



Report on Implementation of Gender Equality Strategy

1. Introduction

Gender equality refers to “the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys”¹. This is a crucial prerequisite for societal sustainable development and, as such, it concerns men, women, and other non-conforming gender-identifying persons and thus can only be achieved with the direct engagement of persons across the entire gender spectrum. This consortium is committed to promoting the rights and interests of all persons in their professional and private life. The BioProS consortium strives to foster gender equality and is dedicated to avoiding any discrimination within the project based on gender, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, or otherwise. Thus, all involved participants within the consortium will be provided with the same opportunities for development.

This report on the Implementation of a Gender Equality Strategy has been completed in accordance with the Statement of Work requirements by explicating an approach to educating and coaching the partners on how to improve processes and practices related to gender balance for the BioProS consortium. The BioProS gender equality strategy is modeled on the Gender Equality Plan formula set forth by Horizon Europe and will be followed throughout the duration of the project. The strategy is based on an analysis of gender-disaggregated data of the individuals who will be working directly within this consortium as partner members. This report on the Implementation of a Gender Equality strategy is the result of a collaborative Gender Equality workshop substantiated and coordinated by EurA AG and identifies challenges and targets to be achieved in the short and long term and defines monitoring actions and indicators for the Gender Equality Strategy. The workshop covered the core areas of gender equality that are directly relevant and applicable to the consortium.

All consortium partners acknowledge the opportunities generated by gender equality, inclusion, and diversity. This is in accordance with the declared goal of the project coordinator to increase the proportion of female workers in research and ensure the reconciliation of work, private, and family life. The recruitment process will also follow a strict equal opportunity policy. Young females or other-identifying gendered persons have been encouraged specifically to actively participate in this project. Further, this project will continue to promote education, training, and awareness-raising activities on sex and gender equality throughout the project duration. The project coordinator will maintain oversight on matters regarding the implementation of the gender balance policy on the sides of all members. All consortium members will strive to comply with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers & the Code of Conduct for their recruitment, with reference to the principles of non-discrimination, gender balance, and selection in relation to nurturing gender equality within the consortium.

This report is structured according to three main sections:

- Analysis of Gender Disaggregated Data of Project Partners within the BioProS consortium
- Actions and Targets
- Monitoring

¹ United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>. Last Accessed: 08.12.2022

2. Analysis: Gender Disaggregated Data within BioProS

Gender disaggregated data has been collected from each partner through a questionnaire on Microsoft Forms. The questionnaire asked for detailed information regarding the gender of persons directly participating in the BioProS consortium. According to the results, as of December 2022, the BioProS consortium is comprised of both male and female project members, with 39 males and 23 females (or other non-conforming gendered persons) participating in the project, as shown in figure 1. Therefore, out of the 62 total participants reported to have direct involvement in this project, 63% are male and 37% are female or non-binary participants.

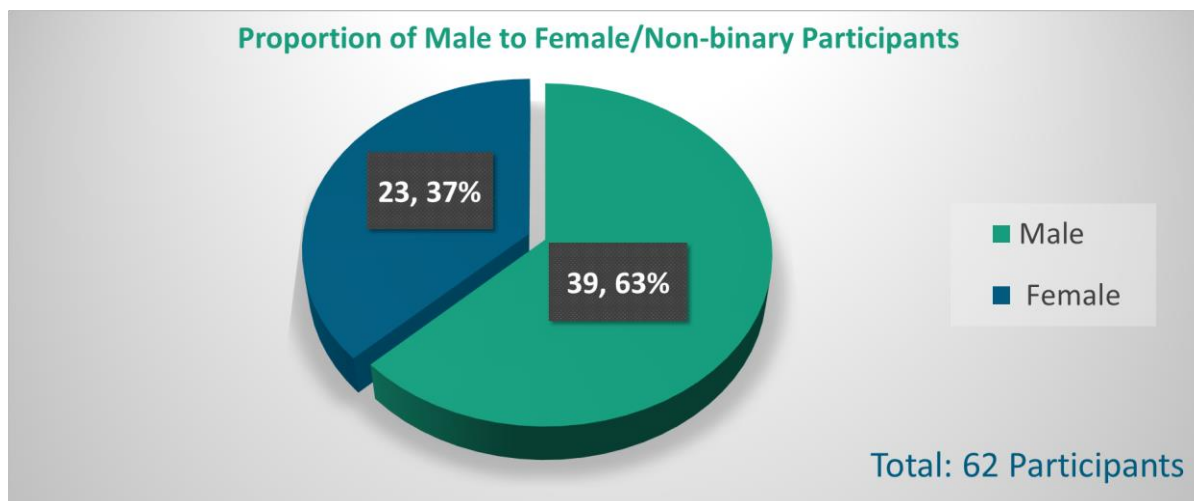


Figure 1: Proportion of Male to Female/Non-binary Participants

Further, the gender distribution regarding which of the participants hold leadership positions within their respective organizations was determined. The results, as seen in figure 2, demonstrated that of the 24 partner members who hold leadership positions, 16 are men, and 8 are women. Therefore, roughly 66% of the BioProS participants who hold leadership positions within their respective organizations are men, and 33% are women.

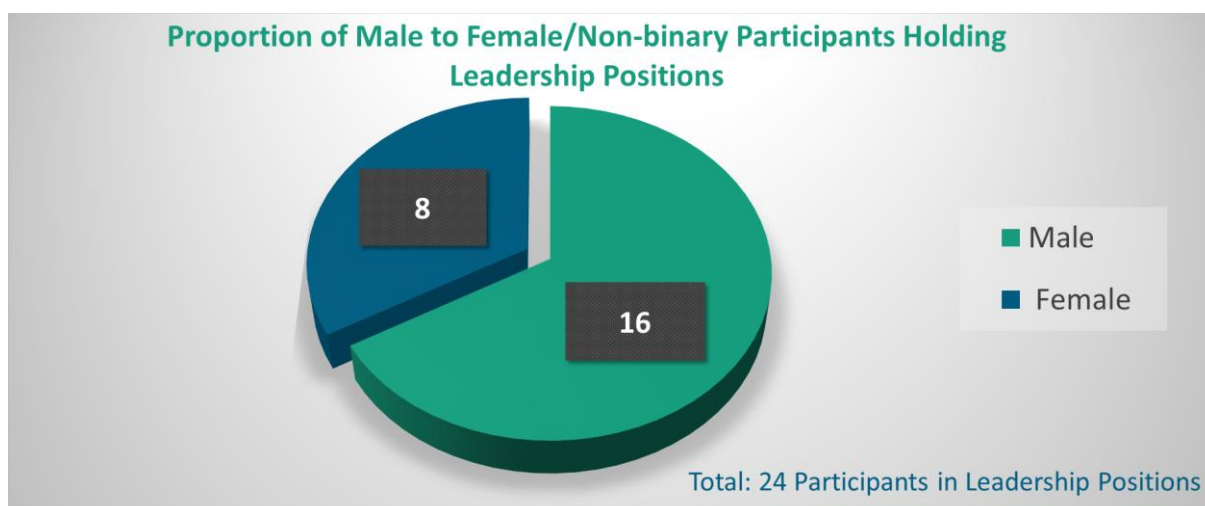


Figure 2: Proportion of Male to Female/Non-Binary Participants Holding Leadership Positions

These results demonstrate the work to be done in ensuring that the discrepancy between the number of participating men and women does not overshadow the importance of establishing equality within the consortium.

3. Actions and Targets

BioProS values the competencies of all participants and strives to ensure that men, women, non-binary, or other gender-non-conforming persons have the same opportunities to achieve their goals in their professional life. A dynamic, diverse, and inclusive research and innovation system is critical to the success of the BioProS project. Unfortunately, biases based on gender are present in society and in the workplace that often prevent one from reaching one's goals. Therefore, the consortium developed a workshop around Gender Bias in the workplace to ensure that these biases do not lead to inequalities within this consortium.

The Gender Equality Workshop was inclusive and interactive and was designed to achieve two distinct goals. First, the workshop was meant to raise awareness of the biases and challenges that women and non-binary persons face in the workplace. Second, the workshop was intended to develop objectives, targets, and measures that considered the content-related or thematic Gender Equality Plan building blocks set forth by Horizon Europe, including work-life balance and organizational culture, gender balance in leadership and decision-making, the integration of the gender dimension into research content, and taking measures against gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Therefore, the Gender Equality Workshop was designed to teach the consortium partners about important gender bias topics which have cross-cutting relevance to each of the building blocks. The types of bias that were discussed included the various bias types that might be experienced in the workplace including unconscious bias, performance bias, attribution bias, likability bias, maternal bias, and affinity bias. Further, the workshop pointed out the damaging effects that positive stereotypes can have on women in the workplace. Finally, the workshop explored a range of key performance indicators that will help the consortium reach its gender equality goals with an action plan that will be implemented throughout the course of this four-year project. The workshop was essential for shaping the BioProS gender equality strategy because it highlighted the importance of maximizing the talents of all genders and provided information on the common types of gender bias and how to tackle bias within the context of this group and in everyone's working situation outside the context of BioProS. Finally, the workshop closed with an overview of several tools and strategies that each individual member can use to break gender bias habits, combat work cultures based on toxic masculinity, and ways to fight bias in the workplace including, speaking up for someone at the moment when an instance of bias is noticed, asking probing questions in situations that might be biased to influence the offender to examine their thinking, sticking to the facts when having a conversation about how bias might be at play in a particular situation, explaining how bias is in play, and advocating for policy and process change and always being on the lookout for improving practices that reduce bias. The workshop concluded with an overview of further resources that have been collected for the development of the workshop which will be readily available on the project website for all team members to make use of to further their own education privately on matters of gender-based bias.

The BioPros consortium has identified several ways to promote gender equality and to approach a gender balance amongst the participants, though the consortium recognizes that achieving numerically equal representation amongst male, female, and non-binary participants is an impossibility due diverse nature of participant involvement. Everyone is participating in the consortium on behalf of their respective organization and must act in accordance with the values and protocols of their organization. However, the partners have identified several ways in which the potential negative effects of the numerical gender imbalance can be avoided and/or alleviated. The consortium considered both qualitative and quantitative indicators that will help to address intersections between gender and other demographic dimensions. A few objectives that were discussed that will help to improve equality amongst the partners is to ensure that each participant is able to share their ideas within every meeting, where time is set for a brainstorming session to collect the ideas of all participants equally. Both online and in-person meetings will follow predefined rules, such as the avoidance of interruption, and routines, such as roughly equal speaking times between men and women, to ensure that unconscious bias or other gender-based biases do not alienate any team member. A second

objective was discussed which will attempt to distribute work package leads evenly amongst male and female members to the best of our ability.

Target	Actions to Achieve Target	Timeline
Promote gender balance in the consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise positions to ensure enough candidates are reached 	Duration of project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the recruitment of female and non-binary candidates to the best of our ability 	Duration of project
Apply gender-sensitive recruitment procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all available positions are open to any gender to the best of our ability 	Duration of project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortlist job applicants to ensure gender balance to the best of our ability 	Duration of project
Promote equal competence development with the consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that junior partners are trained in a gender-balanced way 	Duration of project
Promote actions against stereotypes and gender bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop workshops and training sessions that raise awareness about gender issues 	Annually
Promote women in leadership positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of women who lead work packages 	Duration of project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of women-led meetings to account for male-dominated discussions 	Duration of project
Incorporate gender perspective in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the consideration of rights, interests, and needs of female and male employees when taking decisions within the consortium 	Duration of project
Eliminating gender biases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of an inclusive language within the consortium 	Duration of project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the importance of gender equality during meetings 	Duration of project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condemn the use of stereotypes within the consortium, e.g., based on gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, or any other salient personal characteristics 	Duration of project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint two responsible people for monitoring gender biases as contact persons who can address complaints related to discrimination and gender inequalities within the consortium 	Duration of project

Table 1: Targets and Actions to Achieve Target

4. Monitoring

The Gender Equality Strategy can be updated annually to ensure that the document is current with respect to the gender-disaggregated data regarding team member statistics. Monitoring techniques to ensure that the team is maintaining an awareness of gender-based issues will include periodic internal appraisals of how balanced the team feels the project is regarding gender-sensitive issues. The team will be able to openly discuss any issues regarding gender equality with the gender bias awareness team.

Target	Indicator
Promote gender balance in the consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of women and non-binary candidates with direct involvement in the project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual collection of gender-disaggregated data
Apply gender-sensitive recruitment procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all applicant material uses gender-sensitive language
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include a gender perspective in the communication strategy of the BioPros consortium (both internal and external)
Promote equal competence development with the consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that junior partners are trained in a gender-balanced way
Promote actions against stereotypes and gender bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop workshops and training sessions that raise awareness about gender issues
Promote women in leadership positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of women who lead work packages
Incorporate gender perspective in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the consideration of rights, interests, and needs of female and male employees when taking decisions within the consortium
Eliminating gender biases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit the number of complaints related to discrimination and gender inequality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued presence of an appointed team of 2 persons to monitor gender biases
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of partner input in Gender Equality Strategy

Table 2: List of Monitoring Indicators for Gender Equality Strategy

5. Conclusion

This report on the Implementation of a Gender Equality Strategy illustrated the actions taken by the BioProS consortium to ensure that gender competence development initiatives in the organization are tailored directly to the specific needs of the BioProS consortium. Gender disaggregated data was collected to help identify gender imbalances within the consortium members. A workshop on gender equality was conducted to address gender stereotyping and gender bias to raise awareness about gender-related issues amongst consortium members and to help mainstream gender competence. The consortium will collect relevant gender-based data annually for participants to keep track of gender statistics. The consortium will strive to advance the role of women with the intention to increase the number of women in work package leadership positions. A two-person gender equality team will be available to address gender-related issues and will monitor the progress of each meeting to ensure that a balance is kept during internal discussions.

Note: This report on the Implementation of a Gender Equality Strategy has primarily focused on the managerial and human relations aspect of gender equality, however, it should be noted that the content and area of research relevant to the BioProS Research and Innovation Action is gender neutral. The envisioned technology is applicable to product manufacturing for all genders. However, the big data approach to quality control viral particles maintained in this research project might provide insights into therapy functionality discriminating between males, females, and others in the future (e.g., on male/female production cells or cells-based infectivity assays).