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**TRansforming Institutions by Gendering contents
and Gaining Equality in Research**

**FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE SUSTAINABILITY
OF THE TRIGGER ACTION PLANS**

ASDO



July 2015

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Executive summary

Introduction

This document represents the **first deliverable** produced under WP6, task 6.3., fully devoted to the sustainability of the five Action Plans carried out under TRIGGER after the completion of the project. The document presents the **results of the feasibility study** on the conditions for the sustainability of the Action Plans, carried out by ASDO, which is the leading entity of WP6.

The document develops a **sustainability model** aimed at ensuring that permanent impacts of the Action Plans could be produced on the concerned research institutions once the project will be completed. The key components of the model are presented in Part One of the text, while Part Two proposes a **roadmap** to help the teams in charge of the Action Plan design and implement the sustainability plan.

Components

In the **first section of Part One**, the focus is on defining the **main concepts** on which the model is based and describing the **key features of the sustainability plans**.

As for the **concepts**, special attention is given to the distinction between two interrelated but different concepts, which often are viewed as synonyms: **institutionalisation** and **sustainability**. An in-depth literature analysis leads to recognise institutionalisation as a specific form of sustainability. In fact, the latter refers to the possibility to ensure that actions activated through a given project continue after the project lifespan, by developing new financial, human and technical arrangements, both within and outside the concerned organisation, whereas **institutionalisation** refers to the pursuing of the same objective but only through an embodiment of the actions in the organisation.

With respect to the **key features of the sustainability plans**, these plans are usually understood as a tool aimed at highlighting the importance of a given programme, thus justifying its continuation after the funding period, and at defining under which conditions such a continuation is possible. Therefore, sustainability plans are very similar to any business plan, even though tailored for the continuation of an already existing project and not – as it usually happens – for promoting a new one.

As any business plan, sustainability plans typically include some recurrent components, e.g.: the **overall vision** underlying the project so as to better identify which actions or functions are to be continued and why; the **team** in charge of the sustainability planning process; the **quality assessment** of the actions to be

continued, so as to find well-grounded justifications for their continuation; the **expected partnerships** allowing to get long-term support for continuing the actions; the ways in which a **political support** by leaders and key partners will be secured; the ways in which **new resources** able to ensure the financial stability of the project will be found; how the **project** and especially its successes and potentials will be communicated and to whom.

To coordinate all these components, in the **second section of Part One, five main approaches** are presented, underlying the TRIGGER project as a whole and to be fully taken into account also in developing the sustainability plans.

- **The analytical approach.** This approach is aimed at devising in an integrated way different complementary strategies, in order to avoid any possible conflation or simplistic views of the complex problems related to inequality. In particular, three strategies have been defined, i.e.: i) making research institutions an enabling environment for women; ii) including the gender dimension in the very image of science and in the process of research and innovation; iii) promoting women in scientific leadership positions. This approach is particularly helpful for taking decisions about which are the more promising actions and worth investing on in a sustainability perspective.
- **The gendered research process approach.** Such an approach is that of promoting gender and sex as key variables to be considered whenever necessary in all steps of the research process, so as to make them as important factors in research excellence. This approach is based on the idea (increasingly grounded in experience and literature) that promoting gendered research also affects the image of women in science and technology and the self-perception of women scientists. Promoting gendered research is therefore a key element for developing sound sustainability plans intended to progressively remove the deepest cognitive and cultural barriers to women's progression in science and innovation.
- **The negotiation approach.** This approach identifies negotiation between, on the one side, the promoters of the Action Plans and, on the other side, stakeholders and institutional counterparts, as a major tool to promote changes towards gender equality, managing conflicts and overcoming resistances, so as to redefine gender arrangements and the distribution of power between men and women. Negotiation, in all its different forms (institutional, interpretive, symbolic and operational), is also the only way for favouring the establishment of new long-term arrangements aimed at ensuring the continuation of the Action Plans after the completion of the project.
- **The social innovation approach.** This fourth approach underlines the importance of mobilising internal and external stakeholders and individuals in order to activate structural changes and make them permanent within the

institutions. This approach requires that the teams in charge of the Action Plans play a specific role, i.e., acting as a catalyst for change by linking the drive of the project towards gender equality with the agency of other internal and external players, so to involve a growing number of relevant stakeholders.

- **The participatory modelling approach.** This approach stresses the need for capitalising on the experiences gained by the structural change projects promoted by the European Commission in the last years (INTEGER, GENISLAB, STAGES, FESTA, GENDERTIME, GENOVATE, EGERA, GARCIA and obviously TRIGGER). This implies the development of a specific mutual learning programme involving representatives from these projects. This approach is expected to help TRIGGER partners develop their sustainability plan also leveraging on strategies and practices distilled from the experience of the other projects.

Roadmap

Part Two of this document describes a roadmap driving the sustainability process within TRIGGER. Four phases are envisaged: the screening phase (M21 to M33); the consultations phase (M34 to M38); the design phase (M39 to M42) and the transition phase (M43 to M48).

The **screening phase** is aimed at carrying out an in-depth analysis of the Action Plan, in order to select the actions which deserve to be continued after the completion of the project and to scrutinise viable options to make this real. This phase includes both the development of solutions for favouring the **sustainability of the team** in charge of these actions and those necessary to ensure that the **single actions are fully sustainable** in financial, institutional and organisational terms. This phase will be conducted on the basis of a documentary review of the Action Plans as well as of other sources like the Action Plans' quality evaluation reports. The output of this phase would be a **grid of questions** to discuss with stakeholders in the next phase.

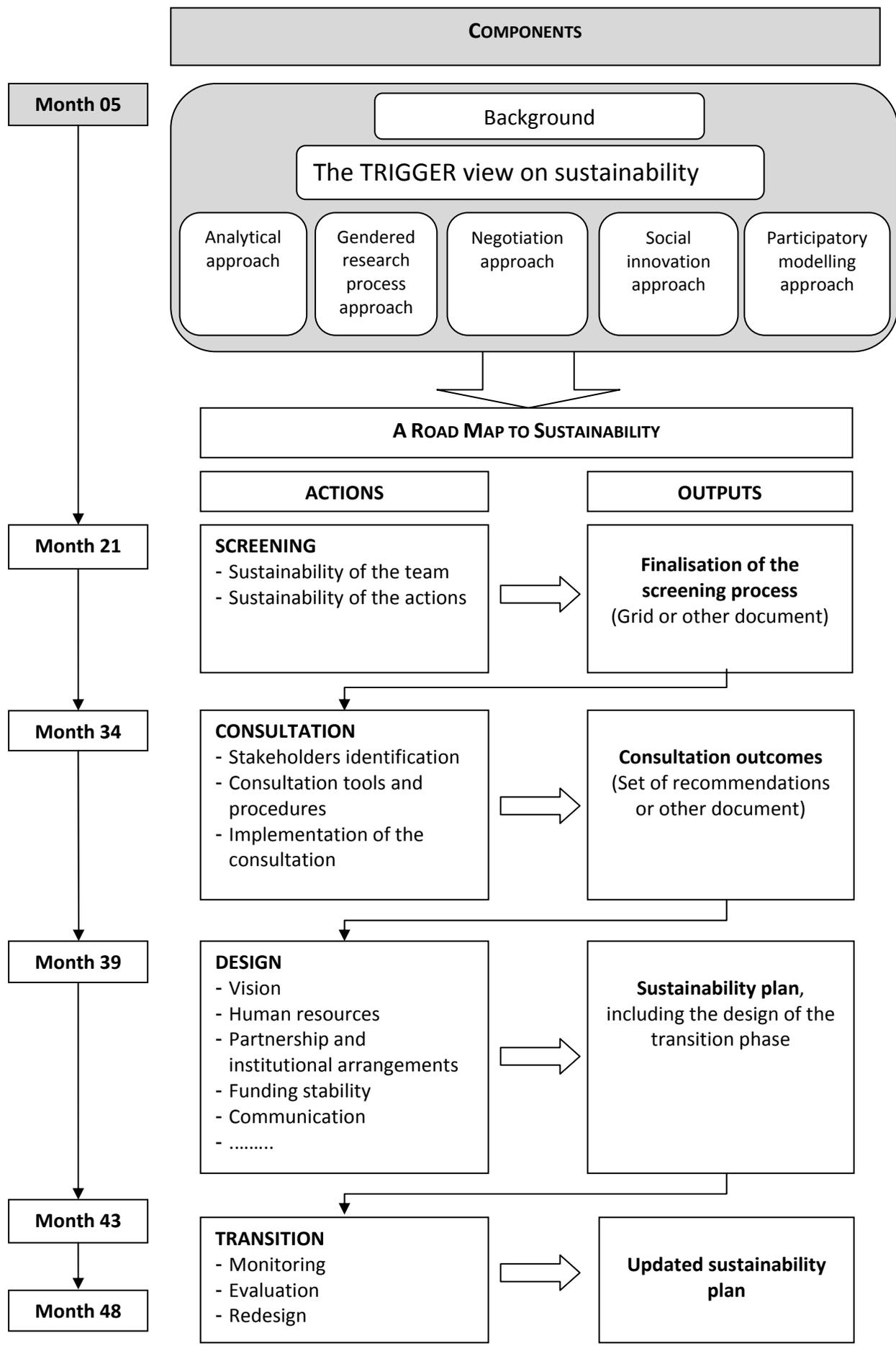
The **consultation phase** is conceived for **collecting additional information** useful to complete the screening of the actions through direct consultations with the all relevant stakeholders inside and outside the organisation. This phase also allows to verify the **possibility to engage these stakeholders** in developing sustainable arrangements so as to set up reliable hypotheses about the future of the actions after the project lifespan. The output of this phase would be a **set of recommendations** for developing the sustainability plan.

The **design phase** would allow the team to draft the sustainability plan, defining, for each selected action, grounded hypotheses about their continuation. The plan should include the key elements characterising any business plan, such as a clear **vision** of the actions to be continued, the **human resources** necessary for sustaining

them, the **partners** to involve, the **sources** for securing the funds for their continuation and the **communication strategies** to adopt to this end. The output of this phase will be evidently the sustainability plan, even though in a provisional version, and a design of the activities to be conducted during the next phase.

The **transitional phase** is aimed at **testing the hypotheses developed in the design phase** and actually starts developing the new arrangements envisaged in the sustainability plan. This phase includes a monitoring and evaluation systems leading to a revision and, in case, the redesign of the sustainability solutions. The output expected from this phase is the **final version of the sustainability plan**.

The scheme of the roadmap is presented in the following page.



Introduction0

One of the tasks (task 6.3.) included in WP6 “Technical assistance and evaluation of structural change Action Plans” of TRIGGER is aimed at implementing a **feasibility study on the sustainability of the Action Plans** and at providing the consortium members with a **technical assistance in drafting the sustainability plans**. These Action Plans are carried out in five research institutions: Università di Pisa (UNIFI); Vysoka Skola Chemicko-technologicka v Praze (VSCHT); Birkbeck College – University of London (BBK); Université Paris Diderot – Paris 7 (UPD); Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPD).

This document represents the **first deliverable pertaining to this task** (deliverable D.6.4) and is devoted to the presentation of the **results of the feasibility study** on the conditions for the sustainability of the Action Plans after the TRIGGER lifespan. This study also includes a roadmap towards sustainability, to be understood as a technical support for the partners in order to identify measures strengthening and making permanent the procedures, institutions and activities begun through the Action Plans.

From the perspective of the TRIGGER project, **sustainability is unmistakably a key objective to be attained**. In fact, sustainability is intrinsically embedded in the concept of “structural change”, given that this concept refers to a deep and permanent change affecting all the different elements (e.g., procedures, culture, languages, norms and regulations, etc.) of the institution. Sustainability refers to the possibility to make the new gender arrangements introduced through the Action Plans actually permanent. This is particularly meaningful considering that (as witnessed by past experiences like that of the NSF-funded ADVANCE programme) gender equality-related results are usually gained some years after the project completion.

In this framework, the first and the major step to approach the sustainability process in the screening phase is likely to **come back to goals and objectives of the Action Plans** (see para. 1.2., part two, “The sustainability of the actions”), i.e. a better environment for women, more gendered science, and more women in leadership, and related objectives (see para. 2.1., part one, “Analytical approach”). The setting up of future measures will also depend on how the actions included in the plan have progressed in meeting the objectives and if there are some of these latter which deserve an additional effort. This would imply identifying or improving the ways to monitor the gradual achievement of the goals, to be considered in the sustainability plans, which will be drafted in the second part of the project lifespan by each partner implementing an Action Plan.

However, long-term endurance of these arrangements can be assured only through a **complex process** which develops in parallel with the Action Plan and goes on after its completion, allowing the actions to continue after the end of the funding period. Hence, the aim of this document is that of defining a **sustainability model**, including an approach and a roadmap, allowing the consortium members to favour and successfully drive this process up to the end of the project.

In this regard, it is to consider that **sustainability is an issue that teams are dealing with** while implementing the Action Plans, in some cases already attaining permanent arrangements (some of them are described in the text). This fact helps manage the risk of unavoidable stops and setbacks in the path toward gender equality which usually occur in institutions with high turnover rate of top level managers..

It is also to bear in mind that current and future sustainability is strongly influenced by **external factors**, which differ in the five countries in which TRIGGER takes place, i.e., among others, the schemes of research funding or the national policies and investments on gender equality in research. This is one of the main reasons why the Action Plans have been tailored on the actual national, institutional and individual situation of the concerned universities, and they are also refined year by year through annual detailed plans. These aspects are thus to be carefully considered in the sustainability plans.

It is to highlight that this document largely relies upon a previous literature review and theoretical reflection made by ASDO in the framework of the STAGES project. This latter is another EC-funded structural change project, which is in its last year of activity. This reflection as well as the experience gained through STAGES allowed to refine the approach and to adapt it to the specific features of the TRIGGER project.

In addition to this introductory section, this document includes two main parts.

Part One is intended to describe the **components** of the proposed sustainability model. The part includes **two sections**. Section One provides the background of the model, comprising the concepts and the components of sustainability plans in the international practice. Section Two dwells upon the approaches adopted in the TRIGGER project and describes how they come into play in the sustainability process.

Part Two proposes a **roadmap for developing the sustainability plan**. This part includes **four sections**, each one devoted to the four steps of the roadmap (screening, consultation, design and transition).

The document was drafted by ASDO, which is the leader of WP6.

PART ONE

Components

1. Background

This section contains a synthetic review drawn from relevant documentation of working definitions and concepts of **project sustainability** (para. 1.1.) and **sustainability plans** (para. 1.2.).

It is to bear in mind that the purpose of this section, as well as of the whole document, is essentially practical. Concepts and definitions provided by groups and institutions dealing with the sustainability of real programmes, with the same practical purpose, were thus selected. The theoretical approach of the project TRIGGER, recalled in Section 2 and inherently aimed at sustainability, will allow in any case to frame and connect these different contributions.

1.1. Sustainability and institutionalisation: some basic concepts

Within TRIGGER, we will keep on prevalently using the term “sustainability”, which is current in EC-related programmes (see for instance the effort on sustainability in the key document of the European Commission on *Structural change in research institution: Enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation*, 2009), It is however important to highlight the difference – well attested in international practice – between the **interrelated but separate concepts of sustainability and institutionalisation**, which is also useful to identify different possible solutions for the continuation of the actions. At a first basic level, focusing on financial aspects only, it can be said that the **sustainability** of a programme could hypothetically be achieved, even long-term, with external funding and no contribution from the organisation where the programme is actually implemented. **Institutionalisation** is instead achieved when an organisation makes a “permanent” financial commitment to a project or some aspect thereof, typically over an extended period of time (Litzier, Claiborne & Brainard, 2007).

Definitions of both sustainability and institutionalisation of programmes are therefore reviewed here below, which don't necessarily focus on the distinction, but anyway highlight the **basic features of a programme which is to attain long-term viability**. Some definitions refer to initiatives other than structural change projects in research institutions, but they do share very similar objectives and challenges.

A dictionary definition indicates that to sustain is “to **keep in existence**; to maintain; to nurture; to keep from failing; to endure” (American Heritage Dictionary, 1994). It is in this same and basic perspective that project sustainability

is defined by many economists and international development agencies: as the capacity of a project **to continue to deliver its intended benefits** over a long period of time (The World Bank's definition in Bamberger and Cheema, 1990; US Agency for International Development, 1988; Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012).

According to the EuropeAid Cooperation Office of the European Commission (2002), sustainability should be viewed, rather than as the output of specific streams of action, as a quite objective **quality feature of a project**, making it either sustainable or not. This is the reason why sustainability is not defined here as a capacity, but as "the **likelihood** of a continuation in the stream of benefits produced by the project after the initial grant is over". Consequently, sustainability criteria are fully overlapped with project quality criteria.

Quite paradoxically, another branch of the European Commission – the Directorate-General for Education and Culture – seems to move in the opposite direction. The definition given in this case (European Commission, 2006) is in fact more **focused on project activities than on intended benefits**. In fact, "the sustainability outcomes may be difficult to anticipate and to describe" so that "most are not tangible and are difficult to see". Therefore, "**a project can (...) be considered as sustainable if relevant activities are maintained or developed** after the end of the EU funding".

Keeping a project in existence, so as to continue producing activities, outputs or benefits, takes on a deeper meaning in the **institutionalisation perspective**. Maintaining a project actually means institutionalising the system changes it brings about. As Robert Kramer (2002) stated, referring to bottom-up community development projects: "institutionalisation is the active process of establishing your initiative – not merely continuing your programme, but **developing relationships, practices, and procedures** that become a lasting part of the community" (Adelman & Taylor, 2003).

Institutionalisation is also defined, in development cooperation projects, as an ongoing process in which **a set of activities, structures and practices become an integral part of an organisation for its day-to-day activity**, often representing the final stage in the diffusion of the new process and measuring how deeply an organisation has adopted it (Asfaw, 2011).

The US Department of Labour, as concerns the continuation of community-based vocational training programmes, adopts instead a definition of sustainability that closely resembles what is generally ascribed to institutionalisation. **Sustainability** here points to the continuation of a project's goals, principles, and efforts to achieve desired outcomes. However, it goes beyond just finding the resources to

continue the programme “as it is” after the expiration of the grant period. Ensuring sustainability, in fact, really means **making sure that the goals of the project continue to be met through old and new activities that are consistent with current and evolving conditions**. Thus, sustainability does not simply mean maintaining the status quo in terms of funding, staffing, and activities, but providing for the **institutional conditions allowing to constantly adapt** and renew the original programme (US Department of Labor, 2009).

Coming closer to **structural transformation programmes in higher education** and research settings, the definitions coming from the **ADVANCE programmes** in the United States can be considered highly relevant. In fact, while EC-funded structural change initiatives are still very recent, the experience of the ADVANCE programmes (funded by the National Science Foundation) offers some interesting example of already implemented sustainability plans. Programme leaders at Brown University, for instance, define **institutionalisation** according to the classic sociological work of Selznick (1952): **the process by which an organisation “takes on a special character” and “achieves a distinctive competence or perhaps, a trained or built-in capacity”**. In the box below, an example is provided of some actions they consider necessary in their organisation to practically achieve a so-defined institutionalisation process.

What does it take to institutionalise the Brown University ADVANCE programme

“Ideally, we would need to see the adoption of NSF-funded programs and activities become part of Brown’s distinctive competence: ongoing and stabilized within the budgets of various units, both within the administration of Brown, and within science and engineering departments. *(In designing the program)* we have included senior administrators as part of the management team, so that they can act as liaisons to the Provost to negotiate plans for institutionalization. *(It was also foreseen that)* the results of yearly evaluations were to be discussed with the Provost, so that programs funded by ADVANCE could be added to the table of needs for which we will seek private funding.”
(O’Neil et al., 2005)

Still in the framework of the institutional theory, Litzier, Clairborne and Brainard (2007) maintain that programme **institutionalisation needs four factors to be present**. Once again referring to Selznick (1957) they identify the following: the infusion of the **value** of gender diversity programmes in the organisation; the support of both “functional” and “positional” **leadership** (see also Bilimoria & Valian, 2006); the **stabilisation** of the organisational change; the **diffusion** of the change, especially at the internal level, throughout the university.

Feminist scholar Ann Froines (2004), in assessing the “relationship of programme structure to its long-term viability” as concerns the introduction of women’s studies

programmes and academic units in US universities, distinguishes between “**institutional viability**”, which points to the long-term survival of a programme beyond the commitment of its founders and initiators, and the broader concept of the **institutionalisation** of a programme, calling for a deep change in the university culture and not just the change in some of its structures.

Understanding the institutionalisation process of gender-related programmes in higher education and research settings makes it necessary, according to Froines, to resort to multifaceted and complex approaches, considering that such programmes are located within **large, complex and “loose” institutional settings such as universities**, which are to consider peculiar environments, not to be equated with different kinds of organisations or with business firms.

Among the factors of institutionalisation to be taken into account, according to Froines, one must include what are conventionally named “rational” factors (statistical profile of an academic programme, such as for example, the number of participating faculty, or the budget growth over time) as well as “nonrational” ones (motivation and satisfaction on the involved stakeholders, nature and strengths of alliances, on campus and outside university, links to the university’s “dominant coalition”, etc.). **Institutionalisation** is therefore best described, according to this author, as **an emerging and dynamic social construct**, to be assessed on a variety of interrelated grounds, where inter-personal and inter-group power and symbolic relations are pivotal.

The definition of the institutionalisation process in higher education settings provided by Froines, as well as many elements of the more multidimensional definitions of sustainability, institutional viability and institutionalisation reviewed in this paragraph, strongly resonate with the approach of the TRIGGER project to structural transformation, which will be recalled in section 2.

Summing up sustainability and institutionalisation concepts

Sustainability and institutionalisation are largely overlapping and interchangeable concepts. If however we want to stress differences in emphasis, we can highlight that sustainability mostly recalls the need to find the necessary financial, human and technical resources, both within and outside an organisation, whereas institutionalisation stresses instead the importance of weaving a programme in the fabric of an organisation, thus deeply changing it. To the aim of the TRIGGER project, the term sustainability, which is most current at EU level, will be mostly – but not exclusively – used. However, it will be used in the **broader sense** which was described by many sources reviewed above, which expresses the very essence of the structural change effort in itself.

1.2. Key features of sustainability plans

Sustainability plans are **practical tools** used to describe the basic features of ongoing programmes, typically (but not exclusively) funded through public sources, with the aim of highlighting their importance and accomplishments, and try and **secure their continuation and possible stabilisation within the supporting institution**. To do so, they particularly focus on their needs, in terms of resources, for the years to come and put forward proposals as for how to achieve them.

In general, **the structure of a sustainability plan closely resembles that of a typical business plan**, even though the former is drafted for an already existing project, or else for a new project whose first years are however already sustained by external funds. Sustainability plans are therefore, in a sense, the business plans of projects that need to start standing on their own legs after a first “subsidised” period.

As business plans, they therefore serve both **internal and external purposes**, which also correspond to different phases in their drafting and communication process.

Initially, the definition of a sustainability plan has the function of **better focusing the design of current arrangements and actions** on those features which would increase their chances of being confirmed and integrated in subsequent years. The drafting of a plan therefore assumes a mostly **internal relevance**, involving the core team of the project and those more closely cooperating in it.

As the project progresses, and the funding period approaches its end, the sustainability plan takes on a more defined character and **public relevance**, as the occasion to **engage other stakeholders within and outside the organisation** and gain their alliance and support. The sustainability plan is therefore **not just one document**, but a **process** entailing the drafting of different provisional schemes and documents.

A **quick review was conducted of practice-oriented documents** defining the areas sustainability plans should cover. It clearly indicates that their basic elements are more or less the same, with many plans adopting a **process approach**, indicating the various phases to get to the plan, while others simply reviewing all the information that must be included, or listing all the decisions that need to be taken.

To give but a general idea, the most recurrent contents have been drawn out of the examined templates, so as to develop a **reasoned summary** of the issues they usually cover. It is to be noticed that such templates refer to different kinds of projects (e.g., health, education, community-based development, gender equality)

and different types of institutional contexts; therefore, only those issues and contents directly or indirectly relevant to the TRIGGER objectives and needs have been considered.

CLARIFYING THE VISION

The majority of templates stress the need for understanding, at the beginning and along the sustainability process, **what actions, services, functions or sometimes benefits are to be sustained and why**. This need is expressed in different ways. Some templates emphasise the need for building or clarifying “a **vision**” of the activities to be sustained after the completion of the programme they are embedded into (Femley, 2009; Afterschool Alliance, 2002; US Department of Labor, 2009) allowing to systematically **determine which actions or functions are to be sustained** and which could be discontinued with minor consequences (US Department of Labor, 2009). Other templates (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Centre for Training and Research Translation, 2011; Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012) more practically suggest to develop **valid arguments** (for example, in the form of a convincing project summary) explaining why the programme or the selected actions deserve to survive in the future (what they offer, whom they serve, which benefits they produce, etc.). This also requires a special effort in developing an **analysis of the institutional context** of the programme and its possible change after the end of the funding period (Rover, 2011).

SETTING UP THE TEAM

Some templates focus on the establishment of the **team in charge of the sustainability planning process** through, for example, the constitution of a sustainability planning committee (Femley, 2009) or a transition team (ISU ADVANCE, 2011). Similarly, many stress the need to build the **team which will be responsible for the future actions to be continued** once the current programme is completed, for example, by identifying the future project champion and leaders (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; Adelman & Taylor, 2003) or the units of the institution to be entrusted with the future project and/or actions (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998).

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

A great attention is obviously attached to **partnerships**. Sustainability processes actually need the establishment of a “**critical mass of support**” (Adelman & Taylor, 2003), the involvement of **institutions and individuals** who may serve as **advocates** for the continuation of the programme (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998), and the development of a **network of partner entities and groups** interested to provide the programme with long-term collaboration (Centre for Training and Research

Translation, 2011; European Commission, 2007; Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012; US Department of Labor, 2009). This should also include the integration of the project in **existing local and regional networks and associations** (European Commission, 2007). Raising a **sense of ownership** is moreover necessary for partnerships to be effective in order to favour a real long-term commitment of those entities and individuals who are involved in the sustainability process (European Commission, 2006).

SECURING POLITICAL SUPPORT

Long-term time frames bring to the fore the issue of the **political support** that the sustainability plan should gain. Especially when the sustainability process is headed to the **institutionalisation** of the programme within an organisation, smart **negotiation strategies** are required in order to gain the full **support of the leaders and key partners** (Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012; European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2002; Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; European Commission, 2007). More in general, implementing a sustainability plan also requires the achievement of political support **within the larger organisation** (i.e., not only from the involved leaders and staff), and often also **from outside** of the organisation (Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012).

FINDING RESOURCES

Needless to say, partnerships and political support are extremely important in gaining access to the **resources** necessary to make the project sustainable in the long run. All the templates obviously insist on the need of developing appropriate actions in order to ensure the **financial stability** of the project as a whole or of some selected actions, by adopting multiple financial sources and institutional arrangements. However, many templates (Shediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998; Femley, 2009) adopt a broader approach to resources, connecting funds with other kinds of resources to be raised, including **human, organisational and technical resources**.

ASSESSING QUALITY

Sustainability planning and activities also require a **continuous control over the sustainability process**. In this regards, **research activities** (ISU ADVANCE, 2011) or **quality evaluation exercises** focused on the activities and the management system in place are suggested (Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012; Afterschool Alliance, 2002; European Commission, 2006). In both cases, the aim is that of identifying strengths and weaknesses of the current situation so as to attain a grounded view of present and future needs in terms of resources to be secured, capacities to be developed, orientations of the key players to be managed or organisational arrangements to be established.

COMMUNICATING SUCCESS

Finally, in some templates (e.g., Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012; US Department of Labor, 2009), a pivotal role is acknowledged to **communication**. The capacity of effectively documenting and communicating the project and especially its successes and potentials – but also risks and constraints – makes it actually possible to mobilise internal and external actors, to ensure transparency, to favour an enabling environment, and to create trust-based relationships with the key stakeholders. This is the reason why some templates dwell upon the **structure and quality of the documents and reports** to be produced (Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012; Afterschool Alliance, 2002) and stress the need to properly account for the achievements attained and the actions carried out, also in terms of data, figures and facts (US Department of Labor, n.a.).

Obviously, all these elements (actions to be sustained and why, team composition and leadership, partnerships, political support, resources, quality assessment, communication) are to be combined together into a real **sustainability plan**, viewed by the majority of templates as a **dynamic tool** to be progressively modified over time, as the different steps towards sustainability are actually taken. Necessarily, this implies the definition of **sustainability strategies and methods** (US Department of Labor, 2009) in order to appropriately manage all the aspects involved, to identify cost-effective alternative options to the actions provided (Rover, 2011) and to anticipate or promptly adapt to new inputs and changes (Femley, 2009).

Summing up the key features of sustainability plans

The brief documentary review about sustainability plans confirms that such plans have much in common with business plans and other general planning tools, which are all subject to the basic principles of project cycle management. Some of the most **recurrent items and structures** which have been presented will be utilised, when relevant to the basic aims and general approach of the TRIGGER project (see section 2), in the proposed roadmap for sustainability sketched in Part Two.

2. The TRIGGER view on sustainability

In the general design of TRIGGER, **the objective of pursuing long-term sustainability** is not just another task, to be addressed as the funding period approaches its end, since **sustainability was built into the general structure of the project** from the outset. The project was actually conceived bearing in mind that achieving significant and long-lasting change through gender equality-oriented policies in scientific and technological institutions is extremely difficult, and **results – rather than being institutionalised – are at the constant risk of being reversed.**

A vast literature and a huge amount of policy documents exist, highlighting the complexity of the issues to be tackled for change to be effective and enduring. It is quite extensively reviewed, for instance, in the Description of Work of the TRIGGER project. The box below provides an extremely concise account of the many aspects coming into play.

Problems and risks in promoting enduring change

Evidence has been increasingly provided of the **wide scope of the problems to be addressed** in launching structural change initiatives, their **depth, persistence and systematic nature**, which calls for a profound rethinking of science and research institutions. As it emerged in different analyses on gender equality-oriented programmes in science implemented in recent decades, change may happen, but only under certain circumstances. For instance, it requires programmes to last long enough to **let it take root**, to simultaneously address a **multiplicity of factors and levels**, to be able to manage **conflict** and to strongly **involve leaders, as well as women** in the organisation, be they scientists, technicians or administrative personnel, without overlooking men's participation. And even so, reports on current practice contain abundant evidence of **backlash phenomena**, based on denial or underestimation of the importance of gender discrimination in S&T research, also affecting important, well-designed projects, endowed with adequate funding and staff.
(PRAGES, 2009; WHIST, 2011; STAGES, 2012; TRIGGER, 2013)

To face the concurrent if opposite risks of irrelevance and backlash inherent in structural change initiatives, the TRIGGER project designed a **set of five general approaches**, which are based both on literature and best practice analyses and evaluations, and on previous direct experience with gender equality-oriented programmes in S&T domains.

Firstly, the **analytical approach** concerns the **“what to do” side of structural change**, that is, choosing the right actions in each institution to increase the internal relevance of the Action Plans (which in turn enhances its sustainability perspectives).

The **gendered research process approach** includes activities geared at promoting a gender sensitive and gender-specific research, while fighting gender blind research and gender bias. As it is shown by the recent literature on gender in science (Schiebinger, 2008; European Commission, 2013), such activities are pivotal in confronting the deepest structures of discrimination and gender inequality in science, which are strictly linked with the knowledge-making process and epistemological assumptions.

The **negotiation approach**, third of the TRIGGER ones, focus on the **“how to do it” side of structural change**, which more directly points to different kinds of strategies to have the actions accepted and gradually integrated into the ordinary life of the organisation, fighting indifference and managing conflict.

With the **social innovation approach**, a particular emphasis has been placed on the objective of **mobilising increasingly wide and varied groups of internal and external stakeholders**, triggering internal processes accompanying and supporting the efforts of the team and promoting a shared sense of ownership of the Action Plans in as many people as possible.

The **participatory modelling approach**, the fifth and final, points out the efforts already in place to reach gender equality both inside and outside the TRIGGER consortium, by promoting a dialogue with other EC-funded projects geared at identifying the building blocks of the structural change process.

These five general approaches are **all directly connected to the objective of sustainability**.

Here below, in the first paragraph (2.1.), a brief account of these approaches is reported, **just to recall their basic elements** (please refer to the TRIGGER proposal and to the Observation model of the accompanying research, deliverable 7.1, for more details).

In paragraph 2.2., instead, **each approach is linked to the sustainability effort**, which will then be detailed in section 3.

2.1. The five TRIGGER approaches

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

On the basis of the work carried out in the previous PRAGES project (2008-2009), the Action Plans were designed taking into account three major problem areas and connected policies. This differentiation was useful **not to conflate complex**

problems and situations in simplistic views such as, for instance, that holding that work-life issues are basically the only cause of women’s and men’s unequal outcomes in S&T settings. In this perspective, a **classification system** was used, based on relevant literature, identifying **three strategies** for intervention, articulated in **nine objectives**, as summarised in the following table.

The **first strategy** aims at making research institutions an **enabling environment** for women’s progression and working life. The **second strategy** aims at including the **gender dimension** in the very **image of science**, as well as in the **process of research and innovation**. The **third strategy** aims to promote **women in scientific leadership positions**, including those that are getting increasingly important in what is called “post-academic science”.

As the original Action Plans, it is obvious that sustainability plans will not be able to address all the problems connected with all these different areas. What appears to be critical, instead, is having a clear perception of the many-sided nature of the issues that are going to be addressed, **so to advisedly choose the most relevant to one’s institution in the different areas**. Being unaware of the whole picture may in fact lead to leave crucial issues behind, limiting the impact of the Action Plan, but also running the risk of producing paradoxical effects, because **problems left in the background interfere**, if not kept under control, with planned activities.

STRATEGIC AREAS		OBJECTIVES
		1. Women-friendly environment
2. Gender-aware Science	2.1. Actions challenging gender stereotypes and consequent horizontal segregation 2.2. Actions aimed at gendering S&T contents and methods	
3. Women’s leadership of science	3.1. Actions promoting women’s leadership in the practice of research 3.2. Actions promoting women’s leadership in the management of research 3.3. Actions promoting women’s leadership in scientific communication 3.4. Actions promoting women’s leadership in innovation processes and science-society relationships	

GENDERED RESEARCH PROCESS APPROACH

The choice to include in all the Action Plans a set of actions focused on gendering research process and contents relies on the assumption that **addressing the gender**

dimension of research means taking into consideration a key analytical and explanatory variable in research. If relevant gender issues are missed or poorly addressed all along the research process, results will be partial and potentially biased. **Gender can thus be an important factor in research excellence.** To support this process, it is also essential to devote resources to specific gender research.

More and more in European research, and increasingly under Horizon 2020, actions dealing with the **production of scientific knowledge** are recognised as having a direct impact on research priorities identification, public interest and societal needs, knowledge transfer and commercialisation, thus highlighting the **link with wider social innovation strategies**. At the same time, it is also increasingly emerging that promoting gendered research also affects the image of women in science and technology and the self-perception of women scientists.

This is why TRIGGER is trying to verify how a successful implementation of gendered research activities could affect the success of initiatives geared at promoting gender equality in science.

NEGOTIATION APPROACH

Negotiation has been put at the centre of the TRIGGER approach based on a very practical need, as a major **tool to promote change** also able (but not limited) to manage conflict and more silent forms of resistance in situations where dynamics of power are strongly implied.

Applied to gender dynamics in organisations negotiation includes all actions – at micro, meso or macro level – geared at directly or indirectly **redefining gender arrangements and the distribution of power, in its different forms, between men and women**, therefore producing deep and systemic change. To this aim, different types of negotiation have been planned under each Action Plan. In fact, problems related to consensus or leadership support mostly originates in four dimensions, recalled below:

- the **interpretive negotiation** (i.e., the negotiation geared to facilitate the interpretation of the real situation of women within the organisation so as to develop a common understanding of the problems to be addressed);
- the **symbolic negotiation** (i.e., the negotiation aimed at modifying the masculine symbolism of science so as to support women scientists' visibility and remove stereotyped images of women scientists);
- the **institutional negotiation** (i.e., the negotiation which has the objective to modify the "rules of the game" so as to modify the overt or hidden structures of women's discrimination);

- the **operational negotiation** (i.e., the negotiation which serves the need to translate good will, declarations or decisions into actual actions in a reasonable time).

– The negotiation effort thus is being largely experienced since the very beginning of TRIGGER (even before its start) by the teams, involving different kinds of internal and external stakeholders as well as their institutional counterparts (governance of the concerned universities).

SOCIAL INNOVATION APPROACH

This approach underlines the importance of **mobilising internal and external stakeholders and individuals** in order to activate and make permanent structural changes within the institutions.

Male dominance is in fact embodied in organisational features and formal/informal norms, which express themselves in almost all aspects of organisational life, including widespread behaviours, stereotypical assumptions, even language, resisting change also through die-hard mechanisms of institutional stickiness. Effectively addressing such deeply-rooted and widespread resistances requires that multiple types of internal and external players are sensitised and involved, getting them (both men and women) to become fully aware of the issue and its implications and able to express an adequate **willingness to take action**.

However, in this perspective, it is extremely important that a **transformational player** – i.e., a player able to promote social innovation processes – is present within the organisation, acting as a catalyst for change, able to link the drive of the project (i.e., the agency of its promoters towards gender equality) with the agency of other internal and external players, so to involve a growing number of relevant stakeholders. The TRIGGER core teams have progressively taken on this transformational role, but they increasingly need to **build alliances with other groups**, so to better contrast resistances and take advantage of supportive attitudes. In the final period of activity of the project, the diffusion of transformational attitudes among different groups of players at the institutes should ideally make it easier to pursue change objectives through gradually diminishing efforts on behalf of the TRIGGER teams, thus concretely starting the **transition process towards sustainability**.

PARTICIPATORY MODELLING APPROACH

The fifth and final approach characterising TRIGGER focuses on the development of an **integrated model** for **structural change-oriented programmes**, capitalising on the experience of TRIGGER and the other existing EC-funded structural change

projects (INTEGER, GENISLAB, STAGES, FESTA, GENDERTIME, GENOVATE, EGERA, and GARCIA). This approach is **participatory in nature**, since it is based on a strong interaction and exchange process involving all the project teams engaged on structural change, viewing them as part of the same European policy.

This approach leverages on the fact that, in the last years, four different ways of structural change projects have been funded, thus allowing the generation of a “critical mass” of knowledge and practical solutions which could be usefully applied in the future programmes aimed at struggling against gender inequality in research settings. However, to pursue this aim, these experiences are to be shared and discussed through a **mutual learning process**, so as to refine them and turn them into clear and transferable strategies and practices.

2.2. How the TRIGGER model can support the quest for sustainability

As it will be better described in Part Two, all the approaches described above are useful to suggest, in the different phases of the process towards sustainability, sets of actions to undertake and procedures to follow which should not be neglected.

Framing the typical elements of sustainability plans (which were presented in paragraph 1.2., above) in the theoretical setup of the TRIGGER project may therefore represent a simple way to **combine theoretical soundness** (that is, understanding what sustainability really entails) **with practical aims** (that is, having a clear check-list of necessary issues to consider and steps to be taken).

Here below, the contribution of each approach can be hinted, which will be then practically translated into items in the roadmap suggested in Part Two.

- The **analytical approach** highlights how important it is that the **decision about which actions are more promising and worth investing on** after the end of the project is taken, bearing in mind that if structural change is to be successfully sustained in the long term, actions covering multiple strategies and objectives are evidently to be pursued. According to this approach, a relevant Plan, and therefore a sustainable one, will have to include actions in different domains, avoiding to focus on just one or two. Better still, based on relationships built during project operations, the sustainability plan could include, whenever possible, new actions covering those areas which were less developed in previous years.
- The **gendered research approach** would play a pivotal role in the sustainability perspective, since it challenges the **masculine image of science** which – weakening the self-esteem of women researchers – is one of the main factors causing women’s marginalisation in science and innovation. Promoting

gendered research is therefore a key element for developing sound sustainability plans intended to progressively remove the deepest cognitive and cultural barriers impeding women to be visible protagonists of science and innovation.

- The **negotiation approach** has different consequences for the drafting of the sustainability plans. On the one hand, **the set of actions to be sustained** after the end of the project should be selected also considering the importance of covering **the different types and levels of negotiation for change** which are needed: interpretive (awareness, availability of gendered data, etc.); symbolic (role models, visibility of female researchers and results, etc.); institutional (norms, rules and procedures); operational (monitoring and assessment, etc.). On the other hand, **negotiation is the essence of the process towards sustainability**. The multiform nature of negotiation, as stressed in the TRIGGER approach, is useful here to constantly recall the need to envisage different kinds of negotiation strategies, able to reach and successfully engage different internal and external stakeholders in sustaining the project, with different degrees of awareness and involvement on gender issues.
- The **social innovation approach** provides a guidance to the TRIGGER teams in designing the sustainability plans, helping them identify the key players to be involved and the tools to be used for doing it. In fact, this approach can be also used for connecting all these players (women's networks, groups of volunteers cooperating to the different actions, external public or private players who participated in selected initiatives) to contribute in implementing the new envisaged arrangements for making the actions actually sustainable. In addition, this third approach highlights the importance of striving to maintain – at least in part – the **institutional arrangements** behind the TRIGGER project in the different organisations (core team and extended teams, boards, etc.) which can preserve and coordinate, under a unitary vision, the different gender equality efforts.
- Also the **participatory modelling approach** has much to do with sustainability. In fact, identifying strategies and practices distilled from actual experiences in structural change is helpful in increasing the long-term impacts of structural-change projects, in limiting their failures and in making them more strategically oriented. Therefore, it will be important, in developing the sustainability plan, to mainly focus the attention on the actions which turned out to be particularly effective within different organisational contexts and under different structural change projects.

PART TWO

A roadmap to sustainability

In this second part, the **components** reviewed in previous sections **will be operationalised and put to work**, so that they can shape the basic elements and steps of the process which will get the teams to develop their sustainability plans and test them during a transition phase in the last six months of the project.

Preliminarily, it is necessary to highlight some aspects.

First of all, the suggested process and its constituent elements (the “components”) are to be intended as **support tools** to the sustainability planning efforts of the Action Plans. Local circumstances, combined with the specific characteristics of each Plan, will in fact suggest the promoting teams to adapt these tools to their peculiar and evolving needs. This is to say that the contribution of Technical assistance cannot but be limited to providing **common categories**, at a level which is general enough to fit the different Action Plans. **Contents within the categories will instead be entirely context-specific** and are thus expected to vary greatly.

Moreover, it is important not to see the effort towards the plans as the work which is needed to draft a document, so that this suggested roadmap would be its template. **Sustainability** in fact, as we many times stressed, is **but another name for structural change**, so that the shift from working for the project to working for sustainability is somewhat tenuous.

Working for **sustainability is indeed a process**, which stems from the ordinary activities of the Action Plans and calls for the teams to focus on how those same activities can be still carried out, even if differently, after the end of the project. This focalisation has to be performed **during operations**, when the many contacts established both internally and externally can provide ideas and concrete occasions for making the actions permanent, even though adapting them to concrete opportunities.

The process towards sustainability is intended to last 28 months starting in M21 (September 2015) and being concluded in M48 (December 2017) with the draft of the final version of the sustainability plans (Deliverable D6.8). This period will also include a 6-month long “transition phase”, where the strategies and actions envisaged in the provisional Plans are actually carried out. Along these months, **the process will have to be monitored**, and progress periodically formalised.

In the following sections, the **main steps of the process** are discussed. The timing of the different steps is the following:

- **Screening** (M21 → M33);
- **Consultations** (M34 → M38);

- **Design** (M39 → M42);
- **Transition** (M43 → M48).

As it is easy to notice, the first step is also the longest one (11 months). This fact is mainly due to the need of providing the teams with a significant period of time for internally reflecting on the sustainability perspective of the Action Plans, on the basis of some first provisional results, after an initial period fully devoted to launch and implementation activities.

Concerning the duration of the following two steps, it is to keep in mind that, anyhow, sustainable arrangements are already looked for (and in some cases achieved) by the teams while implementing the actions, thus partially anticipating the steps of consultation and design.

The logical connection between the four proposed phases of the sustainability process may be better appreciated qualifying each phases on the basis of two criteria.

The first one is that of the **prevalent nature of each phase**. From this perspective, two phases (screening and consultations) are prevalently of an **analytical nature** in that they are focused on analytically assessing, respectively, the actions (with the aim of selecting those which can be sustained) and the potential partners and institutional counterparts (with the aim of identifying those who can be fruitfully involved in the sustainability process). The other two phases (design and transition) are prevalently of an **operational nature**, since they are mainly geared to operationalise and make real the outputs of the previous two phases.

The second criterion is that of the **overall orientation of the phases**. According to such a criterion, then, there are two **internally-oriented phases** (screening and design), when the activities are mainly carried out within the teams, and two **externally-oriented phases** (consultation and transition), implying the involvement of external players.

All that can be schematised in a double-entry matrix as follows.

NATURE OF THE PHASES	ORIENTATION OF THE PHASES	
	Internal	External
Analytical	<i>Phase 1</i> SCREENING	<i>Phase 2</i> CONSULTATION
Operational	<i>Phase 3</i> DESIGN	<i>Phase 4</i> TRANSITION

In this document, the first steps will be those dealt with more at length, while the last ones will be only sketched now, to be later deepened by integrating the new information continuously coming from the activities in the Action Plans as they develop over time.

1. Screening (M21→ M33)

The screening phase is when to carry out the **analysis of the project and the individual actions** considering their added value, strengths and weaknesses, and their relevance to both internal and external sources of support and funding. This is also when starting figuring **alternative options for the continuation of the activities**, in terms of resources, targets, organisational arrangements.

While, in practical terms, some actions will be selected out of the concrete occasion of continuing them, others will have to be advocated for through different forms of negotiations. Particularly for the latter, **the screening process will serve two purposes**. First, it will lead to **identify the actions which are more relevant** at each organisation and worth the lobbying effort. Second, it will highlight and **scrutinise viable options to have them confirmed**, at least partially or in a modified way. Actions, and connected stakes, will therefore have to be selected on which it is still **worth** and **possible** to invest resources of various kind.

Screening should be accomplished by core and extended teams, including in some cases the network of women researchers (where this has become an internal player strongly involved in the project).

It is to stress that the **screening** phase is the longest, and the one which overlaps the most with the ordinary functioning of the project. During project operations, in fact, it will be possible to identify possible ways to make existing arrangements and actions permanent, and to understand how it will be necessary to adapt and modify them to this aim.

However, **a specific function needs to be included and monitored** by the teams, devoted to screening project arrangements and actions against some key items and issues relating to sustainability. Current arrangements and actions will have to be assessed as for:

- Their actual and perceived **results**;
- Their **potential** in terms of longer-term sustainability.

Some of these **key items and issues** will therefore be provided in the following paragraphs **to frame and support the screening process**, both as concerns the results and the sustainability potential. They have been identified based on the documentary review reported in the background (see section 1, Part One), as well as the main TRIGGER approaches (see section 2, Part One). **Other sources of information** will obviously feed the screening process, such as for instance Action Plans' quality evaluation reports. Related indicators are therefore not included in this document.

The screening phase will have to be concluded by collecting (in a grid or in another kind of synthetic document) **the team's opinions and orientations** about the continuation of the different arrangements and actions, to be then discussed with different stakeholders in the following phase (Consultations, see section 2, below).

Here below, with an **entirely practical aim**, some issues to feed the screening process are provided, respectively dedicated to the **sustainability of the team** (paragraph 1.1.); the **sustainability of the actions** (paragraph 1.2.) and the **draft of the grid** or other document containing the team's first remarks about sustainability (paragraph 1.3.).

1.1. The sustainability of the team

GENERAL INDICATIONS

Even though sustainability may ideally be achieved by incorporating each action into existing structures of the organisation (this would in theory be "institutionalisation" at its best), experience shows that **maintaining at least some basic form of a "TRIGGER office" would be highly recommendable** to try and preserve the commitment and unitary approach of the original promoters. This does not entail, of course, that a group has to be sustained, entirely or mostly devoted to the project, since this would be hardly possible anywhere. However, even one unit of staff, not necessarily full time, with a specific assignment to the actions formerly managed under the project would make the difference in terms of effectively sustaining a change process with some continuity. **Mixed solutions** are also possible, with some actions taken in charge by different central structures, and other actions assigned to staff formerly involved in the TRIGGER team, through specific arrangements and coordination mechanisms.

The **assessment of the first results**, in terms of recognition and stabilisation of the team, **as well as the identification of viable options** to achieve sustainability should therefore be included in the screening process.

Basic items which could be used in the screening for the sustainability of the teams have been identified and reported in the following paragraph. They have been **formulated as questions** to stress their possible use, that is, **feeding the screening process** by suggesting relevant issue to deepen and discuss, among others, **in a participative and informal process within the team**. These items, therefore, do not represent the necessary components of a closed list or questionnaire, since they cannot all be relevant to each partner institution or action, considering their differences and the weight of local circumstances.

However, they derive from experience, representing **a sort of repository** of issues to consider, assessment criteria of action and arrangements, available options for sustainability.

In item description, **keywords and concepts** recurrent in documentary sources or deriving from the TRIGGER approach are highlighted in small caps. In the boxes, instead, **examples** of relevant actions and negotiations carried out or planned under the different Action Plans, as well as suggestions deriving from the experience of the first 18 months of implementation of the TRIGGER project, are provided. Please bear in mind that negotiations for sustainability are **still very preliminary**, so that the examples **by no way intend to be exhaustive or final** about the complex institutional, organisational and financial circumstances each partner is dealing with. Again, their only aim is to provide some food for thought for the screening process.

BASIC ITEMS FOR THE SCREENING PROCESS

A. Is the team visible, and perceived by the leadership (at department, university or other level) **as a unit with a distinctive mission on which it is worth investing?**

- ✓ What INTERPRETIVE AND SYMBOLIC NEGOTIATION actions have been carried out or can be identified to increase the recognition of the VALUE of a coordinating team on gender issues? Can MUTUAL LEARNING mechanisms be promoted or identified to show how internal units for gender equality are effective and rewarding in other universities/organisations?

Visibility and recognition of the team is often enlarged by successful **initiatives aimed at increase the engagement of the institution as a whole on gender equality**. This is the case, for example, of the creation of a Committee for drafting the first Gender Equality Plan at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), established thanks to the TRIGGER Action Plan. This fact made both symbolically and practically the team a key player on gender issues within the organisation. Similar impacts can be observed in the Birkbeck College (BBK), where the TRIGGER team has successfully lobbied for the appointment of a Pro-Vice Master for Equality Issues. To this same purpose, at the beginning of project, the TRIGGER team of the University Paris Diderot (UPD) created a TRIGGER think tank which is composed of leadership (president of university, vice rector of research council, directors of departments..etc). Two meetings by year are organised in order to present the implementation of TRIGGER Action Plan.

- ✓ Can a somewhat formal BUSINESS CASE for an internal staff devoted to gender equality (or specifically to the continuation of the TRIGGER Action Plan) be developed and discussed to increase awareness and LEADERSHIP SUPPORT?

Adding other diversities to gender may help widen the beneficiary pool and increase the value of the programme for the university/organisation. Could this be a strategy to strengthen the business case for a devoted staff, especially at those universities where gender equality is currently losing momentum, while more general diversity efforts could be more easily sustained?

- ✓ Other issues/options ...

B. Is the team perceived by women and men researchers and other internal groups/stakeholders as a leading group for advocating change?

- ✓ Has the team been able to link its TRANSFORMATIONAL AGENCY for gender equality with other internal efforts and motivations for change in different domains (generational issues, internal reforms, professional issues of various kinds, etc.)?

In order **to hook other groups or individuals engaged with gender equality or connected issues**, at the Vysoka Skola Chemicko-technologicka v Praze (VSCHT) a network called “Club for Equal Opportunities” was established, open to anyone who is interested in promoting a fair management at the university. The Club is therefore not focused on women-related issues only. It is to be also noticed that, almost spontaneously, also a network of women professors was created at VSCHT thanks to an input of the team.

C. What institutional solutions have been (or can be) devised and/or negotiated?

- ✓ Are AGREEMENTS in place already providing for some form of STABILITY of the involved staff? Or else, is there a chance that current arrangements can be confirmed, at least to some extent, should the project yield significant and highly visible results?

In the case of the team at UPD, one of the member has been selected, through an open competitive exam, for a **permanent position** related to gender equality, thus reinforcing the possibility for making the team as a whole more sustainable after the project lifespan. A similar opportunity has been reported at BBK, where there is some possibilities for one member of the staff to be hired after the TRIGGER project completion to keep on working on gender issues.

- ✓ Has the establishment of a RESEARCH/TEACHING UNIT ON GENDER ISSUES been planned or negotiated? Such units, in fact, often represent the institutional engine for coordinating internal equality efforts, serving both academic and policy purposes. Alternatively, can the regular funding of dedicated PHD POSITIONS be secured, so to assure some continuity in the support to gender equality-oriented efforts?

The **establishment of new organisational units** as a consequence of the Action Plans has been reported in some of the research institutions concerned with TRIGGER. At the Università di Pisa (UNIPi), for example, the activities carried out by the team led to the creation of research groups on gendered science, while at the UPM, a chair on gendered research is planned to be established under the Action Plan.

- ✓ Did the LINKS established with relevant internal units (Equal Opportunities or Diversity Committees, Equal Opportunity officers, Human Resources departments, etc.) lead to the acknowledgment of the ADDED VALUE of the integration with the TRIGGER team? Could that be used to the aim of an at least partial stabilisation of staff units in those functions?

Many cases related to the development of **links with relevant internal units** could be drawn from TRIGGER. For example, at VSCHT, a strong cooperation relationship with the Communication Department has been established, since it is institutionally involved with initiatives and policies connected to career development. At the BBK, a link is established with the university Master for the appointment of the Pro-Vice Master for Equality Issues.

- ✓ Has the institutionalisation of the NETWORK OF WOMEN RESEARCHERS established under the project (when foreseen) been negotiated? A formal acknowledgment of the role of the Network could allow preserving a unitary direction of gender-equality efforts when no other institutional solution is available, also in cooperation with other groups or stakeholders. Has the follow-up of the project been formally inserted in the Network's STATUTE as an objective?

Under TRIGGER, **different networks involving women** have been established. An interesting case is that of the National Conference of Italian Universities' Equality Bodies (CoNaEB), which was created in the year leading up to the Project with the contribution of the TRIGGER Team at UNIPi. Now the CoNaEB is directly involved with the actions included in the Action Plan related to gendered science. Another case is the Women Professor's Network at VSCHT, which is presently supporting the TRIGGER team in developing doctoral theses with a gender dimension. At BBK, a network is being built with other organisations, from the private and public sector, to maximise TRIGGER research impacts.

- ✓ Are there other EU-funded or different kind of projects sharing compatible aims with which to link, and which could provide EXTERNAL RESOURCES to support some staff member of the TRIGGER team, at least provisionally?
- ✓ Have individual actions been scrutinised for the chances they might imply of bringing about the STABILISATION of the responsible staff or the INSTITUTIONALISATION of other connected actions?

With regard to possible **stabilisation and institutionalisation of actions** activated under TRIGGER, the case of UPM is to be highlighted. A Committee was established and promoted by the TRIGGER team for developing the first Gender Equality Plan at the university level, and the TRIGGER project coordinator has been appointed as the first Rector's Delegate on Gender Equality. It is quite evident that the very existence of an institutional plan and an official delegate for gender equality significantly increases the opportunities for the Action Plan or part of it to be continued after the completion of the project. Another case is reported at BBK, where the TRIGGER team proposed to appoint "champions" for innovation in Departments and research groups, i.e. members of the staff who can help colleagues in understanding and developing the commercial potential of their research. The team is promoting this initiative with the aim of including gender equality among the issues to deal with through the champions. Now the School of Business, Economics and Informatics is seeking to create a post with responsibilities for technology transfer in order to address the issue of low levels of commercialisation within the School.

- ✓ Have procedures and mechanisms been established, which – besides sustaining the actions – could guarantee a role to TRIGGER staff members?

Some strategies aimed at **providing staff members with opportunities to play a role in the continuation of the actions activated under TRIGGER** are starting to emerge. In the case of UPD, the Action Plan is managed by an already existing unit – the *Pôle Égalité Femmes-Hommes* – focused on gender equality. This fact would make it easier for the team to keep a role after the completion of the project. At BBK, the increasing recognition of the Team as a pole of expertise for the Master on gender equality issues would favour a possible role of TRIGGER staff members after the project lifespan. In the case of UNIPI, the staff is already recognised as a reference point for gendered science within the university, thanks to the many initiatives made so far on this issue.

- ✓ Other issues/options ...

D. Have formal or informal agreements been negotiated to have voluntary work to continue sustaining the TRIGGER actions after the end of the project?

- ✓ What will happen of individuals or groups of people voluntarily supporting selected project activities after the end of the project? Could INTERNAL AGREEMENTS or decisions about organisational arrangements be discussed or adopted to institutionalise or at least informally continue cooperation?
- ✓ Other issues/options ...

1.2. The sustainability of the actions

GENERAL INDICATIONS

Those actions (or groups of actions) which are not dropped at the end of the TRIGGER funding period can achieve **different levels of sustainability/institutionalisation**. Moreover, actions which are still sustained may **be managed by different groups**: either pre-existing university/organisational structures or programmes, in contact or not with the original TRIGGER team, or new dedicated staff (again, from TRIGGER or not).

It is also to consider that when actions are **incorporated in already existing programmes**, perspectives for durability are certainly improved, even though **control may be lost** – to a certain extent – as for the contents and other features (periodicity, target, format, organisational arrangements) of the action, which is already the case with some ongoing TRIGGER actions.

In this variety of options and dilemmas, **the fate of the individual actions** depends, on the one hand, on their success and quality. On the other, it also depends on the **institutional and organisational circumstances** of the different organisations, whereas some types of action may be easier or more difficult to integrate, regardless of the success or quality they achieved.

This is one of the reasons why, as it was also suggested for the screening of the TRIGGER teams arrangements (see previous paragraph), **the individual actions will need to be scrutinised under two different respects**: their **results** and their **potential for sustainability** in a given environment.

Basic items and issues have been identified and reported in the paragraph below also as concerns **the screening for the sustainability of the individual actions**. These are again **formulated as questions** and only have the aim of reviewing some examples of the factors to consider, to be enriched with those specifically connected to the features of the many different actions being implemented in the five Action Plans.

As already mentioned, **quality indicators included in the periodic evaluation** foreseen under the general TRIGGER project **will not be included** in this list, even though they are certainly relevant to the screening process. Related information will in fact be drawn from **evaluation reports**.

As in the previous paragraph, **keywords and concepts** recurrent in documentary sources or deriving from the TRIGGER approach are highlighted in small caps. In the

boxes, again, **examples** of relevant actions and general suggestions deriving from the experience in the TRIGGER project are provided, with the only objective of providing some ideas.

BASIC ITEMS FOR THE SCREENING PROCESS

E. What is the importance of the action for the overall gender equality policy of the organisation?

- ✓ Is the action connected to a STRATEGIC APPROACH (enabling environment for women, including gender in S&T contents, promoting womens' leadership), or a specific OBJECTIVE (see "Analytical approach", paragraph 2.1.) which is insufficiently covered in the organisation's general policy for equality? This would make its discontinuation particularly damaging and would call for an extra effort to maintain it.

There are some examples from the Action Plans in which the **action covered needs which were not satisfied by the organisation's equality policies**. In this regard, a good example is the need for information and knowledge about the real condition of women in the working environment. The TRIGGER team at UPM produced a report titled "Women at UPM" which provided for the first time an accurate description of the situation of women and men at the University as a whole and at the different School. The team is also generating new knowledge about the use of a sexist language within the university, raising the interest of staff members and leaders about gender issues. Statistical analysis on women's and men's conditions similar to those of UPM have been carried out at UPD, UNIPI and VSCHT, thus matching a wider need for information on women's condition within the concerned organisation.

- ✓ What actions have been carried out or can be identified to stress the importance of focusing on strategies and objectives which are not usually acknowledged in the organisations' equality policy?

At VSCHT, the TRIGGER team noticed that some issues, including the childcare services for the university staff, were **disappeared from the competence and agenda of Trade Unions**, which otherwise would be a "natural" partner in promoting more balanced working conditions for women and men as well. The team thus started to collaborate with the Kindergarten staff, helping them develop and administer a questionnaire aimed at collecting information about the satisfaction of parents. The result of the initiative was very positive. The final effect was that of urging the university administration to directly contribute to sustain the Kindergarten.

- ✓ Does the project, with the set of relations and opportunities it brings, provide the opportunity to develop new actions, or widen the scope of existing ones, covering previously neglected areas? This would increase the INTEGRATION OF GENDER POLICIES at the organisation and would be particularly important to include in a sustainability plan.

- ✓ Is the action recognised by the leadership as a VALUE for the organisation? If not by the leadership, are there other stakeholders attaching value to it, who could lobby for its continuation?

An example where **leaderships clearly showed to recognise an action as a value for the organisation** is given by the Action Plan at BBK. A negotiation started with the Pro-Vice Master for Learning and Teaching in order to ensure that the Permanent teaching module for PhD courses launched under TRIGGER could continue under the completion of the project. The negotiation in particular pertained to the identification of a possible format of the module (length and number of sessions) and its institutional anchorage, to assure its legacy after the TRIGGER project. Another example is provided by the two research studies carried out both at UNIPi and at VSCHT, respectively on work-life balance and working conditions in the university. In both cases, the studies raised a tangible interest by the same women researchers who complained that the issues dealt with in the study were largely neglected by the university administration.

- ✓ Can a somewhat formal BUSINESS CASE be developed or drafted for the action, or for a connected group of actions? It should highlight how these actions are providing useful services for which there are no adequate options available, so that they are recognised as worth funding. It should also clarify which value would be lost by discontinuing them.

Examples where a formal business case has been developed are not reported yet under TRIGGER. However, it is to notice that some activities have been enlarged in scope or size since they were **producing services** recognised by stakeholders and leaders as very useful for the institution. In this regard, it is interesting to mention the case of the training courses or modules included in different actions promoted under the Action Plan at VSCHT. These activities address different targets (males and females young researchers, women candidates to access decision-making boards and committees, etc.). The common character of these initiatives was the focus on “soft-skills”, i.e., cross-cutting professional and personal skills related to, e.g., communication, time management, career planning, empowerment and self-confidence. The action allowed to observe the presence of a great demand for trainings on this kind of skills which however is largely neglected, especially in technical universities. Hence the raising interest from the university administration to continue and enhance these initiatives, so as to reach a larger audience.

- ✓ Can the action also potentially represent a VALUE for organisations, groups, or public agencies outside the institution, so that sustainability could be achieved also by resorting to EXTERNAL FUNDS?

The capacity to **attract external funds** emerged in the case of an action carried out at BBK, aimed at promoting the inclusion of women scientists in external collaborative networks. In this case, additional funds have been provided by the BBK administration, while other two universities (the Dundalk Institute of Technology and the University of Lund) decided to cooperate with BBK to reinforce this action, hosting two additional networking events. Another example is that of UPD, which is part of the *Université Sorbonne Paris Cité*, an institutional federation of 8 universities and 5 research centres based in Paris. The

TRIGGER team started to enlarge the scope of some actions planned for UPD only to other universities affiliated to the federation. In this way, the Team also obtained extra-funds from external players to sustain these actions.

- ✓ Besides formal leadership, are there “functional leaders” or informal GATEKEEPERS acknowledging the importance of the action or that could be specifically targeted to find ways to support it?
- ✓ Other issues/options ...

F. Have all the relevant dimensions of negotiation (interpretive, symbolic, institutional and operational) been planned or applied to increase the sustainability chances of the various actions?

An interesting example in which a specific form of negotiation – in this case, the interpretive negotiation – has been applied for increasing sustainability chances is that of the action promoted by the Team at UNIPI to urge the university administration to deal with the question of **child-care facilities for the staff**. In the past, the administration had adopted solutions which were later abandoned because of the increasing lack of resources affecting the University. The leverage used by the team to launch again such an issue was the result of the satisfaction survey carried out under TRIGGER. The survey showed how the lack of child-care facilities were a cause of worry for the staff, especially for women. Thanks to the survey, in 2015, the administration started looking for solutions which were more sustainable than those practised in the past. As a consequence of this process, the administration decided to sign a number of agreements with various co-ops to satisfy the need for childcare services of university employees, students, PhD students and others working for the university on a temporary basis.

- ✓ Other issues/options ...

G. Is the action already stabilised to some extent?

- ✓ Has the action been reconfirmed as a new feature of the organisation, with the ALLOCATION OF DEDICATED FUNDS?

Examples of **actions destined to become fully incorporated or which are already incorporated in the organisation** can be found in different Action Plans. At VSCHT, for example, the website of the TRIGGER project is becoming a permanent section devoted to equality issues of the university website. At the same university, the team succeeded in introducing new rules for the interruption or postponement of grant implementation due to pregnancy by the university Internal Grant Agency. At UPD, a module on gender issues addressed to all first-year students is becoming part of the standard university procedures, being already funded under the UPD budget. At UNIPI, the team successfully promoted institutional negotiations to appoint the Delegate of the Rector in Gender Studies & Equal Opportunities.

- ✓ Has the action been integrated, even with a term and the need to be reconfirmed, into some pre-existing ordinary structure of the organisation, thus achieving a first level of STABILITY? If not, what are the chances to do so?

A case to follow is that of a permanent training on gender issues promoted by the team at UPM addressed to students, which is becoming part of the ordinary training activities on offer at the university.

- ✓ Has the action spread beyond the target groups originally envisaged (to other departments/faculties/institutes, etc.), paving the way for the DIFFUSION of the change process throughout the organisation?

An example is that of the course on gender issues at UPM addressed to students just mentioned above. The course was so favourably accepted that it was suggested to include it in the training initiatives addressed to university managers. This suggestion was implemented by the administration of one of the institutes of the university, which has included a module within a course addressing managers and decision-makers on Horizon 2020. A similar case has been reported at UPD where the already mentioned modules on gender presently addressed to first-year students has been already extended to the master's students of the universities affiliated to the *Université Sorbonne Paris Cité* (USPC), namely the University Sorbonne Nouvelle and the University Paris Descartes.

- ✓ Other issues/options ...

H. What are the actions most effectively promoting change at the different levels of depth which are to be addressed?

- ✓ What are the more effective actions in promoting an improvement in the understanding of the real situation of women within the organisation? INTERPRETIVE-LEVEL actions increase awareness and fight denial, creating the necessary preconditions for building alliances, obtaining support and taking action. Among the actions with a significant interpretive negotiation focus, what is the added value of each one, if any, which should not be lost, so that an extra effort would be needed to sustain them?

The many actions that, in all Action Plans, include a **periodic and systemic collection of internal gendered data** all have a strong relevance for interpretive negotiation. Maintaining at least some of these actions would be indispensable, as these bases of data at the same time represent **platforms for coalitions and action** within the different institutions and across them.

- ✓ What are the actions more successfully challenging the masculine image of science? Supporting the visibility of women scientists, fighting belittling stereotypes or promoting women's qualified presence in scientific communication (SYMBOLIC DIMENSION) are crucial tools to mobilise people

and make them aware, at a deeper level, of the strength and persistence of gender inequality. Among the actions with a significant focus on the symbolic dimension, what is the added value of each one, if any, which should not be lost, so that an extra effort would be needed to sustain them?

There are some actions which turned out to be particularly effective in **challenging the masculine image of science**. This is the case of the Julie Hamackova Award, established at VSCHT under the TRIGGER Action Plan and addressed to student works integrating the gender dimension. Another case is that of the proposal made by the team at UPM to award with a honorary degree international outstanding women scientists. This proposal has been accepted and it is going to be implemented.

- ✓ What actions are succeeding in modifying the rules of the game that reinforce mechanisms leading to inequality? Are other INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL strategies working fine, such as creating alternative institutions (networks, working groups etc.) supporting the Action Plan? Among the actions with a significant institutional negotiation focus, what is the added value of each one, if any, which should not be lost, so that an extra effort would be needed to sustain them?

Some good examples can be drawn out of the Action Plans in which **institutional negotiations led to tangible changes within the institution**. At BBK, a working group for promoting a Centre on Leadership has been established. The institutional negotiations are presently going on. The working group includes, other than the BBK TRIGGER research team, women academics from different departments and at different levels, including the Pro-Vice-master for Learning and Teaching. As we already said, at VSCHT, new gender-sensitive rules for accessing grants delivered by the university Internal Grant Agency have been introduced. Also at UNUPI some changes in the university internal regulations have been introduced, pertaining to research fellowships, researchers working on a temporary basis, research scholarships, the working conditions of PhD students and freelancers hired by the university. Another example of successful institutional negotiations is the establishment at UPM of a Committee in charge of developing a gender equality plan for the university and the appointment of the TRIGGER team leader as Rector's Delegate for Gender Equality, a position that has never existed before. New regulations are expected to be introduced soon also at UPD, concerning, e.g., gender turnover in administrative and teaching responsibilities, the adoption of a gender-unbiased language in all internal documents (including job offers), and the gender composition of the most important decision-making meetings.

- ✓ What are the actions displaying a sound practical dimension, with accomplishments monitored and assessed, involving all the relevant staff (OPERATIONAL LEVEL)? Among the actions with a significant operational practicality, what is the added value of each one, if any, which should not be lost, so that an extra effort would be needed to sustain them?

Internal monitoring structures, involving core and extended team members could sometimes be maintained and extended to other staff for the carrying out of specific actions or groups of actions. Similarly, actions such as **periodic reporting practices** to the academic senate or to other decision-making boards would imply a continuing effort at assessing and redesigning the actions.

✓ Other issues/options ...

I. Is the action conveying transformational attitudes and activating groups of supporters?

✓ Are women's formal or informal NETWORKS AND GROUPS, at department, institute or university/organisational level supporting the establishment of the action, willing to lobby for it or to sustain it through VOLUNTARY WORK?

Some cases of individuals voluntarily participating in the actions are already presented above, such as the Club for Equal Opportunities at VSCHT, the network of Italian Universities' Equality Bodies (CoNaEB) or the involvement at UPD of women and men representatives of each Department of the university in the network of equality referents created through TRIGGER. Besides this, being among the founders of the CPED (the national association gathering the gender equality officers in the French universities), the TRIGGER team is inspiring the work of individuals and groups participating in such network.

✓ Other issues/options ...

L. Is the action already successfully tested in other gender equality programmes?

✓ Is it possible to develop around the action forms of inter-institutional cooperation involving different gender equality programmes?

In a couple of cases, **forms of inter-institutional cooperation** among gender equality programmes activated in different university have been established. This occurred, for example, at VSCHT and UPD.

✓ Other issues/options ...

M. Is the action actually enhancing gendered science?

✓ Is the action attracting the interest of different scientific communities on gender? It is to be expected that an action supported from different scientific communities has more chances than others to be sustained in the long run.

The promotion of **gender and sex as key variables** in science and innovation often attracts the interest of scientific communities, with broader effects on gender equality policies. It is interesting to notice, for example, that the team at UNIFI successfully proposed to establish a specific thematic section on gendered research within the National Conference

of Italian Universities' Equality Bodies. In the same way, the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development at BBK (known as Babylab), thanks to the Action Plan, started a process aimed at increasing its capacity to use sex and gender as variables in their research on how babies learn and develop.

✓ Other issues/options ...

1.3. The finalisation of the screening process

The screening phase which, as already mentioned, lasts more than one year (M21→M33), covers the central and more intense part of project implementation. The information which will be collected in this long period will therefore be particularly rich of **predictive elements for the sustainability chances** of the actions and the project as a whole, which are not obviously available in this moment.

In the second six-month period of the screening phase (M28→M33), this same information, which will be recorded in many outputs and working materials produced all along the implementation of the Action Plans (monitoring and mutual learning reports, evaluation reports, deliverables, publications, websites, etc.), will have to be **processed to the specific aim of sustainability**.

In this time frame, **the finalisation of the screening phase** will therefore take place, mostly on the basis of the items listed in paragraphs 1.1. and 1.2. above, which we suggest to use as a sort of check-list (to be integrated with other relevant items if needed), which will allow **taking stock of the situation**, identifying strengths, weaknesses and perspectives for sustainability.

An **internal decision-making process** involving core and extended teams will thus be launched to this aim, which will likely entail a series of **periodic meetings** on the different aspects of sustainability (for instance, the institutional arrangements of the project and the individual actions), as well as on the different parts of the Action Plans.

The decisions taken and the solutions envisaged at the end of this process will be gathered in a **final grid or other internal document**, where the different sustainability options to be discussed in the subsequent wider **consultation phase** (see section 2, below) will be set out.

2. Consultations (M34 → M38)

As mentioned, the screening phase will produce, as its final output, a grid (or a similar document) containing the orientation of TRIGGER core and extended teams about which actions and which institutional arrangements are to sustain, and through which resources and institutional mechanisms. **Alternative options** will be included when a decision could not be reached, either out of diversity of opinions, or because crucial information was still lacking at the moment (for instance the attitudes of key internal or external players, or possible solutions team members might be unaware of).

The function of the subsequent consultations phase is to collect the missing information by **widening the decisional process** to include – beyond team members – all relevant stakeholders, both internal and external to the organisation, involving them through a varied and tailored set of tools and procedures.

This final and participative decision-making phase will lead to the design of the sustainability plan (see section 3, below). Besides, the consultation process is also aimed at increasing sustainability chances by **spreading the ownership of the decisions** to be taken and **actively engaging additional stakeholders** in the effort towards gender equality.

In the following paragraphs the three main steps of the consultation process are briefly touched upon, namely:

- Information to collect and stakeholders to involve (2.1.);
- Consultation tools and procedures (2.2.);
- Consultation outputs (2.3.).

2.1. Information to collect and stakeholders to involve

Before starting with the consultation activity, an important step to take is that of developing a **map of the stakeholders to be involved**, to be also identified considering which information is particularly needed.

The **strategic importance** of such a step deserves to be stressed here. Indeed the team has the unique opportunity, through the consultations, to understand to what extent the hypotheses emerging from the screening are grounded, detecting the real intention of the institutional counterparts and other potential partners to sustain the actions in the long run.

To this aim, **three sets of information** could be usefully gathered, through more or less formal exchanges and meetings (see paragraph 2.1., below, on possible tools and procedures).

The **first set includes** information **on how the TRIGGER activities have been perceived** by relevant leaders, stakeholders and beneficiaries. This includes opinions and data on, e.g., how much such activities have been appreciated, which impact they have had according to stakeholders and how they could be improved. As it is easy to see, this information may be of a technical nature (i.e., opinions on how the activities have been designed and implemented), but they also should allow each player to take and express a first general point of view (e.g., agreement, disagreement, generic interest, etc.) towards the activities in view of their future continuation.

Secondly, through the consultations it will be possible to have a **further reality check as concerns the sustainability hypotheses** developed after the screening phase. This includes opinions on, e.g., to what extent and how the actions can be continued in the future, which institutional and technical requirements could make the actions sustainable and who are the internal or external players (leaders, institutional units, external organisations, etc.) that could be also involved.

Finally, consultations will also be useful to understand the **actual capacity, possibility and willingness** of each stakeholder to contribute in the sustainability process (depending on the case, as the institutional reference, executive unit, external expert, partner organisation, funding organisation, etc.). To this end, consultation should allow defining as far as possible the key terms of possible future institutional and partnership agreements to develop in the design phase.

In practical terms it could be useful to start consultations with **the “natural” counterparts of TRIGGER** (e.g., those who have been already involved with the project activities, those who have been already contacted for discussing future institutional arrangements, those who have been beneficiaries of the activities carried out, etc.). It is however equally important to **enlarge the consultation scope** to include individuals, organisational units or external players who have been only partially involved with TRIGGER (e.g., those who have been the target of TRIGGER communication activities) or even those who do not know TRIGGER at all, but could be interested, or competent from the institutional point of view, to know and sustain it in the future.

2.2. Consultation tools and procedures

Needless to say, the consultation process will be set up and implemented by each team according to its needs. It is therefore impossible and even useless to try to provide a common framework about tools and procedures.

It is however to consider that that there is a **wide range of consultation procedures** that could be applied according to the circumstances. They include, for example, those that are focused on a one-to-one interaction (such as simple bilateral meetings and informal interviews), those involving small groups of people (typically focus groups, but also meetings with the leaders of an organisation), or those to use when the people to reach are many (that is the case, for example, of online consultations or self-administered questionnaires). According to the kind of consultation, specific technical tools can be developed, including interview grids, questionnaires, background documents, white papers and the like.

2.3. Consultation outputs

Despite all the efforts, it is quite unlikely that consultations will provide clear and unambiguous outputs. Indeed, the opinions of the stakeholders on the activities carried out and on the sustainability hypotheses could largely differ. Similarly, it is strongly probable that the actual orientation of the different actors to play a role in the sustainability process will be difficult to precisely ascertain.

The **outputs of the consultation process** should therefore be **analysed** and **summarised** in order to pave the way for an appropriate designing process of the sustainability plans.

In this perspective, it could be advisable to develop some form of **consultation report**, which would allow organising and finalising the collected information. It could for instance be formalised as a set of **recommendations** about, e.g., actions to be sustained, their modifications, the institutional and organisational arrangements to set up, or about institutions, partners or financial sources which could be mobilised. Such report, whatever its form, will represent the basis for developing the sustainability plan (see section 3, on the design phase, below).

3. Design (M39 → M42)

On the basis of the results of the consultations, the draft of the **sustainability plan** can start, including the design of the **transition phase**, that is, how to manage the last phase of the project, when the bridges will have to be built leading from the TRIGGER-funded to a new institutional context (see section 4, below). This phase is expected to start on Month 39 and to be completed on Month 42.

In the sustainability plan the recommendations emerging from the two previous phases will have to be specified, operationalised and combined to shape a consistent executive tool to steer the transition and subsequent phases. The time frame to be covered by the sustainability plan should be five years after the completion of the TRIGGER project, as specified in the Description of Work.

Two preliminary aspects are to be highlighted.

- Firstly, we need to stress that the sustainability plan is necessarily a document susceptible of **in-progress modification**, according to the evolving circumstances and needs which will occur as its implementation proceeds. In fact, during the transition phase, some strategies devised could prove ineffective, some options unfeasible or some institutional arrangements unreliable. In these cases, therefore, coming back to the original plan to change it becomes inevitable.
- Secondly, **structure, components and contents** of the sustainability plan **vary according to the project and actions**. Even though there is a core of issues that all plans will have to deal with (qualifying them exactly as sustainability plans), the way in which such issues are organised and deepened, as well as the integration of additional issues, strongly depend upon the nature of the project/actions to be sustained and the institutional/social context they are embedded into.

It is quite obvious that it is impossible to develop now a **common template for the sustainability plans at all the involved institutions**. Beforehand, all partners need to cumulate direct experience on sustainability and identify – through screening and consultations – what are the opportunities available in their own institutional and social contexts to make each project sustainable.

What we can do now is establishing **a set of issues that a sustainability planning process has necessarily to take into account**, based on the basic literature review on sustainability which was presented (see paragraphs 1.1. and 1.2., Part One) and the path that TRIGGER made until today.

In particular, **five key issues** can be identified at present:

- Vision (3.1.);
- Human resources (3.2.);
- Partnerships and institutional agreements (3.3.);
- Funding stability (3.4.);
- Communication (3.5.).

3.1. Vision

At the moment in which the design phase will start, each TRIGGER team is supposed to have already developed – in the screening as well as in the consultation phases, see above – a quite precise idea of the actions to be sustained and the different viable options for their effective institutionalisation.

However, this idea, which at that point will only be embodied in a more or less formalised set of recommendations (see paragraph 2.3., above) is **to be developed and expressed into a clear vision**, setting out the general and specific aims, as well as the results to achieve, which will be necessarily reflecting the new context of the post-TRIGGER phase.

The vision will also have to clearly argue the usefulness of the sustained actions and the functions or benefits which would be lost if they were discontinued, and why this should result in a damage for the concerned institution, stakeholders and potential beneficiaries.

This vision should act as the **common ground** for finalising institutional arrangements and partnership agreements discussed during consultations.

3.2. Human resources

Another key point of the sustainability plan is describing **the team in charge for the transition phase**, which will include both the TRIGGER team and the human resources which will be involved in managing the actions after the end of TRIGGER.

It must be highlighted that one of the critical aspects to be dealt with as concerns human resources is that the management of the transition phase is not totally overlapping with the ordinary activity of the TRIGGER Action Plans. This could make it difficult to **keep the focus on both the management of the Action Plans and the**

transition process at once. Envisaging that a specific item related to transition is included in internal monitoring checklists or meeting agendas could help manage this problem.

3.3. Partnerships and institutional arrangements

The sustainability plan should include the **key partners and institutional counterparts** that will be involved in the sustainability process.

Precisely finalising partnerships and institutional arrangements for sustainability is a critical aspect to manage in the design phase. In fact, the sustainability design requires turning generic expressions of interest and willingness to cooperate or promises of institutional support emerged in the two previous phases into well-defined agreements where aims, tasks, duties and responsibilities are specified.

In general, it is advisable that a **flexible approach** to design is adopted, considering that clear-cut solutions for sustainability will not be easily available at this stage. Implementation mechanisms can be proposed that can be anyhow viable by, e.g., graduating institutionalisation levels, envisaging different steps of the institutionalisation process over the time, splitting the actions into sub-actions when necessary, or modifying the actions identifying cost-effective alternative options or reducing their organisational complexity.

Management systems, including monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, will have to be carefully crafted taking into account the complexity of both the transition and subsequent phases, involving many stakeholders and sources of funding and support, in a **particularly uncertain institutional environment** (see also section 4).

3.4. Funding stability

Another key component of the sustainability plan is obviously the definition of the means and sources to **secure the funding stability** of the sustained actions.

Needless to say, **this issue goes hand in hand with that of institutional arrangements**. In fact, institutional and partnership agreements should also include a part specifying the origin of the funds and the way in which they will be managed.

It is however possible, above all when it comes to funds, that univocal decisions are not already available about how to fully secure resources for the actions to be sustained. For example, institutionalisation and partnerships agreements could

allow to cover some costs (e.g., staff, basic activities), but not all the items included in the executive design.

Moreover, it is also possible that the agreements only allow covering the costs for one or two additional years of activities. This implies that **alternative solutions will have to be devised in the first years** to ensure the sustainability process in the long run.

This is the reason why the sustainability plan must include – if not a detailed budget – at least a rough analysis of the needs in terms of funds and resources, as well as the identification of the activities necessary to raise them year by year.

3.5. Communication

Communicating is one of the most significant tools for an effective sustainability perspective. To a certain extent, the sustainability plan is – as mentioned – comparable to a business plan, where the **products** to be marketed are the actions to be sustained and the **target groups** are the leaders and relevant units of the research institution, as well as other external entities (of different kind, including public funding agencies, private firms, NGOs, other research institutions, governmental bodies or international networks).

Therefore, appropriate communication strategies and tools should be devised that, even though they will probably build on the communication tools developed for the TRIGGER project, are at least partially **specific to the aim of sustainability**. It is to take into account that communication serves multiple objectives, such as documenting the achievements attained through the Action Plans, putting sustainability of the project/actions in the agenda of the institutions involved with TRIGGER, attracting new partners, raising the support of women and men (researchers, technical staff, administrative staff, students, etc.) within the institution, or establishing links with other programmes and networks aimed at promoting gender equality in science and technology.

As for the communication tools, there is a vast experience cumulated in the field of the promotion of gender equality in science and technology from which to draw inspiration. The TRIGGER Action Plans provide plenty of examples which can be also used and adapted in the perspective of the mutual learning. Moreover, a quite large array of tools to be used for communicating (including reports and documents, direct contacts, information desks, media campaigns, meetings, social events, newsletters, networking activities, web-based communication) are also described in the Guidelines for Gender Equality Programmes in Science developed in the framework of the PRAGES project (2009).

4. Transition (M43 → M48)

The **transition** phase will test, in the last six months of the project, the new arrangements which have been devised and formalised in the sustainability plan. Transition, from the sociological point of view, is the crucial moment when all the hypotheses developed through the different approaches (the analytical approach, the negotiation approach, etc.) will be put to the test. In the transition phase, indeed, **it will become clear if a durable process of structural change has been activated** or not.

Even though transitional arrangements will have the chance to be tested even in advance for some actions (some have already been institutionalised or are close to institutionalisation), **anticipating the new organisational and institutional setup** intended to replace the old one **while the project is still ongoing** would provide important clues – when there is still some time to take action – of what will likely happen in the future.

It is difficult to establish now which features will characterise the phase. Such features will be defined in the design phase and will be specific to each partner.

What we may say here is that its approach will be unavoidably based on the **project cycle management**, being the transition phase essentially aimed at launching what can be considered a new project, or at least a coordinated set of actions to be continued beyond the TRIGGER life span.

Of the project cycle management, we can limit ourselves to dwell upon **three specific aspects** which, in view of testing sustainability, will surely play a particularly relevant role:

- Monitoring (4.1.);
- Evaluation (4.2.);
- Redesign (4.3.).

4.1. Monitoring

In the context of project cycle management, monitoring represents a key management tool, aimed at maintaining control over the level of accomplishment of the activities so as to timely react to unexpected problems.

However, monitoring is even more crucial in the transition phase of complex programmes as the TRIGGER Action Plans, to secure the results of the structural

change effort. As it is stressed in the already cited document of the European Commission on structural change (European Commission, 2009), **only the monitoring of the newly-introduced gender policy will guarantee its long-lasting effect.**

In the transition phase, indeed, in addition to its ordinary control function, monitoring also serves the pivotal function of providing **feedback** useful to anticipate what will happen when the staff or the unit(s) in charge of the various actions will act **without the support of the resources provided by the European Commission** (funding, staff, institutional framing).

Therefore, monitoring should not limit itself to ensure the correspondence between the plan and the activities, but it should be aimed at collecting **work-in-progress information** about the possibilities of the actions to effectively go on, and about the capacity of the staff, as well as of the institution at large, to autonomously manage and develop them in the future. **Specific issues to monitor** also emerge. **Coordination mechanisms** among the different units carrying out different parts of the former Action Plan will be for example particularly important.

To a certain extent, monitoring should be considered, particularly in this phase, not only as a **management tool**, but also as a **research tool** aiming to understand the present but above all the future of the project.

Hence the suggestion to occasionally **couple monitoring tools** (e.g. monitoring sessions, monitoring check-lists, flowcharts, time schedules, etc.) **with research tools** (interviews, focus groups, etc.), allowing to collect additional elements about possible future developments of the project, so to be able **to adapt the design.**

4.2. Evaluation

Similar considerations should be made for **evaluation**, which is another key component of the project cycle management approach.

Evaluation is usually defined as a periodic assessment of some key features of a project along a **set of dimensions** (efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance, etc.). Among these, there is also sustainability, conventionally defined to the aim of evaluation as the capacity or the likelihood that a project will continue operating, or will still produce some of its benefits, after the period of external support has ended.

However, in this case, the transition phase is a sustainability test performed while the TRIGGER project is still ongoing. Evaluation should anyway be performed

as if the external support was already over. In other words, the object of the evaluation will not only be the project or the actions in themselves, but the functioning of their sustainability arrangements.

In this perspective, even though verifying the quality of the actions carried out will remain important, it will be much more significant to **verify the quality of the institutional arrangements and organisational solutions** adopted and **their capacity to last for a long time.** In this sense, a particular weight will be awarded in the evaluation to aspects such as the **capacity and motivation of the individuals** in charge of the project or parts of it, the actual **commitment of the institution** to support them, the actual **involvement and capacity of the partners**, the quality of the **climate within the staff**, the **consensus** level within the organisation on the actions performed or the participation level and **sense of ownership** expressed by stakeholders and beneficiaries.

4.3. Redesign

A third component of the project cycle management deserving a particular attention in a sustainability perspective is the **redesign process** of the project.

Usually, redesigning consists of introducing modifications in the project structure or in the work plan on the basis of the output of evaluation. This implies that the staff and the organisational unit(s) entrusted for implementation will be able to keep a daily control over them and to devise appropriate strategies in order to pursue the established objectives over the time.

In our case, the capacity of the staff and the concerned organisational unit(s) to ensure such functions and to develop new strategies **cannot be taken for granted.** This is the reason why the scope of the redesign process will be wider, including, not only modifications of individual actions, but also changes in the institutional set-up, staff composition, tasks assignment, procedures and tools adopted, training inputs and the like.

The output of the redesign process will be the **update of the sustainability plan**, in the light of the feedback received from monitoring and evaluation during the transition phase.

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