



EIT FOOD

GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICY

EIT Food – Improving Food Together

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender Mainstreaming Policy in EIT Food is a result of a participatory process involving EIT Food employees in co-designing the approach to gender equality within the KIC. Within the research the following needs were identified:

- the need to foster multivocality around gender-related actions,
- the need for gender-related data, but there is no gender data collection and processing strategy,
- the need to involve everyone, not only women in tackling gender related challenges,
- the need for both top down approach with a clear vision from the top management level as well as bottom up approach involving all employees in co-creating and implementing the policy,
- the need to look beyond gender and understand other factors causing inequalities,
- the need to promote diversity for an equitable food system.

The vision of EIT Food Gender Mainstreaming Policy is rooted in the following values:

- caring for all,
- making things accessible for all,
- recognizing the strengths of all.

Based on that a set of challenges and actions to address them were identified within 6 overarching objectives structuring the EIT Food Gender Mainstreaming Policy:

1. Lead role in the community
2. Building capacity and awareness
3. Gender balanced representation in staff and management
4. Promote gender equality in education
5. Promote gender equality in entrepreneurship
6. Promote gender equality in innovation

All actions to be delivered while implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Policy will be first validated against the gender disaggregated data collected according to the strategy to be designed in 2022. Gender Officer established in June 2021 together with Gender Task Force will be responsible for defining and coordinating the implementation of the actions. The whole gender mainstreaming process in EIT Food will be overseen by the Management Board.

2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The European Commission is committed to promoting gender equality in innovation and technology. This commitment is part of the **European Commission Gender Equality Strategy for**

2020-2025¹ which sets out the Commission's broader commitment to equality across all EU policies.

In addition, the EU has a well-established regulatory framework on gender equality, including binding directives, which apply widely across the labour market including the innovation and technology sector.

In **Horizon Europe**, the Commission reaffirms its commitment to gender equality in innovation, technology and research. The legal base sets gender equality as a crosscutting priority and introduces strengthened provisions.

The goal is to improve the European research and innovation system, create gender-equal working environments where all talents can thrive and better integrate the gender dimension in projects to improve the quality of innovation, technology and research as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies and innovations produced.

EIT Food as a part of the European innovation scheme aims to provide equal opportunities through mainstreaming processes, co-develop innovations that are relevant to all, and leave a long-lasting societal impact.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategical process aiming to achieve gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures, and spending programmes, which then stands for promotion of equality between women and men, whilst combating discrimination.

There EIT Food has applied the chosen elements of participatory design and service design to drive the development of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy. Both participatory and service design are recognized as approaches suitable for working with complex problems. Therefore, they provided a feasible framework to identify challenges and provide gender-related knowledge through the engagement of the EIT Food employees.

The research was between August - November 2021 and included desk research, exploratory workshops, a series of interviews, and a co-creation session (Figure 1). The goal of the process was to understand the current state of gender equality practices in agrifood, recognize the gender-related challenges in EIT Food, and act upon research insights to co-create ideas for actions and solutions to address the identified gaps.

All the activities were conducted in an online setting using Zoom video conferencing and the Miro platform for visual communication. The process engaged all the members of the EIT Food Gender Task Force, 32 EIT Food employees (representatives of CLCs and FAs), and two external experts on gender, diversity, and European Policy.

¹ European Commission (2020) [A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#)



Figure 1: The participatory process of developing Gender Mainstreaming Policy in EIT Food.

3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

EIT Food aims to transform the food system to make it more sustainable and healthy. All genders should be given an equal opportunity to bring their strengths to fuel such transformation.

Therefore, to start, data can support storytelling about inequalities that occur and need to be addressed. Additionally, EIT Food needs a compass to navigate the change. Such compass is a set of values, which guides a coherent framework for gender mainstreaming actions. Those values are: **caring for all, making things accessible for all, and recognizing the strengths of all.** Within such a framework, it is possible to set up different actions in various areas of EIT Food that are context-specific.

Finally, data is necessary to show the effectiveness of interventions and impact the stories. It is also crucial to analyze the possible unintended societal consequences of undertaken actions.

The participatory research process led to the 6 main conclusions regarding gender mainstreaming in EIT Food.

They provide context and set the foundations for the gender mainstreaming policy in EIT Food.

- 3.1.1 The concept of gender mainstreaming in EIT Food is utilized through binary terms. There is a need to foster multivocality around gender-related actions.

Gender is a way of looking at how social norms and power structures impact the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women². Introducing gender equity means offering fair treatment to women and men that is equivalent in rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities.

Therefore, in the path towards equity, women cannot be set in opposition to men and vice versa.

EIT Food aims to be recognized as an inclusive organization that practices what it preaches. To strengthen the aspect of inclusivity, it might be valuable to promote the understanding of gender as part of identity in a social context that is unique and self-defined rather than based in female-male duality. There is an expectation among EIT Food employees to include into gender mainstreaming actions the openness to more masculinity in femininity and femininity in masculinity, and any other nonconforming forms of gender expression.

- 3.1.2 Women are more involved in gender related issues and can recognize them better than men. Therefore, an inequity is already present in the problem recognition.

Women find it easier to name gender-related challenges, and they are ready to act to address them. It is more obvious for them to counterbalance the inequities by proposing only women-directed actions. Women in EIT Food have an impression that: "*gender equality is a problem reserved for women.*" On the other hand, EIT Food is recognized as a women-dominated organization.

On the contrary, men are not used to sharing and reflecting on gender-related issues. As a result, it's more difficult for them to recognize inequalities. They often lack intrinsic motivation to engage themselves in gender mainstreaming. Some men-related inequalities are present in areas not identified as priorities, e.g., the low number of men at the assistant positions.

Therefore, a dichotomy exists in terms of striving for equity in EIT Food. There is also a risk that using a dual approach to tackle gender-related challenges will bring more inequalities rather than positive changes.

Inequalities are signs of the lack of equilibrium in a given area, regardless of the gender of a person signalling. Moreover, gender is more complex than a men-women binary. Therefore, in the gender mainstreaming process in EIT Food, it is crucial to run interventions for all genders.

²GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/gender/understanding-gender/>

3.1.3 Currently there is no one way to gather and display data about gender equity in EIT Food. Data is crucial for monitoring the impact of gender mainstreaming policy and going beyond unconscious bias.

The discussion regarding gender-related data in EIT Food oscillates around two dimensions. First, there is a group of EIT Food employees who want to know the gender-related status of the organization: *Is it balanced or not? What is the number of women and men in various areas?* Second, others want to use data to monitor the impact of the policy and inform the narrative around innovation or entrepreneurship in agrifood. **Undoubtedly, there is a high need for gender-related data, but there is no gender data collection and processing strategy.**

It might be risky to equate gender equity to an equal number of women and men. Increasing the number of women in a mainly patriarchal system is not a guarantee for more equal outcomes. Gender equity requires identifying and tracking correlations that disclose stereotypes or/and prevent future imbalances. For example, in times of the pandemic, there is a risk that people who spend more time in the office will be more often promoted. Therefore, it's necessary to track promotions with the dominant type of work setup (remote working from home vs. office).

3.1.4 Acknowledging gender inequalities requires the awareness of own stereotypes and dominant values.

Members of the EIT Food community are representatives of various countries, cultures, and ethnicities. Gender, as a social construct, is conditioned by social and cultural aspects. **Therefore, the gender-related challenges recognized in one place might not be visible in another. To cultivate dialogue around gender, members of the EIT Food community need to be aware of their burdens and opportunities.**

Here, some validated insights might be informative. For example, Hofstede³ identified dimensions that enable the comparison of countries. Among six dimensions, there is the one that describes countries taking into account their level of Femininity or Masculinity.

According to the Hofstede Insights⁴:

³ HOFSTEDE, G., HOFSTEDE, G.J, and MINKOV, M. 2010. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of Mind* (Third edition) New York: McGraw-Hill.

⁴ Hofstede Insights. Country comparison. Retrieved from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/poland/>.

“Masculine score indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement, and success, with success being defined by the winner / best in the field – a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organizational life.”

“Feminine score means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A Feminine society is one where the quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what you do (Feminine).”

Among the EIT Food Partners, there are representatives of countries with high scores in Masculinity, e.g., Poland, and high scores in Femininity, e.g., the Netherlands, Sweden. The recognition of such differences can support EIT Food in coordinating actions towards gender equity.

3.1.5 EIT Food expects actionable and sustainable gender mainstreaming policy that will create space for gender-related discussions at various levels of the organization.

Employees of the EIT Food express their need for actionable and sustainable policy that will provide them with guiding principles and values, so: *“it won’t be a tick box exercise.”* Apart from that, they assume that the development and communication of the policy is the first step of the gender mainstreaming process. **This process requires discussion and access to safe and shared space for everyone in EIT Food to question fundamental assumptions, raise serious concerns or even make complaints.**

Gender mainstreaming policy needs to be rooted across EIT Food, so there is a space for transparent gender discussions from strategy meetings to business as usual.

3.1.6 EIT Food requires a clear vision and methodical approach to gender equity, as it is a prerequisite for an equitable food system.

EIT Food employees want to act towards gender equity based on a singular vision coming from the top. **They also want to follow a set of operational values that can be transferred into their everyday work-related actions.**

In practice, it means that the goal of gender-related actions in EIT Food is to reach policy values. In this way, the binary narrative (women-only or men-only actions) can be avoided.

Finally, EIT Food employees want to recognize the impact of their actions by using measurements and monitoring.

Based on the desk research regarding gender equality in agrifood and main insights described above the objectives within 6 overarching areas have been defined.

3.2.1 Lead role in the community

THE OUTCOME: Importance and value of diversity in agrifood is clearly presented and acknowledged by the agrifood community

Agriculture and food related industries and services provide over 44 million jobs in the EU, including regular work for 20 million people within the agricultural sector itself. From a gender point of view, there are significant gaps between women and men in the sector. Farming continues to be a predominantly rural profession and male domain. Women farmers have significantly less access to, control over, and ownership of land and other productive assets compared to their male counterparts. However, the number of farms run by women is continuously growing. Eurostat data suggest that despite huge differences among Member States, an average of 30% of farms across the EU are managed by women.⁵

To become the leader in gender equity in the agrifood community, a good starting point for EIT Food is to introduce gender-neutral communication at various levels of the organization and within its processes. For example, in the recruitment processes or during the events.

Detailed objectives within this area include:

1. **Limiting job segregation through inclusive approach to professional development;**
2. **Bringing more visibility to persons performing non-stereotypical roles in agrifood value chain;**
3. **Keeping gender balance not only among panellists and speakers on EIT Food events, but also among the audience;**
4. **Making EIT Food communication gender inclusive.**

3.2.2. Building capacity and awareness

THE OUTCOME: EIT Food staff and Partners understand the concept of gender mainstreaming

The sustainability and security of European agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and fishing requires striking a balance between socio-economic goals and responsible natural resources management. Therefore an integrated approach making full use of all the major players involved (farmers, consumers, regulatory bodies and scientists) is necessary. It will be important to ensure that men and women are equally represented within groups of stakeholders to ensure that their respective needs and interests (e.g. on novel food and food

⁵ *Gender and Food Innovations*, European Institute of Innovation & Technology (2021)

technologies, risks etc.) are taken into account.⁶ Indeed, the success of the European Green Deal in the agricultural and food sector depends on the contribution of all rural residents – across all genders, ages, nationalities, cultures, etc.⁷

Gender mainstreaming in EIT Food will be recognized as successful when all employees acknowledge gender-related activities, measurements, or conversations in their everyday work. Building awareness and capacity focuses on learning from each other, exchanging opinions, and building empathy.

Detailed objectives within this area include:

1. Providing all women who want to become leaders a space to do so;
2. Providing all men who want to express their caring duties a space to do so;
3. Providing all persons who identify themselves as non-binary a space to express themselves freely;
4. Keeping gender balance among speakers during the events;
5. Keeping diversity in visual communication regarding leadership;
6. Avoiding gender-biased language;
7. Deploying projects aimed at eliminating gender gaps in agriculture and agrifood related workforce, including in leadership and access to training;
8. Understanding and learning from those who are sceptical towards gender-related issues;
9. Including gender aspect in everyday EIT Food operations.

3.2.3. Gender balanced representation in staff and management

THE OUTCOME: EIT Food is equally accessible to all people who get the same opportunities to grow within the organization regardless of their gender.

The agrifood sector is a male dominated sector with 58 per cent of workers being men. In leadership positions this gender imbalance is even more pronounced, with the proportion of employees reporting they have a female boss being much lower than in the EU as a whole. Only 35 per cent of women and 8 per cent of men report having a female boss, compared to the EU averages of 47 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.⁸

To reach gender balanced representation in staff and management it is necessary to challenge the existing stereotypes in the workplace and be vocal about them.

⁶ European Commission (2013) [Gendered Innovations. How Gender Analysis Contributes to Research.](#)

⁷ European Commission (2020) [Gendered innovations 2. How inclusive analysis contributes to research and innovation: policy review.](#)

⁸ Eurofound (2014) [Agro-food sector: Working conditions and job quality](#)

Detailed objectives within this area include:

1. **Providing data regarding gender-related issues at EIT Food;**
2. **Taking intersectional approach by including other dimensions of inequality when tackling gender imbalance;**
3. **Combating gender stereotypes in the workplace;**
4. **Including all perspectives in gender mainstreaming, not only female;**
5. **Sensitizing men regarding gender related issues;**
6. **Providing work-life balance solutions that are working for everyone.**

3.2.4. Promote gender equality in education

THE OUTCOME: Educational programmes are accessible to all and encourage participation based on interests and talents, regardless of gender.

There is very little research and data on gender bias in agrifood education, however we can build on the general studies regarding gender equality in educational field to point out the biggest challenges such as educational segregation (women are systematically overrepresented in fields of study, such as social sciences and the humanities, which offer relatively poor labour market prospects; at the same time, they are underrepresented in fields that perform above the average, as engineering and ICT)⁹; gender gaps in access to training: (across all age groups, women report lower levels of employer-paid training than men)¹⁰ or access to funding for research¹¹.

Those who educate can challenge stereotypes. Therefore, educators need support in providing gender-neutral education that opens opportunities for all.

Detailed objectives within this area include:

1. **Identifying the unconscious bias in education;**
2. **Delivering unbiased educational programs;**
3. **Addressing different ways of learning by men and women;**
4. **Promoting women in the agritech and foodtech field.**

⁹ Barone, C., Assirelli, G. *Gender segregation in higher education: an empirical test of seven explanations*. High Educ 79, 55–78 (2020).

¹⁰ Eurofound (2014) [Agro-food sector: Working conditions and job quality](#)

¹¹ Schiffbaenker, Helene & Van den Besselaar, Peter & Holzinger, Florian. (2019). [Gender bias in grant allocation and academic careers: The GRANteD project and previous findings](#)

3.2.5. Promote gender equality in entrepreneurship

THE OUTCOME: Entrepreneurial programmes are accessible to all and provide the same support and resources to all teams regardless of their composition.

Female entrepreneurs represent only one third of self-employed people in the EU and women farmers represent 30% of total EU farm managers. Holdings managed by women are noticeably smaller in economic size than those managed by men. While women take more calculated risks than men, yet it is still difficult for them to access loans. Women's ideas for innovation are as marketable as men's, but they are not recognised by predominantly male stakeholders.¹² Lastly, many women still work in family businesses and farms and lack professional status, independent remuneration or separate social security (European Commission 2011)

In a recent EIT Food study into gender equity in agrifood entrepreneurship, it was revealed that up to 75% of women have experienced negative gender bias during their life or/and as an entrepreneur. Furthermore the study has shown that Engaging men is a critical part of the solution to reduce negative gender bias. 66% of survey respondents say that men have "untapped power" to reduce negative gender bias and 97% suggest that men need training on gender bias. Across the broad entrepreneurship ecosystem, just 24% of respondents agree that men are making an effort to create gender parity, compared with 39% who believe no effort is being made.¹³

Entrepreneurship is dominated by men and needs redefinition to become accessible for all. Women need encouragement and acceptance for being entrepreneurs in their way. Also, the ecosystem needs to be prepared for that.

Detailed objectives within this area include:

1. **Promoting diversity and gender balance in the entrepreneurial teams supported by EIT Food;**
2. **Giving opportunity to choose the type of programme women entrepreneurs want to participate in – women-only or coeducational ones;**
3. **Deploying projects aimed at eliminating gender gaps in female entrepreneurship, including in access to finance and relevant networks;**
4. **Providing women farmers opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial skills;**
5. **Redefining entrepreneurship to include more values stereotypically considered as "feminine" ones;**
6. **Promoting EIT Food's gender-related initiatives among investors.**

¹² European Parliament (2019) [The professional status of rural women in the EU](#)

¹³ EIT Food (2021) [Female agrifood tech entrepreneurs](#)

3.2.6 Promote gender equality in innovation

THE OUTCOME: EIT Food is incubating innovations that are addressing needs of all potential customers and users, regardless of their gender.

The agricultural and agrifood sector is becoming increasingly digital and will continue to adopt advanced technologies in the near future. However, if the future is indeed digital and women have been found to be underrepresented in both agricultural management and ICT sectors, there is a serious concern about the future of women in agricultural and related technology sectors. While there is substantial research on the inclusion of women in STEM, the connection between women and ICT in the context of the agritech in Europe remains underdeveloped. Innovation can play a key role in achieving a gender inclusive digitalisation of the agri-food sector. Starting from the assessment of digitalisation needs, and the understanding of specific gender-related barriers and attitudes towards ICT uptake, all agri-food actors will need a gender lens in their activities in order to generate and transfer ICT-related knowledge and innovation that specifically caters for women's needs, thus paving the way for an inclusive digitalisation of the sector. Furthermore, an in-depth understanding of women's needs not only in relation to "hard" (technological), but also to "soft" issues can generate innovations in relation to business models, new forms of management and finance.¹⁴

Moreover, consumer debates on food innovations (e.g. on novel food and food technologies, risks, etc.) should be reported in a gendered way to take different needs and perspectives into account. In food and nutrition research, attention should be given to gender differences, such as sex- and gender-related variations in non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular disease, cancers, and diabetes, to better understand risks for developing NCDs over time. Determining sex-specific metabolism, dietary, and nutrient responses is also important in the field of nutrigenomics to provide an understanding of how diets affect females and males at the genetic, molecular, and cellular levels. When constructing models to develop new sets of biomarkers to study the effects of food compounds on body functions gender is particularly relevant.¹⁵

EIT Food needs to redefine innovation, so it will not be recognized only as a technology-driven area but as the creative problem-solving approach to food-related challenges.

Detailed objectives within this area include:

1. **Providing support for women on their path towards leadership in innovation projects;**
2. **Redefining the leaders role in innovation projects to reflect various leadership styles;**

¹⁴ SmartAgriHubs (2020) [Let's not talk about gender. The Gender Analysis Committee.](#)

¹⁵ European Commission (2013) [Gendered Innovations. How Gender Analysis Contributes to Research](#)

3. **Acknowledging the increased digitalisation of agricultural and agrifood sector, presenting both opportunities and threats for gender equality;**
4. **Embedding gender mainstreaming within innovations through taking into account gender differences in developing new food products (e.g. in metabolism, dietary, and nutrient responses) as well as in research on consumer behaviour and preferences (e.g. with regards food quality and safety).**

4. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In 2021 EIT Food created a solid framework for implementation of gender mainstreaming policy by appointing a dedicated Gender Officer, establishing Gender Task Force consisting of representatives of EIT Food Head Quarters, different CLCs and different positions (from Intern through Project Managers to Director of Functional Area and the Chief Operations Officer). The GTF held regular meetings to monitor the participatory design process of creating the Gender Mainstreaming Policy, which has been supervised by the Gender Officer and deployed by the dedicated service design agency subcontracted to perform this task. As a result the report from the process informed this document.

In parallel, the Equity Diversity and Inclusion group – informal body comprised of EIT Food employees with ambition to advance diversity issues incl. gender equity has been working on raising awareness around inclusivity in EIT Food. Each monthly All Hands' meeting in EIT Food gathering all employees includes 15 minutes on the agenda for the Diversity and Inclusion topics. This is a great tool used to disseminate the diversity values and raise awareness about main challenges for inclusivity in the agrifood sector.

The Gender Mainstreaming Policy in EIT Food requires reinforcement of the current organisational arrangements by considering a paid role for a person responsible for the policy implementation as well as rearranging the Gender Task Force to better reflect variety of the regions (HQ, CLC South, CLC West, CLC North-West, CLC Central, CLC North East) and functions (Education, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Public Engagement) covered by EIT Food operations.

At this stage the biggest challenge identified is access to gender disaggregated data, which requires creation of a strategy on how to gather, process and analyse data important from the gender mainstreaming perspective.

Based on those data and overall KIC strategy the actions identified through the research and presented in the Annex 1 will be validated. The validation process will inform the selection of activities to be implemented within the 3-Year Action Plan that will include clear targets and indicators to monitor the progress.

4.1. 3-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The goal of the Gender Action Plan is to implement the vision and objectives set in the policy by taking actions in various areas of EIT Food.

The GAP will include the following phases:

- 1. An audit phase:** Elements of this phase will include the collection of sex-disaggregated and/or gender-disaggregated data and a review of practices to identify gender inequalities and their causes. The latter has been already performed through the participatory policy design process, yet the collection of data will be the first step in the implementation of GAP from 2022 onwards. The review of practices and causes of inequality will be performed regularly.
- 2. A planning phase:** During this phase, EIT Food will validate the objectives defined in the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and set the targets for the GAP alongside a roadmap of actions and measures. This phase also includes allocating resources and responsibilities for the delivery of the GAP (redefinition of the Gender Officer role and rearrangement of the Gender Task Force) and agreeing timelines for implementation.
- 3. An implementation phase:** The roadmap of activities for EIT Food will be implemented. This phase will include communication and training efforts to achieve buy-in and build capacity and support for the GAP across EIT Food, as well as give visibility internally and externally to the GAP.
- 4. A monitoring and evaluation phase:** The delivery of the plan and progress against its aims and objectives will be regularly assessed, including the participatory process to include EIT Food employees. Ongoing review of findings and progress will also provide space for learning and feedback to enable adjustments and improvements to interventions.

The delivery of all three phases will be within the responsibilities of the Gender Officer working closely with the Gender Task Force, HR Manager, EDI group internal team, synchronizing data collection strategy across the whole organization (TBD) and the Management Board. Specific tasks requiring additional support and expertise will be delivered by external subcontractors based on the allocated budget. The budget allocation will be determined after validating the actions against gender-disaggregated data for EIT Food.

EIT Food has an ambition to implement the GAP at all levels of organization and in all activities carried out within its frames. Therefore, EIT Food employees' involvement is crucial, and they were consulted upon the GMP and GAP from the very beginning of the process.

To make GAP actionable, EIT Food employees need to know the background and rationale behind each action and understand the expected ideal state. Therefore apart from standard elements of the action plan such as division of responsibilities or evaluation strategy, the communication of each action should include the list of benefits and expected outcomes for the following three groups:

- those who identify as women,
- those who identify as men,
- those who identify as nonbinary.

The three-level communication of actions in GAP will emphasize the importance of the policy to all genders and will operationalize the strategy towards inclusivity and diversity in EIT Food.

4.2. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The GAP monitoring will be performed on a yearly basis by an external company using both standard evaluation methodologies (e.g. SMART or RACER frameworks) as well as participatory approach to involve employees and be able to adjust the actions and targets according to dynamically changing reality of agrifood sector. Monitoring will mobilize large number of different actors within the organisation and therefore the action itself will have a transformative potential.

The methods used for the monitoring will be both qualitative and quantitative depending on the indicators to be measured. The yearly monitoring reports will be presented to the Management Board and any actions required to adjust the GAP will be approved by the senior management.

The ex-ante evaluation based on the process carried out so far and gender disaggregated data gathered at the beginning of 2022 will become the reference point for the evaluation of GAP in 2024.

4.3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Successful realization of gender mainstreaming policy requires consistent and active participation by all EIT Food staff at all levels. Responsibilities and actions require collaboration and effective linkages across departments and units.

Senior management and leadership will be responsible for:

- overseeing the implementation and monitoring process;
- aligning the gender mainstreaming policy with general KIC strategy and Impact Pathways;
- supporting persons responsible for introducing and deploying specific activities (especially Gender Officer and HR Manager) in communicating the gender mainstreaming process to EIT Food employees;

- securing enough human and financial resources to perform the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and GAP;
- communicating the gender mainstreaming policy values to agrifood community within and beyond EIT Food.

Programme and Project Managers will be responsible for:

- including gender perspective in designing and performing the activities within respective KAVAs;
- reporting on gender disaggregated data according to the EIT Food data collection strategy
- understanding impact of their activities with regard to influence on gender equity;
- implementing specific actions assigned to them within the Gender Action Plan;
- communicating the gender mainstreaming policy values to agrifood community within and beyond EIT Food.

Operational and technical staff will be responsible for:

- adapting HR policies to the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and ensuring that all matters related to recruitment, onboarding and professional development are taking into account the gender equity principle;
- cultivating inclusive organizational culture, which allows everyone in EIT Food to grow regardless of their age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, race and disability;
- ensuring that all communication materials (videos, pictures, texts, events) are designed in a gender neutral manner;
- implementing specific actions assigned to them within the Gender Action Plan;
- communicating the gender mainstreaming policy values to agrifood community within and beyond EIT Food.

5. ANNEX 1: STATUS QUO ANALYSIS OF THE KIC

The qualitative status quo analysis has been performed to assess the current situation of gender equity in the EIT Food and areas where the gender bias is most visible. The next step required in order to fully understand the situation of EIT Food in terms of gender is the analysis of gender disaggregated data, which are currently dispersed within the organization and a joint strategy to collect them needs to be put in place. EIT Food employees are committed to make the food system more inclusive and diverse, which sets a very promising ground for the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and GAP to become a truly transformative tool.

5.1. LEAD ROLE OF EIT FOOD

EIT Food is vocal about the gender equity by investing in the participation gender mainstreaming policy design process and involving over 30 employees including 10 men.

Two out of six member of the Gender Task Force are also members of the EIT Food Management Board and they are committed gender champions.

On the biggest annual EIT Food conference “Future of Food 2021” a dedicated panel discussion for diversity and gender equality will be organized on 1st of December 2021.

Communication Team in EIT Food is engaged in the topic of gender equality and published pieces on the matter e.g. [Inclusive systems innovation: our opportunity for a future-fit food system](#) or [Why gender balance is the key to delivering a sustainable food system](#)

Below, there is a **list of possible actions** to bring EIT Food closer to the role of a gender equality leader in the community to be validated.

➔ Challenge the current stereotypes

- Take an active stance to challenge the stereotypes when portraying a chosen role, regardless of gender. For example, it means using gender-neutral pronouns such as they/them and avoiding gendered language, e.g., the word ‘ninja’ often appears in job descriptions in IT.
- Many stock gender-balanced images are too clean, too airbrushed, and too visibly balanced. EIT Food can find more stock images that avoid the perpetuation of stereotypical gender role or create a custom gallery of images that will fill in the missing roles.
- Analyse the images in the Asset Library for their inclusivity: analyse the images in the collection of EIT Food to identify which roles are missing e.g. there are images of a woman going to the grocery, but black women are still missing and men doing groceries as well.
- Bring diversity into all images, e.g., by promoting different body types and clothing to avoid oversexualization of women.
- Develop strategy regarding videos that include values from Gender Mainstreaming Policy.
- Organize a panel as an awareness-raising exercise e.g. a round table where people can discuss some challenges in the context of different countries.

- Complete the EIT Food Branding Guidelines with requirements regarding gender.
- At the public affairs level, promote initiatives that require more gender balance from agrifood companies.

➔ Provide support in career development

- Encourage all individuals regardless of gender to engage in more managerial activities before they take leadership positions.
- Include professional growth in all annual plans: for example, the line manager should discuss with all staff regardless of gender how they see their career evolving and which directions they could go in.

➔ Promote mentorship and recognize talents

- All leaders should be engaged in mentoring talents. Currently, EIT Food expects to see more female leaders mentoring other women and men.
- Recognize talents regardless of their gender and invite them to fill strategic positions in EIT Food.

➔ Redefine leadership

- Provide resources on imposter syndrome conditions and fears.
- Change the definition of a leader, so it includes more feminine values.

➔ Give leaders the role of educators

- Provide more opportunities to show the 'human' side of leadership, the feminine values of leadership.
- Offer current leaders a space to educate others.
- Encourage leaders to be transparent, more approachable, accessible, and share experiences of overcoming hurdles.
- Promote leadership that is sensitive to the development of needs of the individuals, regard their gender to ensure that the right support is there. Provide training on such nurturing leadership.
- While finding mentors for women, pay attention to what type of support they need.

➔ Identify ambassadors

- Sign up the EIT Food CEO to the Gender Champions network and provide a good case of leading by example.
- Make the Gender Equity Ambassador in EIT Food a title to be proud of.
- Invite men to also be the leaders of change.
- Ensure that leaders follow the values that EIT Food is looking to bring in.

➔ Have an influence on EIT Food Partners around promoting gender equality

- Educate and encourage Partners to be more active in advancing gender equality in their organizations.
- Share best practices on gender equity among Partners.

- Have a charter for Partners in EIT Food, which sets out the expectations regarding gender.
- Plan how to impact startups that participate in EIT Food programs to be more inclusive.
- Prepare a toolkit on how to tackle the gender element when writing KAVAs.

➔ Identify those with the best practices

- Collect examples of best gender equity-related practices from projects to disseminate among other consortia.
- Set up and share best practices across teams.

➔ Find experienced partners

- Identify entrepreneurs with mostly female teams and learn from them.
- Identify investors who invested and succeeded due to supporting women-led startups.
- Create a network of engaged men in the EIT Food Community.
- Mobilize Partners who have expertise in gender issues in innovation and entrepreneurship projects.

5.2. CAPACITY AND AWARENESS RAISING

EIT Food is leading in terms of gender equality by having an established role of Gender Officer together with Gender Task Force comprised of:

- Teresa Jia Yi Ye, Junior Communication Officer (intern)
- Maarten van der Kamp, Director of Education
- Charlotte Knowles, Chief Operating Officer
- Aleksandra Niżyńska, RIS Project Manager
- Lara Rodriguez, RIS Project Manager
- Amparo de San Jose, Entrepreneurship Programme Manager

The Gender Task Force is cooperating closely with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDI).

Below, there is a **list of possible actions** on how to build capacity and awareness within EIT Food to be validated.

➔ Conduct surveys to recognize unconscious assumptions

- Search for standardized questionnaires to monitor gender equity in organizations.
- Identify measures (qualitative and quantitative) that will enable EIT Food to evaluate the current state of gender equity in the organization and among Partners.
- Include gender-related questions into surveys regarding employees' wellbeing.

→ Start from basic measurements

- Propose a questionnaire to assess the starting level for the challenge in the EIT Food.
- Check the number of women and men in high job positions (program managers, directors).
- Verify the number of female/male entrepreneurs applying to EIT Food programs and act on the results of measurements.
- Introduce metrics that are recognized as the industry standard regarding gender mainstreaming e.g. gender pay gap index, proportion of men and women in the senior positions, proportion of men and women leaving the organization.
- Gain expertise on gender-related data and how to interpret and act upon it.

→ Use data to inform the narrative and changes in EIT Food

- Make sure text filters and searches in the related websites and platforms consist of all gendered terminology.
- Make gender an evergreen topic in each activity/project.
- Keep consistency in storytelling throughout the organization.
- Develop a communication strategy regarding gender equity outside EIT Food.
- Bring more visibility to decision-making processes in EIT Food, increasing the gender equity.
- Build action plans based on the results of the employee wellbeing surveys, demonstrate progress and changes.
- Decide how EIT Food should respond to gender-related issues in the agrifood sector.

→ Identify commonalities and barriers

- Collect the data to verify what is the level of gender-related challenges in different countries.
- Find key common values that can be manifested uniquely under different cultural contexts.
- Recognize the barriers connected with large geographical scope of EIT Food operations.

→ Create a safe space for sharing at various levels of EIT Food

- Provide a possibility to share gender-related insights anonymously, make a complaint, or raise serious concerns, e.g., anonymous letterbox.
- Have an approachable HR Manager and a Gender Officer who can act as a spokesperson and be heard by the management.
- Create a whistleblowing system.
- Provide space in which EIT Food employees can share their personal stories regarding gender-related issues. Then communicate such authentic stories in the organization to make the policy actionable.

→ Create a community of practice

- Continue Gender Task Forces to ensure the sustainability of gender mainstreaming processes.
- Conduct regular check-ups with the Gender Officer.

→ Leave space for future adaptation and exchange of experiences

- Agree on common goals and leave room for local needs at the regional /CLC level.

- Identify the pain points in different regions/CLCs and design specific approaches to target priority goals.
- Transform Gender Task Force into a 'gender issues committee' with rapporteurs representing each region/CLC to add this new dimension to the dialogue.
- Acknowledge cultural differences and be open to varying views, but do not abandon the core fundamentals.
- Have periodical catch-ups of Focus Area employees regarding gender-related issues in their work in their regions and discuss how they are tackled.
- Have an Action Plan that specifies the minimal goals and ways of implementation but enables CLCs to exceed the minimal requirement.

➔ **Assure the sustainability and actionability of the policy**

- Provide a possibility of regular engagements with the topic, so it is not just a one-off exercise.
- Integrate gender topics into all spaces of organization and casual business.
- Propose and communicate follow-up actions.

➔ **Conduct formal and informal actions in parallel**

- Start formal processes that people need to know are available and provide space, which isn't necessarily formal, where people can discuss gender in EIT Food.
- Some people may just want to talk about gender-related issues, things that they're thinking about, or things that have come to their attention without feeling they're making a complaint. For example, it is possible to have such a space within the EDI group.

➔ **Encourage men to express their feminine side**

- Share in the Communication Hub some materials advising EIT Food employees how to promote non-stereotypical gender roles.
- Work with personal experience. Consider doing an exercise with men to talk with women from their families on the gender-related issues, e.g. mother, wives or daughters
- Ask men about the women who have influenced them in their lives/work.

➔ **Educate**

- Ensure EIT Food employees are well-informed on the topic and do not assume they are.
- Promote gender-neutral language.
- Act upon the storytelling to ensure everyone sees the value of the policy and action plan.
- During team building or employee event promote role-playing, e.g., men put themselves in the shoes of women <https://fb.me/e/1LJAjBjwU> or
- Test Theatre of the Oppressed technique for seeing different perspectives / working through challenges.

➔ **Encourage to speak up**

- Promote the policy of immediate reactions and speak up in EIT Food.
- Make sure men are aware of the challenges by communicating it to them directly.
- Challenge discriminating behaviours and be vocal about problems.

- Provide practices to know how to respond to comments in social media questioning gender-related actions.

5.3. REPRESENTATION IN STAFF AND MANAGEMENT

EIT Food is an equal opportunity employer, offering each candidate matching the minimum obligatory qualifications and experiences an equal chance in employment and promotion procedures.

The data collection strategy to be developed will include the data on gender balance in EIT Food workforce, disaggregating by position in the hierarchy and by function.

Currently developed HR strategy will also include work life balance measures and anti-discrimination policies.

Below, there is a list of possible actions on how to keep gender balance within EIT Food as a workplace to be validated.

➔ Make changes in the recruitment processes

- Benchmark status quo on staff and use this knowledge to report future recruitments inside and across EIT Food.
- Keep job advertisements gender-neutral.
- Benchmark successful applicants to verify if EIT Food invites more diversity.

➔ Promote and use gender-neutral communication

- Promote job descriptions in a gender-neutral way.
- Strengthen the communication skills of everyone and their assertiveness.

➔ Maintain the effectiveness of meetings

- Make it possible for everyone to express opinions and join discussions and events.
- Bring visibility to decision-making processes, so the decisions resulting from the chit-chat in the office that is not available to all are limited.
- Use a hybrid model consciously, sometimes face-to-face is better, sometimes online is better to elicit certain viewpoints and make sure all voices are heard.

➔ Enable flexibility in a workplace

- Maintain the flexibility of homeworking.
- Organize key meetings during core hours to enable attendance by staff with family and caring responsibilities
- Foster a culture where child care/family life can be present and can take precedence.

➔ Enable work-life balance

- Make part-time positions available also at management level.
- Ensure equal treatment of part-time positions (e.g. in terms of access to promotion, training, opportunities, etc.).
- Enable flexitime/flexible schedules.
- Adopt clear provisions of telework or smartwork.
- Support actively the paternity leave.
- Ensure carer/Parent-friendly workplace (e.g. areas where children can be cared for, bottle- or breastfeeding rooms, breaks).
- Support caring activities (e.g. for children, relatives).

5.4. EDUCATION

EIT Food currently runs two Educational Programmes strictly addressing the gender imbalance in agrifood in the RIS countries.

1. [WE Lead](#) offers female researchers and professional women from RIS countries an opportunity to:
 - explore and develop both their entrepreneurial and leadership self
 - address systemic issues
 - define their vision for a more sustainable food system
 - devise a plan for the change

The programme is made up of interactive sessions designed to unlock and develop the entrepreneurial mindset and capabilities of the participants in the context of leading in the complex and changing food industry.

The experiential component will be complemented by a leadership development plan and a mentoring programme. To challenge and progress the development plan, each participant will have access to industry, academic and/or policy mentors, cross-sector industry leaders' network and the tools to leverage both entrepreneurial and collective leadership ways of working.

2. Through an online learning programme on the circular agri-food system, about 750 girls will be trained in the [Girls Go Circular](#) programme in 2021. The online learning programme will involve girls from RIS countries.

The GGC girls are engaged in both individual research and group activities, contributing to forge their leadership and entrepreneurial skills. While acquiring competences about the circular economy, the girls will be required to use digital tools to progress with their learning.

The data collection strategy to be developed will include the data on graduates from EIT Food MSc/PhD programmes by gender, participants in (non-degree) education and training by gender, startups created of EIT Food labelled MSc/PhD programmes by gender, EIT Food MSc/PhD students and graduates who joined startups by gender.

Below, there is a **list of possible actions** on how to advance gender equity in the field of education within EIT to be validated.

➔ **Start programs directed towards kids**

- Provide digital skills training especially for young girls in agrifood.
- Start educational programs targeting children to promote the attractiveness of the food industry.

➔ **Bring gender balance into educational programs and actions**

- Deliver education programs using various methods as women and men have different learning styles.
- Conduct gender audits of educational materials to make sure that materials include all genders regardless of topic.
- Conduct research to investigate gender-related challenges in educational programs.

➔ **Include aspect of diversity and inclusion in every educational initiative**

- Add human touch to all online training about gender diversity.
- Create a *human library* that presents a person in a certain situation and enables you to learn about their situation. This allows people to see the difference changes make. It also helps in developing empathy.
- Include gender-related topics in every course.

5.5. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Women entrepreneurship is one of EIT Food priorities in term of actions towards advancing gender equality in agrifood. The KIC is running a project which is specifically focused on boosting women entrepreneurship in RIS countries, namely [Empowering Women in Agrifood](#). The programme provides tailored mentoring, training, networking opportunities and funding to women who start their business path in agrifood. So far 130 women were supported in 9 RIS countries from Southern and Central- Eastern Europe.

Furthermore, EIT Food commissioned an independent research on gender equality in business creation programmes. The 2021 report *Female Agrifood Tech Entrepreneurs* presents current situation in this area in the KIC. The following session is based on the insights from this report and the list of potential actions corresponds to the list of recommendations presented there.¹⁶ The study has been performed on participants of EIT Food business creation programmes.

¹⁶ EIT Food (2021) [Female agrifood tech entrepreneurs](#)

According to them gender bias might be invisible, but it is widespread. 19% believe they are being held back because of negative gender bias they have experienced during their careers.

While half of survey respondents state there is a level playing field for women raising capital, 83% stated that they have encountered negative gender bias when pitching and 45% feel they are not treated equally to their male peers. Engaging men is a critical part of the solution to reduce negative gender bias. 66% of survey respondents say that men have “untapped power” to reduce negative gender bias and 97% suggest that men need training on gender bias.

At the same time only 1 in 25 say they have experienced negative gender bias on an EIT Food Entrepreneurship programme. 50% of respondents say that the EIT Food Entrepreneurship programmes have strengthened their confidence as female entrepreneurs. 75% say that EIT Food does not enable negative gender bias, yet 54% say EIT Food can do a better job at recruiting diverse ecosystem.

The data collection strategy to be developed will include the data on EIT Food start-ups created of/for innovation by gender of CEO/owner, EIT Food supported start-ups/scale-ups by gender of CEO/owner, investment attracted by EIT Food supported start-ups/scale-ups by gender of CEO/owner, start-ups created by students enrolled and graduates from EIT Food MSc and PhD programmes by gender of CEO/owner

Below, there is a **list of possible actions** on how to advance gender equity in the field of entrepreneurship within EIT to be validated.

➔ **Promote agrifood among women**

- Show the presence of women at all stages of the agrifood chain, share their stories.
- Show women running agrifood businesses, especially in agriculture.
- Promote agrifood as a career path, as it is not considered attractive, especially not for women.
- Make agrifood more universally appealing.
- Work with young women, who just graduated, and encourage them to apply for tech positions.

➔ **Promote women entrepreneurs in communication of Business Creation programmes**

- Establish goals, collect and disseminate data, tell stories across all communications platforms: branding, website, outreach, intake, recruitment, and operational documents.
- Analyse marketing and promotion components that feature “female entrepreneurs” and set new tone and approach to these.
- Use the EIT Food platform to continue giving a voice and visibility to female founders/CEOs and share content highlighting the importance of supporting and funding women-led businesses.

➔ Strengthen gender equity in existing entrepreneurship programmes

- Provide business best practices training and support to nurture a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion across all programmes.
- Look at how EIT Food Business Creation programmes can be reconfigured to 1. increase participation of female founders and CEOs; 2. improve access to supportive role models and relevant networks; 3. educate all participants on the benefits of taking a diverse and inclusive approach to building and scaling a business.
- Engage and include men, from trainers to mentors to participants across all EIT Food Business Creation programmes to achieve gender equity goals and encourage men to act as 'champions of change' and to achieve gender equity goals.
- Build more active support mechanisms between men and women within and across EIT Food Business Creation programmes and with the EIT Food network.

➔ Combat gender bias among agrifood investors

- Commit to setting best practices as investors ourselves, for example participating in diversity initiatives such as Diversity VC Standard and others across Europe.
- Engage and educate the investor community on gender bias issues and prioritise investors who are already committed to funding more female founded businesses.
- Engage the investor community to offer pitch training support and office hours for female EIT Food Business Creation programmes participants.

5.6. INNOVATION

So far EIT Food has not been tackling the issues of gender equality in the area of innovations.

The data collection strategy to be developed will include the data on number of innovative products/services designed or tested, by gender CEO or owner, number of innovation KAVAs including gender dimension in project description.

Below, there is a **list of possible actions** on how to advance gender equity in the field of innovation within EIT to be validated.

➔ Redefine innovation

- Conduct research to explore gender-related issues in agrifood innovation processes.
- Emphasize that innovation isn't just about robots and technology.

➔ Bring more visibility to women in innovation

- Make ICT courses more appealing to women, including AI, machine learning.
- Promote the leading role of women in biotechnology.
- Support women in positioning themselves as innovators.

➔ **Add gender dimension to innovation projects**

- Grant innovation projects taking gender dimension into account.
- Evaluate innovative ideas, projects, or business models, considering their impact on gender.
- Support gender innovations that address the needs of all genders.