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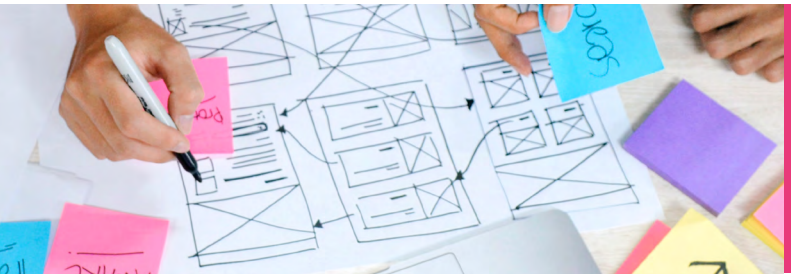
ERA Success Stories

No.1

Project portraits of Horizon Europe's Reforming and enhancing the European R&I System programme area



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CALIPER

Linking Research and Innovation for Gender Equality

Homepage: caliper-project.eu

Project duration: 48 months

Project coordinator: ViLabs

Project contact address: info@caliper-project.eu

Partners: 12 partners – 9 GEP implementing partners: seven Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and 2 Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) from Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Georgia, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and 3 supporting organisations

Interview with Kyriaki Karydou, Gender Expert – Project Manager at ViLabs, Project Coordinator of CALIPER project.

Can you briefly describe your project?

Kyriaki Karydou
Project Coordinator of CALIPER

The CALIPER project supports seven (7) Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and two (2) Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) in nine countries across Europe and beyond (Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Georgia, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey) at an initial stage of gender equality activities in developing Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and engaging the local Research & Innovation Hubs to transfer the gained knowledge beyond academia.

CALIPER's coordinator ViLabs benefits from the experience gained from Horizon 2020 projects such as EQUAL IST and GE ACADEMY. Smart Venice has undertaken the scientific coordination of the CALIPER project.

The project's goal is to make research organisations more gender equal and inclusive, thus contributing to the overarching objectives of the European Research Area (ERA).

The project aims to go one step further by bringing together actors from the quadruple helix to discuss and participate actively in developing and implementing GEPs during the lifespan of the project. All partners are responsible for their

own GEP within the scope of the project, in line with the set methodology and guidelines. Via the Innovation Hubs established by each GEP-implementing partner, it is expected that organisations from the wider innovation ecosystem of the participating partners will be influenced to follow their example and become more inclusive.

How was the partnership formed and how it has evolved during the project implementation? To which target groups does your project reach out?

CALIPER has adopted a geographically inclusive approach from its conception phase, engaging with organisations from nine countries from all across Europe plus Georgia and Turkey. The organisations' level of Gender Equality uptake differs, which facilitates knowledge exchange and the sharing of good practices during project implementation.

The project targets actors from academia, civil society, businesses and public authorities. The partners have already established their Innovation Hubs, which facilitates their engagement in the GEP processes through the promotion of active collaboration with an overall aim to aspire other institutions to implement Gender Equality actions.

What is the expected impact and sustainability actions that you envisage?

At partnership level, it is intended to continue the collaboration in future proposals, following the completion of the CALIPER project. CALIPER also has a task dedicated to the sustainability of the project and, specifically, the sustainability of its partners' GEPs as well as workshops planned for all interested stakeholders. CALIPER organises a multitude of events to raise awareness and create engagement ties both at internal level among the involved RPOs/RFOs and at external level, bringing together the key actors from the national innovation ecosystems.

Through a series of Help Desk sessions, CALIPER supports RPOs/RFOs during the implementation phase in a customized way, ensuring that the initial capacity building is sustained consistently throughout the process. Against this background, the project aims to foster not only structural but also cultural change that welcomes GEPs in order to enhance the role of women in STEM R&I, improve their career prospects and ultimately better integrate the gender dimension in research.

In this respect, the project seeks to highlight women-led innovations, and gender-sensitive product development/design, while raising awareness to attract more girls to STEM research, via "Women in INnovation (WIN) events" held by all partners.

What are the main achievements of your project or any special milestone? What has been challenging during project implementation?

The project will run until December 2023. Overall, the tasks are being implemented according to the initial plan. “The only issue we had to face was due to the different processes for the approval of the GEP in each participating organization that caused some delays at the initiation of the implementation phase”, Ms Kyriaki Karydou mentioned. Still, all GEPs were finalized and approved in autumn of 2022. The “Women in INnovation” event is considered one of its special milestones. One of the main achievements of the project is the development of policy briefings on the basis of the project findings and the experiences gained in fostering institutional change to support gender equality in R&I institutions. Moreover, CALIPER promotes role models by conducting interviews with exceptional female researchers in their respective areas in order to create promotional videos and thus raise awareness and generate a debate about gender inequality issues in STEM fields.

Are there any lessons learnt so far with regard to success factors, tips on what should be avoided or preferred in the process of proposal preparation and the overall implementation of similar projects?

At the initial and proposal preparation stage, it was important that a good mix of partners who had already taken actions linked to gender equality was identified and combined with partners with less experience in this regard. The geographical criterion was also applied in line with the general eligibility criteria of the Horizon 2020 programme. In terms of implementation, a success factor is that the partners have become aware of the necessity to include the gender dimension in their activities and that GEPs are now a mandatory eligibility criterion for public authorities and research organisations. This is expected to further ensure the sustainability of the results as well as the implementation of any future activities. Moreover, a key element in the successful implementation of the project is that there are two partners in charge of its coordination: one covering the scientific expertise and one the overall management. Finally, another success factor is that all partners have set up working groups across all levels of hierarchy in order to implement their GEPs tasks, ensuring their timely and smooth completion.

caliper-project.eu

CALIPER
Gender Equality in STEM Research

GRECO

Fostering a Next Generation of European Photovoltaic Society through Open Science

Homepage: greco-project.eu

Project duration: 36 months

Project coordinator:
Universidad Politecnica de Madrid (UPM) at Instituto de energía solar

Project contact address: anabelen.cristobal@upm.es

Partners: 11 partners from academia, public and private sector, who come from Spain, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, Bulgaria and Brazi

Interview with Dr. Ana Belen Cristobal Lopez and Prof. Carlos de Canizo Nadal at the Institute of Solar Energy (IES) of the UNIVERSIDAD POLITECNICA DE MADRID (UPM), project coordinators of GRECO project

Dr. Ana Belen Cristobal Lopez & Prof. Carlos de Canizo Nadal
project coordinators of GRECO

Can you briefly describe your project?

GRECO was a multinational research project funded by the European Commission. Its main goal was putting Open Science and other Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) approaches into action in a real research project in the photovoltaic sector. It demonstrated how knowledge coalitions comprising researchers, civil organisations, citizens, governments, industry and non-profit organisations may adopt RRI approaches such as Open Science. Specifically, GRECO fostered the uptake of six innovative and socially acceptable solutions for photovoltaic products.

The name GRECO came from the famous painter, linking it to the period of renaissance. It refers to the “renaissance” of science and its open character that the project aimed to revive, adding the humanistic view and the active role of the citizens through their engagement in the implementation of the project.

The project was linked to two previous projects, both in the area of photovoltaics and agriculture, involving end-users such as irrigators, public administrators and rural population. The coordinator had also participated in a previous FET project, **AMADEUS**, under the Horizon 2020 programme, where they initially dealt with such ideas.

Which are the main results & outcomes achieved during the project?

Society was engaged not only in obtaining data but also in designing a citizen science/solar app. To see which problems and challenges arise in practice was also part of the project. The project applied a participatory process in defining what is needed for developing the application. Broader society was involved through meetings and online surveys with the aim to increase their level of commitment. The best idea was selected out of 30 submitted. The application was about mapping photovoltaic installations - rooftop mainly - in order to help the researchers working on the modelling of installations get the lay of the land. Owners could also provide input as to the main characteristics. In this process, many people contacted neighbours who had solar panels already and exchanged information. “We are proud of the participatory process that we followed by involving all”, Prof. Carlos de Canizo Nadal states. The evaluation revealed that more resources would be necessary to maintain the app, and that in order to disseminate and go further, additional efforts/budget or even another project(s) would be required.

Another important output was the **report on mobilizing and mutual learning** regarding renewable energies which presented the main results of GRECO’s activities and recommendations for policy makers.

Did you manage to sustain public attention and improve the visibility of the consortium and the project results and activities?

In the area of agriculture, the consortium approached irrigators and farmers to learn about their needs and adjust the research to what they consider important in their day-to-day work. In fact, the consortium had to adopt less advanced technologies than the ones planned initially. The irrigators and farmers were then involved in different demonstrations to obtain further feedback. Policy makers and local governments were also involved in this process due to their knowledge about possible legal restrictions. They were also consulted in relation to proposed activities regarding the future of photovoltaics.

The project also approached the citizens about topics not well known to the wider public (new solar shells, solar shells with high efficiency). Based on their needs rather than technicalities (e.g., greener solar systems irrespective of how they are manufactured), the citizens' feedback will enable the scientists to do research and produce results that are accepted by the end users. Journalists, NGOs and students as well as consumer organisations were involved in this process. The meetings took place in various countries.

Which were the main challenges that your project faced in the process of achieving its main objectives and scope?

One of the main challenges we faced at the beginning of the project was to persuade researchers to approach open science as a necessity rather than extra work. When it comes to citizen science, the most important challenge is to ensure the continuous engagement of people. Citizen science is part of open science and as such requires more time as well as additional resources to keep the community engaged. This was also true for GRECO. The COVID pandemic was another challenge that the project had to face and which the partners managed to overcome by using electronic means.

In your opinion, what was the actual impact of your project's results? Do they go beyond the project's lifespan? Are any sustainability measures foreseen?

Most important is the involvement of citizens. The energy field is very wide but still democratic since it can involve the citizens. One important outcome is the introduction of open science aspects into research practice in photovoltaics.

This means an increased use of open sources, open innovation processes and open access to publications. The focus is now on promoting the democratization of access to photovoltaics and strengthening the link to energy communities, among others.

Which were the lessons learnt with regard to success factors, hints on what should be avoided or preferred in the process of proposal preparation and the overall project implementation?

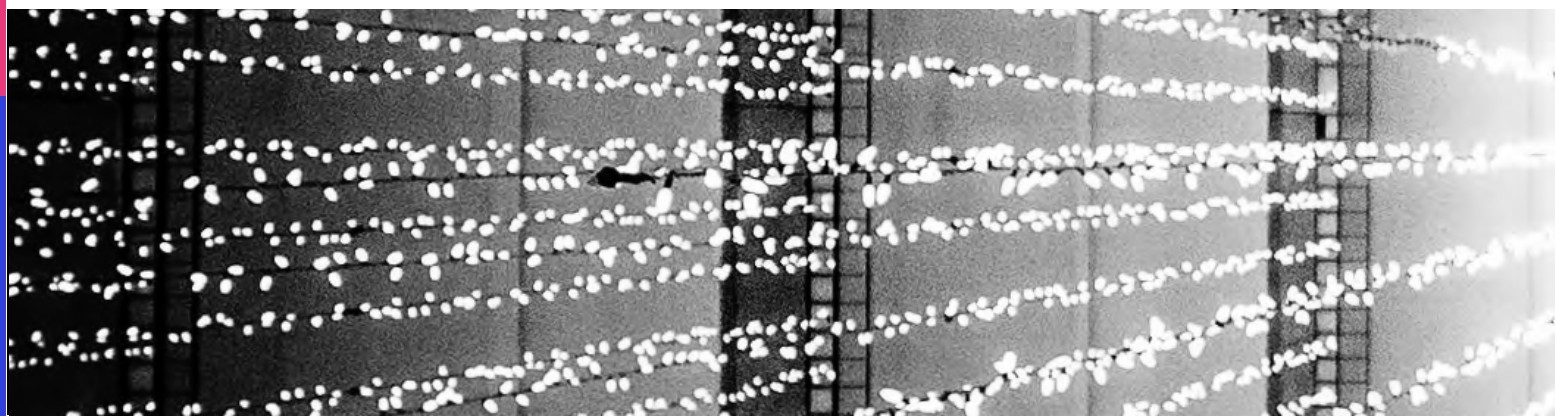
One of the main lessons learnt from GRECO is that it is very difficult to engage people. As a researcher you are under pressure to publish articles, secure patents, etc., but you still want to make something useful so you need to engage with people. “It is time and effort demanding and the academic structures are not prepared for that”, Dr. Ana Belen Cristobal Lopez highlights. Her current experience in another project under the acronym **AURORA** which deals with large numbers of citizens, confirms that it is difficult for citizens to understand and engage in science.

Was there any value-added gain for the project partners?

The coordinator mainly used their existing network and managed to find the right partners with whom they had already worked in the past and which possessed the right prerequisites for implementing the project activities. The added value was the technical and scientific expertise brought by the new partners.

greco-project.eu

GRECO



HSbooster.eu
Standardisation Booster for H2020 & HE research results

Homepage: hsbooster.eu

Project duration: 24 months

Project coordinator: COMMPLA SRL COMMPLA SRL

Project contact address: contact@commpla.com

Partners: 6 partners from academia, public and private sector, who come from Italy, Serbia, Ireland, Denmark and Spain

Nicholas Ferguson
Project Coordinator of HSbooster.eu

Interview with Nicholas Ferguson, COMMpla, Project Coordinator of HSbooster.eu

Can you briefly describe your project?

HSbooster.eu is the new EU Standardisation booster service supporting Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020 projects to contribute to standardisation. COMMpla leads the six-partner HSbooster.eu consortium, which consists of an experienced and strong consortium with solid expertise in the standardisation field and in implementing EC booster services.

HSbooster.eu guides projects on how to address standardisation. From understanding and mapping the standards landscape, to dissemination activities, to technical committees, to actually contributing to standardisation – the booster strives to ensure projects take timely action to valorise results and maximise their impact through standardisation.

Navigating the path to defining and delivering on an effective standardisation strategy can be complex and costly for project consortia. HSbooster.eu is therefore recruiting over 250 standards experts from European and international working groups and technical committees to provide guidance and advice to projects so that they can strategically plan and contribute efficiently to the standardisation process.

Already over 70 projects have applied. In a simple first-come, first-served process, projects can apply online, stating the type of support they would like. HSbooster.eu

partners match the application to an appropriate standards expert who connects-up with the project directly. Support is then delivered through up to four conference calls over a period of up to 3 months.

HSbooster.eu also provides a broad Training Academy which addresses the educational dimension of standardisation in response to the Code of Practice on Standardisation by providing an efficient mechanism and accessible hub for training knowledge, expertise, and skills in the field of standardisation. The Academy provides both online training material and a series of monthly workshops. Through our training programs we aim to support the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that can effectively engage with standardisation practices and promote their adoption in the industry.

Which of the ERA priorities is your project mostly aligned with?

Standardisation reinforces the consumer's confidence to use a certain product or service. HSbooster.eu covers all fields linked to research and innovation, going beyond the ICT sector. The European Commission's Standardisation Strategy highlights the critical role standards play in enabling EU industries to face current challenges. Standards are a crucial tool to valorise research results and, as highlighted in the EC's Recommendation on a Code of Practice on Standardisation, help researchers and innovators bring their innovation closer to the market. In support of this, the project aims to boost the uptake of Research and Innovation (R&I) results into the economy, fostering resilience and competitiveness at economic and societal level. "HSbooster.eu can support European standardisation experts and projects to play their part in meeting the objectives of the EU Standardisation Strategy to make the EU standardisation system more functional, agile and effective", Mr Ferguson states.

How did you build the current consortium? Is there a mix of previous and new collaborations?

COMMpla and its parent company Trust-IT have a long experience in coordinating Coordination Support Actions projects and projects in the area of ICT. The consortium is made up of specialized partners, e.g. the Danish Standardization body (DANSK), Dublin City University, which is very active in standardisation bodies, the University of Belgrade, specialists in training in the area of standardisation, and finally SGS specialists in certification with knowledge of the market and the importance of specification for companies that want to create impact on the market.

COMMpla's controlling organisation Trust-IT coordinates another Coordination and Support Action project, StandICT.eu, which focuses on funding European standardisation experts to contribute to standardisation working groups. Dublin City University are also a beneficiary of StandICT.eu.

Proposal writing methodology: What was/were the winning element(s) of your proposal?

When writing the proposal, we were very much focused on making sure we were able to address each of the call objectives. As a booster service it was important that we were able to not only respond to requirements regarding European standardisation priorities, but also to establish a smooth-running system and procedures to ensure delivery of actual services. Projects that apply are matched to standardisation experts who provide consultancy-type support to them. This requires continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure everything goes well.

What are your project's beneficiaries or user groups? What kind of results do you expect to deliver for them?

EU R&I projects can become an important source for contributions to standardisation in Europe.

The project therefore tries to facilitate and guide research projects on where they should be contributing to when it comes to standardisation and on which existing standards they should use. The type of support required by a project largely depends on the experience of the consortium. Some projects need to understand the basics of standardisation while others have partners with experience and links to specific Technical Committees and are therefore better prepared. HSbooster.eu therefore offers a wide-ranging training academy and workshops which reflects this broad range of standardisation understanding and expertise.

The project timeline is also important. For example, specific support can be provided to projects in their first year to plan strategically and carry out a standardisation landscape analysis which may contribute to their own deliverables. "What we do is encourage the projects to report and use the input from the expert in their reporting". Once mapping has been carried out, a key second step the experts can provide is to advise projects on how to interact with standardisation committees, identifying which project topics should be standardisated and eventually to understand how to participate and contribute to standardisation. This can either be done by participating in standardisation committees through National Standardisation Bodies or by taking advantage of more "project-friendly" mechanisms such as CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements.

Many projects have a deliverable linked to standardisation or a related task and HSbooster.eu can really support projects in producing these. HSbooster.eu also supports projects in purchasing standards and National Standardisation Body membership fees.

Finally, with a lack of women active in the standards landscape, the project pro-actively promotes the recruitment of female experts and is organising a campaign for women in standardisation to boost participation and expertise in this area.

Which are the main results & outcomes you expect to achieve during the project? Have you encountered so far any challenges in this process?

Apart from the trainings that are planned to be delivered and the services to be provided by the experts, the project aims to publish a series of success stories on the impact that such services had on the projects, either on the way to approach standardisation or the actual delivery of the planned results. Recommendations will be also produced on the future of the booster as a sustainable service for European R&I projects. One of the challenges already faced has been to raise awareness of the importance of standardisation as a priority to be addressed by projects as soon as they kick off. The publication of the success stories will promote the potential impact of such services on the projects in order to recognise the need for standardisation and hence actively seek the benefits from booster services.

hsbooster.eu

HSbooster.eu
Horizon Standardisation Booster

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