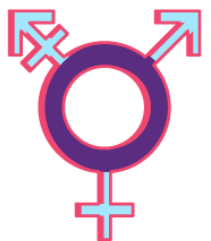




SUPPORTER

**Roadmap towards the
development of a 4I-GEP,
National Sports Academy
“Vassil Levski” (NSA)**



The first version of the NSA roadmap

This document is the first version of the National Sports Academy “Vassil Levski” (NSA) to develop an inclusive, innovative, intersectional and impactful gender equality plan (4I-GEP). It has been developed within the context of their participation in the SUPPORTER project by the UL team, with the support of SUPPORTER’s expert partners. The full text, as well as other partners’ roadmaps, are to be found in SUPPORTER’s deliverable: [D4.1 Report on the design of the institutional roadmaps.](#)

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Introduction

The SUPPORTER project aims to foster gender-related, **sustainable**, and **transformative** institutional changes in sports higher education institutions paying specific attention to the challenge of **gender-based violence and leading to the development of inclusive, innovative, intersectional and impactful gender equality plans (4I-GEPs)**.

The transformation of existing institutional GEPs into 4I-GEPs is achieved through the co-design and implementation of individual roadmaps, tailored to the needs of each implementing organisation.

This document outlines the development and implementation of the roadmap of the National Sports Academy “Vassil Levski” (NSA) within the SUPPORTER project. **It describes the grounding actions to be taken and the individual steps to be followed.**

The NSA roadmap encompasses a set of Grounding Actions (GAs) to be implemented from March 2024 to June 2025. These actions address mandatory and recommended thematic GEP elements ([Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans](#)) under-addressed in the IO's existing institutional GEP. Critical challenges, including engagement and participation barriers in implementing the roadmaps, resource limitations and organisational resistance, have been identified, alongside measures to effectively address them.

This roadmap represents a tailored strategy, responsive to the unique needs and opportunities within NSA, structured in a set of Grounding Actions which are going to be carried out within a 16-month implementation period (March 2024 – June 2025). It is crucial to emphasise that, while carefully designed, the roadmap is a living document, likely to undergo several adjustments to effectively address evolving challenges and time constraints and feedback gathered during the organisation of the planned activities. This shall ensure that the roadmap remains relevant and conducive to transformative change through the development, at the end of this period, of the new 4I-GEPs.

Development of institutional roadmaps

A roadmap is a detailed document that sets the steps and actions (a.k.a grounding actions) necessary to achieve institutional changes into a common strategic framework and timeframe and has the key features of being flexible and progressive.

In the context of SUPPORTER, a roadmap provides a clear and detailed plan of grounding actions that will foster the institutional changes needed to pave the way for the development of the 4I-GEP.

After national and institutional mapping and self-assessment of the existing GEP and institutional policies, the NSA team co-designed their roadmap with their internal stakeholders and the support of the SUPPORTER mentoring team from December 2023 to March 2024. This participatory approach ensured that the roadmap addressed specific problems in the institution and tailored it to the needs of sports higher education.

Steps

The co-design of the institutional roadmaps consisted of five steps:

1. Launch of the co-design process: The roadmap concept, as well as the scope and objectives of institutional roadmaps, were introduced to the NSA.
2. Internal consultation process: Meetings were held with different types of internal stakeholders in a consultation process that led to the first draft of the institutional roadmaps
3. Consultation with the mentoring team: NSA participated in consultation meetings with the mentoring team, which consisted of consortium experts.
4. Internal review process: NSA reviewed the roadmap internally to address any previously identified challenges and gaps.
5. Finalization of the roadmap.

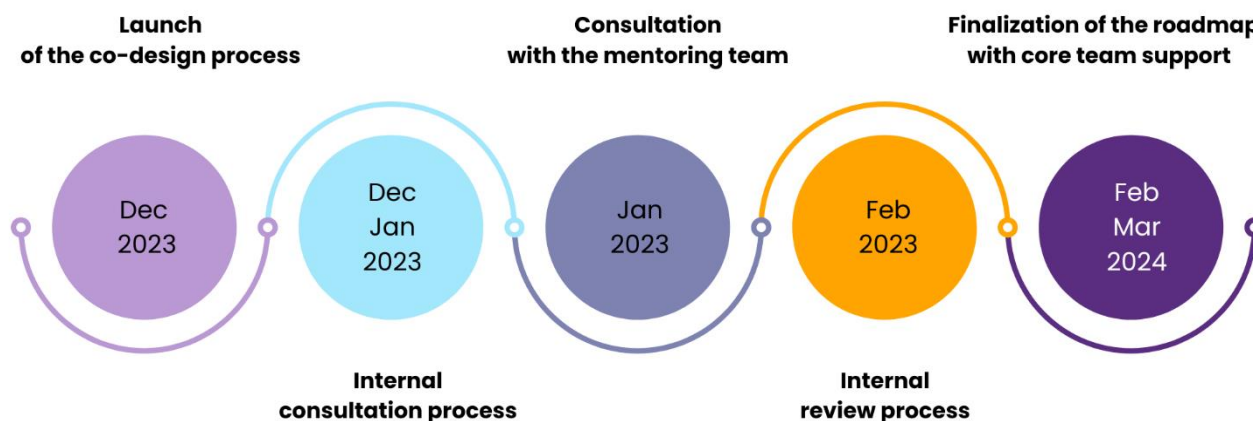


Figure 1 – Steps to co-design partners' roadmaps within SUPPORTER

NSA: The organisation

The National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski" is a higher education institution specialising in sports, sport-related specialities and physical education. The university is accredited by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency for delivering programs at the three levels – Bachelor, master and Doctor. NSA trains students in its three faculties – Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Sport and Faculty of Health Care and Social Health. The Academy was established in 1942. At present, there are 3500 students (men and women) and 450 teachers (habilitated lecturers and practitioners). Coaches in 68 types of sports are trained in the Academy. The Faculty of Pedagogy prepares specialists for the school system, extra-curricular sports in schools, sports for adults, adapted PE and sport. The Faculty of Health Care and Social Health prepares kinesitherapists, leisure time sports coaches and nurses. NSA has introduced Bologna principles since the adoption of the Bologna Declaration and its programs are in compliance with tools such as ECTS, Diploma Supplement, mobility recognition, student participation in decision making etc. NSA participates in Erasmus+ exchanges as well as in different projects and partnerships. Representatives of the National Sports Academy participate in committees of the main European NGOs related to sports, sports employment and athletes' rights within sports integrity.

Gender equality in NSA

Public document

NSA rules regarding GEP were accepted by the Rectors board on the 5th of September 2022. The act is registered in the written protocol from the Rectors board meeting. It is communicated through the official institutional website and is available at:

<https://www.nsa.bg/bg/page,1632>

Points for improvement: To extend this regulation beyond the research activities; to extend this regulation to a larger target group, including not only the academic but also administrative staff and the students.

Roadmap towards the development of a 4I-GEP

The context

In Bulgaria, the legislation does not allow gender discrimination in any social and labour area. Anti-discrimination provisions are entered into every law related to the personal and social life and work activities of citizens. Academic life is mainly regulated by the Law on Higher Education, the Law on the Development of Academic Staff and other normative documents. Although the issue of gender equality is settled at the legislative level, including in university and research organisations, there are still identified weaknesses that should be overcome.

Specifically, in the context of the National Sports Academy, several main weaknesses can be noted:

- lack of emphasis related to gender balance in institutional policy; despite the presence of an anti-discrimination text in the university regulations, there is a lack of a strategic position on how to ensure compliance with this requirement

- there are no defined rules and procedures regarding monitoring and evaluation of gender equality and equal opportunities in academic and administrative environments
- lack of a scientific and statistical approach to reflect the situation, newly emerging views and problems, new areas of risk of endangering gender equality, a scientific methodology for reporting the social and professional degree of compliance with this requirement
- lack of systematised opportunities for the academic staff and administrative personnel to express proposals and opinions to improve the conditions for gender equality
- lack of a specific requirement for the presence of the topic of gender equality in the educational content of the programs in relevant academic disciplines (the presence of discussions of this topic in the educational lectures and seminars is the result of a personal choice of the teachers, and not a requirement to fulfil an institutional strategy)
- lack of a system and action plan for maintaining an up-to-date level of awareness on this topic among the academic staff and the administration and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity; there is no decision for assigning responsibilities in this regard to specific teachers and employees
- there is no expressed position for balanced recruitment of female and male employees
- lack of a line of action to protect gender equality in the activities of trade union organisations in the academy
- there is no specific policy for increasing a balanced gender representation in university management bodies.

Aims and Objectives

The main goal of the strategic map being developed is to ensure systematicity, consistency and sustainability of the actions of the National Sports Academy to maintain and develop gender balance in the overall environment.

The overall aim will be supported by several specific objectives:

1. purposeful understanding and definition of sports education as a specific area to ensure equality of women and men, reflecting the conclusions in all areas of education and science
2. Provide regular, accurate and accessible information on the observance of gender rights for the purposes of taking relevant regulatory measures combating discrimination
3. creating visibility of the management stance on zero-tolerance concerning any kind of violation of gender equality and fully assisting the reactions to all proven cases of gender-based violence
4. establishing an image of a sports academic community where intolerance of gender-based violence and violation of the rights of faculty, staff and students is a core characteristic
5. creation of a permanent and active information environment (training events, self-study, discussions) for developing intolerance of gender-based violence and violation of the rights of faculty, staff and students among the core ethical norms of the academy
6. establishing specific bodies with responsibilities to ensure scientific analyses, measure impact and propose innovative steps in the implementation of the gender balance strategy.

Structure of the roadmap

<i>Period of implementation</i>	<i>Grounding actions/Action lines</i>	<i>GEP element</i>
PROJECT PERIOD	<i>GA1 – Building a Communication & Networking Policy</i>	Training Dedicated resources Work-life balance and organisational culture
	<i>GA2 – Raising Awareness on Gender+ Equality and Inequalities in Sports Environments</i>	Training Work-life balance and organisational culture
	<i>GA3 – Establishing a Commission for Implementation of the GEP along with Rules for its functioning</i>	Dedicated resources Public document
	<i>GA4 – Needs Assessment and Analysis</i>	Data collection and monitoring
	<i>GA5 – Creating a gender equality database</i>	Data collection and monitoring
	<i>GA6 – Raising awareness on GBV and sexual harassment in sports environment with internal and external stakeholders</i>	Training Measures against GBV
	<i>GA7 – Use of Inclusive Language in Institutional Documents</i>	Work-life balance and organisational culture Gender dimension in research and teaching
	<i>GA8 – Integrating Gender in the Curriculum</i>	Gender dimension in research and teaching
4I – GEP IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	To be developed at the end of the SUPPORTER project, based on the lessons learnt from the roadmaps and the newly developed 4I-GEP of the institution.	
SUSTAINABILITY PERIOD		

The Grounding Actions

A set of eight Grounding Actions are envisaged to achieve the purposes of this roadmap and pave the way towards the development of a new, 4I-GEP, which will be sports-specific and place emphasis on addressing gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Each of these dimensions is comprehensively addressed by the different actions comprising the roadmap, as depicted in the following table.

Dimension	GA1	GA2	GA3	GA4	GA5	GA6
<i>Intersectional</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Innovative</i>	x	x		x		
<i>Inclusive</i>			x	x	x	x
<i>Impactful</i>	x	x		x		x
<i>Tailored to sports</i>		x	x	x		x

GA1 – Building a Communication & Networking Policy

Building an effective communication policy and channels that cover the various dimensions of gender+ equality. Identification of external stakeholders at governmental, local and other university levels. Exchange of information and good practices. To create a dynamic and supportive ecosystem where everyone is actively involved in advancing gender equality, contributing to a workplace and academic environment that is equitable, inclusive, and respectful of diverse personalities and identities.

a. GEP element

Mandatory: Dedicated resources; Training and awareness-raising
Thematic: Work-life balance and organisational culture

b. Objectives

The aim of the "Communication and Networking" action within the GEP for the National Sports Academy is to cultivate a culture of awareness, collaboration, and support for gender equality. This initiative seeks to elevate understanding and engagement across all stakeholders, including students, faculty, coaches, and external partners. Through effective communication channels and networking opportunities, the goal is to build a supportive community that values diversity and fosters an environment where every individual feels empowered to contribute to gender equality efforts. Additionally, the action aims to address concerns through open communication and organise networking events that bring together diverse voices from the sports community. Ultimately, the aim is to create a positive and inclusive organisational culture where gender equality is integral to the identity of the NSA, promoting an environment free from gender-based discrimination. Contribute to building a positive organisational and institutional culture that values gender equality as an integral part of its identity.

c. Implementation plan

1.1 Identifying key internal (within the university, including students, faculty, administrative staff, and alumni) and external stakeholders.

1.2 Defining the communication strategy objectives, tools and task allocation

1.3 Developing communication strategy, including the establishment of regular channels, such as email exchanges, university events, seminars, and departmental meetings, to update stakeholders on GEP progress and initiatives in the Academy and vice versa – the external stakeholders to raise awareness of current issues and national specifics. The communication strategy should be aligned with the university's academic environment to engage these stakeholders effectively.

1.4 Seeking approval for the finalised communication strategy (if necessary)

d. Stakeholders involved

Internal: Besides the main team, there are a number of stakeholders that will be involved in this action. The project team will communicate with the Academic Ethics Commission, Complaints Commission, and the Students Council. There will be a second circle of communication with key persons: The Rector, the Assistant Rector, the Administrative Director, the Legal Advisor, the President of the Student Council, The Deans of the three Faculties, the heads for attestation (every department has a trusted person who is monitoring the academic development).

External: the project team, succeeded by the Gender Equality Commission upon its creation, needs to create a network with the Equal Opportunities, Anti-Discrimination and Social Assistance Unit (EADSU) in the Disability, Equal Opportunities and Social Assistance Policy Directorate (PDEASP) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Unit is also the secretariat of the National Council for Equality between Women and Men of the Council of Ministers. The gender equality coordinator of the regional municipality of Sofia will also be invited to the network. Important stakeholders in the network will be the related NGOs like "The Centre for Women's Studies and Policies", "Animus", etc.

e. Potential obstacles

1. Our institution has strong traditions and cultural norms. Overcoming ingrained stereotypes and traditional gender roles may be challenging.
2. Choosing the right communication channels and ensuring their effectiveness can be challenging. Some stakeholders, both internal and external may not be reached through traditional channels, requiring innovative approaches or top-down approach.
3. Limited human resources and work overload may hinder the implementation of comprehensive communication strategies or the organisation of impactful networking events.

f. Timeline

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible actor</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Required resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1.1 Identifying key stakeholders	Rector Project team	Map of names	Human resources	March – April 2024

1.2 Defining objectives, tools and tasks	Project team Academic Ethics Commission PR Communications department	Outline of the communication strategy	Human resources	April – May 2024
1.3 Development of communication strategy, including communication channels	Project team Rector's board Communications department	Communication strategy document Timetable of events Regular report	Human resources Consultation time Communication tools	May – June 2024
1.4 Seeking approval	Rector's board	Approved strategy	Human resources	June 2024

GA2 – Raising Awareness on Gender+ Equality and Inequalities in Sports Environments

GA2 is focused on raising awareness activities on gender equality and understanding of gender issues, stereotypes and biases in the academic sport environment.

a. GEP element

Mandatory: Training and awareness-raising

b. Objectives

- To get the topic of gender equality on the organisation's/faculty's agenda
- To promote a uniform understanding of the concept of gender equality in higher education
- To integrate discussions on unconscious bias, stereotypes, and the implications of gender inequality on individuals and the broader sports community.

c. Implementation plan

2.1 Setting up a working team (incl. academics, students and/or staff) and clearly allocating tasks

2.2 Developing the scheme (Define objectives, target audience, timeframe and budget, activities and desired outcome)

2.3 Designing the material (define appropriate channels, create the visuals)

2.4 Finalising the material and seeking approval (if necessary)

2.5 Implementing the activities. These may include: Social media campaigns for commemorating international days associated with gender equality, such as International Women's Day, through the organisation of special events that emphasise the significance of gender inclusivity in the sports arena; Targeted campus events for academic/admin staff and students, one local stakeholder event for external stakeholders)

2.6 Evaluating impact and suggestions for future relaunch

d. Stakeholders involved

Co-producing: Project team, PR, Student and staff representatives

Only consulting: Academic Ethics Commission, mid-level management, external consultants

Only informing: High-level management, external stakeholders

e. Potential obstacles

Some individuals within the university community, including faculty, staff, and students, may resist changes in the traditional norms and practices related to gender roles and equality. This could result in vague interest towards the planned events. Deep-seated stereotypes and prejudices related to gender roles in sports may hinder the acceptance of gender equality initiatives. Overcoming these ingrained beliefs can be a significant challenge. The sports university's culture among students may present barriers to the successful implementation of gender equality initiatives. Ensuring active participation and engagement from both students and staff in awareness activities can be a challenge. Apathy or disinterest may hinder the impact of the initiatives.

f. Timeline

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible actor</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Required resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
2.1 Setting up the working team	Project team PR Student/staff representatives	List of team members	Human resources	March – April 2024
2.2 Develop an awareness-raising scheme	Working team	Detailed plan	Human resources	April – May 2024
2.3 Design the awareness-raising scheme	Working team Department for multimedia	Communication material Material for the awareness-raising activities	Multimedia tools Human resources	May – June 2024
2.4 Finalise and seek approval	Working team Rector's board	Approved campaign	Human resources	June 2024
2.5 Launch the activities: Organising informational sessions and workshops. Incl. Local stakeholder event	Working team	No. of planned events No. of participants Feedback from participants.	Communication platforms Multimedia tools and Human resources	June – October 2024
2.6 Evaluating impact	Working team	Increased knowledge through pre/post workshop questionnaire	Human resources	October 2024 – November 2024

Satisfaction of
participants in feedback
forms

Number of
posts/reactions in
social media

GA3 – Establishing a Commission for Implementation of the GEP along with Rules for its functioning

This activity will mark the beginning of a public expression of the gender equality policy at the National Sports Academy - Sofia. In view of the current administrative structure of the NSA, we will create a database with the available administrative units responsible for gender equality and the responsible persons in cases of gender violence or sexual assault.

The creation of a management capacity with the appointment of responsible persons by name of a collective body for the implementation of the equality policy will give a visible expression of the importance of this policy and give impetus to processes such as monitoring, reporting, training, etc. The commission will be established by order of the rector, which will commit the university management to this decision and to the acceptance of the activity at the highest level. On the other hand, the significance of the new Gender Equality Commission will be an independent body and not part of an already existing one (e.g. Academic Ethics Commission, Complaints Commission, etc.). This will allow the members of the commission to concentrate solely on the issues of gender equality and to develop expertise in a normative and practical aspect. The appointment of a Commission for ensuring gender equality will be combined with the development of rules for the functioning of this commission, which will be adopted by the Academic Council. The approval of this commission by the highest academic body will create recognition of the strategic intentions of management for the sustainable implementation of gender equality policy in the academic and administrative environments.

a. GEP element

Mandatory. Dedicated resources; Public document.

b. Objectives

This action corresponds to one of the basic GEP requirements – it will be publicly available, the Commission's members will be known, the results of their activities will be monitored and publicly available. The Commission will be appointed, and its work will be received by the top management of the university. As such the established Commission will rely on commitment of dedicated resources and gender expertise to implement the GEP. Commission's members will be purposefully qualified and will keep an archive of data and monitoring/evaluation reports. The Commission for ensuring gender equality will respond to the need of more awareness, developed procedures, correspondence of the procedures to the national and European requirements, training events and personal attitude in case of the equality rights infringement.

This action aims to create a set of commitments and actions that will promote gender equality in the organisation (NSA) through a process of structural change.

Specific objectives:

- to create an administrative body in the institution to be responsible for cases of gender discrimination, gender violence, and sexual assault.
- To increase gender expertise within the faculty, with a focus on gender issues in sports environments
- To establish accountability for the implementation and update of the 4I-GEP within the institution/faculty
- To ensure clear task allocation and smooth cooperation among institutional bodies with a similar mandate
- To raise the awareness of academic and non-academic staff, students and young scientists in the NSA on issues of gender inequality, gender rights and the legal rights of every person in this regard.
- To launch structural changes and establish institutional capacity
- To start strategic and policy development with continuity in strategic periods
- To create a degree of understanding and support for the implementation of these policies among the entire academic community
- To ensure the institution's contribution to pan-European social transformation regarding gender equality
- To ensure sustainable transformation in the overall strategic framework

c. Implementation plan

The activity of creating a Commission for ensuring gender equality is long-term and related to a comprehensive academic commitment.

The activity expects to achieve visibility of the problem, demonstrate the determination of the institution's management to maintain a policy of gender equality, involve the entire composition of the academy in dealing with current problems and future challenges, create an example for the younger generation of students for an uncompromising position on the rights of equality in a working environment, in team relationships, in a public national and European framework.

This activity includes the following stages:

3.1 Informing the academic community about the presence of a focus on gender equality in the institutional vision, the need to create organisational capacity and the open possibility of proposing committee members

3.2 Formulation of criteria for selection of candidates for inclusion as members in the commission; these criteria will be consistent with the functions and role of the commission, as well as with the need for the members to benefit from the collective trust

3.3 Determining the members of the Commission based on submitted applications and a conversation with the approved candidates; the Commission will be institutionalised by an order of the Rector and will have a mandate, the duration of which will be decided during the implementation of the activity

3.4 Define the mandate of the Commission: Developing rules for the Commission's activity, as well as defining its connections and relations with other bodies related to academic ethics and the institution's relations with external organisations and policies; the rules of activity of the Commission

for ensuring gender equality will be voted on by the Academic Council. The Commission will be the first step for establishing structures within the field of research and innovation (R&I) to combat and reduce gender imbalances and inequalities. The functions of the Commission will include the development of a training plan for academic staff and employees, which will be tailored to previously identified needs; in view of this, emerging new challenges will be formulated, as well as the overcoming of previous challenges to gender equality in academia will be assessed.

3.5 Identifying training needs of the Commission members on gender+ equality through discussion with GE experts

3.6 Delivery of training for the Commission members according to identified needs

3.7 Meeting of the Commission with relevant institutional bodies to communicate their role and discuss effective ways for collaboration

The main indicators (but not the only ones) that will report the successful progress of the activity will be:

To achieve the goals and results of this activity, both internal resources will be used - teachers who have experience in developing this topic, literature and Internet accessible resources, as well as external expertise - specialists and lecturers from state institutions with leading responsibility for the development of state equality policy and colleagues from other academic institutions who have better experience in establishing equality measures.

In addition to the available resources of researchers and technology, the implementation of the policy to create internal capacity to maintain gender balance and equality will also rely on project activity through developed projects in the fields of education, science, citizens' rights, culture and sports.

The work of the Commission will be visibly considered when evaluating the quality of work of the National Sports Academy. The evaluation of the committee members, as well as the overall achievements of the committee, will be part of the internal evaluation of the academy.

d. Stakeholders involved

Institutionally, the following will be interested in this activity, as well as actively participating in the implementation: the governing bodies of the administration - rector and rector's council, academic council, student council, deans and heads of departments. In the communication of the National Sports Academy outside the institution, the main state bodies will be addressed - the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Scientific Research Fund, the Directorate of Structural Funds at the MES, National Statistics Institute main non-governmental organisations that support the development of equality policy, international organisations.

There will be different levels of participation and support by the stakeholders:

- Level of assistance in training events
- Level of information supply by the governmental institutions
- Level of cooperative work with other academic institutions
- Level of partnership co-working in project frameworks

e. Potential obstacles

There exist some obstacles that should be envisaged and responses should be planned in order not to stop the process of implementation and sustainability achievement:

- categorical conviction on the part of the academic staff that there is no need for measures to change the gender culture in the institution

Measure: starting with information materials and discussions on the topic

- lack of broad and in-depth knowledge of European gender equality policy

Measure: discussions with experts and law specialists to gain an equal understanding

- lack of systematic approach to tackle the interrelated sub-activities

Measure: coordinated schedule for launching the main training events and the procedure for Commission members' appointment

- lack of holistic approach and focus only on R&D gender equality

Measure: inclusion of representatives from all circles of the academic community in the commission work

f. Timeline

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible actor</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Required resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
3.1 Informing the academic community	Rector's Council	Achieved satisfactory awareness level	PR expert Experts for IR	March – October 2024
3.2 Formulation of selection criteria	International Relations Office Legal Department	Acceptable criteria for commission's selection	Internal information Available EU publications	September – November 2024
3.3 Recruitment of Commission members	Legal Department	Choice of three or five broadly trusted commission's members	Human Resources Experts preparing amendment on their duties and functions	September – November 2024
3.4 Developing the mandate	Head of main academic units	Document with Commission's mandate Established internal structures and capacity pool	Human resources	September – December 2024
3.5 Identifying training needs	Ethics Commission GE Commission	Report on knowledge gaps	Human resources External expertise	November –

	Internal/ external experts	after meeting with GE experts		December 2024
3.6 Training of Commission members	Ethics Commission GE Commission Internal/ external experts	Training material Increased knowledge	Human resources	January – March 2025
3.7 Internal and external communication of the Commission’s creation and mandate	GE Commission Head of main academic units Deans and Head of Departments	Satisfactory degree of internal communication	Institutional departments (heads and active department members) Communicators with external stakeholders	January – February 2025

GA4 – Needs Assessment and Analysis

Analysing the current situation and drawing up proposals for optimising the existing legal and institutional framework and units.

Will provide an opportunity to define the content and monitoring elements of the institutional needs analysis, annual performance measurement and new GEP areas of priority. Outsource the collection of data and include the results as part of the institution's internal quality and performance report.

a. GEP element

Mandatory: Data collection and monitoring

b. Objectives

To date statistical information on gender balance is presented at the national level every three months to the NACID (National Information and Documentation Centre). This action aims to generate information regarding the institution’s state-of-play, including perceptions on gender equality, and to determine relevant needs and areas of priority. This will lead to highlighting activities that will sustainably spread and promote gender equality in the organisation through good practices.

c. Implementation plan

The activity of generating and disseminating information and data on needs requires the active participation of the Commission and the Director of Administration and Business, and the overall commitment of all units in the organisation.

The activity expects to achieve sustainable awareness in the organisation and maintain a gender equality policy in the work environment, in line with the national and European framework.

This activity includes the following stages:

4.1 Identification of responsible organisers for the implementation of the activity

4.2 Identify suitable methods to collect and analyse data: interviews, surveys, focus groups; for a higher degree of trust in the institution, some of these mechanisms will be tailored to the necessary anonymity. Determining information parameters for conducting interviews and developing surveys (questionnaires) in accordance with academic ethics and the institution's relations with external organisations and policies; Coordination of the proposals for information parameters with the academic leadership, human resources and the lawyer of the organisation

4.3 Developing data collection tools (i.e. interview/focus group guide, questionnaires etc.)

4.4 Recruitment procedure: Inform the units of the organisation about the existence of a gender focus in the institutional vision, the need to generate and analyse information.

4.5 Conduct the data collection procedures (e.g. to determine views, preferences and viewpoints of awareness of gender equality in the units of the institution, focus groups will be formed, which will support the development of ideas, priorities and opportunities for sharing and developing specific proposals.

4.6 Analysis of the information generated and identifying areas of priority to focus on in the updated 4I-GEP

The main indicators that will report on the successful progress of the activity will be:

- percentage of faculty, students, and staff who would participate in interviews, surveys, focus groups, and open discussions for awareness and analysis of gender equality at the institution
- the level of awareness of gender equality among academic staff;
- degree of awareness of gender equality on the part of students;
- degree of awareness of gender equality on the part of administrative staff;
- increase in the number of initiatives related to GEP compared to the original statistics
- improving the level of awareness of European policies on gender equality and gender-based violence among faculty, students, and staff.

In order to achieve the aims and outcomes of this activity, both internal resources - academics with expertise in the subject, literature and internet resources - and external expertise - specialists from government institutions with lead responsibility for the development of government equality policy and colleagues from other academic institutions who have better experience of developing equality measures - will be used.

The information will be visibly reported on in assessing the quality of the National Sports Academy's work.

d. Stakeholders involved

Institutionally, besides the project team, the following will be interested in this activity and will be actively involved in its implementation: the governing bodies of the administration - Director of Administrative and Business Affairs, Academic Council, Student Council, Deans and Heads of Departments. In the communication of the National Sports Academy outside the institution, the main state bodies will be addressed - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Education and Science, National Statistical Institute.

There will be different levels of stakeholder involvement and support:

- level of assistance in conducting surveys

- a level of assistance in organising focus groups for discussions
- level of cooperation with other academic institutions
- level of peer collaboration in projects

e. Potential obstacles

There are some obstacles that need to be anticipated and a response planned to avoid halting the implementation process and achieving sustainability:

- Overcoming ingrained stereotypes and conviction of academic staff, administration and students that there is no need for needs analysis surveys and a gender database.

Measure: start with information materials and discussions on the topic

- Reluctance to participate openly in research through interviews and surveys

Measure: ensuring anonymity of respondents

- Lack of a systematic approach to address interrelated sub-activities

Measure: coordinated timetable for launching activities

f. Timeline

Activity	Responsible actor	Success criteria	Required resources	Timeline
4.1 Identification of organisers	Project team	Allocation of responsibilities	Human resources	September 2024
4.2 Identifying data collection and analysis methods	Project team Academic Ethics Commission	Methodological plan (actions and content defined) Timetable of events	Human resources Consultation time with experts	September 2024
4.3 Developing data collection tools	Project team Academic Ethics Commission	Interview guide and/or Questionnaire	Human resources Consultation time with experts	October – November 2024
4.4 Recruitment procedures	Project team HR Student Union Communications department	List of recruitment criteria The number of prospective respondents reached Recruitment methods/tools employed	Human resources Communication tools	December 2024

4.5 Data collection	Project team Gender Equality Commission Student Council External experts	Number of respondents/participants Number of interviews Feedback from personal meetings and focus groups	Human resources	January – February 2025
4.6 Data analysis and setting priorities	Project team GE Commission	Report on findings	Human resources	March 2025

GA5 – Creating a gender equality database

Based on the results of the previous GA, this action creates a database to make the gender audit and gender-related information publicly available and easily accessible to all units in the institutional structure.

a. GEP element

Mandatory: Data collection and monitoring

b. Objectives

This action aims to create and maintain a database of all the gender-related information in the NSA to construe a comprehensive image of the national and organisational regulatory framework, to consolidate understanding of the internal relevant structures, procedures and competent bodies and to draw attention to existing gender inequalities and the developed strategies to overcome them.

c. Implementation plan

5.1 Setting up a working team and allocating creative, operational, and content-related tasks on the gender database

5.2 Defining the purpose, content, and format of the database.

5.3 Compiling and reviewing existing sex-disaggregated data, relevant national legal and policy documents, and the organisation’s strategic and operational documents.

5.4 Designing the database for information on gender+ equality at the institutional level, which will be visually captivating, user-friendly, and institutionally available

5.5 Adding content and testing the database (functionality, interface, purpose-serving)

5.6 Launch of the database and dissemination.

d. Stakeholders involved

Gender Equality Committee, Communications Department, IT Department, Management, Students/Staff

e. Potential obstacles

- Internal resistance to acknowledge the need for such a database or the importance of increasing transparency on gender equality issues
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of appropriate technological equipment/expertise to create or maintain the database

f. Timeline

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible actor</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Required resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
5.1 Setting up a working team	Project team Gender Equality Commission Communications team IT team	Allocation of responsibilities	Human resources	January 2025
5.2 Defining the database’s purpose/content/format	Working team Management	Plan for the database	Human resources	January 2025
5.3 Compiling and reviewing existing data	Project team Gender Equality Commission	Compiled national laws and internal regulations	Human resources Consultation time with experts	February – March 2025
5.4 Designing the database	IT team Communications department	Developed database	Human resources Communication tools Software/Technological equipment	February – March 2025
5.5 Adding content and testing	Working team Staff/student representatives	Satisfaction level of functionality User-friendly interface Comprehensive content	Human resources	April 2025
5.6 Disseminating the launch of the database	Working team Communications department	Number of stakeholders reached (e.g. via emails)	Human resources	May – June 2025

Number of unique
visitors

Feedback requests
via emails

GA6 – Raising awareness on GBV and sexual harassment in sports environment with internal and external stakeholders

This GA develops and implements awareness-raising activities on GBV and sexual harassment in the sports environment and promotes existing achievements from the university level, but also at the local level by raising awareness of external stakeholders.

a. GEP element

Mandatory: Training

Thematic: Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

b. Objectives

- To increase understanding both of internal and of external stakeholders on the concept and forms of gender-based violence (physical, sexual, psychological, economic and financial, sexual harassment, online) in the sports context
- To create a safe environment and a culture of respect, equality and zero tolerance towards gender-based violence
- To introduce staff and students to the relevant regulatory framework and internal procedures in place (reporting and case management, support mechanisms) in a simple and comprehensive manner

c. Implementation plan

The following activities will be carried out to implement this Grounding Action:

6.1 Set up the working team (incl. students and/or staff, and a communication team to engage external stakeholders effectively)

6.2 Develop a comprehensive scheme (Define objectives and message, target audience, timeframe and budget, outline the campaign's activities and desired outcome)

6.3 Design the material for the planned activities (define appropriate channels, create the visuals, prepare the presentations)

6.4 Finalise the scheme and material and seek approval (if necessary)

6.5 Launch the awareness-raising activities. This may include one training event organised for staff and students and one introduction workshop organised for freshly enrolled students.

It will also include a local stakeholder event (e.g. in the form of an awareness day) to raise awareness of targeted external stakeholders such as sports clubs, trainers, associations, umbrella organisations, and public authorities.

6.6 Evaluate the scheme’s impact and explore the possibility of future relaunch

d. Stakeholders involved

Project team/Gender Equality Commission, Academic Ethics Commission, Student Union, Management, PR/Communications team. In the communication of the National Sports Academy outside the institution, some national sports federations will be involved, including the Bulgarian Olympic Committee, the governmental bodies responsible for the GEP implementation, and Labour Unions from the sectors of Sports and Higher education.

e. Potential obstacles

- Lack of interest/time of targeted stakeholders
- Lack of adequate resources (human resources, expertise, financial resources to engage external expertise)

f. Timeline

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible actor</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Required resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
6.1 Setting up the working team	Project team Communications team Students/Staff representatives	List of team members defined	Human resources	October 2024
6.2 Development of a comprehensive scheme	Working team	Document of the scheme, with a time plan of activities and budget	Human resources	October 2024
6.3 Design the material	Working team External experts	Complete material of the campaign	Software and communication tools Human resources	November – December 2024
6.4 Finalise and seek approval	Working team Rector’s Board	Official approval by the management	Human resources	December 2024
6.5 Launch the activities	Campaign team External experts	Number of planned activities Number of participants and profile of participants per activity Number of stakeholders reached via	The education or science budget of the NSA Classroom and venue for local event	January – May 2025

		communication activities		
6.6 Evaluate the impact and explore the possibility of future relaunch	Working team External experts	Increased knowledge of students, staff and external stakeholders on GBV and SH in sport environment, as well as on procedures and steps to follow in cases of GBV and SH Satisfaction of participants in feedback forms	Human resources	May – June 2025

GA7 – Use of Inclusive Language in Institutional Documents

This action is geared towards promoting inclusivity by revising documents, including academic policies, handbooks, and communication materials, to ensure that language is inclusive and embraces diversity. This promotes a sense of belonging for individuals of both genders within the sports university community.

- Development and supplementation of the existing regulations in the NSA, creation of new commissions and the appointment of responsible persons.
- Development of the existing lecture courses in NSA such as Sociology of Sport and Philosophy of Sport, Psychology of Sports etc. with new topics such as Violence, Gender and Sport. Gender stereotypes, sports, etc. Increasing the hours in these disciplines.

a. GEP element

Thematic: Work-life balance and organisational culture

b. Objectives

The aim of document revision and the application of inclusive and tolerant language is to foster a more inclusive and respectful academic environment within the sports academy.

The revision process aims to identify and rectify unintentional biases present in language that may perpetuate stereotypes or reinforce gender norms. It seeks to create a more neutral and equitable representation of individuals, irrespective of their identity, thus preventing unintended bias. Inclusive language fosters an atmosphere of tolerance by acknowledging and respecting diversity, contributing to a campus culture that values and celebrates individual differences, thereby encouraging tolerance. Through document revision, the NSA will set a positive example for students, faculty, and staff, fostering a more inclusive and tolerant academic community. Ensuring that institutional documents adhere to inclusive language principles aligns with broader national policies on diversity and inclusion, helping the NSA to meet or exceed regulatory and accreditation standards related to gender equality, and ensuring compliance with official policies.

c. Implementation plan

7.1 Collect and identify institutional documents and policies which are going to be reviewed

7.2 Review and Update of Documentation - Review and update existing institutional documents and policies to ensure they align with gender equality principles. The institutionalisation of gender equality is a guiding principle of the university’s mission and strategy.

7.3 Develop guidelines on inclusive language use that respects diverse identities in relation to the Bulgarian national policy and gender equality principles.

7.4 Encourage the use of inclusive language in all university communications, documentation, and official forms.

d. Stakeholders involved

A large number of representatives within the university administrative and academic structures will be involved in these GA –Besides the entire rector’s board, the main project team and the GE commission, the legal advisor, the HR director and the PR will be involved.

e. Potential obstacles

- Internal resistances
- Lack of time for document review
- Lack of expertise in inclusive language

f. Timeline

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible actor</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Required resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
7.1 Collect documents for review	Project team HR	List of documents for review and update	Human resources	October – November 2024
7.2 Review and update of documentation	Project team GE Commission Academic Ethics Commission	Revised documents and summary of updates	Human resources	December 2024 – February 2025
7.3 Develop guidelines for inclusive language use	Project team Ethical commission HR	Document of guidelines	Human resources	October – December 2024
7.4 Encourage inclusive language use	Project team GE Commission	Number of internal and external stakeholders reached via email,	Human resources	March-May 2025

PR/Communications department	social media posts/reactions, website visits
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GA8 – Integrating Gender in the Curriculum

Teaching: Conducting exercises and lectures with 1st and 4th-year students at the National Academy of Sports in the Philosophy of Sports and Sociology of Sports classes based on the results of the project.

a. GEP element

Thematic: Integration of gender dimension in the research and teaching content

b. Objectives

The objective of integrating gender equality into teaching is to cultivate a more inclusive and fair academic landscape. This involves infusing the ethos of gender equality into educational curricula across diverse disciplines. The purpose is to:

- **Elevate Awareness:** Heighten awareness among students, faculty, and researchers regarding the crucial significance of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion within their specific areas of study.
- **Challenge Assumptions:** Confront and dismantle gender stereotypes and biases embedded in academic content, ensuring that teaching materials and research methodologies are devoid of discriminatory elements.
- **Cultivate Inclusive Learning:** Establish a learning environment that is not only inclusive but also supportive of all genders, offering equal opportunities for academic success, irrespective of gender identity.
- **Shape Future Advocates:** Equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to become advocates for gender equality in their future careers, whether within academia or other professional realms.
- **Exemplify Role Models:** Highlight and celebrate accomplishments of individuals from all genders in academia, serving as inspirations and challenging stereotypes surrounding gender and academic achievement.
- **Advocate for Inclusive Policies:** Champion and implement policies that uphold gender equality within academic institutions, fostering an environment that acknowledges and celebrates diversity and inclusion.

Through the integration of gender equality into teaching, the National Sports Academy will contribute to the creation of a more equitable society, preparing students to be informed, conscious, and proactive contributors to a world of sport that values individuals and respects their human rights for access to sport.

This GA will be linked to the three important strategic points of the NSA – quality of education, internationalisation and excellence in research.

c. Implementation plan

8.1 Review the curriculum and identify gender-related topics in existing modules and gaps

8.2 Define sports-specific contents that address gender-related issues, including historical inequalities, opportunities, and challenges in each sport. Each sports module should entail a reference to gender equality and persistent stereotypes.

8.3 Incorporate case studies that highlight the achievements and challenges faced by athletes of both genders in various sports. Showcase examples of successful female athletes and their impact on the sports landscape. These examples would be with a strong emphasis on those sports which are considered “male” sports. Showcase examples of successful male coaches in traditional “female” sports.

Although traditionally, our curriculum is tailored to the specific nature of each sport taught in our Academy; we must ensure that our students will gain a deeper understanding of the gender dynamics within their chosen discipline and contribute to fostering a more inclusive sports culture.

8.4 Finalise the new curriculum and submit it for approval

8.5 Communicate the integration of the gender dimension in academic teaching.

d. Stakeholders involved

A large number of representatives within the university community will be involved in these GA – The education supervisors and module teachers in each department, the directors of the different centres in NSA, the Deans, The rector's board, and in particular, the Vice-rector for Education and the Vice-rector for Research. The steering will be the project team and the GE commission in collaboration with the Ethical Commission. The key role in the promotion of research topics will be the Directors of the different master's programs.

e. Potential obstacles

As modernisation of teaching and encouraging research are among the milestones of NSA, no obstacles are foreseen for these GA, besides lack of staff time.

f. Timeline

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible actor</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Required resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
8.1 Review of curriculum	Project team GE commission Vice-rector for education	Report on existing relevant topics and suggestions	Human resources	January 2025
8.2 Discuss and define new topics/methods	Project team GE commission	Updated topics/methods	Human resources External expertise	February – March 2025

	Module teachers External experts			
8.3 Incorporate case studies	Project team GE commission Module teachers External expertise	Summary of case studies	Human resources External expertise	March – April 2025
8.4 Finalise and seek approval	Project team GE Commission Vice-Rector for education	Updated syllabi and curriculum approved	Human resources	May 2025
8.5 Dissemination and communication of new curriculum	Project team GE Commission PR/Communications team	The number of internal and external stakeholders reached	Human resources Communication tools	June 2025

General timeline

