter "Member" or "Members".

4. Commitments and role of CoP members

4.1 Membership in the "INSPIRE CoP Communities of Practice" is free of charge.

4.2 By signing this Memorandum of Understanding, CoP members undertake to support and contribute to the activities of the CoP, in particular they undertake to:

4.2.1 participate in the CoP needs assessment.

4.2.2 attend the CoP meetings, send a substitute if needed, and execute tasks agreed on in the CoP meetings and noted in the meeting minutes. Each CoP member has a right to start a joint initiative, or suggest organisation of common trainings, lectures, workshops etc.

4.2.3 contribute to the development of a CoP work plan for the life of the CoP within the framework of the INSPIRE Project.

4.2.4 contribute to the fulfilment of the CoP work programme to the best of its ability.

4.2.5 contribute to INSPIRE research tasks and data collection.

4.2.6 participate in INSPIRE events (Co-Creation Workshops, Knowledge and Exchange Events, conferences etc.) when possible.

4.2.7 provide feedback on the use of one or both support packages received from INSPIRE if asked for it.

4.2.8 participate in research activities aimed at evaluating CoP development and learning outcomes.

4.2.9 share lessons learned from institutional change projects or gendered innovation projects and policies.

4.2.10 exchange information and experiences with other institutions that wish to carry out structural changes or gendered and intersectional innovation processes or policies and advance in gender knowledge, and offer mentoring to them.

4.2.11 upload the institutional GEP (when applicable) on GENPORT to become part of INSPIRE's repository.

5. CoP Coordination

5.1 The coordination and facilitation of the INSPIRE CoP is organised within the CoP and supported by KSH leaders.

5.2 The CoP workplan defines the share of responsibilities among the CoP members.

5.3 A CoP representative participates in KSH board meetings which take place at least four times in the runtime of the CoP, acts as a contact person for the KSH to exchange and spread information and is responsible for providing suitable attendees for INSPIRE events and activities.

5.4 Each CoP may suggest other forms of coordination not foreseen in this model MoU.

6. Admission and Termination of Participation

6.1 The Communities of Practice supported by INSPIRE were selected through a call for proposals process based on their organisational characteristics and their interest and commitment to promoting institutional change for inclusive gender equality and/or implementing inclusive gendered innovations.

6.2 Participation in the CoP may be terminated by:

> 6.2.1 the consensus decision of the CoP, that a member no longer meets the criteria of participation, and/or fails to fulfil its obligations to the CoP, and /or acts in a manner contrary to the aims, objectives or values of the CoP.

> 6.2.2 the withdrawal of the member. Any member may cease to participate in the CoP and the INSPIRE project by giving written notice to the CoP members and/or the Project Consortium. The notification period is one calendar month.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 CoP members and the INSPIRE Consortium will treat any information strictly confidential. If deemed necessary, they may sign a confidentiality agreement defining what type of information will be considered confidential.

8. Publicity

8.1 Within the parameters of the parties' communication strategies, the INSPIRE Consortium can provide an opportunity for the logos of the CoP members to be placed on the project's website with a hyperlink to a page chosen by each CoP member to this MoU. This promotion of the cooperation between the Parties is optional and not mandatory.

9. Dispute resolution

9.1   Any dispute related to the development of the CoP and the execution of this MoU may be brought for resolution to the INSPIRE Project Consortium for resolution.

10. Liability

10.1 Except as provided in Article 8, the Project Consortium and the CoP Member(s) shall have no liability to each other in the execution of this Memorandum of Understanding.

11. Duration of the MoU and its Extension

11.1 This MoU will be effective from the date of the last signature hereto and will be maintained until the end of the INSPIRE project (set for 30. September 2026) and/or until the period of time that each CoP sets for its operation.

11.2 This MoU may be extended at any time by mutual agreement between the INSPIRE Project Consortium and the CoP Members.

12. Statement of Intent

12.1 The parties accept and agree that this MoU is a statement of intent, and is not legally binding on either party.

12.2 It is therefore understood that, by signing this MoU, the Members and the Consortium acknowledge that the success of the project depends on each Member adhering to its provisions.

13. The signatory parties

13.1 The Parties signing this MoU are the following:

the legal representatives of the INSPIRE Project consortium;

and the legal or authorized representatives of each CoP member institution.

Signed on behalf of INSPIRE:

Place:
Date:

[name]
Managing Director
FUOC

Signed on behalf of [name of CoP member]

Place:
Date:

[name]
Managing Director
[organisation]

Signed on behalf of [name of CoP member]

Place:
Date:

[name]
Managing Director
[organisation]

Signed on behalf of [name of CoP member]:

Place:
Date:

[name]
[function]
[organisation]

Signed on behalf of [name of CoP member]:

Place:
Date:

[name]
[function]
[organisation]

Signed on behalf of [name of CoP member]:

Place:
Date:

[name]
[function]
[organisation]

ANNEX:

INSPIRE Consortium

Participant No.	Participant short	Participant organisation name	Country
1 (Coord.)	FUOC	Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya	Spain
2 (KSH4)	JR	Joanneum Research	Austria
3 (KSH1)	SDU	University of Southern Denmark	Denmark
4 (KSH2)	UJ	Jagiellonian University in Krakow	Poland
5 (KSH3)	Notus	Notus	Spain
6 (KSH2)	FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencas Sociales	Argentina
7	EM	Europa Media	Hungary
8	Portia	Portia	UK
9 (KSH1)	RU	Radboud University	The Netherlands
10 (KSH4)	FhG	Fraunhofer ISI	Germany
11 (KSH3)	UH	Hasselt University	Belgium
12 (KSH2)	ZRC-SAZU	Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts	Slovenia
13	GESIS	GESIS- Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences	Germany
14	INNO	INNOSYSTEMS M.IKE.	Greece

COP Members:

Member No.	Member short	Member organisation name	Country
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14		To be extended to your needs…	

Template 2: CoP Fact Sheet

Model to systematise information on the state of progress in the organisation of inclusive gender equality policies in R&I organisations that make up the CoP.

**COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
GENDER ORGANISATIONALITY
IN HEIs and R&I ORGANISATIONS**

COUNTRY & CITY

NAME OF R&I organisation

TYPE OF ORGANISATION: public/private

ORGANISATION SIZE: Number of staff

GENDER ORGANISATIONAL UNIT
(agency/unit/area/coordination/secretariat/directorate, department, etc.). For example: Coordination of Gender Equality Policies).

YEAR OF CREATION OF THE GENDER ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK

FUNCTIONAL DEPENDENCY IN THE ORGANISATION
(e.g. Rector's Office, Academic Secretariat, etc.)

AUTHORITY IN CHARGE/RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GENDER AREA/SECRETARIAT/COMMISSION/ETC. GENDER (Indicate name and rank/position and contact email)

HUMAN RESOURCES OF THE AREA/SECRETARIAT/COMMISSION/ETC. (number and profiles)

BUDGET (for the design and implementation of actions for inclusive gender equality)

TIMELINE OF THE GENDER ORGANISATIONALITY (background, date of creation, outstanding activities, changes in its status or area of dependency)

MISSION/FUNCTION/OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK

REGULATIONS
(indicate if there are dispositions, resolutions, etc. that endorse/legitimise the creation of gender organisational unit)
Note: Please indicate links to access documents or send them attached.

STATE OF PROGRESS OF THE ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK AND OF THE DESIGN OF THE GE POLICY

1. Emerging

2. Medium

3. Advanced

Comments:

STATE OF PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE GE POLICY

1. Emerging

2. Medium

3. Advanced

Comments:

PERSON RESPONSIBLE / TO CONTACT
(indicate name / position and contact e-mail)

Template 3: CoP Work Plan

MATRIX FOR THE DESIGN OF THE COP WORK PLAN - CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Objectives (general and specific)	Activities	Expected outcomes	Results indicators
Objective 1	Activity 1.1.	O1	Indicator 1
	Activity 1.2.		
Objective 2	Activity 2.1.	O2	Indicator 2
	Activity 2.2.		
	Activity 2.3.		
Objective 3	Activity 3.1.	O3	Indicator 3
	Activity 3.2.		

Template 4: CoP Operational Plan

Please copy and use on a large (landscape) paper or excel file and fill out.

Operational Plan								
Objective								
Activity	**Period**		**Person(s) Responsible**	**Place**	**Resources**			**Indicator**
	Since	**Until**			**Human**	**Economic**	**Others**	

- Activities per objective/goal: the activities necessary to achieve each objective are agreed upon. Sub-activities can be defined (visits, meetings, etc.).

- Timing: indicating the estimated period of time in which each activity is expected to be carried out.

- Assignment of tasks/responsibilities: who is/are responsible for each activity; in a collaborative work plan this is key so that everyone and the group as a whole is clear about what is expected of each member and in what time frame. The assignment of roles and responsibilities is linked to the construction of a sense of "co-responsibility" for the achievement of the objectives proposed by the CoP as a collaborative environment.

- Decide in which areas the activities will be implemented and therefore the results to be achieved will be evaluated: this is very important given that the CoP may propose different types of actions in its work plan, as developed above; therefore, the definition of the areas of implementation will be directly and logically related to the type of objectives, activities and results proposed. However, each university or research center that makes up the CoP can be areas of implementation of actions and or recommendations; also the CoP itself to the extent that it proposes objectives and activities of knowledge production and other networks and/or organisation if it is thought of as activities of incidence and dissemination of knowledge.

- Estimate the budget (human, economic, etc.). Prepare a simple budget that identifies the expenditure items involved in the implementation of the action plan: human resources,

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101058537.

Page **32** of **34**

inputs, materials, etc. It is also recommended to foresee the budget implementation schedule, which should be consistent with the implementation schedule of the planned activities.

- Monitoring and results indicators: define indicators for monitoring the implementation of planned activities according to the implementation schedule and identify identifiers to evaluate not only what has been done (output and coverage indicators) but also the effects and/or results that may or may not have occurred as a result of the activities carried out by the CoP. This implies an interesting challenge that will also contribute to the production of learning and knowledge. Undoubtedly, these outcome indicators are related to the objectives proposed by the CoP in its action plan; therefore, it is important to identify and define the expected results of change from the outset in order to be able to design some metrics and/or appreciative inquiry of their degree of achievement.