

KA220 Final Report Assessment Training

Case Example: Higher Education



CLEAR **ASSESSMENT**



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Prepared by Orientra on behalf of the CLEAR LTA.

This case example has been prepared to facilitate discussion during the facilitate the training of Erasmus+ assessors. Whilst modelled on emerging priorities and past project ideas, the project and partnership are fictional and any similarity to actual or future projects is purely coincidental.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Title

Quality Standards and Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions (STAND-EQUAL)

Field

Higher Education (HED)

Duration

24 months

Lump Sum

€250,000

Short Description

STAND-EQUAL aims to identify, recognise and promote good practice in addressing gender equality in higher education. Whilst gender equality has been a priority for many years, women still face barriers to recruitment and progression, especially for higher level academic and management positions, and there is still some work to be done to effectively address this important societal issue. We will initially reflect on the state-of-development of gender equality and on how this topic is being specifically addressed within quality standards for higher education. Beyond this, we will focus on the production of gender equality guidelines and on badging processes to more fully recognise those with outstanding practices. In addition to reflecting on gender equality in the recruitment, retention and career progression of academic and management staff, we will focus on efforts being made to achieve gender balance among student cohorts in higher and continuing education programmes.

RELEVANCE

Priorities

P1. HIGHER EDUCATION: building inclusive higher education systems.

P2. HORIZONTAL: inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, youth and sport.

Motivation

Whilst a continuing priority for many years, and decades, gender equality remains a priority for higher education. Research confirms a continuing under-representation of women in higher-level academic and management positions and there is a need for continued efforts to help to address this important societal challenge. Many parts of the labour market are already facing challenges related to staff recruitment and retention and talent management and higher education is no exception. A visible and high-quality approach to positively addressing gender equality in staff and student recruitment practices will help in more effectively market individual institutions and their programmes, with digital badging providing a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of excellent or outstanding practice. Whilst quality standards often refer to fair and transparent recruitment processes for staff and pre-defined regulations to govern student admissions, gender equality is not obviously addressed in all cases and there is a need to compare and contrast these systems and practices and to highlight those aspects which might be extended or enhanced at systems or institutional levels.

Project Objectives

STAND-EQUAL aims to achieve the following objectives:

O1. To investigate and report on how gender equality is addressed in existing national and European quality standards for higher education, identifying areas where an improved or extended focus might be needed.

O2. To develop gender equality guidelines to support Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in effectively addressing gender equality - to support recruitment, progression and growth for staff and students - aligning these with existing national and European quality standards.

O3. To develop a digital badging system, award processes and criteria and to establish a Gender Equality Alliance with responsibility for the future award of digital badges to reward excellent or outstanding practice.

Expected Results

The following results and deliverables are expected for STAND-EQUAL:

R1. STAND-EQUAL State of the Art Review of Gender Equality and Quality Standards.

R2. STAND-EQUAL Guidelines for Effectively Addressing Gender Equality in HEIs.

R3. STAND-EQUAL Digital Badging System, Processes and Criteria.

R4. STAND-EQUAL Gender Equality Alliance.

Innovation

Whilst individual HEIs have their own perspectives on how to address gender equality in their own systems and practices, quality and effectiveness can only really be achieved by comparing practices across multiple countries and institutions, mapping against existing quality standards and determining whether, and in what way, improvements might be needed at systems or institutional levels. An opportunity also exists for rewarding those institutions whose gender equality measures are deemed excellent or outstanding, with digital badging and a Gender Equality Alliance anticipated as a means of addressing this. This is not an isolated challenge yet the proposed review, guidelines and badging efforts are not currently in place, and this is the basis for the proposed project and the targeted institutional and systems-level innovation.

Complementarity

All partners have confirmed a priority for advancing gender equality, with many having developed operational plans for their own institution to cover staff (recruitment, growth, progression) and students (promotion, admission, support). Partners engaged directly in needs analysis actions for the current project and identified a number of areas for improvement.

FU, JTU, UPA and TUSZ are higher education institutions who will directly engage with the targeted actions, providing insights into their own gender equality measures and practices and building on the developed guidelines to deliver improvements in their own institutions. These partners will facilitate access to key managers and staff to help in documenting existing gender equality measures and processes and how these relate to staff and students.

MKHU is a quality standards and assurance agency for higher education and will work directly with remaining partners to document and describe how gender equality features and can be effectively addressed in relation to existing quality standards and practices. MKHU will also provide access to partner agencies in other European countries, to extend the outreach of the initial STAND-EQUAL state-of-the-art review.

Synergies

STAND-EQUAL builds on past successes in developing European quality standards for higher education, and on efforts to successfully introduce gender equality measures in higher education at institutional, sectoral and/or national levels. Whilst the focus of this project is on higher education, specifically, the developed model and resources could easily be extended to other fields of education, training, youth and sport in the longer term. Promotional efforts will extend to policy audiences which, in some cases, might also be responsible for other aspects of education, training and community development.

European Added-value

STAND-EQUAL brings together partners from four European countries (SE-LV-ES-BG) with complementary footprints in the fields of higher education and quality assurance. While having a common field of outreach and engagement in higher education, individual partners bring forth their own institutional, cultural, social and regulatory backgrounds and perspectives which will form the basis of the targeted investigation, review and exchange actions to deliver a more complete overview of the state-of-the art as well as providing resources in multiple partner languages and a multi-country alliance of established HEIs that can establish and govern future badging for excellent or outstanding practices in addressing gender equality in HEIs. This is a common challenge which requires a common and wide-reaching solution that goes beyond the needs and expectations of a single institution or country.

Needs and Needs Analysis

STAND-EQUAL is based on the following identified needs and developments:

N1. Mapping Quality Standards and Gender Equality Measures: gender equality issues impact and are reflected in higher education systems worldwide, with unequal access to higher education in many countries, fewer resources and opportunities available to women and sustained under-representation of women in leadership positions in HEIs (British Council, 2022). There is a critical need to consider how quality standards address and reflect on gender equality in higher education and on whether and how these standards might need to be extended or enhanced to better reflect ongoing and future development and reporting needs.

N2. Delivering Institutional Change: in the EU Gender Equality Strategy (European Commission, 2020) a clear commitment is made to delivering significant progress by 2025 towards a gender-equal Europe and to closing gender gaps in the labour market; addressing gender pay gaps and achieving gender balance in leadership and decision-making.; individual HEIs have already begun to develop and implement dedicated gender equality strategies and plans yet the reach and extent of the targeted measures can differ across institutions and countries and there is a recognised need for a common resource to guide HEIs on their journey towards excellence.

N3. Recognising Excellence in HEIs: whilst some institutions have excelled in their efforts to directly address gender inequality among staff and students, efforts to recognise and reward this are limited yet digital badging offers significant opportunities for measuring, recognising and promoting excellent or outstanding practices in gender equality within individual HEIs, with merit to also establishing a Gender Equality Alliance for higher education.

These needs were identified by STAND-EQUAL partners through the following means:

NA1. Literature Review: HEI partners undertook desk research and critical peer review, with a focus on better understanding existing quality standards and strategic reporting mechanisms and reflecting more widely on gender equality policy and governance in the different partner countries. More than 200 documents and reports were consulted on these topics, with needs, gaps and inadequacies reported under the above-listed headings: mapping quality standards, delivering institutional change; recognising excellence in HEIs.

NA2: Internal Consultation: HEI partners consulted managers and staff with responsibility for the recruitment growth and progression of staff and student admissions, engagement and support, reflecting on gender equality practices and on perceived application and awareness of these measures within the institution. In many cases, growth areas were identified and reported and centred mainly on improved application of gender equality measures for and by staff. In all cases, increased recognition of successes, among management, decision-makers and policy actors, was confirmed as important.

NA3: Student and Staff Interviews: a digital survey of female staff members in the four partner HEIs asked for (confidential) input on the perceived visibility, adequacy and pertinence of gender equality measures in their own institutions with 83 unique respondents confirming a need for continued and enhanced efforts to manage and promote gender equality; a similar digital survey sought input from female student on the existence and visibility of gender equality measures and on perceived or registered inequalities in their own experience of recruitment, engagement and support, with 174 unique respondents confirming a need for greater visibility, access and support.

Target Groups

STAND-EQUAL addresses the following (direct and indirect) target audiences:

TA1: HEIs: improved understanding of gender equality measures, including how to apply and promote these measures and their benefits; mapping gender equality measures against national and European quality assurance standards [DIRECT].

TA2. HEI Staff: improved and equal opportunities for recruitment, growth and progression within current and future HEIs, as a consequence of having mapped and aligned existing practices against quality standards and through promoting institutional advancement and improvement [INDIRECT].

TA3. HEI Students and Graduates: improved and equal opportunities for accessing, engaging with and graduating from higher education programmes at all levels, including continuing professional development programmes [INDIRECT].

TA4: Educational Policy and Decision Makers: improved understanding of the importance of gender equality measures in the field of higher education, of how these measures map against national and European quality assurance standards and of the benefits of recognising excellence [INDIRECT].

PROJECT DESIGN

WP1: Project Management (€50,000)

Monitoring

We recognise the importance of monitoring progress, quality and achievement in the planned activities and deliverables. As overall project coordinator, FU will take the lead in WP1, relying on a variety of methods, including: a requirement for partners REGULARLY REPORT ON PROGRESS highlighting challenges and solutions, detailing levels of participation and engagement and using pre-defined indicators to determine overall success (MO1); a requirement for lead partners to regularly report on achieved and outstanding actions using dedicated ACTION TRACKING tools and reporting against pre-determine milestones and deadlines (MO2); a requirement for each partner to nominate one individual to participate in a STEERING COMMITTEE which is responsible for governance and decision-making and for dealing with any possible risks or emerging conflicts - Steering Committee members will meet once every 6-8 weeks to review progress and achievement, and wider partner staff will also participate in project review meetings, as needed (MO3); production of a dedicated QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN at the outset of the project to define quality assurance objectives, tools, methods, contingencies, metrics, indicators and related partner roles; whilst all monitoring actions will be undertaken internally, wider outreach and feedback is envisaged from managers, staff and students in the participating institutions with all such engagement expected to feature in the quality assurance plan (MO4).

Budget and Time Management

Budget and time management are critical management aspects and will remain the responsibility of FU as overall project coordinator. To ensure effective control of the budget, partners will be required to periodically report on activities, deliverables and related expenditure (six-monthly reporting) and to provide timesheets and evidence of costs as per the guidance from the project coordinator. A detailed budget overview will be hosted online and, following periodic updates, will provide an up-to-date overview of all project-related expenditure. Payments to partners will be made twice per year on the basis of reported and validated expenditure. No pre-financing payments are foreseen, except in exceptional circumstances.

Scheduling and time management will feature in all partner meetings and will form the basis of the action tracking tool/platform. Partner meetings will allow for decisions to be taken on revised scheduling for one or more of the targeted actions and outputs. Where delays are met by one or more partners, discussion will take place with the project coordinator to identify possible human and financial resources from within the partnership that might help to bring the project back-on-track. The contracting authority will be kept informed of significant deviations or changes to the original time plan.

Risk Management

Risk management and mitigation is an important aspect of the project and we have already considered some of the possible risks related to project delivery. In all cases, we will document risks that have the potential to impact on project and output delivery and end user engagement, using a Risk Management Plan, detailing possible mitigation strategies in each case. This will help to facilitate a common understanding of risk across the partnership. Examples of possible risks include: lack of interest and engagement among higher education managers and staff (mitigation options include: increased promotion of the timing, extent and benefits of input and participation; use of mediators or influencers); resistance from systems-level actors (mitigation options include: reinforced promotion, highlighting the benefits for staff and student recruitment, growth, engagement and retention); partner withdrawal (mitigation options include: identification of barriers to participation and possible renegotiation of role; identification and introduction of replacement partner).

Accessible and Inclusive Activities

Equity and inclusion are inherent to the overall vision for STAND-EQUAL, which centres on mapping the state-of-development of gender equality measures and on how this topic is being specifically addressed within quality standards for higher education. In addition to mapping progression, we intend to deliver guidelines to aid continuing development and advancement of gender inclusion within higher education landscapes and institutions. We will additionally establish a Gender Equality Alliance, initially within the partnership, with a mandate for measuring and recognising HEIs with excellent or outstanding gender equality practices through the award of bespoke STAND-EQUAL digital badges. Additionally, digital tools and platforms will be used to encourage wider engagement among managers, staff and students and project outputs will align with the key principles of the EU Web Accessibility directive. To facilitate resource access and integration, we will deliver resources in multiple partner languages (English plus all partner languages). Physical events for partners and others will always be located in accessible venues.

Digital Tools and Learning Methods

STAND-EQUAL will adopt digital tools and learning methods in a number of ways, including: VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS (use of readily-accessible virtual meeting technologies and platforms to host more regular partner meetings and to host targeted promotional activities and events); VIRTUAL COLLABORATION (use of readily-accessible communication and document-sharing platforms to facilitate partner cooperation and exchange); SOCIAL MEDIA (use of readily-accessible social media platforms and tools to communicate with internal and external stakeholder audiences); DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORM (use of readily-accessible digital platform to host digital reports and resources); DIGITAL BADGES (use of readily-accessible digital badging platforms to recognise excellent or outstanding practice); DIGITAL SURVEYS (use of readily-accessible digital survey tools and platforms to gather input and feedback from key beneficiary and stakeholder audiences, including event participants and those engaged in early-stage mapping and review activities).

Green Practices

STAND-EQUAL considers the following green practices within wider project planning and design: VIRTUAL MEETINGS (held more regularly as a complement to three face-to-face partner meetings and reducing the overall demand for resource- and energy-intensive travel and accommodation); DIGITAL RESOURCES (internal and external documents and reports will in most cases be produced in digital/electronic format reducing the demand for and use of paper and printing; printing will exceptionally be allowed where access and inclusion is better addressed through this means; all partners will be encouraged to use cloud based resource hosting to avoid multiple copies of resources being held; digital surveys will be encouraged as a more environmentally sustainable model); SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT (partners will be encouraged to use public or shared transport means wherever possible, when attending the three face-to-face meetings).

Active and Civic Participation

STAND-EQUAL encourages active and civic participation through engaging multiple actors (managers; staff; quality standards agencies; policy makers) to collaboratively address an important institutional and societal challenge, through strengthening gender equality measures and practices and through better alignment with national and European quality standards for higher education. Targeted promotion will actively engage senior management and policy actors in discussions on how to enhance existing systems and measures and to reward exceptional and outstanding practices.

WP2: Mapping Gender Equality Measures and National and European Quality Standards (€65,000)

Title	Task Description	Start and End Dates	Lead and Support Partners	Indicators of Achievement	Expected Results	Cost
Extended Consultation	Multi-actor and multi-level focus groups in four partner HEIs to more fully document the state-of-development and implementation of gender equality measures for staff (recruitment, growth, progression) and students (promotion, admission, support). Two Focus Groups in each of 4 partner countries (8 events; 160 participants in total).	M1-M4	FU plus JTU; UPA; TUSZ	8 focus groups in 4 countries; 160 participants.	Localised focus group reports and data.	€18,000
Mapping Gender Equality Measures to National and European Quality Standards plus Internal and External Validation and Reporting	Mapping gender equality measures and practices for students and staff against the national and European quality standards for higher education. Internal validation with MKHU. External validation through Focus Groups involving national and European quality standards agencies covering at least 5 different countries and 20 participants overall. Reporting on Mapping and Validation Processes and Outcomes.	M4-M10	UPA plus MKHU; FU; JTU; TUSZ	2 focus groups involving external to agencies from 5 countries and 20 participants overall. 1 report on Mapping and Validation Processes and Outcomes	Report on Mapping and Validation Processes and Outcomes (EN). Executive Summary (EN-SE-LV-ES-BG).	€26,000
Transnational Partner Meeting 1	Collaborative development of mapping and review activities and planning for internal and external stakeholder validation activity and national dissemination workshops.	M4-M4	FU plus MKHU; JTU; UPA; TUSZ	1 transnational partner meeting with 10 participants (2 per partner).	Minutes and Action Points (EN).	€8,500
Dissemination Workshops 1	Hosting and streaming of half-day dissemination workshops in each partner country (total of 4 events and 120 participants) to promote early-stage findings and achievements.	M11-M12	FU plus MKHU; JTU; UPA; TUSZ	Total of 4 events and 120 participants.	Dissemination Workshops in Four Partner Countries (live hosting and streaming).	€12,500

WP3: Digital Guidelines and Mixed Media Resources for Improving and Enhancing Gender Equality in HEIs (€80,000)

Title	Task Description	Start and End Dates	Lead and Support Partners	Indicators of Achievement	Expected Results	Cost
Co-creation of Curriculum and Digital Learning Content	Design and co-creation of guidelines for improving and enhancing gender equality measures, practices and awareness in HEIs. Multi-actor focus on: managers; HR and recruitment staff; academic staff; student admissions and support staff; students; policy actors. Delivery in EN and each additional partner language.	M12-M16	TUSZ plus MKHU; FU; JIU; UPA	Multi-actor guidelines in EN plus 4 partner languages (SV-LV-ES-BG).	Multi-actor guidelines (EN-SV-LV-ES-BG).	€23,000
Digital Media Resource Development	Storyboarding and production of complementary video-based media, including 6 video files in EN and each additional partner language (video files expected to use same footage).	M14-M18	TUSZ plus MKHU; FU; JIU; UPA	6 video files each developed in EN plus 4 partner languages (SV-LV-ES-BG).	Multi-language video-based resources (EN-SV-LV-ES-BG).	€33,500
Transnational Partner Meeting 2	Collaborative review of emerging findings (WP2) and initial design steps towards delivery of multi-actor guidelines. Planning dissemination and validation workshops. Capturing video footage for digital media resource development.	M14-M14	FU plus MKHU; JIU; UPA; TUSZ	1 transnational partner meeting with 10 participants (2 per partner).	Minutes and Action Points (EN).	€8,500
Dissemination (and Validation) Workshops 2	Hosting and streaming of half-day dissemination and validation workshops in each partner country (total of 4 events and 240 participants) to ensure wider HEI engagement in each partner country.	M14-M14	FU plus MKHU; JIU; UPA; TUSZ	Total of 4 events and 240 participants.	Dissemination/Validation Workshops in Four Partner Countries (live hosting and streaming).	€15,000

WP4: Gender Equality Alliance and Digital Badges for Recognising Excellence (€55,000)

Title	Task Description	Start and End Dates	Lead and Support Partners	Indicators of Achievement	Expected Results	Cost
Creation and Operationalisation of Alliance	Creation of Gender Equality Alliance for HEIs including agreement on alliance composition, member recruitment, roles and functions; legal or institutional basis). Operationalisation and hosting of initial set-up and review meetings (minimum 3).	M16-M24	JTU plus MKHU; FU; UPA; TUSZ	1 Gender Equality Alliance (including legal/operational basis). At least 3 alliance meetings.	Gender Equality Alliance.	€12,500
Digital Badging Options and Criteria	Scoping and review of digital badging provision and providers, including costs, assessment and moderation options, automation, digital connectivity and GDPR compliance. Development of assessment and selection criteria and processes for issuing digital badges to partner and non-partner HEIs.	M18-M22	JTU plus MKHU; FU; UPA; TUSZ	1 Scoping Review Report (EN) and Sign-up to Digital Badging Platform Assessment and Selection Processes and Criteria (EN).	Scoping Review Report (EN). Sign-up to Digital Badging Platform. Assessment and Selection Processes and Criteria (EN).	€21,500
Transnational Partner Meeting 3	Collaborative review of emerging findings (WP3 and WP4) and preparation for final dissemination workshops, including official launch of the Gender Equality Alliance for HEIs.	M23-M23	FU plus MKHU; JTU; UPA; TUSZ	1 transnational partner meeting with 10 participants (2 per partner).	Minutes and Action Points (EN).	€8,500
Dissemination Workshops 3	Hosting and streaming of half-day dissemination workshops in each partner country (total of 4 events and 120 participants) including official launch of Gender Equality Alliance for HEIs.	M23-M24	FU plus MKHU; JTU; UPA; TUSZ	Total of 4 events and 120 participants.	Dissemination Workshops in Four Partner Countries (live hosting and streaming).	€12,500

PARTNERSHIP

Applicant

E12245678 / Falkenberg Universitet (FU) / Sweden / Falkenberg / Higher Education Institution

FU is an accredited higher education and research institution in Sweden. As one of the oldest research, science and business education institutions in the Nordic Countries (established in 1848), FU has institutional values that centre on research excellence, sustainable development and developing human potential. FU comprises 5 faculties comprising: Materials Science, Biotechnology and Biochemistry; Digital Technology, Innovation and Business; Education; Humanities; and Life and Health Sciences. We engage close to 500 academic and research staff offer full-time and part-time studies to approximately 7.000 students. We also have a newly-established business incubation centre which aims at promoting entrepreneurship, business and research spin-offs within the wider campus. Research is conducted in almost every discipline and field across the five faculties. We are an accredited institution within Erasmus+ and we have many years of experience in managing and coordinating transnational and international partnerships and development projects.

Partner Organisations

E12245679 / Myndigheten för kvalitet i högre utbildning (MKHU) / Sweden / Stockholm / Public Authority (national)

MKHU is a newly-established agency, created in 2020, with direct responsibility for quality of higher education provision in Sweden, operating at national level and reporting directly to the Ministry of Education (Utbildningsdepartementet). We work in partnership with all Universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Sweden, assuring high-quality higher education programmes and provision and compliance with national standards and guidelines. We recognise the independence of Swedish HEIs, and we work in partnership to develop a quality culture within individual institutions, helping to build capacity and deliver improvement in existing programme landscapes and departmental settings. We are strongly connected at all levels of policy, governance and programme delivery for higher education in Sweden, and we actively participate in many European and international networks which deal with the topics of quality (and equality) in higher education, each providing a solid mechanism for promoting key project findings and results.

E12245680 / Jelgavas Tehnoloģiju Universitāte (JTU) / Latvia / Jelgava / Higher Education Institution

JTU is an accredited technological university in Latvia, having been established in its current form in 1993 (prior to this it was the Jelgavas Polytechnical Institute). JTU has four technical faculties comprising: mechanical engineering; computer science and technology; health and life sciences; and business management and human resources. We see our mission as pushing the boundaries of knowledge and innovation to deliver a better future in which all European citizens play an active part and for which our students and graduates are fully prepared. We have an annual cohort of around 2500 new and existing students and more than 150 full and part-time staff serving their educational, development and support needs. We are an accredited institution within Erasmus+ and we have a strong portfolio of international mobility projects (having received international students from more than 40 countries in 2021) as well as strong and active European and international development partnerships.

E12245681 / Universidad Pública de Andalusia (UPA) / Spain / Seville / Higher Education Institution

UPA is a public university located in Seville (Andalusia, Spain) extending to three campuses and six faculties, namely: chemical engineering; physics; science and materials technology; applied mathematics; data processing and communications technologies; European languages and philology. Since 2014, we have also managed a business creation programme at the University from which more than 50 successful companies and spin offs have already been created across a range of disciplines and sectors. Our European Projects Office is managed centrally under the Vice-Dean for Research and ensures our active participation in a wide range of European research and development projects and partnerships, as well as securing funding for our students to undertake international mobility projects in Europe and internationally.

E12215682 / Tekhnicheski Universitet Stara Zagora (TUSZ) / Bulgaria / Stara Gora / Higher Education Institution

TUSZ is state educational institution and technical university in Stara Zagora (Bulgaria) which was found in 1972 and which comprises four technical faculties (computer engineering; mechanical and electrical engineering; agronomy; veterinary medicine). Our mission is to develop the intellectual and innovation potential of our students to help in the economic development of the region and country and Europe as a whole. We annually engage more than 700 students in higher (bachelor, masters) and continuing education programmes for which we employ more than 100 full- and part-time staff. Our modern campus includes a state-of-the-art library and sports complex, and we actively encourage spin-offs in our dedicated research and business hub. We are an accredited Erasmus+ institution and we actively encourage our students to participate in outgoing academic mobility, within or beyond Europe, to prepare them for participation in a competitive and fast-moving European labour market. Since 2021 and the outset of the current Erasmus+ programme we have entered into 18 different projects and partnerships across the different faculties at our institution.

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Tasks and Responsibilities

Task allocation builds on each partner's strengths and expertise to help in successfully delivering the project and its outputs.

FU is an experienced coordinator, having implemented many European projects as coordinator and partner. FU will oversee management and coordination and ensure that the project is implemented efficiently, whilst also being responsible for quality assurance. FU has direct access to key beneficiaries with plans to directly engage senior management, department heads and academic and support staff in state-of-the-art review, resource development and recognition and promotional activities.

MKHU has specific knowledge in the targeted domain of quality standards and quality assurance, having a mandate for working directly with Swedish higher education institutions to deliver high-quality programmes and provision and to map this against national standards. Through existing national and European networks, MKHU is well-placed to engage higher education staff and institutions in Sweden and more widely and to actively promote key findings and results.

JTU, UPA and TUSZ each have responsibility for the delivery of higher education programmes having direct access to staff and students as indirect beneficiaries and being able to reflect and report on existing gender equality measures and quality standards in their own institutions. All three institutions are ready to engage and consult managers, staff and students at all levels and to promote the end project results through internal structures and external networks in their own countries and beyond.

Cooperation, Coordination and Communication

We recognise the importance of effective cooperation, coordination and communication and specifically envisage the following mechanisms:

PARTNER MEETINGS: online/virtual progress review and planning meetings will be held every 6-8 weeks depending on partner availability and the pace of activity. These meetings will involve all project partners; additionally, we will hold annual face-to-face partner meetings at the start, mid-stage and end stage of the project (M4, M14, M23) allowing for a more intense exchange of ideas and practices among partners and helping to build trust.

DIGITAL CHANNELS: partners will adopt and use a variety of digital communication tools, and channels to actively engage partners and promote intra-partner and intra-project communication. Specific tools and platforms (email, shared drives, digital apps) will be agreed on during the virtual partner meeting in M1.

PROJECT HANDBOOK: a dedicated project handbook will be created and will provide all partners with guidelines for internal cooperation and external communication, whilst detailing project objectives, activities and timelines and confirming the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLATFORM: dedicated project management software will be used to facilitate communication, share documents, manage schedules and track progress and achievement. A decision on the final software choice (e.g. Basecamp, AdminProject) will be taken by FU and communicated to partners during the first virtual partner meeting in M1.

STEERING COMMITTEE: a steering committee will be formed specifically for this project and will be oversee progress and ensure active and effective communication and coordination; the steering committee will be responsible for taking key decisions on the direction of the project and will play an active role in resolving any emerging conflicts.

IMPACT

Achievement of Objectives

STAND-EQUAL will develop an Impact and Achievement Plan which will focus on measuring and recording the outcomes and impact of the project, comparing these to the wider project goals and ambitions. Key performance indicators are embedded within individual work packages and task leaders will be responsible for reviewing and reporting on progress and achievement of the targeted actions and levels of end beneficiary and wider stakeholder engagement. Beyond this, we will assess the outreach and impact of the project, building on the existing Impact+ methodology, as developed by the European Commission, and developing specific measurement and reporting tools for partners to use. For outcome and impact measurement, our actions will centre on four main phases: PLANNING (confirming goals and delivering an impact and achievement plan; identifying targets, metrics and indicators that are specific and relate clearly to the overall project goals and objectives); DATA COLLECTION (harvesting data on events, activities and outputs, as well as levels of beneficiary and stakeholder engagement and the reported use and usability of core deliverables); ANALYSIS (assessing, identifying and recording impact and achievements relating to specific beneficiary and stakeholder audiences, as well as evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the project overall); PROMOTION (sharing outcomes, impact and achievements with wider stakeholder audiences). In terms of audiences, we will reflect on impact and achievement at four distinct levels to cover: individual managers and staff; individual students; partner institutions and policy-systems level actors, using the Impact+ methodology to help in determining impact and achievement indicators. In preparing the current proposal, we already anticipated the following quantitative and qualitative targets and indicators:

- Extended Consultation: 8 events; 4 countries; 160 participants
- Mapping and Internal/External Validation: 2 events; 5 countries; 20 participants
- Transnational Partner Meetings: 3 meetings, 10 participants per meeting
- Dissemination Workshops 1: 4 events; 120 participants; 70% feedback; 70% satisfaction
- Multi-actor Guidelines: Multi-actor and multi-language guidelines (EN-SV-LV-ES-BG)
- Digital Media: 6 video content files in each of 5 languages (EN-SV-LV-ES-BG)
- Dissemination Workshops 2: 4 events; 240 participants; 70% feedback; 70% satisfaction
- Gender Equality Alliance: 1 alliance including legal-operational basis; 3 meetings
- Digital Badging: 1 scoping report; sign-up to badging platform; assessment/selection criteria
- Dissemination Workshops 3: 4 events; 120 participants; 70% feedback; 70% satisfaction.

Sustainability and Continuation

STAND-EQUAL has already discussed the concept of sustainability, reflecting on how the targeted deliverables might continue to be accessed, used and impactful beyond the lifetime of the project. Sustainability planning builds on the following five steps: PLANNING (development of a sustainability plan, detailing which actions and deliverables will be maintained beyond the project lifetime and what partner resources might be needed to facilitate this); PROMOTION (continued dissemination and outreach to raise awareness of the developed reports and resources, promoting continued and wider access by relevant stakeholders within and beyond the participating countries; use of partner and wider networks for continued promotion); ACCESS (continued, free and open access to the developed reports and resources through plans for maintaining the host platform for a period of 3 years beyond the funding period); REVIEW (annual meeting of partners to reflect on validity of practices and resources and to consider all necessary options for updating or renewal); and USAGE (continued use of the developed measures and resources by HEI partners beyond the initial funding period).

Wider Impact at Local, Regional, National and European Levels

STAND-EQUAL has the potential to leave a strong legacy not only within the participating HEIs but on higher education landscapes and institutions at local, regional, national and European levels. Examples of the potential for wider impact and related beneficiary audiences include: HEIs (improved understanding of gender equality, including how to apply and promote specific measures and their benefits to internal and external beneficiaries and policy and quality assurance actors); HEI STAFF (improved and equal opportunities for recruitment, growth, and career advancement within current and future employment in the field of higher education); HEI STUDENTS AND GRADUATES (improved and equal opportunities for accessing, engaging with and graduating from higher education programmes at all levels, including continuing professional development programmes and courses); POLICY AND DECISION MAKERS (improved understanding of the importance of gender equality measures in the field of higher education, of how these measures map against national and European quality assurance standards and of the benefits of recognising excellence); INTERNATIONAL HE STAKEHOLDERS (option to access mapping reports and gender equality guidelines and badges of excellence).

Sharing and Promotion

STAND-EQUAL envisages an active promotion and engagement strategy in which project goals and ambitions are promoted to relevant stakeholder and beneficiary audiences at key stages in the project lifetime and through which, emerging results are made openly and freely accessible online. In all cases, we anticipate internal and external outreach in order to assure the widest possible take-up and use of the developed resources. Among the stakeholder audiences that will be addressed by targeted promotional activities, we include: partner HEIs and their managers and staff; HE students in participating HE institutions; policy and decision makers with responsibility for higher education; quality standards agencies; and professional and sectoral bodies and networks operating in the field of higher education.

The following tools, platforms and approaches are envisaged as a means of achieving active and continuous promotion: WEBSITE (a dedicated website/webpage will be created and will serve to promote the original goals and objectives of the project, highlighting progress and achievement and providing free, open and continuing access to the developed reports and resources); SOCIAL MEDIA (partners will use existing social media profiles and accounts with a dedicated hashtag for analytics); DISSEMINATION AND VALIDATION EVENTS (periodic events are planned throughout the lifetime of the project to promote, validate and launch key project results to national stakeholder audiences, with plans to invite all HEIs in the participating countries); PARTNER NETWORKS (partners will use existing networks to present emerging resources and successes to key stakeholder audiences, either digitally or through attendance at periodic dissemination events); TARGETED MARKETING (active promotion of gender equality measures, principles and practices to key beneficiary and stakeholder audiences, including at policy level); and PUBLICATIONS (digital newsletters and publications will be used to raise awareness of project achievements, including posts in relevant educational journals).