

**Interreg**



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# TOWARDS A GENDER BALANCED NPA



region  
västerbotten

# Why should you strive for gender balance?

The European Union has committed to achieve gender-equal Europe by 2025. All Interreg NPA projects shall ensure equality between men and women during the planning, leading, and in all projects' activities. Additionally, the project must ensure that perspectives and interests of all the genders are considered in all project phases and in all its products or services.

This guide is designed to **inspire** you and **motivate** you to implement new working practices that will help your project to equalize the gender balance in project activities, meetings, or in the project leadership, and to break gender stereotypes.

Striving for gender equality? Ask yourself and your project team a question:

**How will your project ensure that both genders are equally represented in your project? And more important, what will you do to involve the gender that is underrepresented in the project's activities and implementation?**

The cover picture has been taken at **Interreg NPA Annual Conference "NORTHERN SKILLS, Navigating future NPA"** in Skellefteå, Sweden on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The picture shows the communication manager of DACCHE project and the former president of Nordic Youth Council, permanent observer at Interreg NPA Monitoring Committee meetings.

Photo credit: Patrick Trägårdh.



## Adopt the Code of Conduct

In its publication, [Women in European Cooperation projects](#), ERNACT team discovered that 58% of (mostly) female respondents experienced sexism or gender bias/discrimination during EU project meeting. Additionally, 48% experienced rude, unprofessional, or offensive language or behaviors in the working environment. As one of the solutions, ERNACT team suggested to its project partnerships to sign a “Code of Conduct” at the beginning of the project. An example of how such a Code of Conduct can look like can be found in the final pages of the above-mentioned publication.

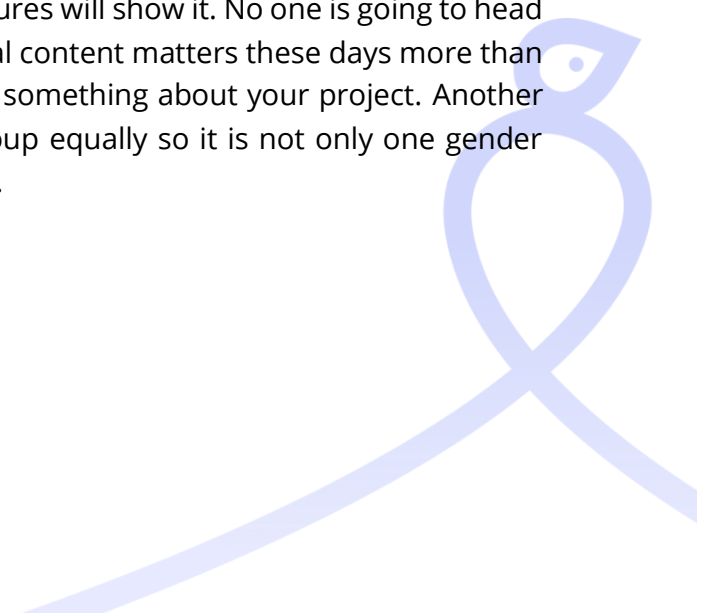
## Gender balance at all levels and in all activities

Look at your Board members or a Steering Committee. Do you see both men and women? Do you see young people represented? What about the leaders of the work packages, who do you see and how old are they? Consider what can you do, to bring more men/women/youth to these positions.

As for the project activities and events, find the relevant audience that would benefit the most from your project, but take an extra step and try to get to the gender balance as close as possible. A good practice is to have both men and women as speakers at events, workshops, webinars etc. Also, your audience should be as balanced if possible. If the 50:50 balance is not possible, anything close to that counts!

## Who do you see in the pictures?

Better than reading about gender equality is to show it! When taking group or event pictures, or making videos, remember to capture both men and women. If you considered gender balance already in the planning phase, then the pictures will show it. No one is going to head count who is in the picture but remember that visual content matters these days more than in the past and what you show in the pictures tells something about your project. Another important aspect to keep in mind is to mix the group equally so it is not only one gender standing in the front, but people are well combined.



## Lead by example

If you want to “walk the way”, be the example that inspires others. Share your stories how you found women in engineering fields or fishing industry, or male nurses! Show everyone that you took that extra step and that it was worthy. If in doubt about how to reach certain underrepresented groups, reach out to Interreg NPA [Regional Contact Points](#) or [Interreg NPA secretariat!](#)

**If you have any other suggestions or best practices,  
please contact the JS Secretariat and we will add them to  
the list.**

