

# Gender Equality Plan for COST Actions

Template provided by the COST Association for guidance  
2025 Brussels



**ImpleMendez GEP**  
**2025 – 2027**

## 1. Gender balance in your COST Action

Table 1: How do participants in your COST Action describe themselves?<sup>1</sup>

### Gender Breakdown by Action, as of September 1<sup>st</sup> 2025:

|                          | No of Members | % of Action Total |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Female                   | 212           | 59%               |
| Male                     | 143           | 40%               |
| Prefer not to say (PNTS) | 3             | 1%                |
|                          | <b>358</b>    |                   |

### Gender Breakdown by Working Group, as of May 2025:

|                 | Females | % of WG Total | Males | % of WG Total | PNTS | % of WG Total |
|-----------------|---------|---------------|-------|---------------|------|---------------|
| Working Group 1 | 154     | 59%           | 107   | 41%           | 1    | 0%            |
| Working Group 2 | 77      | 59%           | 53    | 41%           | 0    | 0%            |
| Working Group 3 | 90      | 66%           | 44    | 32.5%         | 2    | 1.5%          |
| Working Group 4 | 26      | 43%           | 34    | 57%           | 0    | 0%            |

### Gender Breakdown by Management Committee, as of May 2025:

| Females | % of MC Total | Males | % of MC Total | PNTS | % of MC Total |
|---------|---------------|-------|---------------|------|---------------|
| 35      | 55%           | 29    | 45%           | 0    | 0%            |

### Gender Breakdown by Leadership Roles, as of May 2025:

|                                | Females | % of Leadership Positions | Males | % of Leadership Positions | PNTS | % of Leadership Positions |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------------------------|-------|---------------------------|------|---------------------------|
| Mandatory Leadership positions | 3       | 38%                       | 5     | 63%                       | 0    | 0%                        |
| Action Leadership positions    | 18      | 69%                       | 8     | 31%                       | 0    | 0%                        |
| ANY Position                   | 21      | 62%                       | 13    | 38%                       | 0    | 0%                        |

**Mandatory Leadership positions:** Action Chair, Vice-Chair, GH SR, WG Leaders, Grant Awarding Coordinator and Science Communication Coordinator.

**Action Leadership positions:** positions created by the Action e.g. WG co-lead

**Any Leadership positions:** Mandatory or Action positions

<sup>1</sup> The descriptions provided in this table are recommended by the [European Commission's High-Level Group on Non-Discrimination, Equality and Diversity](#)

### Gender Breakdown of Young Researchers by Action, as of May 2025:

|                          | No of YRIs | % of YRI Total | % of Action Total |
|--------------------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Female                   | 73         | 65%            | 23%               |
| Male                     | 39         | 35%            | 12%               |
| Prefer not to say (PNTS) | 1          | 0%             | 0%                |
|                          | <b>113</b> |                |                   |

### Gender Breakdown by ITC and Other Country Category, as of May 2025:

|                               | Female     | % of Action Total | Male       | % of Action Total | PNTS     | % of Action Total |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| COST Member Country - ITC     | 75         | 23%               | 49         | 15%               | 1        | 0%                |
| COST Member Country - non-ITC | 96         | 30%               | 63         | 19%               | 1        | 0%                |
| COST Partner Member           | 0          | 0%                | 1          | 0%                | 0        | 0%                |
| International Partner Country | 17         | 5%                | 15         | 5%                | 0        | 0%                |
| Near Neighbour Country        | 3          | 1%                | 1          | 0%                | 0        | 0%                |
| Other                         | 0          | 0%                | 1          | 0%                | 0        | 0%                |
|                               | <b>191</b> |                   | <b>130</b> |                   | <b>2</b> |                   |

While there is a slight underrepresentation of men when it comes to the total members of this Action, this does not seem to be particularly concerning, considering some of the academic disciplines relevant to this Action are generally women-dominated fields, namely psychology and, more specifically, forensic psychology. Encouragingly, the same gender breakdown is found for Working Groups 1 (WG1 – Investigation, Interviewing, Interrogation Themes) and 2 (WG2 – Law, Human Rights, and Criminal Justice).

However, it is important to note that the underrepresentation of men in Working Group 3 (WG3 – Vulnerability) is significantly more pronounced, while Working Group 4 (WG4 – Institutional and Governmental Leadership) is characterised by an underrepresentation of women. These breakdowns appear to reflect common gender stereotypes. As the projects developed by the Action continue to be implemented, it is expected that the gender imbalance in Working Group 4 will diminish, considering the key members of these projects (the majority of which are women) will be approached and encouraged to join WG4. Nonetheless, a conscious effort will be made by the Action to recruit participants in the underrepresented group for both of these WGs.

There is also an underrepresentation of men amongst Young Researchers; however, this split is in line with the prevalence of women in the areas relevant to the Action and does not seem to be particularly concerning.

### **Beyond the gender binary**

This Action is committed to a concept of gender inclusivity that goes beyond the gender binary. Therefore, all gender-related initiatives should take this definition into account and take an active approach to including people of all genders.

## **2. Incorporating a gender dimension**

### **Activities carried out by the Action**

Some steps have been taken by this Action to incorporate a gender dimension into its work, namely:

#### *Establishment of a Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network*

A Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network has been established, with a specific focus on Gender Equality and Diversity, aiming to promote an adequate gender balance within the Action, as well as highlight underrepresented voices. Additionally, this Network aims to ensure any communications produced by the Action (both for internal and external purposes) are gender-sensitive.

As of date, this Network consists of 17 members, led by COST Action members Samuel Pinheiro and Fenia Ferra.

#### *Nomination of a Gender Equality Advisor*

The Action has created the Gender Equality Advisor role, nominated by the Management Committee, consisting of a member responsible for promoting gender mainstreaming and gender balance within the Action. The key responsibilities associated with this role are as follows:

- Assessment of the needs of people of all genders
- Planning and execution of activities and events spotlighting underrepresented genders
- Monitoring of progress and measurement of impact

- Reporting progress to the Management Committee
- Dissemination of information and activities to all members of the Action

As of September 2025, this role has been taken on by COST Action member Samuel Pinheiro, co-lead of the Action's Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network.

#### *Celebration of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science*

The Action celebrated the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (February 11) with a dedicated post highlighting women's presence and role within the Action.

#### *Podcast episode with Barbara Bernath*

For International Women's Day (March 8<sup>th</sup>), the Action's Vice-Chair Prof. Yvonne Daly spoke with Barbara Bernath, former Secretary General of the Association for the Prevention of Torture. On this first episode of the ImpleMéndez podcast, Prof. Yvonne and Barbara discussed topics such as women in leadership, human rights, policing and the Méndez Principles. You can find the podcast [here](#).

#### *Participation in the COST Connect event "Gender Equality Plans in COST Actions"*

On May 13 2025, the ImpleMéndez COST Action attended the COST Connect event "Gender Equality Plans in COST Actions", in Brussels. This event included a diverse group of participants from several COST Actions that aimed to develop a GEP or similar document. It consisted of a series of presentations by COST Actions that had successfully implemented a GEP, as well as discussion sessions in break-out groups which focused on the development of this document.

### **Activities ongoing within the Action**

Additionally, there are some activities ongoing to prioritise gender mainstreaming within the Action, namely:

#### *Development of a Gender Equality Plan*

The Action is committed to the development of this Gender Equality Plan (GEP), which is designed as a living document to be regularly updated for the duration of the Action.

This GEP will be disseminated to all members of the Action and aims to share up-to-date gender-related figures, as well as detail any steps taken or activities developed by the Action to promote gender mainstreaming, whether past, ongoing or planned.

#### *Development of a gender-related glossary*

The Action is developing a glossary of gender-related information, to be disseminated amongst its members, and featured in the Action's website. This document aims to clarify the definitions of words related to gender and gender mainstreaming, in order to ensure that all members of the Action have an equal understanding of the concepts underlying this topic.

### **Activities to be carried out by the Action**

#### *Dissemination of the Gender Equality Plan*

This Gender Equality Plan will be disseminated within the Action, ensuring that all members have access to all of the relevant information regarding the Actions' gender-related figures, goals and projects. Considering its status as a living document, any updates to the GEP will also be disseminated amongst the members.

Timeline: End of October 2025, with yearly updates

Responsible person/group: COST Action member Samuel Pinheiro (Gender Equality Advisor and Co-lead of the Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network)

#### *Creation of a section within the Action's webpage to centralise gender-related content*

This section will be used to share this GEP, as well as any other relevant resources regarding gender mainstreaming, gender balance and up-to-date guidelines for gender-sensitive communication and research.

Timeline: TBD

Responsible person/group:

- COST Action member Samuel Pinheiro (Gender Equality Advisor and Co-lead of the Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network)
- COST Action member Kristjan Kask (Member responsible for the ImpléMendez website)

*Creation of a social media tag (LinkedIn, X, etc.) for dissemination of gender-related content*

Any gender-related content or resources shared on the ImpléMendez social media pages will be centralised under one tag, for better accessibility and further dissemination amongst all members of the Action.

Timeline: End of October 2025

Responsible person/group: TBD

*Dissemination of gender-related activities via the ImpléMendez newsletters and email*

All gender-related activities will be featured on the ImpléMendez monthly newsletters and announced via email, in order to reach the highest number of members possible.

Timeline: Throughout the duration of the Action

Responsible person/group:

- COST Action member Samuel Pinheiro (Gender Equality Advisor and Co-lead of the Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network)
- COST Action members Ana Sofia Silva and Denis Solodov (Members responsible for the ImpléMendez monthly newsletters)
- Action Chair Dave Walsh

*Recruitment for the Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network*

A concerted effort will be made by the Action to motivate members to join the Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network, to create a cohesive group of volunteers dedicated to the promotion of gender mainstreaming and gender balance within the Action.

Timeline: End of November 2025

Responsible person/group: COST Action member Samuel Pinheiro (Gender Equality Advisor and Co-lead of the Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network)

*Participation in COST Association's gender-related events*

The Action will participate in gender-related events organised by the COST Association, in order to keep up with current guidelines regarding gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive communication.

Timeline: Throughout the duration of the Action, whenever feasible

*Dissemination of up-to-date gender-related information and resources*

This Action is committed to keeping up with current guidelines and suggestions regarding gender mainstreaming, gender-sensitive communication and gender in research, and disseminating them amongst the members of the Action.

Timeline: Throughout the duration of the Action

Responsible person/group: Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network

*Celebration of International Women's Day and International Day of Women and Girls in Science*

The Action will organise initiatives (to be defined) to celebrate International Women's Day (March 8) and the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (February 11). These will feature women from different backgrounds, bringing to light their knowledge and experience.

Timeline: Throughout the duration of the Action

Responsible person/group: Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network

*Conduction of surveys regarding gender-related perceptions and experiences within the Action*

Two surveys will be developed and sent out to all members of the Action.

1. The first survey will assess the general level of gender-related knowledge (regarding the concepts underlying the topic, as well as gender-sensitive communication guidelines) amongst the members of the Action. The results of this survey will inform further initiatives

and activities that will be developed to fill the gaps and ensure a cohesive and up-to-date understanding of gender-related concepts and guidelines across all members of the Action

Timeline for the dissemination of the survey: End of November 2025

Timeline for data collection: TBD

Timeline for the analysis and dissemination of results: TBD

Responsible person/group: Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network

2. The second survey will assess the members' perceptions and experiences related to gender within the Action. The results of this survey will help in identifying the Action's strong suits and areas of improvement when it comes to its approach to gender, which will inform decisions regarding the Actions' next steps towards gender balance

Timeline for the dissemination of the survey: End of December 2025

Timeline for data collection: TBD

Timeline for the analysis and dissemination of results: TBD

Responsible person/group: Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network

### 3. Monitoring

In order to identify successes and areas of improvement, this Action is committed to applying the following monitoring tools.

*Yearly updates to the Gender Equality Plan*

*Keep track of gender balance in the COST Action*

The Action is committed to monitoring its gender balance in the following areas:

1. General gender breakdown, as well as per Working Group, Leadership Roles, Young Researchers (YRIs) and Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs).
2. Grant awards
3. Speakers at all COST Action activities

*Collecting members' feedback regarding gender-related activities and events*

After each activity or event, participants will be asked to provide feedback regarding its organisation and usefulness.

