D7.3 Gender and equality committee report

Version 1.0

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Author	Susana Vaquero (BSC)
Contributors	Janine Gehrig (BSC), Jaume Abella (BSC)
Reviewer	Irune Aguirre (IKERLAN)
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Change Log

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V0.1	First draft
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Executive Summary

The *D7.3 Gender and equality committee report* focuses on the monitoring of gender balance within the consortium and describes the actions taken in the first months of the project for ensuring gender equality. It also provides guidelines for future activities aimed to promote and improve gender equality.

The following aspects are discussed in greater detail:

i) Gender balance in the SAFEXPLAIN consortium

ii) Future actions and how equal participation of women and men will be monitored in the SAFEXPLAIN project.

1. Introduction

According to the "She Figures 2021" report [1] published by the European Commission (EC), there is still a disproportionate number of women and men in both academia and the private sector in all European Member States, especially when considering senior levels of employment and decision-making positions.

While women account for 42,3% of academic staff, they are under-represented at the highest levels of academia and in decision-making positions: only 23% of heads of higher education institutions are women (2019, DG R&I Women in Science database). Women are also significantly underrepresented among inventors (10,7%). The 2020 European Research Area renewed the EU's commitment to gender equality in R&I. The Horizon Europe programme considers gender equality to be a crosscutting priority that will play a key role in ensuring structural change for gender equality in research and innovation.

SAFEXPLAIN's activities related to gender balance stem from considering that "the empowerment of women is the key to all development and gender equality and should be a core part of all policy strategies" [2], as well as the application of Article 14 "Gender mainstreaming" of the Grant Agreement (GA), which states that "the beneficiaries must take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action. They must aim, to the extent possible, for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action including at supervisory and managerial level". The SAFEXPLAIN consortium is fully committed to taking the necessary actions to improve gender equality within the consortium and to promote gender balance in the activities of the consortium.

2. Gender balance in SAFEXPLAIN

The SAFEXPLAIN Consortium gathers a total of 6 partners. A general overview of the gender balance at partner level is shown in Figure 1. Women make up 37% of participants.
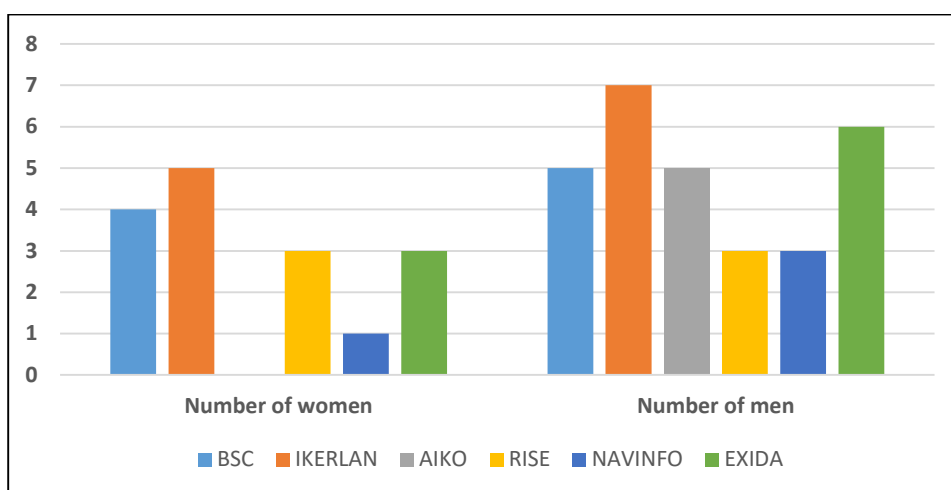

Figure 1. Gender balance in the partner´s organizations

We have also split the roles taken by both men and women within their organizations. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Roles sorted by gender in SAFEXPLAIN project

Role	Total	Number of women	Number of men	Percentage women	Percentage men
CEO	2	1	1	50%	50%
Lead Researcher	7	0	7	0	100%
Researcher	20	7	13	35%	65%
PhD student	2	1	1	50%	50%
Innovation Manager	1	0	1	0	100%
Dissemination manager	2	1	1	50%	50%
Project manager	2	1	1	50%	50%
Finance manager	3	3	0	100%	0%

Table 1 shows that roles of men are more focused on lead researcher and researcher positions while women roles are more distributed among PhD students and managerial positions.

It is worth mentioning that at management level, the following balance is present within SAFEXPLAIN project:

General Assembly (GA): the main governance body of the project, that can take votes to modify aspects of the project includes 4 men (BSC, AIKO, RISE and EXIDA) and 2 women (IKERLAN and NAVINFO), as detailed in *D7.1 Project management and quality guidelines* submitted at M3. This results in a 33% of women representation at the decision-making level.

Managers: the personnel specialized in several key aspects of the project includes 5 women (general dissemination, general project and finance managers) and 3 men (general innovation, dissemination and project management). This results in a 63% of women representation.

Work package leaders (WPL): the coordination of activities within each work package (WP) include 4 women (WP1, WP2, WP6 and WP7) and 3 men (WP3, WP4 and WP5), as detailed in *D7.1 Project management and quality guidelines* submitted at M3. This results in a 57% of women representation.

Technical manager: the technical manager drives the project as coordinator and is led by a man.

Based on this breakdown, the SAFEXPLAIN project has women representation at all management levels. The sole exception is the position of the Technical Coordinator, which is led by one person.

3. Gender Action Plans

The 100% of academic partners already have a gender policy in place. Links to the gender action plans are summarized in Table 2:

Table 2. SAFEXPLAIN academic partners' gender action plans

Partner	Gender Action Plan Link
BSC	https://www.bsc.es/discover-bsc/equity-diversity-inclusion
IKERLAN	https://ikerlan.es/dowload/certificaciones/EQUALITY_PLAN_IKERLAN_2021_2022.pdf
RISE	https://rise-pfi.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Gender-Equality-Plan_RISE-PFI-AS_English.pdf

4. Gender Equality Committee

SAFEXPLAIN consortium is fully committed to take all the necessary actions to improve gender equality within the consortium and to promote gender balance in the activities of the consortium. To this end, SAFEXPLAIN established a Gender and Equality Committee at the beginning of the project. The committee is aligned with the following actions:

- Advocating for raising awareness of gender equality issues, both internally and externally.
- Developing and implementing a gender diversity strategy.
- Ensuring leadership and accountability for various initiatives within the gender diversity strategy.
- Monitoring the progress and impact of the gender equality strategy.

4.1. Committee Composition

The Gender and Equality Committee of SAFEXPLAIN includes a diverse representation of its members, including gender-balanced representation and representation from across the consortia, as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. SAFEXPLAIN Gender and Equality Committee.

Participant number	Partner short name	Person	Gender
1	BSC	Susana Vaquero and Janine Gehrig	♀
2	IKERLAN	Irune Agirre	♀
3	AIKO	Gabriele Giordana	♂
4	RISE	Than Bui	♂
5	NAVINFO	Elahe Arani	♀
6	EXIDA	Davide Cunial	♂

4.2. Diversity and Equality in Recruiting

The SAFEXPLAIN project believes that a diverse workforce and equal opportunities for job candidates is not only a question of Responsible Research and Innovation, but also an important ingredient of excellence.

4.2.1. Advertising

When advertising a job position, the first step in the selection procedure is to define the job requirements and to create the public advertisement about the vacancy, including this information. The form of the advertisements as well as the networks and channels used to promote them also influence the diversity of the pool of available potential candidates.

To improve the advertising strategy, the Gender and Equality Committee recommends the following actions:

1) Use different types of language to address different groups of potential candidates

- https://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/. This site is a quick way to check whether a job advert has the kind of subtle linguistic gender-coding that has this discouraging effect

2) Rethink your networks and dissemination strategies to find new groups of potential candidates

The content of job advertisements, as well as the type of language and design of description, strongly influences the pool of applicants.

SAFEXPLAIN partners will be encouraged to post job openings on platforms that promote women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, such as:

- https://womeninhpc.org/community/jobs/post-a-job
- https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/

4.2.2. Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment Practices

Using open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) practices with regard to research positions is the top action priority within the European Research Area (ERA) Roadmap [3].

Attracting the best researchers and making research careers more attractive, requires the full implementation of the ERA. Open recruitment promotes mobility, the matching of talent to opportunities, and gender equality.

In fact, OTM-R implies gender awareness throughout the recruitment process within an institution, including (but not limited to) the promotion of gender balance within the respective committees.

4.2.3. Equal opportunities

To ensure that the partners offer equal opportunities to everyone and reflect the diversity of today's world, we uphold the following principles and objectives.

• The SAFEXPLAIN project ensures equal opportunities, treatment and access to all candidates regardless of their sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation;

• The SAFEXPLAIN project respects inclusion in the selection procedures and provides all candidates with an equal opportunity to fully demonstrate their competencies by identifying and eliminating their blocking factors, possible biases and risks of discrimination;

• The SAFEXPLAIN project promotes equal opportunities and engages with various stakeholder groups and expert organizations to reach out to a more diverse talent.

5. Gender sensitive communication

Since its inception the SAFEXPLAIN project participates in international initiatives to increase the visibility and representation of women in science and engineering. There is a dedicated page on the project website devoted to Equality and Diversity. This page confirms the project´s commitment to equality and diversity, provides links to the gender and equality plans of the three academic partners and posts excerpts from diversity-focused campaigns that the project participates in. The project has participated in February 11 Women in Science Day and March 8 International Women's Day campaigns through social media.

SAFEXPLAIN will follow-up on the guidelines for gender-sensitive communication in research [4].

Through the lenses of gender-sensitivity SAFEXPLAIN will:

• Raise awareness on the pervasive role of communication

• Introduce a deeper awareness of the gender biases and stereotypes that affect daily communication

5.1. Further actions

The SAFEXPLAIN consortium is committed to promoting gender equality during the execution of the project.

Nevertheless, a more detailed analysis showed that a stronger focus is still needed, especially in the case of some roles where women are still underrepresented. Moreover, direct actions need to be taken to promote a gender equality policy within the consortium.

The gender and equality committee has proposed some project activities to reach these goals, which are summarized in the following table:

Table 4. Recommendations and guidelines on how to improve gender mainstreaming in SAFEXPLAIN management and communication.

Project activity	How to contribute to gender mainstreaming
Project management	Develop a gender strategy within the consortium in participatory manner to ensure the engagement and understanding of all partners
	Appoint a gender specialist or gender contact point from the existing staff to develop partner capacity in addressing gender issues.
Project communication	Increase the visibility and representation of women in science and engineering by putting women staff in the spotlight when communicating and disseminating results
	Participate in EU initiatives promoting gender diversity

The SAFEXPLAIN project will continue to raise the visibility of women through its upcoming 'Women in Stem' interview series. This interview series will help highlight the work of them women in the project. Moreover, the project will continue to participate in international days that promote diversity, such as Women in Science Day, International Women's Day, Diversity Day, European Diversity Month, Women in Engineering Day, and any other events that will help show the project´s support for this important topic.

5.2. Accountability

The Gender and Equality Committee will focus on the monitoring of the gender balance within the consortium on a regular basis as well as to establish guidelines for future activities aimed to promote and improve gender equality. Some aspects have been already discussed in the first months of the project:

1. How to monitor gender balance in the SAFEXPLAIN consortium.
2. How the equal participation of women and men will be monitored in SAFEXPLAIN project.

Regarding point one, the Committee designed a dedicated template to monitor the gender balance taking into account the different roles envisaged in the project and agreed to monitor the figures every six months.

Regarding point two, and as first approach, the Committee decided during the kick off meeting, to monitor the number of men and women who are first authors and corresponding authors in SAFEXPLAIN related publications every six months. At M12, SAFEXPLAIN counts with 2 out of 6 publications where the role of women is significant (one publication has a woman as a first author and another one has a woman as a corresponding author).

In addition to this, SAFEXPLAIN will promote training programmes about gender and diversity and will promote the use of inclusive language in materials published by the consortium.

The Committee will discuss and define future actions/activities to promote and improve gender equality during the course of the project.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

- ERA- European Research Area
- GA – General Assembly / Grant Agreement
- OTM-R- Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment
- STEM- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- WP – Work Package
- WPL – Work Package Leader

References

[1] European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, She figures 2021: gender in research and innovation: statistics and indicators, Publications Office, 2021, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/06090

[2] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152

[3] ERA Roadmap, 2015: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1208-2015-INIT/en/pdf

[4] Guidelines for gender-sensitive communication in research and academia GA No. 787829, https://www.superaproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/SUPERA-guidelines-gender-sensitive-communication.pdf