

The European Research Council Measures and Practices to Improve Gender Balance in Science

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ERC: Gender Balance in Science

- View of ERC ScC: All people, independently of gender, are equally able to perform excellent frontier research
- All ERC processes are carefully designed to ensure equal opportunities for scientists of all genders
- Dedicated Working Group on Gender Issues to monitor Gender Balance in ERC calls, since 2008
- A Gender Equality Plan endorsed by the ERC Scientific Council, was established since the FP7, regularly updated
- Extension of remit of the WG, to ensure that the ERC promotes diversity and prevents any form of discrimination in its structures and operations, (Article 21 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights).



Diversity dimensions at ERC

- ScC membership/Governance;
- Applicants;
- Grantees;
- ERC teams;
- Panel members;
- ERC projects/topics;
- ERCEA staff.

ERC Gender Actions for under-represented sex (implemented in the ERC Work Programmes)

- 2007** **Eligibility** extensions by 12 months per child born after PhD
- 2010** **Eligibility** extensions by 18 months per child born before or after PhD
- 2013** **Scientific leadership potential** (self-evaluation) section **removed**
Order of Evaluation criteria reversed now: 1. Project , 2. PI track-record
- 2014** **Model CV template** included in application forms
- 2015** **No limit to eligibility extension** (before was 4,5 years => 4th child was out).
Care of sick relative now a reason for extension of the eligibility;
Track-record focus on 5/10 publications
- 2016** **Awareness raising of evaluators on unconscious bias** (video and slides)
- 2017** Activities promoting **equal opportunities** or **gender balance** are **eligible costs** stated in the WP
- 2018** **Unconscious Bias training** for **ERCEA scientific officers and Management**
- 2019** **ScC members awareness** session on **unconscious bias**

Gender
Equality Plan
2007-2013

Gender
Equality Plan
2014-2020



ERC gender-related actions

2020 : ERC Workshop on sex and gender dimension in frontier research: (Virtual, ~1800 participants)

- ✓ innovative approaches to address gender dimensions in research;
- ✓ awareness of gender dimension in the way research is designed, conducted, and on the quality of results

2022 : Measures implemented in the ERC Work Programme 2022 address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the productivity of ERC applicants:

- ✓ Proposed changes could apply to any disruption to take these into account in the evaluation process
- > Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027

ERC Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027: Main objectives

- ✓ **Raise awareness** about the ERC gender policy among potential applicants;
- ✓ **Improve gender balance** among researchers submitting ERC proposals;
- ✓ **Raise awareness** about **gender balance benefits in ERC teams**;
- ✓ Continuously **identify** and **remove any potential gender bias** in ERC evaluations;
- ✓ **Monitor differences** in **gender specific careers/academic posts**, after ERC grants;
- ✓ **Embed gender awareness** in all ERC processes;
- ✓ Strive for **gender balance** among **ERC peer reviewers**;

ERC gender-related actions



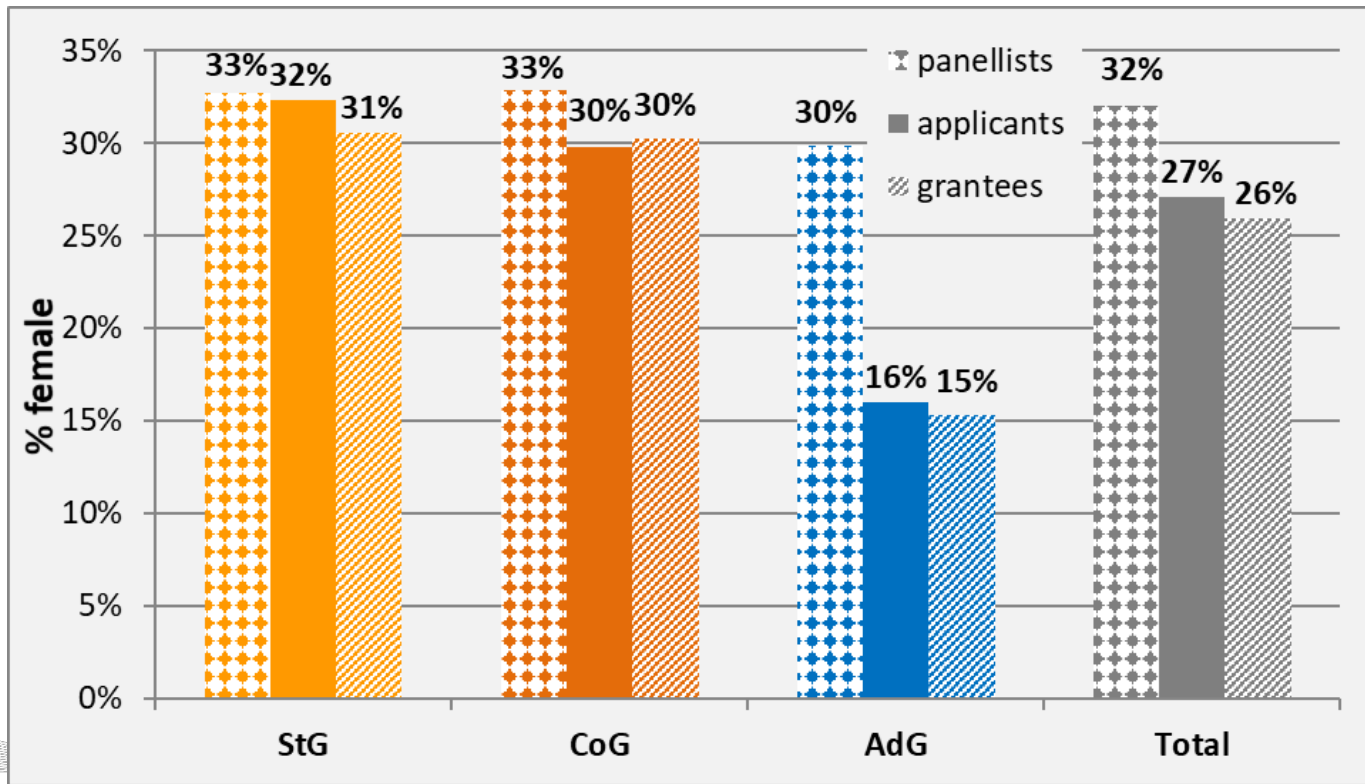
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- **Monitor submission rates** of women and men by country, research domain and panel;
- **Analyse long term effects** of the ERC presence and practice on gender structures in research careers and academic posts;
- **Include successful grantees of both genders** as role models in communication activities, brochures, posters, videos, etc.;
- **Raise awareness** about consideration of sex and gender dimension in the design of research projects;
- **Identify ambassadors** in various countries and research domains to encourage more applications to ERC grants from underrepresented groups of researchers.
- Commissioned studies:

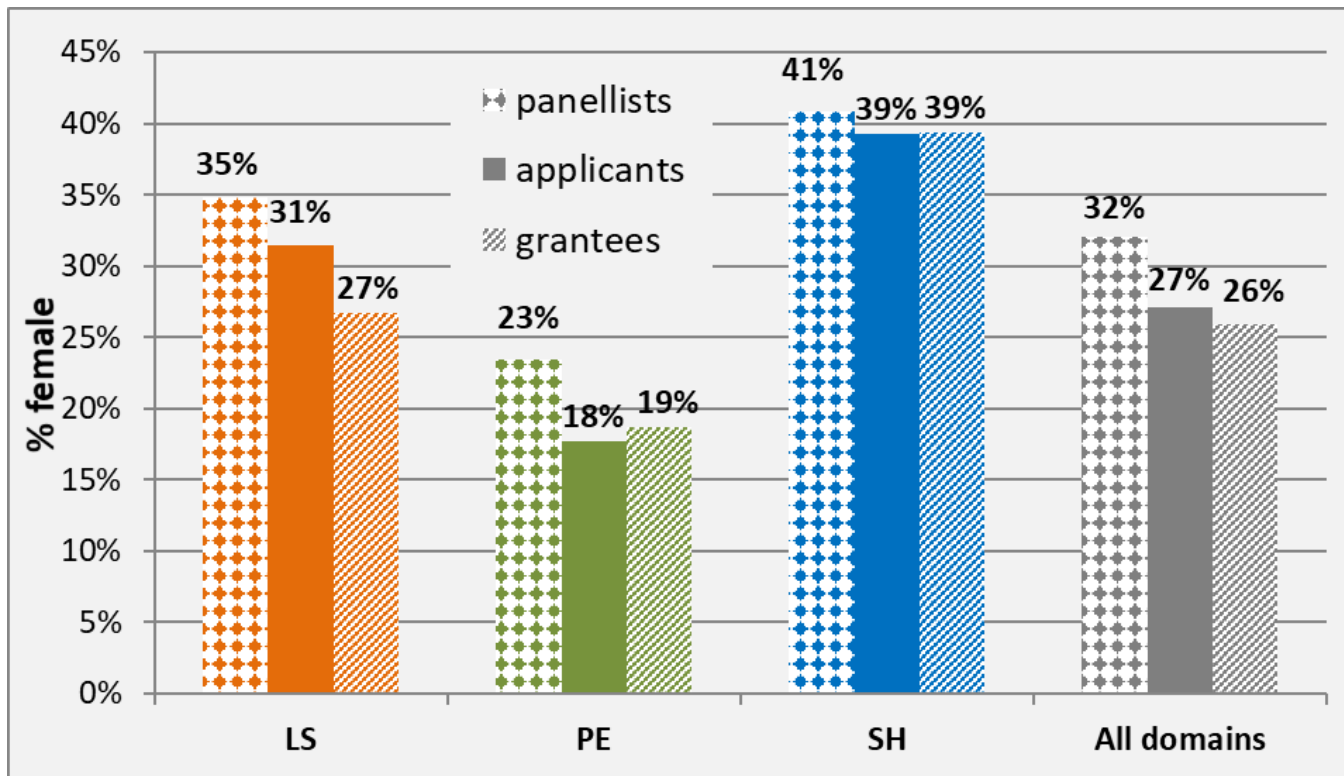
ERCAREER (2012-2014): patterns, differences/similarities in career paths of women/men ERC grantees
gendERC (2014-2016): potential gender bias in ERC evaluation and grant allocation process

ERC gender data on applicants and grantees

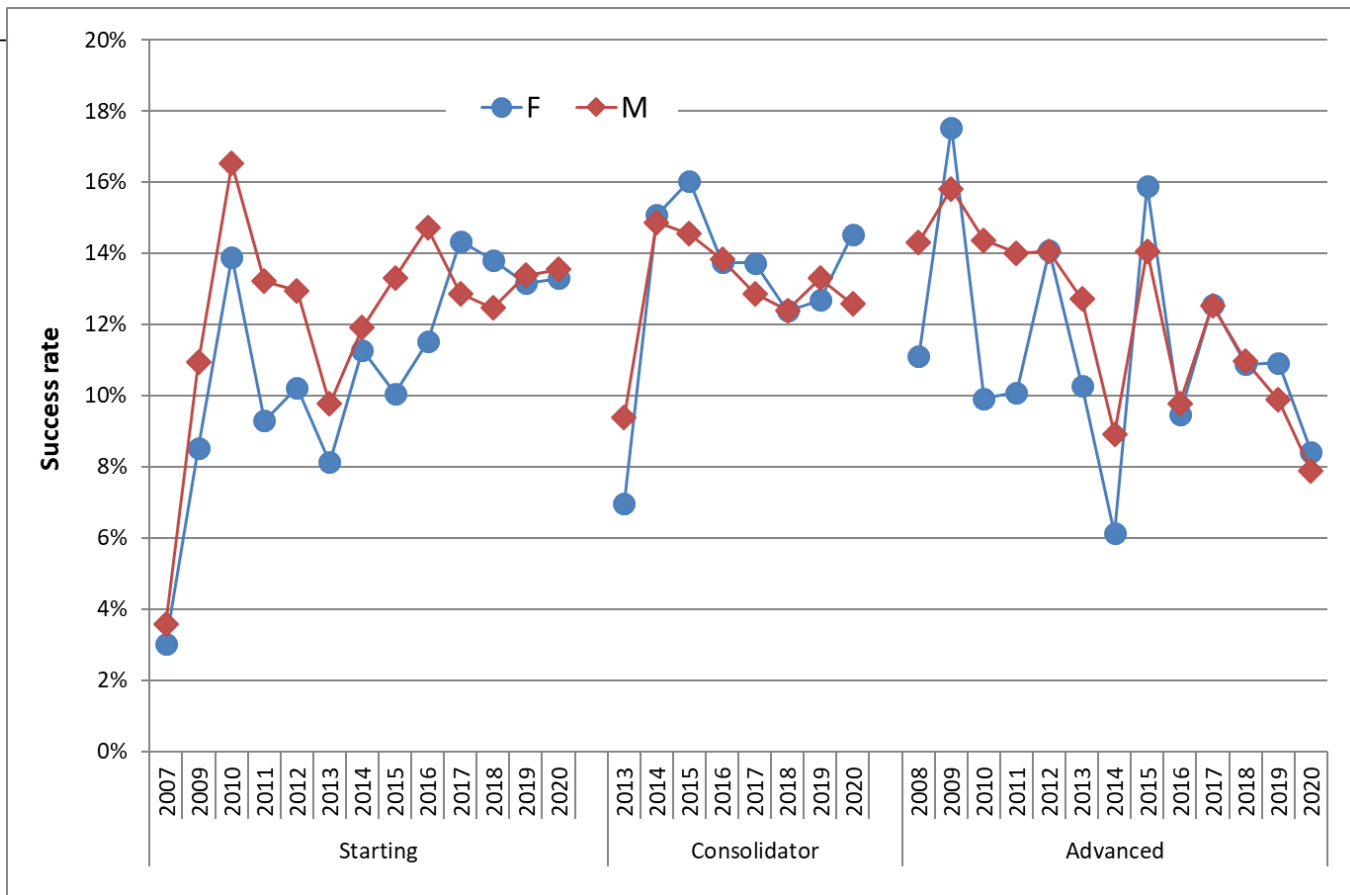
ERC Calls 2007-2020



ERC Calls 2007-2020



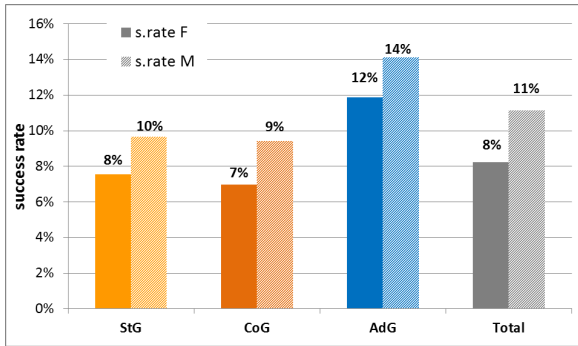
Success Rate by Call



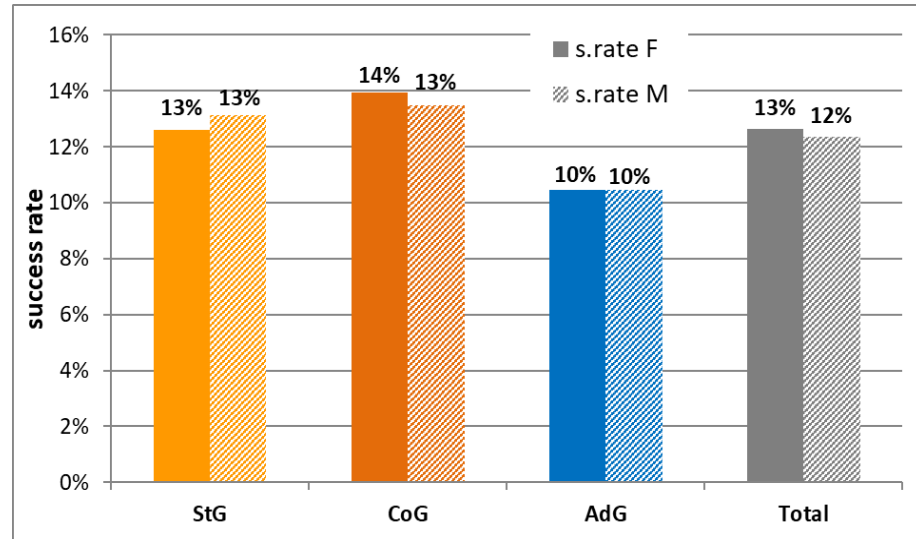
Success Rate by Type of Call

On average we progressed across all calls !

ERC Calls 2007-2013



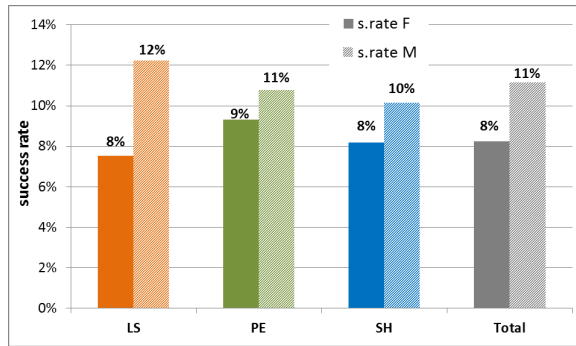
H2020 (2014-2020)



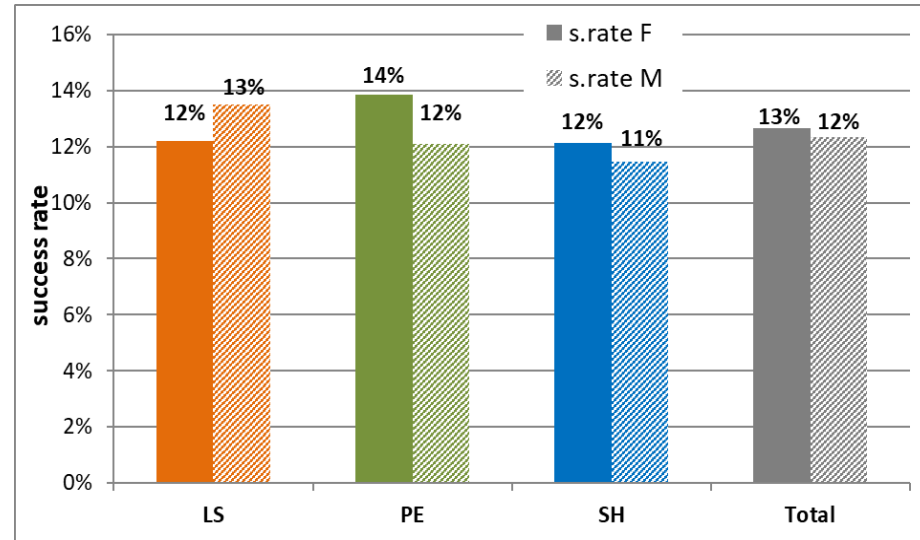
Success Rate by Domain

On average we progressed across all domains!

ERC Calls 2007-2013

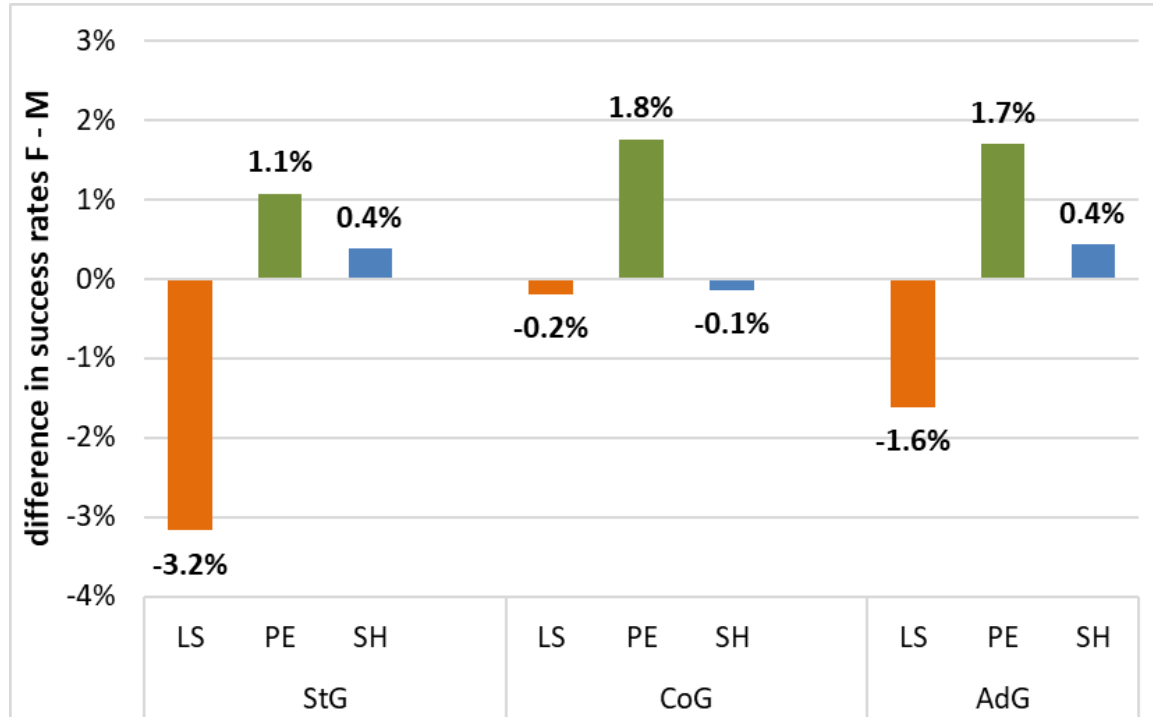


H2020 (2014-2020)



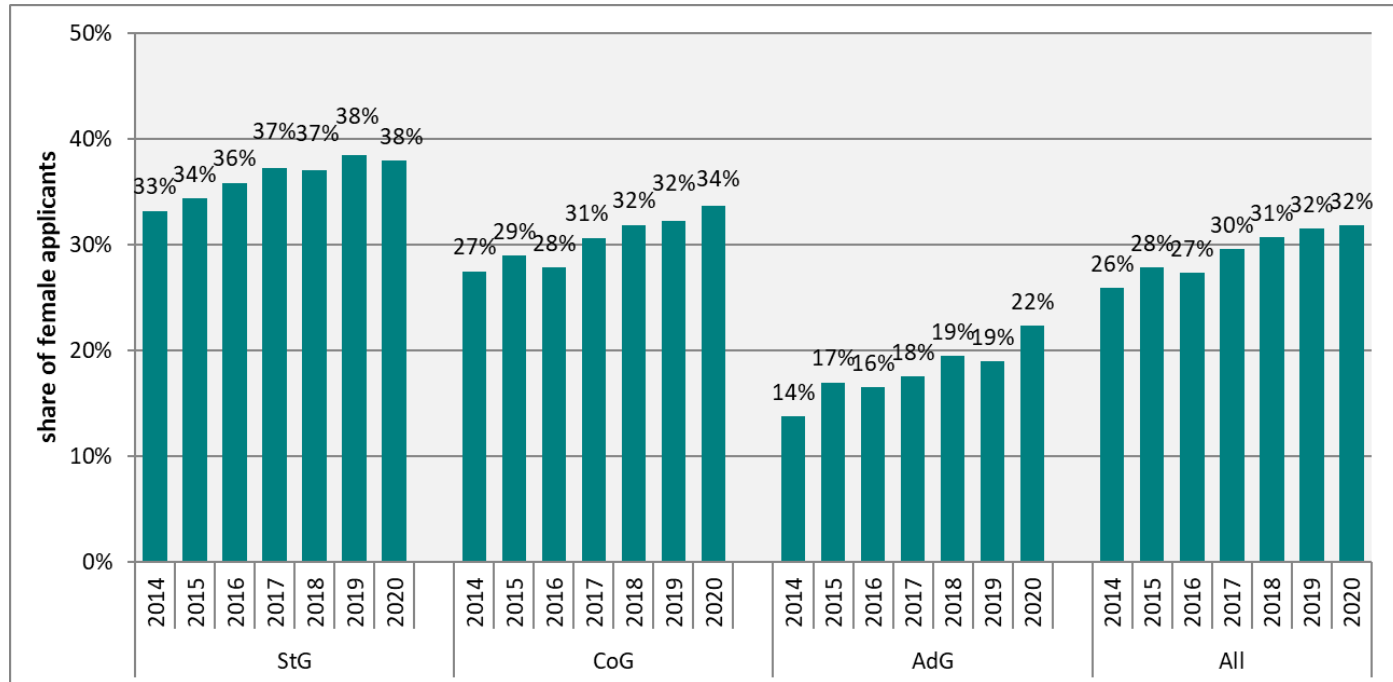
H2020

Success Rate Difference by Domain



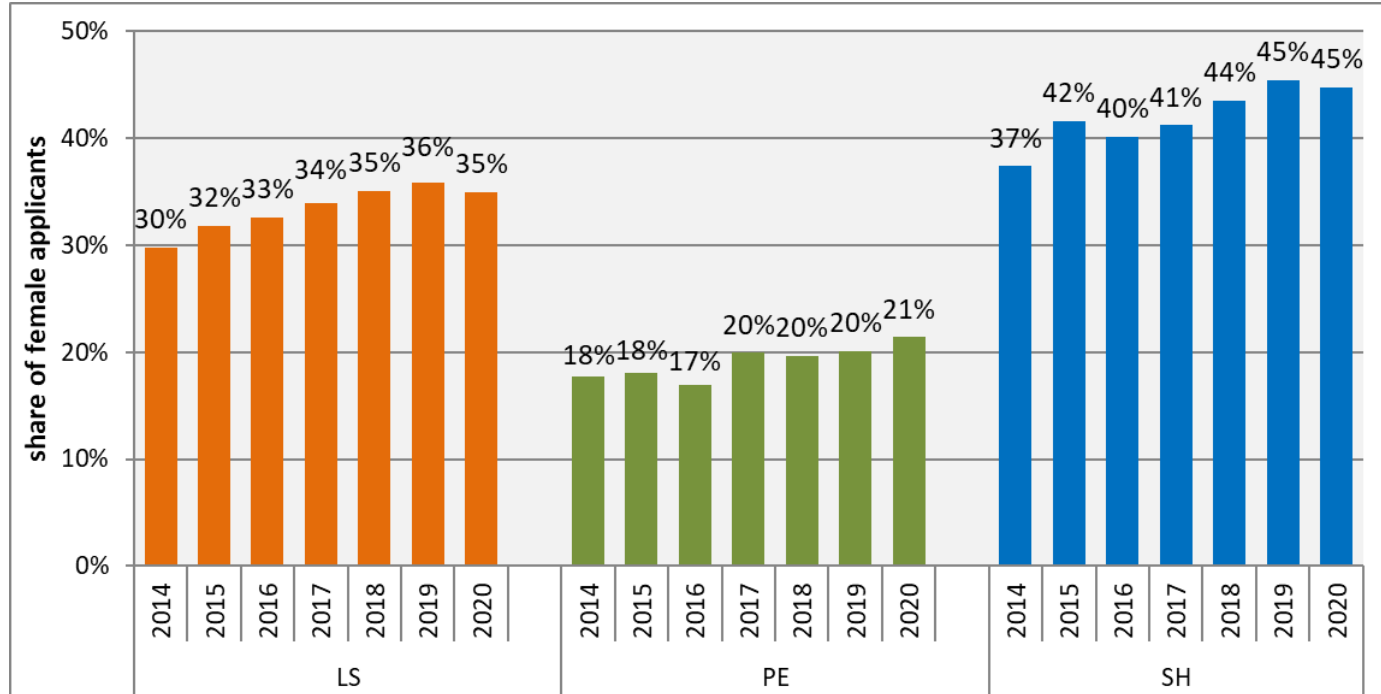
H2020

Share Female Applicants



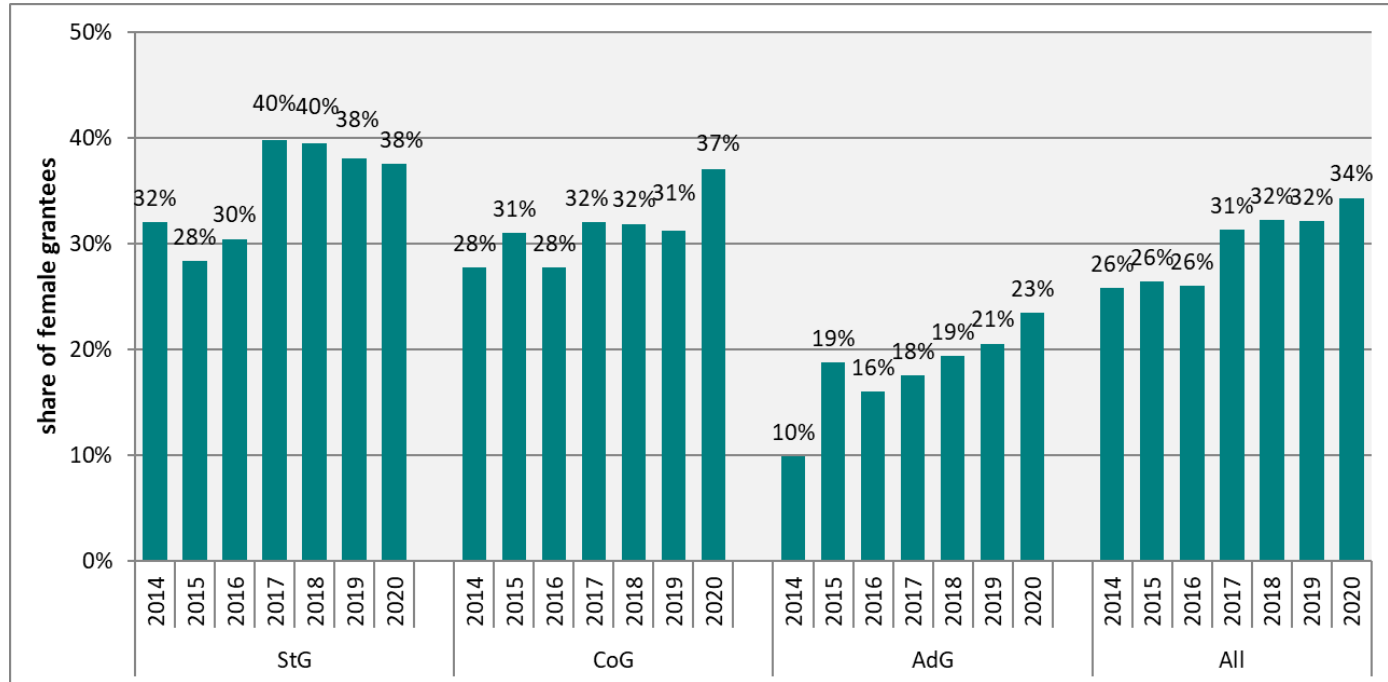
H2020

Share Female Applicants by Domain



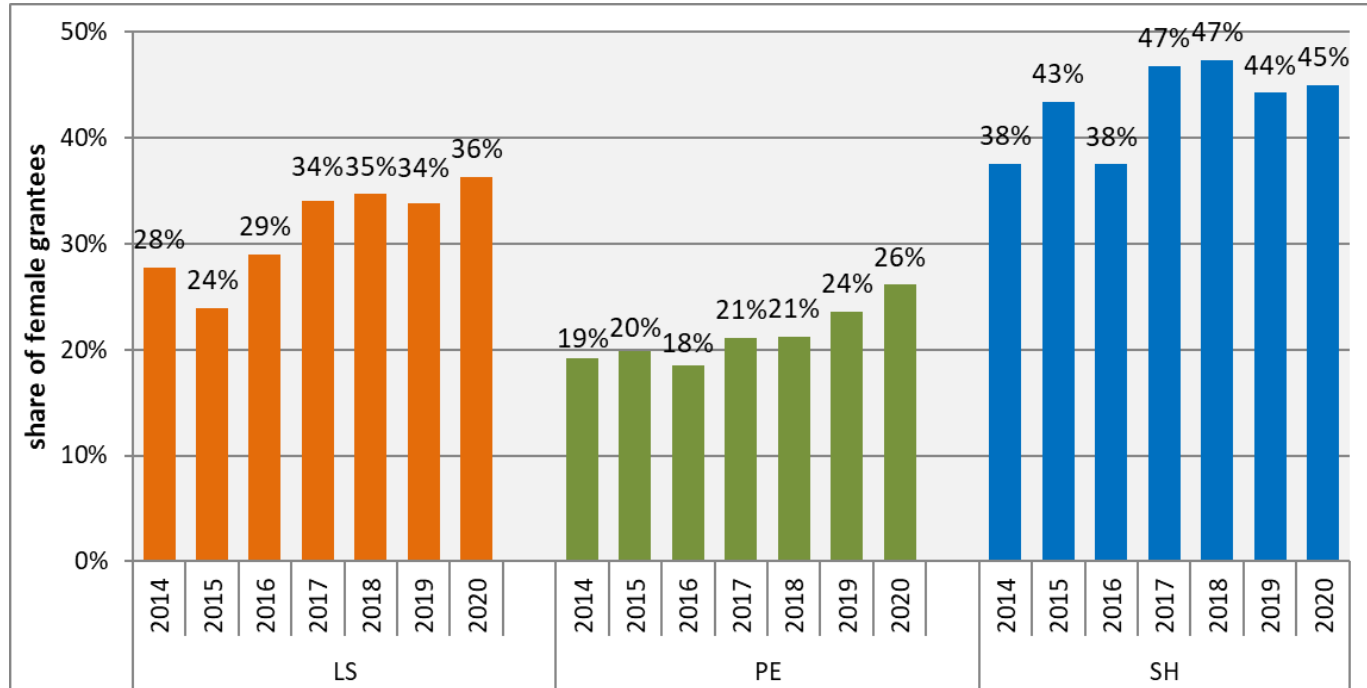
H2020

Share Female Grantees



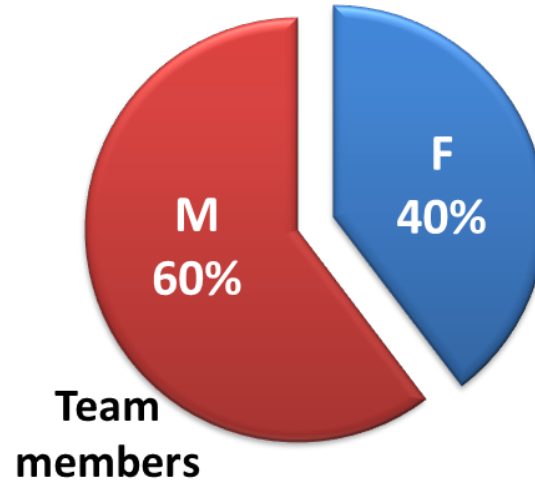
H2020

Share Female Grantees by Domain



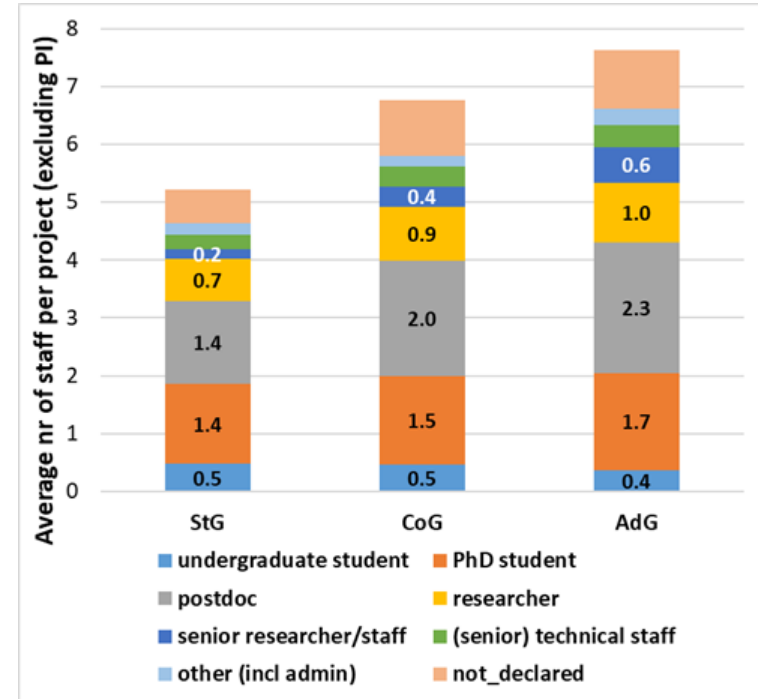
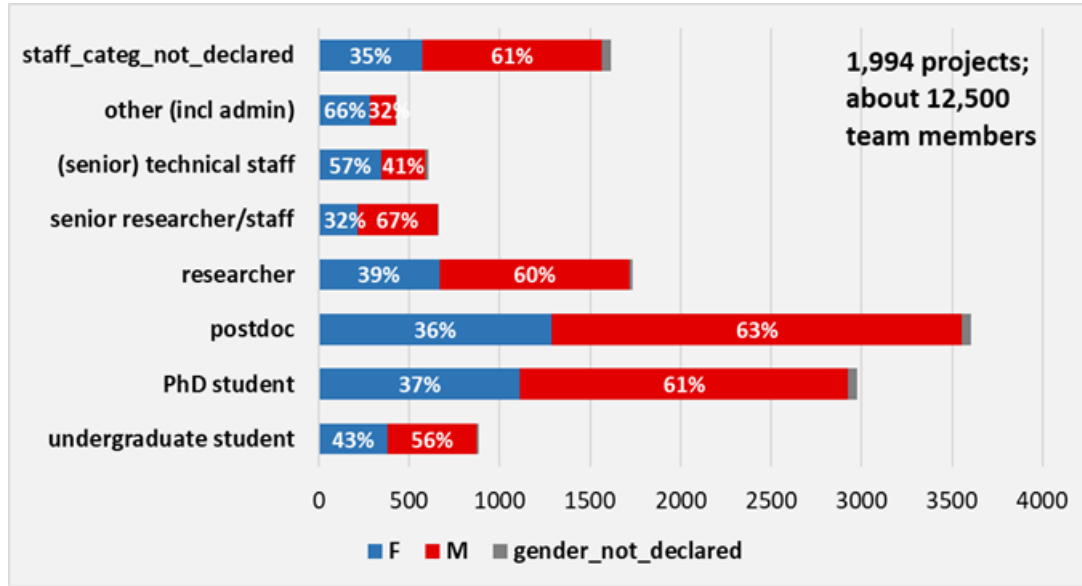
ERC team members and gender 1/2

- 2000 Horizon 2020 projects analysed
- 60% man; 40% women



ERC team members and gender

N.B: Data for the first H2020 reporting projects (about half the projects did the mid-term reporting, the other half the 18 months reporting); teams might still grow until the end of the project



(Un)conscious bias - Challenges and Actions



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- The gender balance in ERC calls, any potential bias related to gender, age, nationality or career path in the ERC evaluation procedure, as well as possible differences in gender specific careers and academic posts following the ERC grants are continuously monitored and addressed.
- The ERC's peer review evaluation process has been carefully designed to identify scientific excellence irrespective of nationality, gender, age, or institution of the Principal Investigator and other potential biases, and without compromising on the scientific excellence as the sole evaluation criteria.
- ERC will continue to raise awareness regarding implicit bias and gender issues among the panellists: during the briefings of the ERC panel chairs, at the beginning of each panel meeting, in the Guide for Peer Reviewers.
- ERC will keep developing targeted encouragement actions for under-represented sex scientists

THANK YOU

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



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Additional slides

ERC Gender Actions for under-represented sex

ERC Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027: Implementation: Awareness and submission rates

Goal: Increase awareness about ERC and encourage top researchers of underrepresented gender to apply



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- **Publish the ERC gender equality plan** on the web and continue;
- **Monitoring submission rates** of women and men by country, research domain and panel;
- Taking active part in **gender equality networks and workshops**;
- **Making visits** to scientific meetings/workshops on gender topics, inform about open ERC calls;
- **Including gender statistics** and ERC's work to achieve gender balance in all general ERC presentations;
- **Including successful grantees of both genders** as role models in communication activities, brochures, posters, videos, etc.;
- **Raising awareness** about consideration of sex and gender dimension in the design of research projects;
- **Identifying ambassadors** in various countries and research domains to encourage more applications to ERC grants from underrepresented groups of researchers.

ERC Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027: Implementation: Evaluation processes and granting 1/2

Goal: *a gender fair evaluation process, ensure the best researchers get funded irrespective of gender*



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- **Ensure that eligibility and evaluation criteria** are designed to encompass the situation of both women and men in research;
- Continue **monitoring success rates** and granted amounts for women and men, publish gender statistics from ERC evaluations in long term time series and by ERC domain;
- **Sensitise ERCEA staff, ERC panel members and external reviewers** to gender issues;
- **Raise gender awareness during briefings** of the ERC panel chairs at the beginning of the evaluation panel meetings;
- **Raise awareness about implicit bias** in the evaluation process;
- **Include reference** to the ERC Scientific Council Gender Equality Plan in the ERC Guide for Peer Reviewers;

ERC Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027: Implementation: Evaluation processes and granting 2/2



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- **Continue collecting and analysing gender data** on PhD students/post docs/ other researchers funded through ERC grants;
- **Address gender-related topics** during visits to Principal Investigators in the course of their project;
- **Address gender-related topics** during visits to Host Institutions (e.g. child care, moving with a family) and highlight good practice and 'role model' host institutions;
- **Analyse long term effects** of the ERC presence and practice on gender structures in research careers and academic posts;
- **Encourage the collection of gender data** in different countries and institutions so as to better define the existing pool of researchers and its evolution in time.

ERC Gender Equality Plan 2021-2027: Implementation: Gender balance among ERC peer reviewers



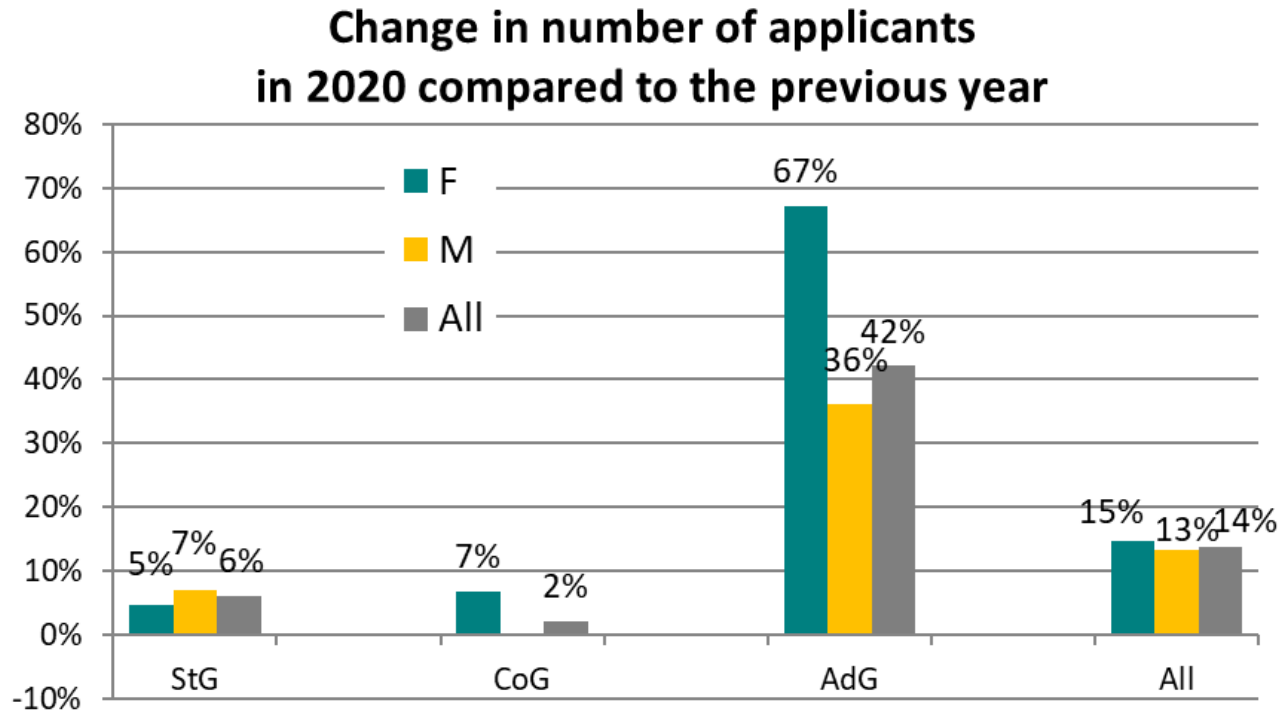
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Goal: *Achieve as much gender balance as possible in ERC evaluation panels, also among panel chairs*

panel members, panel chairs and external referees

- **Set up panel specific goals** for gender balance, based on information from relevant scientific communities and/or the ERC pool of applicants (N.B: The pool of ERC applicants may not necessarily reflect the actual proportionalities of women and men in each and every scientific community; however it yields panel specific reference points);
- **Monitor the gender balance** of each ERC panel.

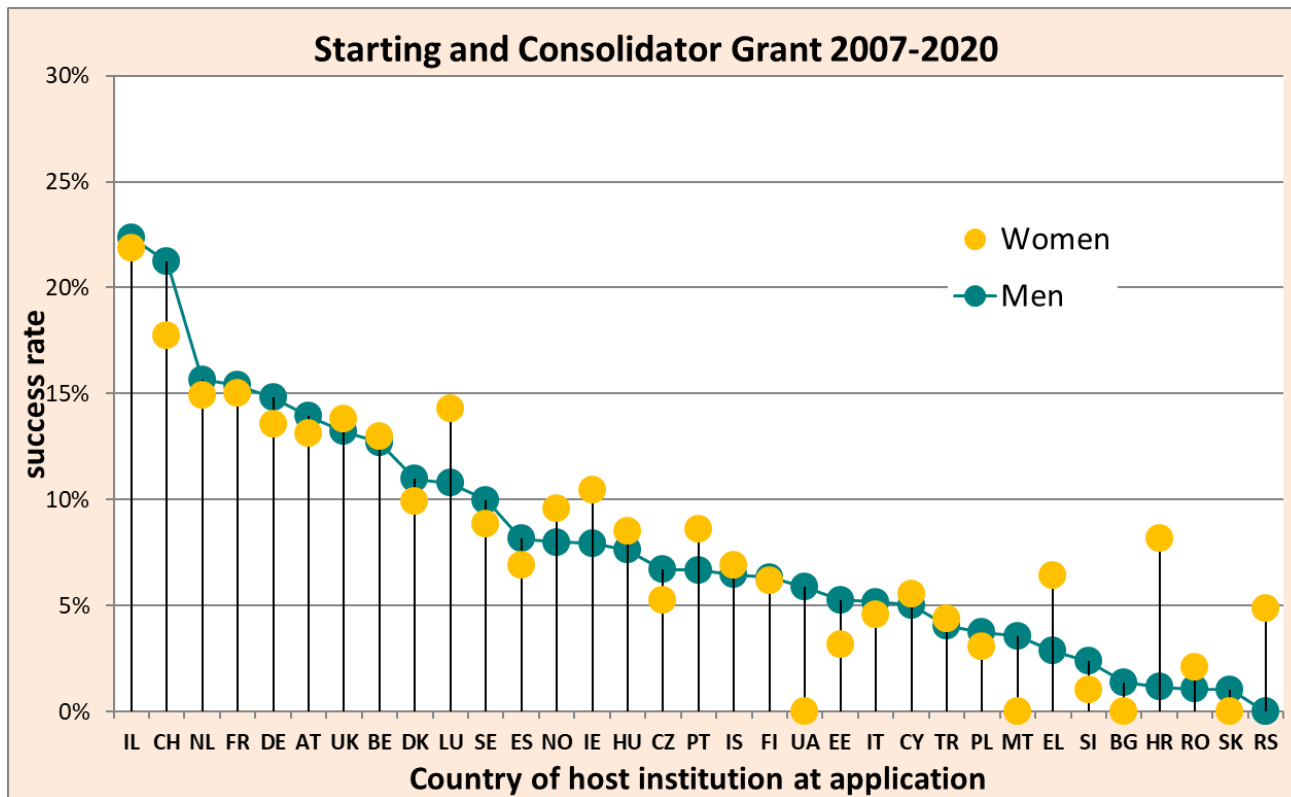
2020 Compared to 2019 Number of Evaluated Proposals



2007-2020

ERC Starting /Consolidator Grants

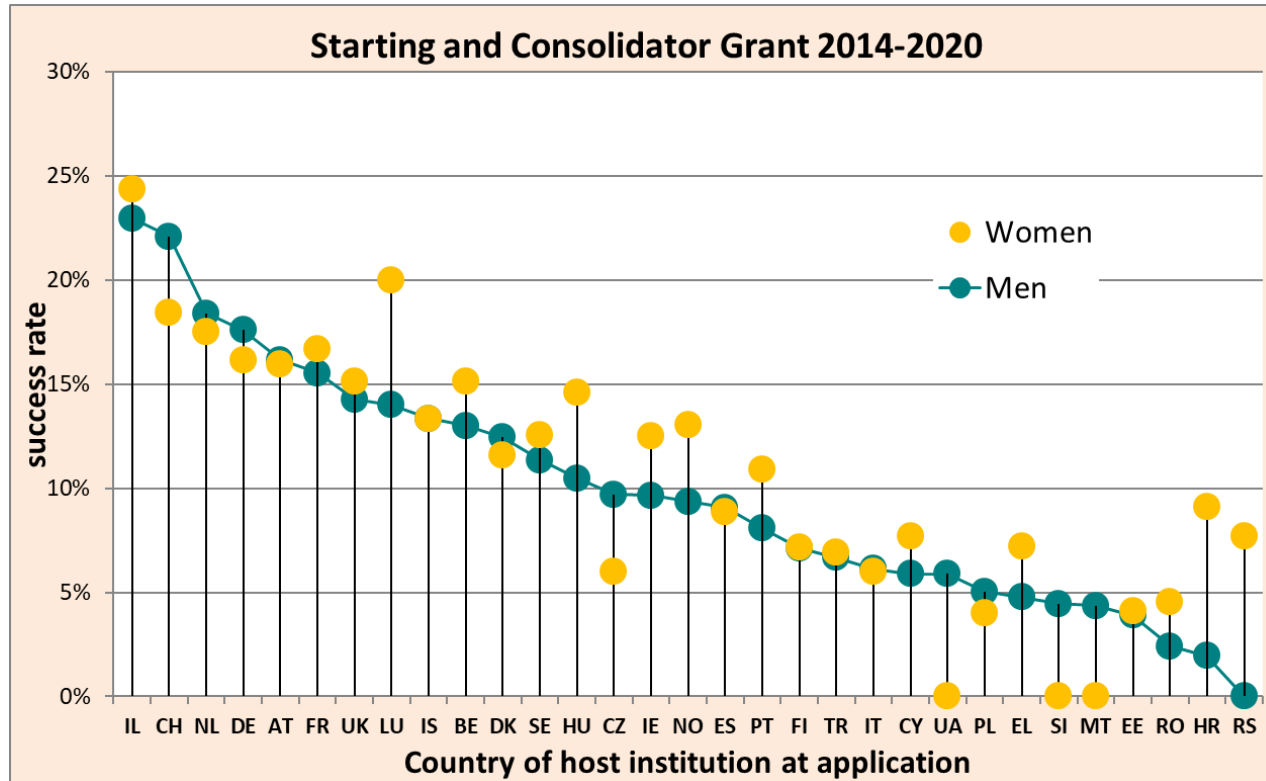
Success rates per country of HI



H2020 (2014-2020)

ERC Starting /Consolidator Grants

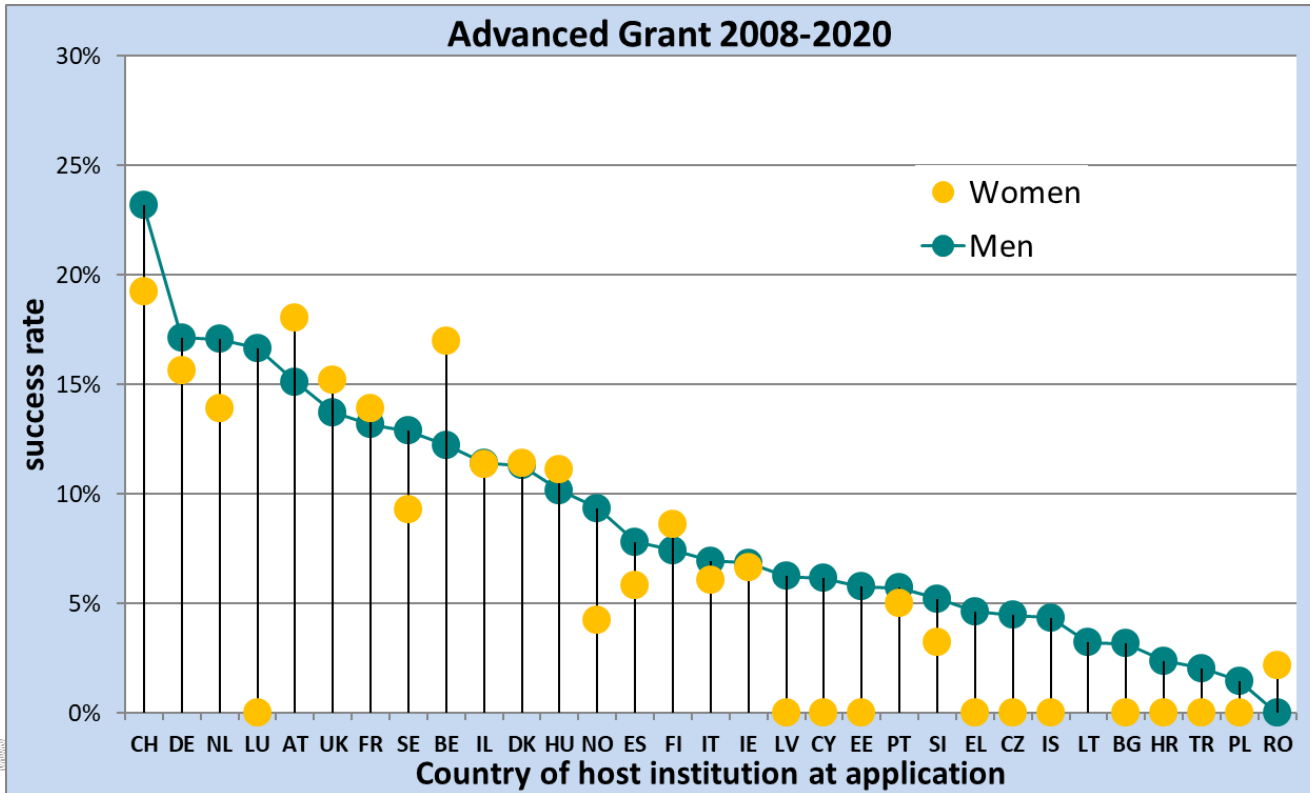
Success rates per country of HI



2008-2020

ERC Advanced Grants

Success rates per country of HI



H2020 (2014-2020)

ERC Advanced Grants

Success rates per country of HI

