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# *Examining Intersectionality and Whistleblowing*

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# Agenda

Welcome

Presentation of research on Gender & Intersectionality in Whistleblowing:

Findings and best practices from the BRIGHT project (CERV-101143234) assessing **the effectiveness of gender and intersectional approaches to whistleblowing across the European civil society landscape** + introducing a **novel tool for measuring and evaluating organizational and institutional culture** through a gender and intersectionality lens.

New research from Transparency International, through the SAFE4Whistleblowers project (CERV -101143007) exploring **how gender and other intersecting factors influence individuals' experiences** when reporting wrongdoing + best practices and recommendations to **promote gender-sensitive and inclusive whistleblowing environments** that empower everyone to speak up safely.

Q&A



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# Website Launch



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Findings and best practices from the BRIGHT project (CERV-101143234) Work Package 4

**Assessing the effectiveness of gender and intersectional approaches to whistleblowing across the European civil society landscape**

Introducing a **novel tool for measuring and evaluating organizational and institutional culture** through a gender and intersectionality lens.



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## Background

**Can a whistleblower's** gender, race, class or ethnicity **shape** their experience of disclosure?

**Disclosure injustice** comprises:

- \* The variability in how different whistleblowers are perceived as credible and thus their testimony taken into account (whistleblower testimony justice)
- \* How structural arrangements support or otherwise people of different social categories coming forward (whistleblower structural justice).

Whistleblowing is not a universal experience. Whistleblowing is unevenly accessible, depending on one's social category.

**Collective shields** provide salience to speakers who are otherwise vulnerable to reprisal. They work because they hedge against the **credibility and support deficits** that accompany the experience of whistleblowing.

**Kenny & Batishcheva (2025). 'Disclosure Injustice: How Gender and other Social Categories Impact Effective and Safe Whistleblowing', Gender Work and Organization, online first.**

# What do women say?



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- Conscious of the **implications of breaching social norms** & risk of exclusion (Feldman & Lobel, 2008).
- Less willing to confront a wrongdoer directly vs via **third party**
- **Anti-retaliation provisions** are more influential for women deciding to report than they are for men (Feldman & Lobel, 2008).
- **Anonymous channels** valued (IBA, 2021; Kaplan et al., 2009).
- Clear assurances of **confidentiality** are important (Feldman & Lobel, 2008).

*Women whistleblowers place greater importance on the **presence of Official Channels** than do men, in their decision to speak out (Rothschild & Miethe, 1999).*

# BRIGHT Project (EACEA – project 101143234)



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**Work Package 4:** To understand existing practice in European organizations and institutions and to identify gaps and areas for improvement regarding inclusivity and gender considerations.

**Research Question (WP 4.2):** Which European civil society actors are developing gender-focused whistleblowing initiatives, and what are the characteristics of these initiatives?

**The research process was conducted in three phases.:**

- In Phase 1 (May 2024), requests for access to relevant contexts were sent to the International Whistleblowing Research Network and BRIGHT partners.
- In Phase 2 (June-August 2024), a review of organizational documents and materials was conducted to identify relevant entities. The information provided is correct to the best of our knowledge and at the time of the research, as of August 2024
- In Phase 3 (March-June 2025), a tool was designed for capturing data related to gender and intersectionality (GIM-Tool).

## II. Methods



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### 1.) Mapping relevant actors

- Snowball sampling
- Selection Criteria

### 2.) Definition of a causal configuration (Neo institutional theory)

- Context (Organizational and Extra-organizational) + Governance Arrangements (Structural and Values) = Holistic Approach.
- A 0 to 1 scale was assigned to measure the performance of organizations.

### 3.) Fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis

- Typology of Gender-based in civil society initiatives in whistleblowing

### 4.) The different approaches that prevail within the initiatives were defined.

- Characteristic features of each approach.
- Examples and cases.

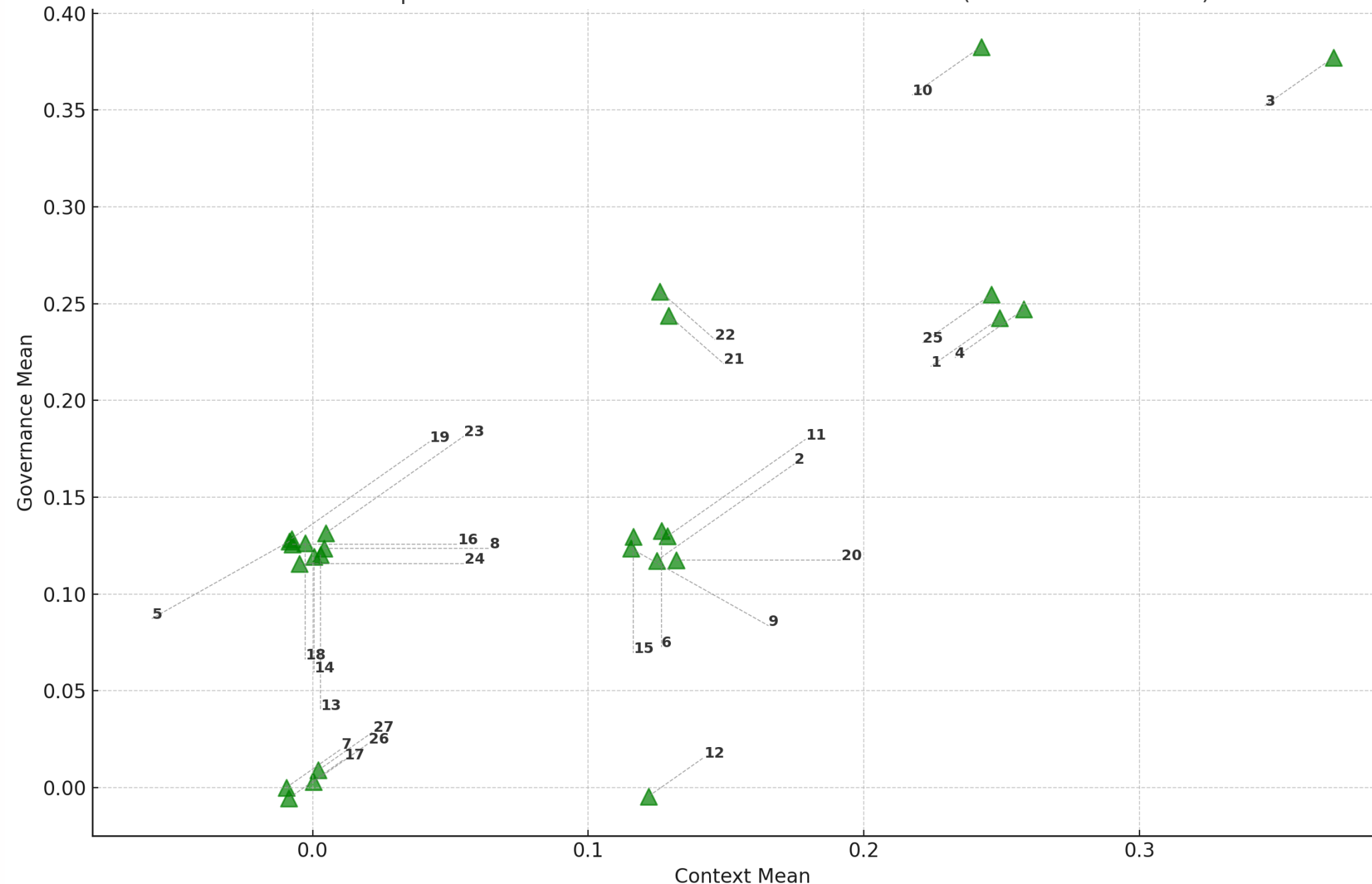


# III. Key Facts



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Relationship Between Context and Governance Dimensions (Dashed Radial Lines)



## Legend (Stakeholders)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Whistleblowing International Network       | 15. Whistleblower Network                        |
| 2. Oživení                                    | 16. UNCAC Coalition                              |
| 3. Transparency International (Ireland)       | 17. Spotlight on corruption                      |
| 4. Transparency International (Spain)         | 18. National Whistleblower Center                |
| 5. Transparency International (Italy)         | 19. Pistaljka                                    |
| 6. Transparency International (Belgium)       | 20. Eurocadres                                   |
| 7. The Good Lobby                             | 21. XNET   |
| 8. Parrhesia Inc Advancing Whistleblowing     | 22. People vs BigTech                            |
| 9. BluePrint for Free Speech                  | 23. Women Press Freedom                          |
| 10. Protect Speak Up, Stop Harm               | 24. Whistleblower Protection.EU                  |
| 11. Maison des Lanceurs d'alerte              | 25. Campax                                       |
| 12. CASE (Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe) | 26. Fondation Charles-Léopold Mayer's            |
| 13. Index on Censorship                       | 27. LIBERTIES (Civil Liberties Union for Europe) |
| 14. Article19                                 |  |

- **27 actors** with whistleblowing initiatives were mapped.
- Gender-focused whistleblowing initiatives are in **early stages**.
- Organizations tend to **link whistleblowing to a global governance agenda** such as anti-corruption, press freedom, digital rights, and human rights.
- Only **7 organizations** (out of 27) offer specific services tailored to gendered aspects of whistleblowing. (TI Ireland, TI Spain, Protect, XNet, People vs Tech, Oživení, BluePrint for Free Speech)
- Most initiatives emphasize extra-organizational dimensions and social value transformation, focusing on policy advocacy and increasing social awareness.

# III. Key Facts

Most initiatives emphasize extra-organizational dimensions and social value transformation, focusing on policy advocacy and increasing social awareness.

## Context

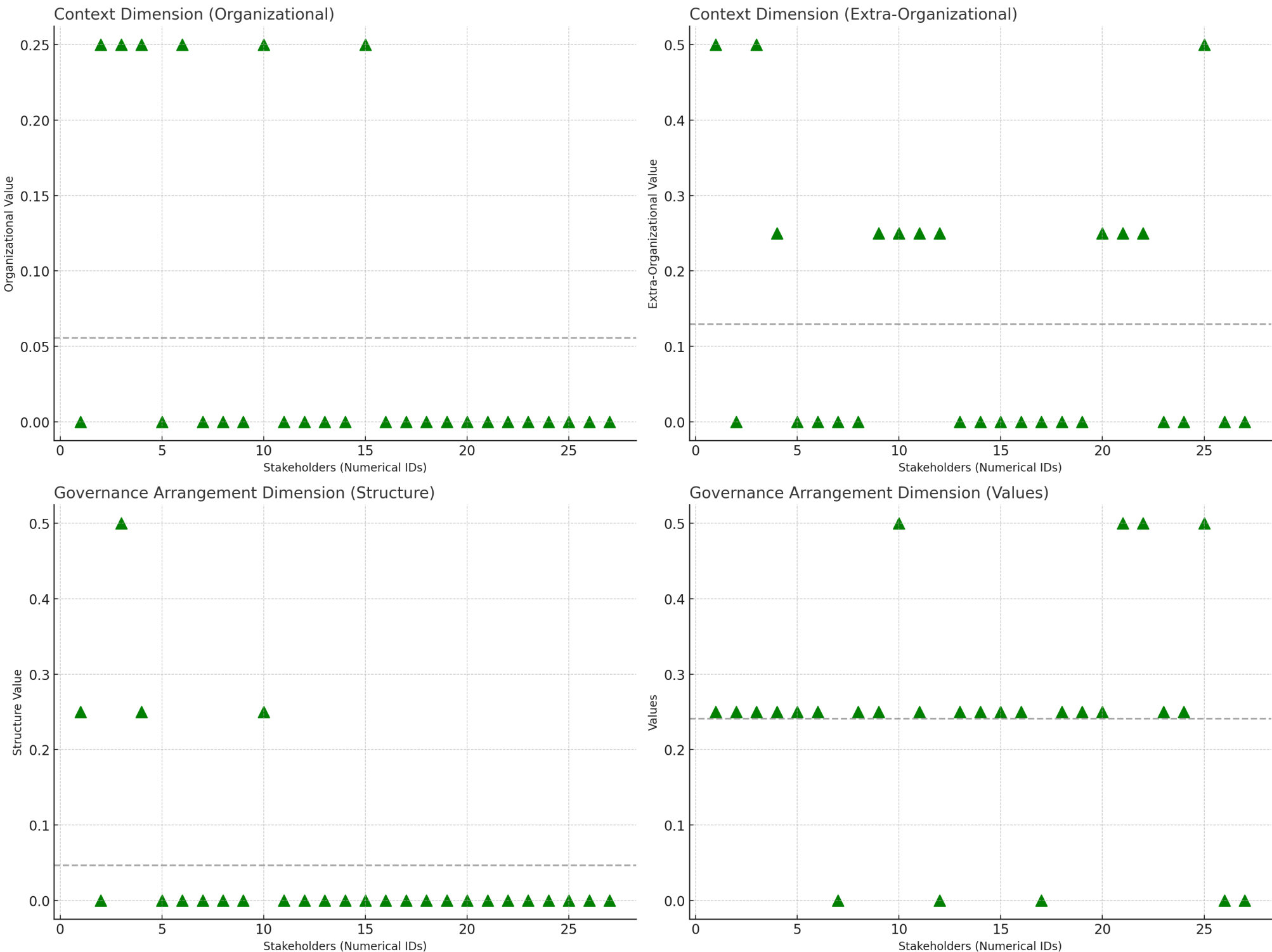
**Organizational Level:** Limited CSO initiatives support organizations in adopting gender-sensitive *Speak Up* systems and arrangements.  
**Existing practices:** Training HR staff and raising awareness on gender issues within organizations.

**Extra-Organizational Level:** Civil society engagement in policy advocacy related to the transposition and implementation of the EU Directive.  
**Existing practices:** Active positioning of CSO actors in policy discussions and consultations surrounding the Directive’s implementation.

## Governance Arrangements

**Structure:** The least developed dimension, highlighting the need for tailored strategies and services that address diverse whistleblower identities through gender and intersectional perspectives.  
**Existing practices:** Priority legal advisory services for women, and translation support for women in mobility.

**Values:** The most developed dimension, focusing on raising social awareness about women’s roles and challenges as whistleblowers.  
**Existing practices:** Use of institutional communication platforms and traditional media to increase the visibility of women-led cases.



## IV. Types of Gender-focused approaches identified



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- **Social Awareness Approach:** The most prevalent approach, using two strategies 1.) publicizing women's experiences, and 2.) highlighting data on disparities in access to reporting systems and effectiveness, or otherwise, of legal frameworks in practical cases. This approach personalizes and contextualizes the challenges women face in whistleblowing.
- **Utilitarian Approach:** Less common but growing, this approach emphasizes whistleblowing as a tool to expose and reduce systematic practices like gender-based violence, workplace discrimination and sexual corruption. It positions whistleblowing as a mechanism for gender-relevant social justice and systemic change.
- **Effective Protection and Assistance Approach:** The least-developed approach, advocating for gender-sensitive whistleblower protection policies. While some organizations refer whistleblowers to specialized services, such as **free legal assistance and psychosocial support**, there is a significant gap in availability of comprehensive services with a gender focus. More robust, integrated services are needed to protect and support whistleblowers effectively.

## 🧠 **Analytical gap**

- **Evidence = Data + Context + Interpretation**

The lack of contextual and interpretive layers prevents data from exposing systemic patterns of inequality.

- **Critical dimensions** — race, origin, migration status, precarity, intergenerational discrimination — often remain **invisible** within gender analyses.
- **Storytelling and life histories** capture complexity but are **perceived as anecdotal**, limiting their policy influence.
- **Organizational data** and **whistleblowers' agency** are **underused** as sources of **policy-relevant evidence**.

## 🚀 **Need for the GIM-Tool**

The GIM-Tool responds to these gaps by:

- Integrating **gender and intersectionality** into data capture and interpretation.
- Enabling the **conversion of individual experiences into aggregated, analyzable evidence**.
- Leveraging **organizational learning** and **whistleblowers' agency** to produce **evidence for systemic change and public policy design**.



# GIM-Tool Overview







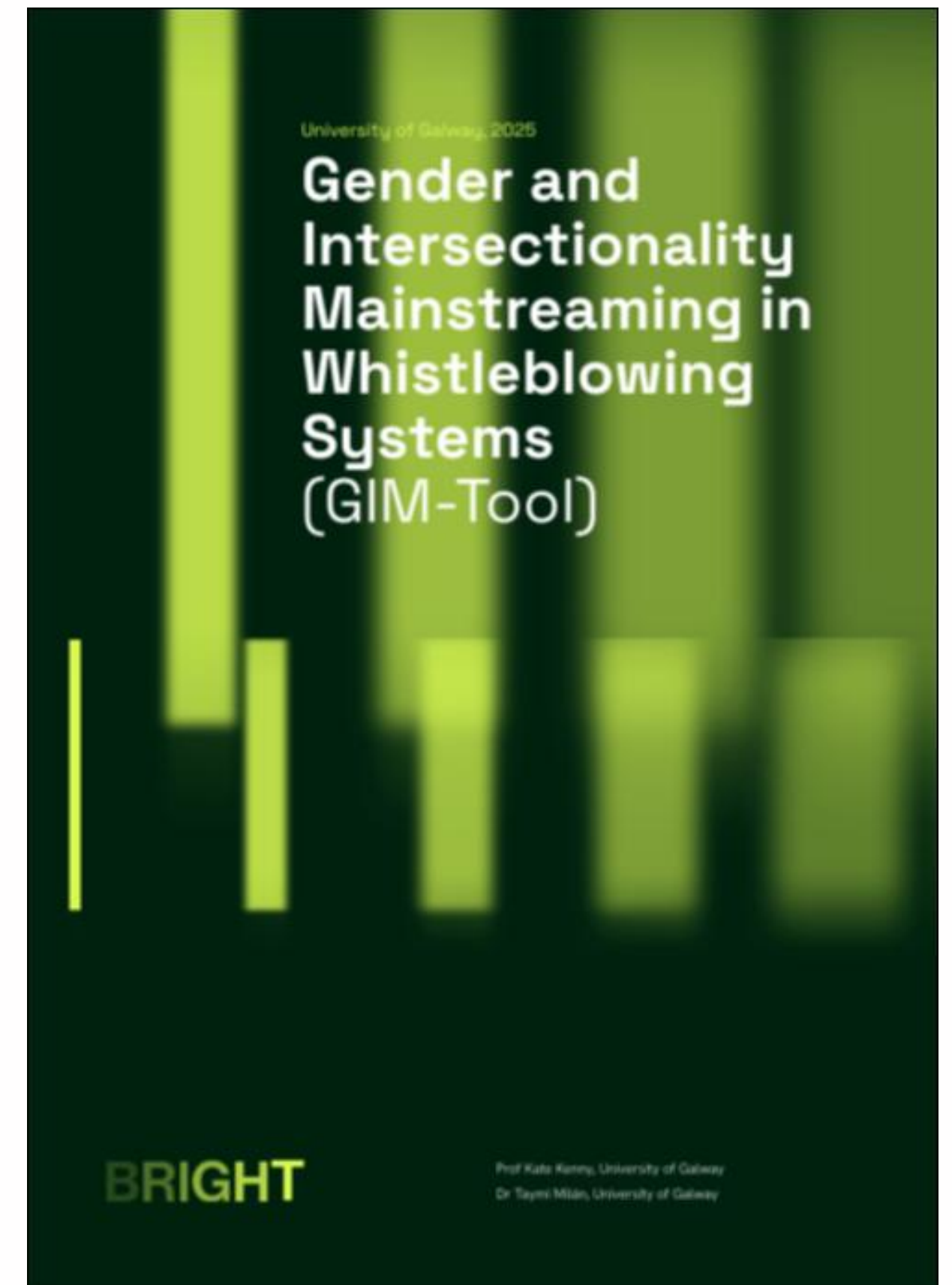
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## Two Complementary Questionnaires

- **For Whistleblowers (21 questions):**  
Explores individual, relational, and structural factors across six domains — sociodemographic, caregiving, discrimination, reporting, retaliation, and support.
- **For Organizations (16 questions):**  
Assesses institutional communication, gender-based violence protocols, support services, collaboration networks, and data intelligence.

## Core Features

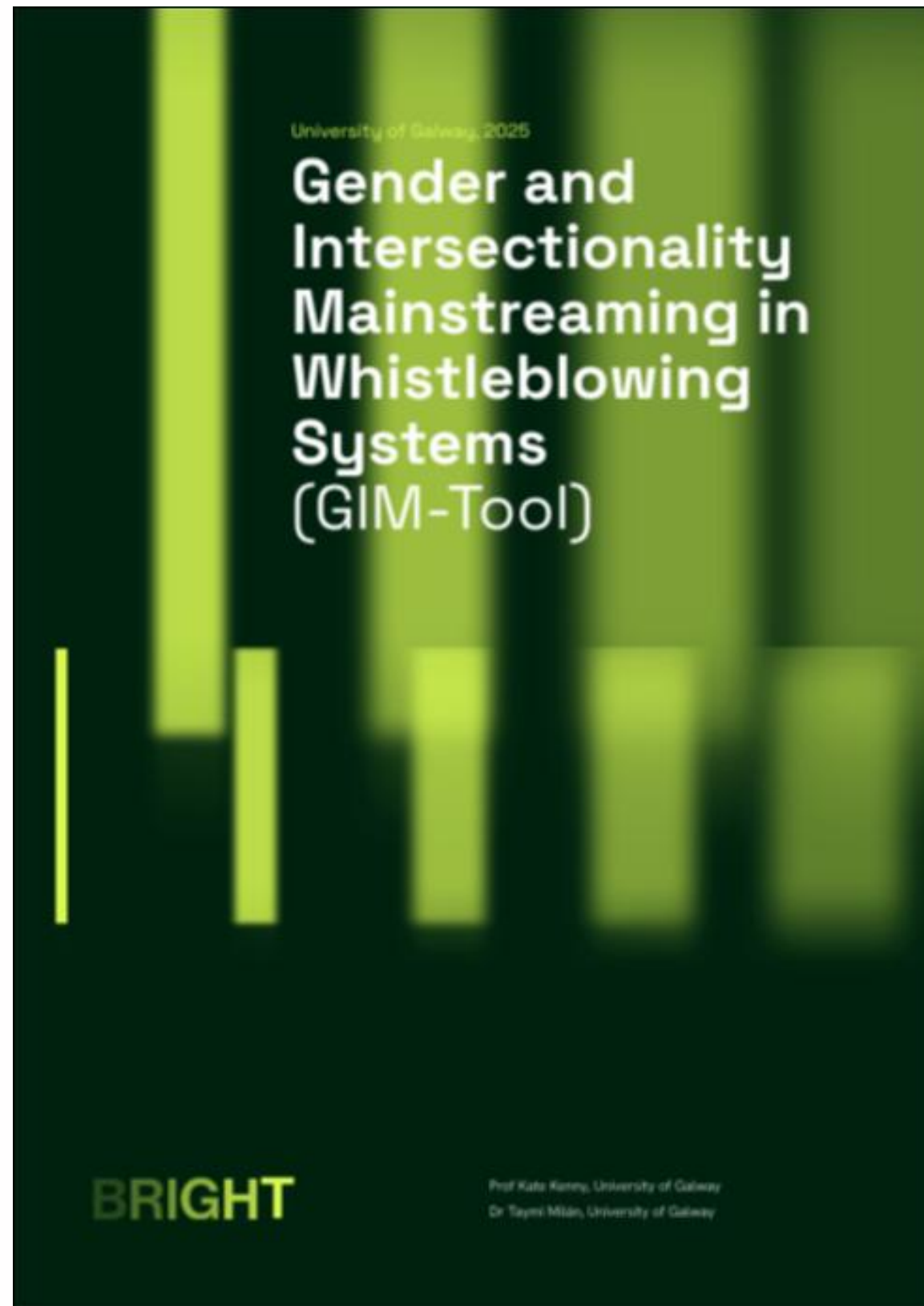
-  Seamless Integration: Easily embedded in existing systems (platforms, hotlines, surveys).
-  Data for Action: Generates anonymized, disaggregated data to guide inclusive reforms.
-  User-Centered & Safe: Ensures informed consent, psychological safety, and non-revictimization.
-  Designed for Change: Identifies structural inequalities and supports institutional transformation through collaboration and evidence.



# Calls to Action



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**If you are planning a survey, use the GIM-Tool**

**Share it with others!**

**We will** be happy to support you in turning data into evidence that strengthens whistleblower protection policies **and can link to other studies.**

 **Available here →**





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*Thank you!*

*Get in touch to learn more & download resources:*

<https://www.ewi.legal>