

The European Research Council means to promote more equity in scientific research

ERC Gender and Diversity Issues WG

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European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Scientific Council

Gender and Diversity Issues Working Group

Scientific Council WG membership:

Geneviève ALMOUZNI (Chair) (FR)

Paola BOVOLENTA (IT)

Liselotte HØJGAARD (DK)

Eystein JANSEN (NO)

Jesper SVEJSTRUP (DK)



ERC and Gender Issues

ERC Gender Equality Plan

- The ERC Scientific Council adopted a **ERC Gender Equality Plan** which is periodically revised.
- The document sets the ERC gender policy and objectives and the implementation plan.
- The document is available to the general public on the ERC website.

→ [ERC ScC Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027.pdf](#)
[\(europa.eu\)](#)



ERC Gender Equality plan 2021-2027

Main objectives : 7 – magic number

- ✓ Raise awareness among potential applicants of **ERC gender policy** ;
- ✓ Improve **gender balance in the pool of applicants** to ERC funding;
- ✓ Stress **gender balance benefits** for researchers in ERC teams;
- ✓ **Monitor gender specific careers** following ERC grants;
- ✓ Strive for gender balance among **ERC peer reviewers**;
- ✓ Identify and remove potential **gender bias** in ERC evaluations;
- ✓ Embed **gender awareness** in all ERC processes from evaluation up to granting;



ERC Gender Actions for under-represented sex Implemented in the ERC Work Programmes over the past years

- ✓ Eligibility extensions by **12 months** per child born **after PhD**
- ✓ -----by **18 months** per child born **before** or **after PhD**
- ✓ **No limit to eligibility extension** (before 4,5 years => 4th child was out).
- ✓ Care of **sick relative** now considered as a reason for eligibility extension;

- ✓ **Removal of the section on Scientific leadership potential** (self-evaluation)
- ✓ **Reversal of the order of Evaluation criteria** > now: 1. Project , 2. PI track-record
- ✓ **Model CV template** included in application forms
- ✓ Track-record focus on **5/10 publications**

- ✓ **Raising awareness** of evaluators on unconscious bias (video and slides)
- ✓ **Unconscious Bias training for ERCEA scientific officers and Management**
- ✓ **ScC members awareness session on unconscious bias**

- ✓ Activities promoting **equal opportunities** or **gender balance** are **eligible costs** stated in the WP

Extensions

Proposals

Evaluations

Incentives



ERC Gender-related actions for under-represented sex

Sex and gender dimension

November 2020: ERC Workshop on sex and gender dimension in frontier research

❖ 5 Sessions

- ✓ Introductory session with **keynote speech: Sabine OERTELT-PRIGIONE**
- ✓ **Gender in medicine and medical care** (1 speaker, 3 ERC grantees)
- ✓ **Gender, demographics and behaviour** (1 speaker, 3 ERC grantees)
- ✓ **Gender and fairness in the digital society** (1 speaker, 2 ERC grantees)
- ✓ **Policy dialogue**

❖ Outcome

- ✓ **Innovative approaches**
- ✓ **Raised awareness**



ERC actions to address COVID-19 pandemic impact

ERC Work Programme 2022

- ✓ In the application form **a dedicated section to report COVID-19 pandemic impact**
- ✓ Applicants **affected differently** can be reported : work, family, home schooling, others ...
- ✓ Analysis of reported impact pending : important to **draw conclusions based on ERC data**



ERC Gender data

Monitoring over time

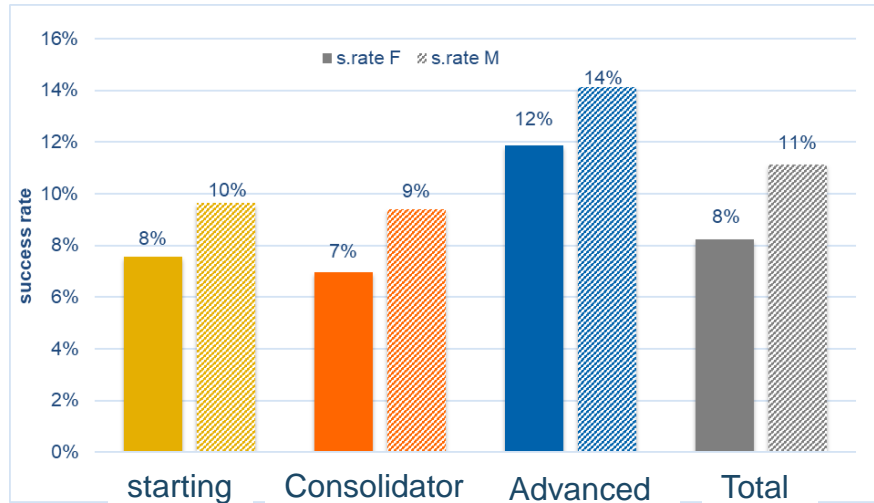
ERC gender data
on applicants and grantees



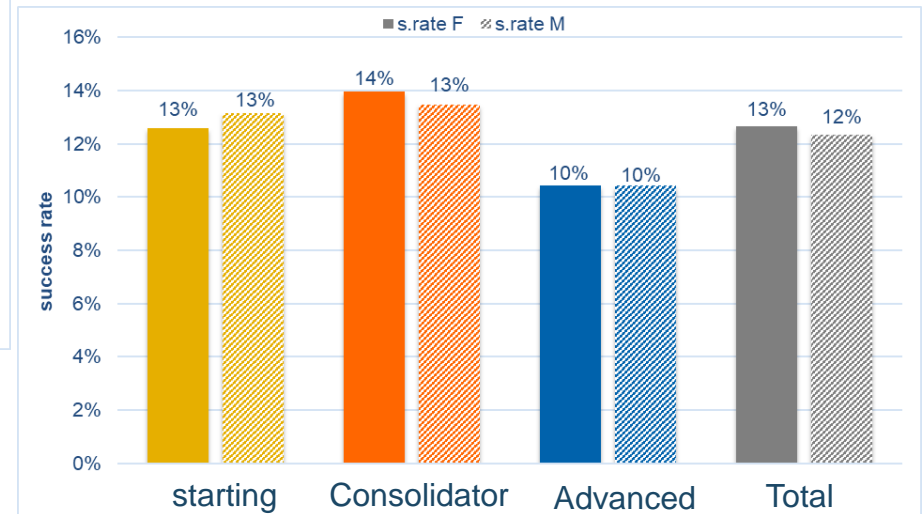
Success Rate by Type of Call

On average we progressed across all calls

ERC Calls 2007-2013



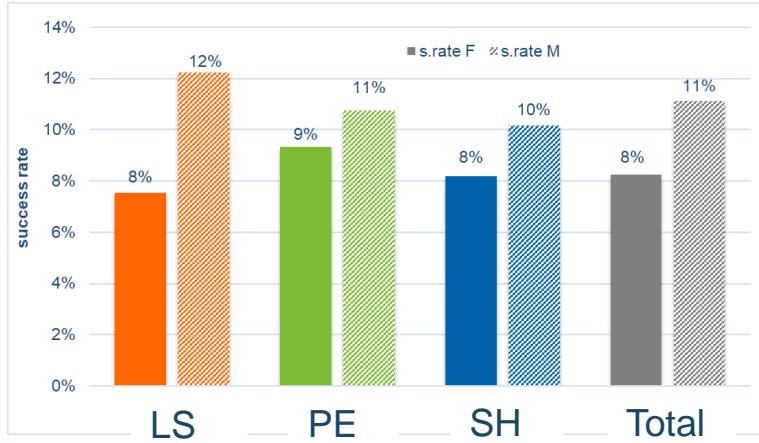
H2020 2014-2020



Success Rate by Domain

On average we progressed across all domains

ERC Calls 2007-2013

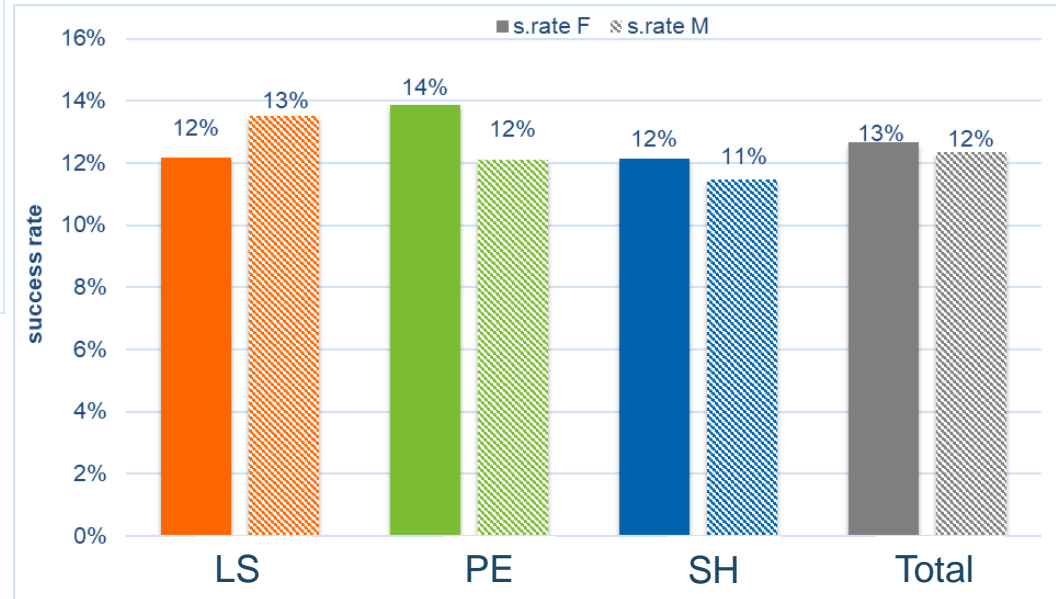


Life Science - LS

Physics and Engineering: PE

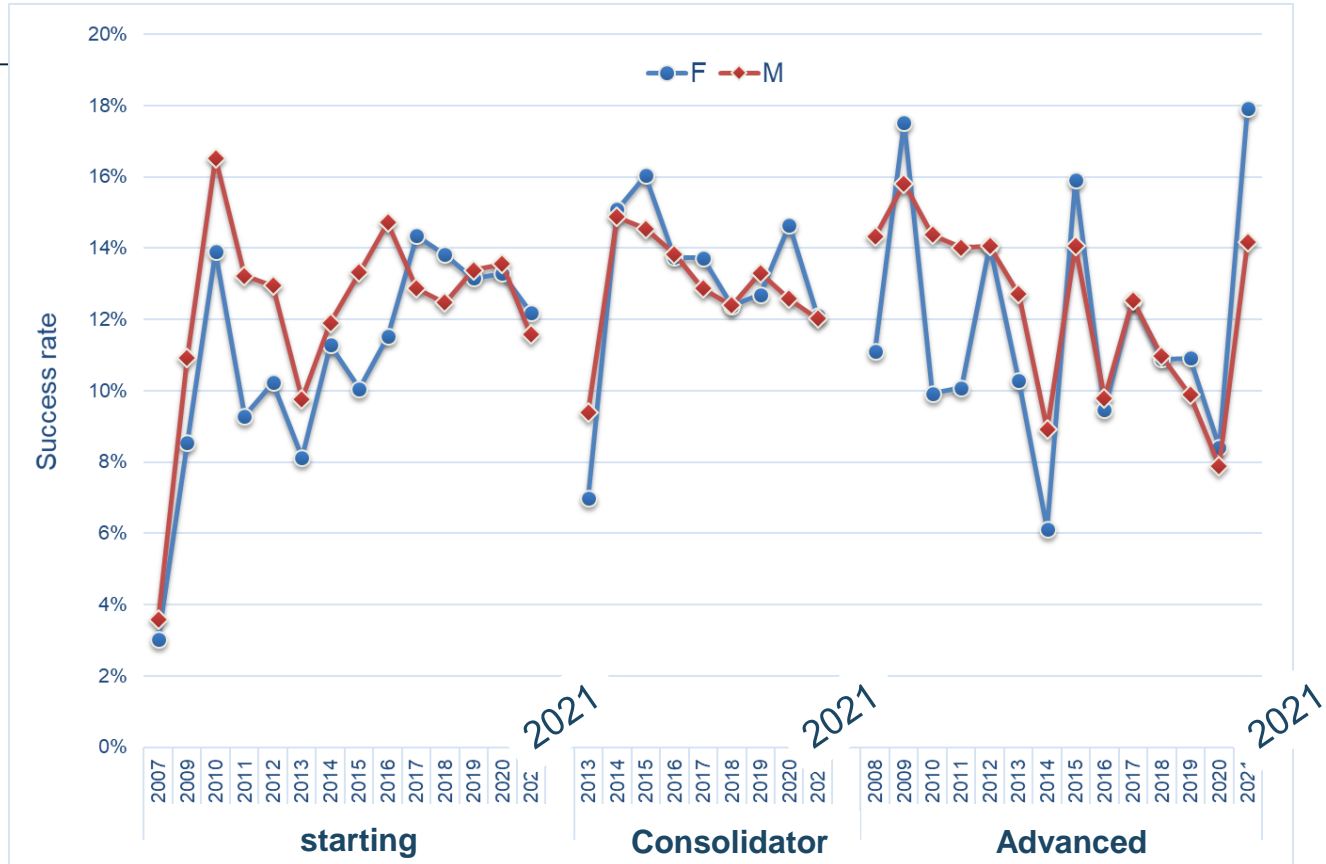
Social sciences and Humanities: SH

H2020 2014-2020



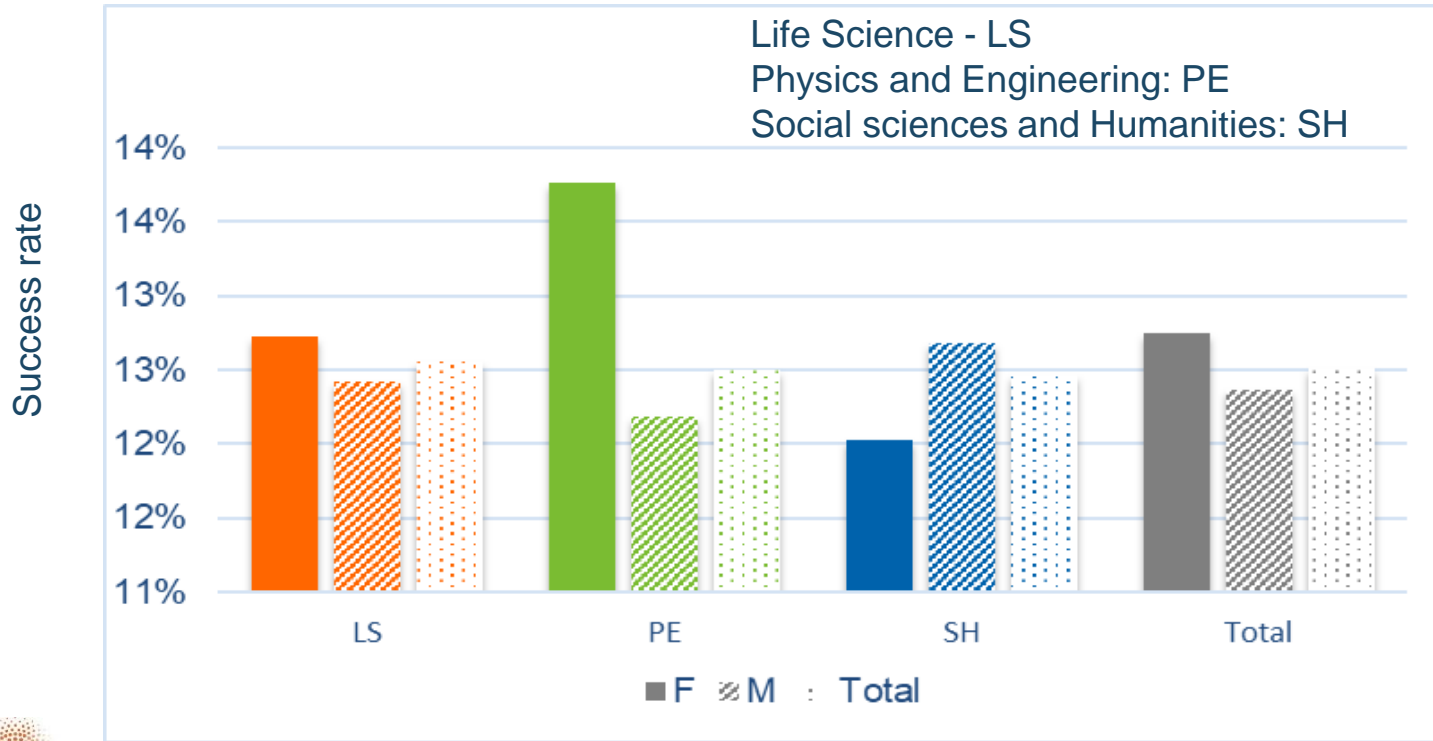
Success Rate by Call

2007-2021



Success Rate by Domain

ERC Calls 2021



*Non-binary data not included in this chart

Focus on ERC Workshop on sex and gender dimension in frontier research

- **Sabine OERTELT-PRIGIONE**, the sex and gender dimension in frontier research

Session 1: Gender in medicine and medical care

- Sex bias in preclinical research: why it exists and why change has been slow
- 2Sexes_1Genome: Sex-specific genetic effects on fitness and human disease
- Genetic investigation of challenging and atypical vascular diseases, predominant in women
- IntraGutSex, The sex of organs

Session 2: Gender, demographics and behavior

- [The gender dimension in economic research](#)
- [Boys will be boys?, The childhood origins of gendered societal roles](#)
- EQUALIZE, "Equalizing or disequalizing? Opposing socio-demographic determinants of the spatial distribution of welfare"
- VENUSCANCER "Women's cancers: do variations in patterns of care explain the world-wide inequalities in survival and avoidable premature deaths?"

Session 3: [Gender and fairness in the digital society](#)

- "AI Bias from the Wild"
- FairSocialComputing, "Gender Bias in Algorithmic Decision Making"
- [CONNECTING EUROPE](#), "Migration, Digital media and Emotions"



Gender Dimension Projects

ERC projects presented in all domains at all levels

- **Irene Miguel-Aliaga:** [LS - AdG] Sex differences in intestinal plasticity
- **Ted Morrow:** [LS-StG] Sex-specific genetic effects on fitness and human disease
- **Nabila Bouati-Naji:** [LS-StG] Investigating fibROmuscular dysplasia and spontaneous coronary Artery dissection using genetic and functional genomics to decipher the origin of two female specific cardiovascular Diseases
- **Iñaki Permanyer:** [SH - StG] Equalizing or disequalizing? Opposing socio-demographic determinants of the spatial distribution of welfare.
- **Judi Mesman:** [SH - StG] Boys will be boys? Gender differences in the socialization of disruptive behaviour in early childhood
- **Claudia Allemani:** [LS - CoG] Women's cancers: do variations in patterns of care explain the world-wide inequalities in survival and avoidable premature deaths?
- **Nello Cristianini:** [LS - AdG] Patterns in Big Data: Methods, Applications and Implications
- **Krishna Gummadi:** [PE - AdG] Foundations for Fair Social Computing
- **Sandra Ponzanesi:** [SH-CoG] Digital Crossings in Europe: Gender, Diaspora and Belonging



ERC SyG Project : interdisciplinary Gender and Health Inequalities: from embodiment to health care cascade

Aim

The objective is to document and explain how gender intersects with other social hierarchies (social class and race/ethnicity) to produce social inequalities in health from early childhood to late adulthood.

Adopting a life course perspective to examine **two complementary research questions**

- 1) how (un)healthy bodies are socially constructed : "**gendered embodied health**"
- 2) how health-seeking behaviors and patterns of care are shaped by gender: "**gendered health care cascade**"

- **ERC Principal Investigator**
Nathalie Bajos

- **Institution**
National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM),
(FRANCE)

- **Years**
2020-2026

- **Grant domain**
Interdisciplinary (SH-LS)



Session 1 : Gender in medicine and medical care

The main conclusions of the session on 'Gender in medicine and medical care'

- the ERC-supported research presented clearly showed that sex-differences account for biological variation.
- This is the case both in vitro and in vivo, both in humans and in other species such as fruit flies, and at all levels, from the cellular level up to organ level.
- In addition, analysing sex-differences is key to a better understanding of their biological basis, as well as for better, fairer and equalitarian healthcare research and treatments.



Session 2: The 'Gender, demographics and behaviour'

The 'Gender, demographics and behaviour' session discussed

- the importance of integrating gender dimensions in the social sciences as well as in epidemiology to ensure robustness, representation and validity of the questions addressed and results obtained.
- Gender-blind analysis can lead to devastating results by supplying biased evidence for economic, educational or epidemiological policies.



Session 3, 'Gender and fairness in the digital society',

The final session, 'Gender and fairness in the digital society' provided

- a clear and thought provoking insight into how bias from 'wild' or partial data sets need to be addressed when used in conjunction with artificial intelligence, for example in automated translation services, internet searches, form auto-completion, and image analysis.
- The presenters highlighted the need for an interdisciplinary approach involving social sciences to understand and potentially correct algorithmic bias that originates from data.



Policy makers have a role to play in driving change

European Commissioner Helena Dalli emphasized that

- Gender equality is essential for innovation and scientific advancement.
- the Commission's new Gender Equality Strategy places gender equality at the core of EU policy development.
- To promote full participation of women in science, the Commission will now require that **all institutions that host researchers applying for support under the new EU research funding programme, Horizon Europe, have a gender equality plan.**



Conclusions and Perspectives

Former ERC Scientific Council member Dame Athene Donald led a [discussion](#) with two Members of the European Parliament: Marc Angel (Luxembourg) and Lina Gálvez Muñoz (Spain).

- They agreed that collecting good quality data forms the basis for robust policy-driven initiatives.
- However, data on men and women in different scientific fields is scarce in Europe, and answering questions about women's representation in different academic disciplines is essential for motivating and directing corrective action.
- The speakers noted, however, that the ERC has set a sterling example of how to collect data and to [publish](#) gender statistics on grant funding.



Take home message

An important conclusion in Athene Donald's [blog](#):

“Policy-makers and funders, as well as individual researchers, all have their own part to play in ensuring that sex and gender are appropriately fed into the design of cutting-edge research programmes, and that fairness in the award of such grants is maintained, with constant vigilance over each stage of any process.”



THANK YOU

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Recommendations

For Policy makers, funding bodies and community

Policy makers

- ✓ Gender concerns all people;
- ✓ Encourage/Promote schemes like ERC that allow to get extensions for applications for family care/childcare

Funding bodies

- ✓ To craft calls in a manner that would be more appealing to women

Community

- ✓ To attract more women/encourage applications from women
- ✓ Using a bystander's approach to help colleagues/fellow lab partners

