



D.4.3

Lessons Learned from Pilot Practices in Gender-Sensitive Human Resources Management.

Version: 0.9

Status and Date: Final, 28 April 2022

Dissemination level: Public

Project Coordinator: CIRAD (FR)

Project Start Date: 1st January 2019

Project Duration: 48 months

Task Leader: WUR

Contributing authors: Eva Siebelink, Joyce van der Velde, Margreet van der Burg (WUR), Panayiota Polykarpou (CUT), with input by partners Laurence Guyard, Angela Zeller (ANR); Francisco Hinojal Juan (CICYTEX); Elvira Lapedota, Marina Marini (CIHEAM Bari); Emma Milhau, Cindy van Hyfte (CIRAD); and Valerie Farrell (TEAGASC).

Reviewing partner: CUT

Contact Persons: Panayiota Polykarpou & Eva Siebelink



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement [No 824546](#).

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Version History

Version	Status	Date	Contributors/Partners	Summary of changes
V.0.1	Draft	28 Jan. 2022	Panayiota Polykarpou, CUT	Structure of the document
V.0.2	Draft	15 Feb. 2022	Panayiota Polykarpou, CUT	Work on the introduction
V.0.3	Draft	22 Feb. 2022	Eva Siebelink, WUR	Review and adjustment of structure and introduction
V.0.4	Draft	25 Feb. 2022	Eva Siebelink, WUR	Work on pilots per partner; adjustment of introduction
V 0.5	Draft	25 March 2022	Eva Siebelink, Joyce van der Velde, Margreet van der Burg, WUR	Work on good practices and lesson learned per partner, analysis and conclusions
V 0.6	Draft	1 April 2022	Panayiota Polykarpou, CUT	Review by WP Leader
V 0.7	Draft	14 April 2022	Eva Siebelink, Joyce van der Velde and Margreet van der Burg, WUR	Processing input from partners and finalizing document
V 0.8	Draft	22 April 2022	Eva Siebelink, WUR	Processing input from partners
V 0.9	Final	28 April 2022	Margreet van der Burg, Eva Siebelink, Joyce van der Velde, WUR; Panayiota Polykarpou, CUT	Finalizing conclusions and abstract; final overall review

Abstract

This public document *D.4.3 Lessons Learned from Pilot Practices in Gender-Sensitive Human Resources Management* captures the lessons learned of the gender-sensitive pilot practices developed for Human Resources Management (HRM) at the partner research institutions, universities and funding agency within Work Package 4 of the Gender-SMART project. This document shares the experiences with the pilots publicly with other institutions and organizations with the specific focus on the lessons learned and how these pilots can be considered examples for others as good practices. It clearly discusses which conditions matter for their sustainability and transferability.

The first chapter introduces the Gender-SMART project and its goals, followed by an explanation of the methodology and criteria used to collect the experiences of the partners. It is important to note that the selected practices were implemented during 2021-2022 under the Covid-19 pandemic which affected the planning, implementation and duration of the practices.

Chapter two presents the gender-sensitive pilot practices that were selected, elaborated and implemented by each partner. These are grouped by their main focus on:

- **work-life balance measures**, including teleworking, homeworking and parental leave;
- **recruitment policies and practices**, including gender coaching of selection committees and bias-free recruitment;
- **mentoring policies and practices**, including individual mentoring, mentoring circles and an ambassador network; and
- **mobility policies and practices**, especially focusing on geographic mobility.

In the final chapter three, we share our reflections and recommendations based on the specifics of the pilot designs and lessons learned, and especially in light of their sustainability and transferability as good practices to adopt by other organisations. We reflect on specific institutional contexts that condition success as it appeared to matter the amount of self-control over implementing new practices, the ratio of research and other staff groups, and the institutional range of (inter)national orientation, disciplines and mandate. We discuss on which level(s) to best take initiative, elaborate the design and then implement a new gender-sensitive HRM measure; who to include at the early stages and how to scale up. We stress monitoring and evaluation tools as key instruments to trace change and propose adjustments in time. The need to secure resources is also strongly stated. The chapter closes with key practical tips.

Glossary

SEX - GENDER. Where sex refers to the biologically determined characteristics and globally understood as a classification of living beings, gender refers to the social construction of women and men, of femininity and masculinity, and varies across time, place, and cultures.

GENDER RELATIONS are the ways in which a society defines rights, responsibilities and the identities of men and women in relation to one another. Gender relations are based on power and negotiations, closely linked, influencing one another. (FAO 2012)

GENDER NORMS refer to the gender dimensions of social norms, or the societal expectations of how men and women ought to behave in their everyday affairs. Social norms also “structure social interactions in ways that allow social actors to gain the benefits of joint activity. And they determine in significant ways the distribution of the benefits of social life” (Petesch et al. 2018, with reference to Knight and Ensminger 1998).

GENDER+ DIMENSION or INTERSECTIONALITY acknowledges heterogeneity among women, among men, and among non-binary genders by examining gender as intersecting with other social dimensions to which binary and hierarchical social values are attached. Examples are age/generation, class/wealth, race/ethnicity, geographical location (e.g. urban/rural), religion, civic status, sexual orientation, health status. Identities, relations and institutional structures often reflect the value loaded attributions and internalisations to these dimensions which possibly complicate and aggravate gender inequalities.

GENDER EQUALITY refers to the situation where individuals of all sexes are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations imposed by strict gender roles or norms. The different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. (based on EC 2014)

GENDER-SENSITIVITY implies taking an approach that addresses societal and cultural factors involved in gender-based exclusion and discrimination (based on EIGE glossary)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY indicates the absence of barriers to economic, political and social participation on the grounds of sex, often intersecting with other social dimensions. Such barriers are often indirect, difficult to discern and caused by structural phenomena and social representations that have proved particularly resistant to change. Equal opportunities, which is founded on the rationale that a whole range of actions are necessary to redress deep-seated sex and gender-based as well as other inequities, should be distinguished from equal treatment, which merely implies avoiding direct discrimination. (based on EC 2014)

EMPOWERMENT refers to the access to resources and development of personal capacities to be able to participate actively in shaping life in economic, social and political terms. (EC 1998)

MONITORING and EVALUATION (M&E) refers to the continuous assessment of programmatic implementation in relation to agreed schedules and of the use of inputs, infrastructure, and services, and its periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact (expected and unexpected) in relation to stated objectives. (based on WB 2012)

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List of Acronyms

ANR	Agence Nationale de la Recherche (FR)
CICYTEX	Centro de Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas de Extremadura (ES)
CIHEAM Bari	Centro Internazionale di Altistudi Agronomici Mediterranei (IT)
CIRAD	Center de coopération International en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (FR)
CUT	Cyprus University of Technology (CY)
D&I	Diversity & Inclusion
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
EC	European Commission
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
HRM	Human Resources Management
LMS	Learning Management System)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
RFO	Research Funding Organisation
R&I	Research & Innovation
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
STEAM fields	Fields of Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture and Mathematics
Teagasc	Agriculture and food development authority (IE)
WP	Work Package
WUR	Wageningen University & Wageningen Research (NL)

1. Introduction

This section outlines the objectives of the Gender-SMART project and Work Package 4, the purpose of this document, the approach taken, and finally the structure of the report.

1.1 Objectives of Gender-SMART and Work Package 4

The overall aim and first objective of the Gender-SMART project focused on the development and implementation of a tailor-made Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in each of the participating Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and Research Funding Organisations (RFOs). It was anticipated to design each GEP around four challenges:

- Building a gender equality culture, elaborated in Work Package (WP) 3
- Developing equal career support measures, in WP 4
- Reshaping decision-making and governance, in WP 5
- Integrating gender in funding, research and teaching, in WP 6

The second objective of the project aimed at initiating change within the partner organizations that will have a long-lasting impact. Therefore, the Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) were to be co-designed with key internal stakeholders and the agreed actions to be implemented during the four-year project delivering change beyond the project duration.

The third objective addressed to disseminate and share good practices and lessons learned among the partners, within and beyond the academic world, and globally.

Work Package 4 aims to address interrelated objectives concerning recruitment and career support. First, it seeks to ensure equal opportunities throughout careers in research organisations and academia (including for administrative and support functions), from initial selection and at each step along the career ladder. Second, it aims at creating the conditions for both female and male staff to achieve an improved balance between professional and family life. Gender-sensitive career management and working environments are to be addressed since they contribute to making research equally attractive to women and to men all along their career.

In view of the activities for WP4, the partners of Gender-SMART have identified their main institutional biases and gaps regarding recruitment, career management and work-life balance in the audits as reported in Deliverable 4.1, and have examined and designed tailor-made gender sensitive pilots for practices that are being implemented at each institution as part of Task and Deliverable 4.2. These gender-sensitive pilot practices were developed for Human Resources Management (HRM) at the partners' and tested during the project with the aim to get fully and sustainably integrated in the institutional daily routines and procedures.

Drawing upon the design and implementation of these pilot practices, this Deliverable 4.3 aims to capture the lessons learned from their implementation as gender-sensitive HR management. The goal of this document is to share their design and the lessons learned on

their implementation such as success factors and obstacles, and recommendations that will be useful to address in the implementation into other institutions around the world.

1.2 Building good practices in gender-sensitive Human Resources Management

1.2.1 Approach and methodology

In this section we briefly explain the agreed research methodology to identify good practices and lessons learned related to the implementation of the gender-sensitive pilot practices in Human Resources Management. We also provide an overview of the main criteria and priorities used to identify the best practices.

Based on the gender-sensitive practices selected by each partner, we conducted mid-term evaluation and final evaluation meetings (in the form of interviews) with the responsible person(s) for each pilot practice, aiming to gather important insights for their implementation process and progress.

Good practices and lessons learned were identified according to the criteria that they:

- build on what was learned from past experience(s) and would be used to inform new planning of strategies and actions;
- lead to improve information and knowledge for better decision-making,
- use existing opportunities or overcome barriers, and
- enable transferability to other institutions.

The lessons learned can be positive or negative. Negative are those which identify (an) element(s) that can be better avoided or prevented in future planning. They can also include identification of specific issues to take into account when engaging in planning implementation. For assessing transferability, it is also important to address which specific organisational contexts can be of influence.

Each partner was asked to provide a short description and justification of the practice selected, the lessons learned and obstacles encountered during the implementation process as well as of the resources that were dedicated and an assessment of the potential transferability of the selected practices as “good practices”.

1.2.2 Enabling and restricting Covid-19 circumstances

The selected practices were implemented during 2021-2022 under the Covid-19 pandemic which affected the planning, implementation and duration of the practices positively in some cases and negatively in other ones. Where relevant, this influence will be elaborated on later.

Most partners commented that Covid-19 circumstances complicated implementation. Their current pilot practices would require more time for sustainable implementation; meanwhile

some partners were more and some less successful in moving this process forward. For several RPOs the project duration under Covid-19 circumstances was simply too short to fully develop more than one selected pilot, and all intend to continue their efforts.

1.3 Document structure

This document aims to capture good practices and lessons learned by the Gender-SMART partners to share publicly with other institutions in support of the development of gender-sensitive human resources practices.

The following core chapter of this document, chapter 2, presents the gender-sensitive pilot practices that were selected to elaborate and implemented by each partner. These practices are subdivided in sections 2.1 till 2.4 according to their common Human Resources Management (HRM) domain which facilitates the reader to better compare:

- Work-life balance measures, including teleworking, homeworking and parental leave
- Recruitment policies and practices, including gender coaching of selection committees and bias-free recruitment
- Mentoring policies and practices, including individual mentoring, mentoring circles and an ambassador network
- Mobility policies and practices, especially focusing on geographic mobility

In the concluding chapter after the presentation of the pilot practices the reader can find concluding recommendations and reflections in relation to further advancement of gender-sensitive Human Resources Practice in RPOs and RFOs.

In the annex to this document the reader can find the practices and the contact details of the responsible person(s) per partner institution.

2. Gender-Sensitive Pilot Practices in Human Resources Management

This section presents the gender-sensitive pilot practices that were selected to be elaborated and implemented by each partner. Each pilot practice is introduced by a short description and rationale why it was selected. Then we present the obstacles encountered and lessons learned, followed by the measures taken to ensure sustainable implementation of the practice including recommendations. Finally, the dedicated and needed resources as well as other points for the transferability of each practice will be addressed.

2.1 Work-life balance measures: teleworking, homeworking and parental leave

2.1.1 *Integrating a gender lens into a flexible work policy at CIHEAM Bari*

Description and rationale

CIHEAM Bari is an international organisation and centre for post-graduate training, applied scientific research and design of in-partnership actions within the framework of international research and cooperation programmes, especially in the Mediterranean area.

CIHEAM Bari selected the integration of a gender lens into a flexible work policy as one of their two gender-sensitive pilot practices. The implementation of this practice was considered important as it would advance the empowerment of the staff by giving them more autonomy in how they do their job to the best of their ability and therefore reconcile work and personal/family life.

The survey CIHEAM Bari held at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic provided lots of interesting insights on how women and men differently handled the new working environment that required homeworking due to Covid-19 measures. These survey results were seriously taken into account in the design of the gender-sensitive pilot practice.

All staff was allowed to apply for remote working, under certain rules and restrictions. This right has been taken up in the staff regulations by now. It has been calculated for 2020 that 32% of the women and 41% of the men (administrative staff and researchers) applied for approval for remote working and no negative effect was recorded in terms of performance.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- This practice was selected before the outbreak of Covid-19 as a pilot action of CIHEAM Bari's GEP to structure flexible work hours and teleworking policies which in practice appeared to be applied in an informal manner. It was promptly implemented during the pandemic due to lockdown restrictions, in compliance with the guidelines issued by the Government to respond to the emergency. Further adjustments were applied leading to a more structured policy on flexible work at the national level.

- The flexible work experience proved not to be the same for everybody due to unequal division of the load of housework between men and women; therefore, often a feeling of unease and inequality was felt and requires efforts to be minimized or otherwise managed.
- The other side of increased flexibility is the risk of overwork as was often complained about by employees when working from home. Therefore, monitoring mechanisms such as separation of working from living space at home or self-monitoring of working hours and connectivity at home are deemed necessary when implementing such practice.

Sustainability of the measures

- A national law already regulates 'Remote Work' nowadays. However, a bill is on the Italian Parliament's agenda to update and adjust implementing provisions, also based on the experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A Remote Work policy is now part of the CIHEAM Bari staff regulations, formally approved by the Director. Since staff performance was clearly improved under the introduction of this measure, long-term implementation is expected to provide the same good results.

Transferability & resources

- Remote work can be transferred to small organisations such as CIHEAM Bari. It is recommended to line managers to monitor their employees' performance by asking them to report in writing monthly. This model/practice can also be applied by organisations running projects abroad and have their staff out of office as well.
- It is recommended to have staff working in the office for at least two days a week since in-person interactions are significantly important for the efficiency of the team.
- CIHEAM Bari has two dedicated staff members for the implementation of this practice.

2.1.2 Agile working policy / homeworking at Teagasc

Description and rationale

Teagasc is the Agriculture and Food Development Authority and the national body in Ireland providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agricultural and food sector and rural communities.

Teagasc chose an agile working policy as one of the two gender-sensitive practices, which was officially launched in December 2020 based on consultation with staff during a virtual workshop as well as feedback from a survey on working from home as part of a COVID-19 survey of staff of which 500 staff replied.

The new agile working policy allows for a number of working options for staff:

- Staff can work flexible core hours between 8am - 6:15pm with an earlier starting time or later finishing time to suit their own personal needs;
- Remote working in another office closer to their home up to 3 days per week;
- A post covid longer term home working policy;
- Compressed working hours which allows staff to working longer hours over four days to free up the fifth day to deal with personal extenuating circumstances for a prescribed term;
- Meetings should only be scheduled between the hours of 10:00 – 4:00 pm where possible, and allow colleagues to take sufficient breaks, such as emphasizing that no meetings should be scheduled for lunch hours.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- Teagasc is part of the Irish public sector and therefore it cannot develop its home working policy on its own. Teagasc depends on the government’s approval which will be based on a framework agreed between government and national unions. Because of this dependency on government policy, the detailed agile working policy has not been finalised within Teagasc.
- It is considered important to have senior female role models participating in agile working/homeworking so that staff can see that working in an agile way does not impact career development opportunities. Senior female and male staff using some of the agile working policies will also help embed a culture of agile working and support for good work life balance.
- In applying such practice it will be important to include support staff throughout this transformation (training for managers) and to consider whether office furniture and technological support is sufficient for homeworking while health and safety assessments need to be also carried out on the home office environment.
- The interactions in the office are still seen as important for collaboration and innovation, so staff should be guided to use their time in the office to meet colleagues. Connection among people in the organisation still underpins productivity, so it is important to build this social capital when staff are in the office.
- Teagasc has set up a working group of managers and staff representatives to understand and resolve issues as they arise.
- Managers will receive training during 2022 on how to support an agile workforce and how leadership styles can positively (or negatively) impact on staff well-being.
- Due to the new circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic, it has not been possible to fully gauge the impact of the new agile working policy.

Sustainability of the measures

- Agile working is now part of Teagasc terms and conditions and part of the conditions of staff in the wider public service. At a macro level, the Irish government has announced that all staff within the public service will have the option to work at least 20% of their time from home. Within the organisation, senior management has given public and formal commitment to agile working.
- Technologies to support agile working have been put in place which involved a large investment of money and resources.
- As the agile working policy gets finalised later this year it will include a number of support measures:
 - Agile working staff representative consultation group
 - Annual reporting of numbers to senior management as well as our parent department
 - Part of new employment contracts
 - Requirement for on-going formal reviews to improve the effectiveness of the policy
 - Senior management job descriptions include a provision that they must support and role model behaviours in support of agile working

Transferability & resources

- An important point to consider is the establishment of clear and transparent guidelines and support measures for the employees and their managers. The process for applying for approval to profit from one of the agile working policies needs to be clear, including transparency about the process if the application is refused (appeals process).
- The implementation process should include an agile working review process carried out annually.
- This particular practice is more effective at an institution where research does not require a fixed presence of researchers in a lab or any experimental set-up. Therefore, the spatial context of the job performance is an important factor for the success of the practice.
- It is important that the HRM department provides central support for the agile working policy, applications and support to both staff and managers. A partnership structure (staff consultation group) is recommended to discuss and agree on any changes to the policies.

2.1.3 Gender-sensitive teleworking at CIRAD

Description and rationale:

CIRAD (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development) works with its partners to build knowledge and solutions and invent resilient farming systems for a more sustainable, inclusive world.

CIRAD has chosen its teleworking policy as one of its two gender-sensitive pilot practices. Due to the mobility restrictions of the Covid-19 health crisis there was an urgent need (and as such

a “window of opportunity”) to advance such policy. It has been taken up as a major subject in the dialogue between social partners and CIRAD top management (signature of a corporate agreement). CIRAD Gender-SMART team took the opportunity to integrate gender considerations in this dialogue.

The aim of this pilot practice was to facilitate a better work-life balance. By providing the option of voluntary teleworking to every man/woman. It enabled staff to spend less time for travelling to work and to better align personal activities with job responsibilities such as taking time to spend with the family. It also allowed to arrange tailor-made support to solve career dilemmas for CIRAD staff.

The pilot practice activated a cultural change as new ways for effective cooperation and remote dialogue had to be explored and shared. It also started a wider discussion with managers on how to reach a more effective and better work-life balance for everyone. This resulted in a training for managers to acquire the necessary skills for managing remotely. This is now included as part of the core skills required and trained in CIRAD’s management training programme which primarily address:

- Support for new managers
- Role and positioning as a middle manager
- Governance, strategic steering and leadership
- Communication
- Leadership and decision making
- Skills management and motivation
- Inclusive management, quality of life at work
- Management of difficult situations and prevention of psychosocial risks
- Collective intelligence and cross-functional management
- Change management
- Remote management.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- Introducing teleworking requires a new management approach by managers. Therefore it is important to have a clear vision and guidance to support managers, for instance by providing training to acquire the newly required skills.
- CIRAD created a group for managers to exchange and compare experiences. Experience learned that such a group should rather be kept small and informal to be most effective.
- Working from home often implies less space for informal discussions which are considered important for stimulating creativity and effective collaboration. Therefore, it is seen as important to also stimulate in-person interactions.
- Group facilitations and toolkits (for example for self-assessment to get an overview of all relevant aspects and for deciding on home working) can help smoothen the process for the employees.

- A teleworking policy for all employees can raise a feeling of inequality when not all the employees can actually work from home (because of their tasks, for example work in a lab). It is important to consider the context of each job position when designing and implementing a teleworking policy.
- The teleworking policy was not implemented as usual as it was under Covid-19 constraints. Due to the new circumstances, CIRAD had to adapt and develop this practice in a very short time frame in dialogue with the social partners.

Sustainability of the measures

- A corporate agreement has been signed with social partners for the implementation of gender-sensitive telework for all staff within CIRAD.
- Teleworking is provided as an option to be requested and applied for all employees on a voluntary basis. No strict rules regarding days of attendance are set. The practical details are arranged in dialogue with their manager to ensure the proper functioning of the team. Direct managers are thus key in the practical implementation of this policy in agreement with staff.
- Optional teleworking for each man/woman has activated discussions with managers on how to achieve a better and more efficient work-life balance for all. These discussions also steered a cultural change as it required new ways to support smooth cooperation and engagement in remote dialogues.
- The use of inclusive design and writing is important to ensure that everybody learns about and can make best use of the new measures. It is also recommended to ensure that each agreement includes flexibility in the design and implementation of teleworking to accommodate all types of professional and personal situations (no fixed days in the month, freedom of telework location) and therefore regardless of gender.
- A proper monitoring system and specific gender criteria have been foreseen to follow-up during the implementation of the corporate agreement.
- Training courses have been set up on how to work well in a remote working environment.
- A guide on the articulation of private and professional life has been created and is available to all.

Transferability & resources

- This pilot practice can be transferable to institutions which national law supports the implementation of such policy.
- This pilot practice must be supported by HR in conjunction with the trade unions and the management of the establishment.

2.1.4 Gender-sensitive teleworking at CICYTEX

Description and rationale

The Centre for Scientific and Technological Research of Extremadura (CICYTEX) is a Spanish Public Body Entity attached to the regional government of Extremadura whose purpose is the generation of Research & Innovation (R&I) in Agriculture and Food Sciences in the four institutes attached to it, in order to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and economic, social and cultural development, as well as the training of personnel and advice to public and private entities in R&I. The overall objective of CICYTEX is to support the business sector by assisting them in the incorporation of R&I in their production processes.

CICYTEX selected gender-sensitive teleworking as a pilot as well. The implementation of teleworking has been initiated by the Government of Extremadura in 2019. Soon in this indisputable step forward it became clear that the foreseen day-based regime of 2 fixed face-to-face on-site and 3 non-face-to-face days would not work well for a research centre, especially for researchers. It would be too rigid and little attractive to workers for research work with fluctuating workloads. For women it would be a risk that teleworking would be misinterpreted and allowing for multi-tasking at home and rather would add to their home workload.

For this reason, CICYTEX introduced a flexible formula for teleworking in the draft of the Statute of Research Personnel that is currently being negotiated. By managing the formula by CICYTEX itself, it will be able to allow teleworking on specific request. In response to the initiative of its Regional Ministry responsible for Research and Innovation and on the proposal of the Ministry responsible for Human Resources, the Government of the Junta de Extremadura is expected to approve the mentioned Statute in 2022. It will include and regulate unique rules to adapt the legislation to the peculiarities of the research staff of CICYTEX. If and when it is formally approved, CICYTEX is ready to implement the pilot practice. It had already included it in its Gender Equality Plan of 2022-2025.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- Due to the limited organizational autonomy that CICYTEX has as a public organisation, any new policy measure has first to be negotiated with the government. Regional law is leading for governmental institutes and can hardly be influenced by the organization.
- The Covid-19 situation severely delayed the legislation process.
- Currently, of the approximately 350 people CICYTEX staff, 20 people (most of them administrative staff) are teleworking under the general teleworking regime of the Government of Extremadura. This number is expected to considerably increase after the new modality introduced within this policy by CICYTEX is formally approved and implemented, especially among the research staff.

- The particular policy is currently under development as it is not flexible yet and the approval is still pending by the government, therefore the lessons learned and problems encountered are those related to the general formula.

Sustainability of the measures

- Ensuring that new measures are supported by law is important to secure the sustainability of the new practices.
- The integration of flexible teleworking policy in the official GEP, secures its implementation in the future. CICYTEX did so in its new Gender Equality Plan (2022-2025) which has been approved by the institution in 2022.

Transferability & resources

- This pilot practice can be transferable to institutions which national law supports the implementation of such policy.

2.1.5 Maternity/paternity leave substitution at CICYTEX

The second pilot practice selected by CICYTEX refers to parental leave, or often called maternal and paternal leave. It aims to provide additional resources for the compensation of the work of those people who are on a maternity or paternal leave. These resources can be used for hiring additional staff or resources for outsourcing of work to ensure that parents can take their maternity or paternal leave without worrying about any impacts on their research and teams if they take up their leave.

CICYTEX has already implemented such practice as an ‘informal’ practice. It is expected that the 2023 budget will be provided for through the recently formally approved GEP. ‘Informal’ refers here to the absence of an endowed budget line for this extraordinary assistance in eligible circumstances.

At the operational level, the person who will take leave, must submit a proposal for the support to the Directorate of the Centre, which will be evaluated by both the Scientific Directorate of the Institute and the Head of Unit to combine competence in both human resources and finance. Once the proposal has been evaluated, an optimal and viable proposal is shared with the submitter.¹

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- For CICYTEX commitment is more important than funding. In a context in which there is commitment, the organization can already informally implement and finance measures.

¹ Compare: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/non-eu-countries/maternity-cover-fund>

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, budgets were restricted and mainly dedicated for alleviating the consequences of the pandemic; therefore resources for this purpose have not always been sufficiently available.
- This practice has limitations since unfortunately qualified persons for replacement or outsourcing are not always available to substitute for all the work to be done in the period of leave absence.
- This measure works better in case the capacity to substitution and additional resource contribution is greater, e.g., in support of less specialised professional profiles and when there are many researchers in the research teams which more easier allows for re-allocation of tasks. It is key to recognize that support is more complicated for those who have a more specialized focus or work method and who are not surrounded by or connected to good teams.

Sustainability of the measures

The sustainability of the measure is linked to the existence of financial resources. From 2023 onwards, it will be charged to a specific budget to be allocated each year for the GEP in the general budget of the Entity.

Transferability & resources

In general, the practice is transferable to all institutions, although its specific implementation is conditioned by available financial resources and by the labour and legal context of each organisation to free resources for this purpose.

2.2 Recruitment policies and practices

2.2.1 *External gender-sensitive coaching in recruitment committees at WU*

Description and rationale

The selected pilot by WUR focused on the appointment procedure for Chairholding Professors at Wageningen University. It aimed to reduce bias and to advance equal opportunity for female and male candidates in the recruitment and selection process.

This appointment procedure for Chairholding Professors is mainly tasked to an appointment advisory committee (BAC = Benoemings Advies Commissie) which selects and nominates candidates to the Rector Magnificus who will make the final decision on who to appoint. For each appointment the Rector Magnificus installs a special BAC with approximately 8 members who represent various disciplines and positions and includes some external members and at least two women.

The pilot enabled to hire an external gender coach with the aim to increase awareness and skills on gender-sensitive recruitment and ensure a less biased and more inclusive recruitment

and selection process. The coach was asked to review the common routines of the BAC she would participate in and to guide them in working with gender-sensitive alternatives during the process from job description till nomination of the candidate.

Based upon the success of a first pilot practice, another nine committees were coached, the last ended in September 2021. The services of the gender coach were offered by the Rector Magnificus on a voluntary basis; all committees invited her to participate. The coach mainly shared her observations and suggestions for improvement outside of the regular meetings with the chair and secretary of the committees; these were incorporated where possible. Suggestions like changing the seating per meeting, variety in speaking order (not based on reputation), discussing criteria per person instead of discussing all criteria person by person, first forming and writing down impressions and scores by oneself before starting sharing, were considered as very useful tips to discuss all on a more equal footing.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- Direct involvement of a gender coach in recruitment and selection processes is an effective practice to reduce various bias during these processes.
- Introducing gender⁺ or Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) issues as a “pilot” smoothens the implementation of a practice as it is easier than to adopt such practice as an already formalized one, and therefore better allows to create sustainable cultural change.
- It is important to ensure that high level staff can invite a gender coach and build trust in coaching since it fuels less resistance than working with a top-down or gender police approach.
- Learning ‘on the job’ is perceived as very stimulating since what it immediately provides shared learning experiences and results suitable to practice.
- In a large organization, it helps to start with a small incubator programme. Spreading the word around good experiences facilitates that others will be stimulated to engage and take over good practices.
- Top management’s commitment is important for the implementation of gender-sensitive practices.

Sustainability of the measures

- To ensure that the knowledge is incorporated in the organization and to support implementation of the lessons learned in the long run, WUR organized a series of workshops with the gender coach in June 2021. In these workshops the knowledge and experiences of the coach were shared with research and teaching staff who often participate in these recruitment and selection committees, and with Human Resources staff. Approximately 50 persons, men and women equally represented, participated in the workshops. This workshop series was graded as very valuable in the evaluation; 80% was very enthusiastic afterwards.

- The aim of the workshop series was that the gender coach would share and embed her knowledge and skills in regular staff the organisation to avoid long-term dependence on her presence in the recruitment procedures.
- The secretaries and chairs of these committees were taught how to ensure a more objective recruitment and selection process without her presence.
- It is important to make change independent of one person and therefore to create awareness and skills among the group of people participating in hiring new staff.

Transferability & resources

The recommendations made by the external coach are:

- Formalize and structure all your processes so that bias can less prevail. For instance, use a standard matrix to score criteria for every candidate before discussing one for all or sharing your assessment in the group plenary.
- Monitor the process. Learn from the steps that you take as a group.
- Reconsider and slow down. We are often in a hurry in the process but then bias kicks in.
- Make committees and advisory panels accountable for their decisions.

2.2.2 Gender-sensitive policy in recruitment at ANR

Description and rationale

The French National Research Agency (ANR) is a public administrative institution under the authority of the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The agency funds project-based research carried out by public operators cooperating with each other or with private companies.

ANR's first gender sensitive practice is focused on recruitment process. Recruitment is a key element in the creation of a more equal workforce. Even though women account for about 60% of the total ANR workforce, this numerical over-representation does not protect from inequalities. Despite this majority of women, a minority of women occupy higher positions (about 40% within the executive committee in 2019), and women who occupy higher positions earn a lower gross average salary than men do. The Agency must have a clear Human Resources policy for equality covering the recruitment process.

This pilot is operationalized through 7 actions in the Gender Equality Plan of ANR aiming to improve Human Resources recruitment policies to promote more women into higher positions. The main focus has been to first examine the internal procedures around the recruitment and promotion of women, produce sex disaggregated data as well as the promotion of internal career plans and mobility in a more effective way. HR management was quite lacking expertise about these topics when the GEP has been elaborated, but guided

through the GEP actions, they have become more and more aware of how they can support women's careers.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- Recruitment is a complex process that includes different steps which are all equally important. Breaking up this process into several distinct actions is essential. Each action complements another, that is why this practice has been subdivided into 7 actions.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has effected the efficiency of this practice as the implementation was delayed and other priorities were set (for example on teleworking).
- Training and raising awareness actions should be targeting the appropriate audience, that is here who has influence or control over the recruitment processes. For example, if managers do a pre-selection process, then the training should also target them and not only HR staff which is not involved in this part of the process.
- Sex-disaggregated data are important sources to underpin policies. A big success for ANR was that gender segregated data were collected and processed in all analyses that they are doing, for instance on pay gap, recruitment, teleworking, etc. With these, ANR can better sketch a clear picture and locate unbalances for which the approach and policy required then can be adjusted.
- Due to the preliminary stage of implementation of this practice, it is still early to identify and measure quantitative and qualitative data for the success of the practice. For start, an achievement is that there is now a common understanding on these topics across the process.

Sustainability of the measures

- Out of the 7 actions concerning this practice, 5 have been implemented, one partially implemented and one is in the process of being implemented. To ensure the sustainability of these actions, evaluation indicators must be set up and made public for the agents of the agency, particularly with regard to the transparency of the applications and the profiles selected.
- The actions undertaken must be part of ANR processes and thus ensure their sustainability.
- A reference person must be designated for each of the actions and the reports made public for consultation by all the agents of the institution.
- Having a Gender Equality Plan helps to formalize the practice and position the role and involvement of the Human Resources services as key for the implementation of the practice. Through the Gender Equality Plan, the change agents have a supportive mechanism that goes beyond analysing and reporting on gender issues.

Transferability & resources

- Awareness trainings / workshops about gender bias in recruitment process should not be limited to HR but should be open to all managers who are involved in the recruitment process. These trainings must be provided internally but also by external service providers who are aware of the issues of gender bias in research, teaching and funding.
- A plurality of qualitative and quantitative indicators must be established at the same time as the design of the actions.
- In order for this practice to be implemented, dedicated Human Resource staff (1 person) has been assigned on this practice. If the practice includes several actions, a dedicated agent must be the referent for each of the actions.

2.2.3 Bias-free recruitment and promotion procedures at CUT

Description and rationale

Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) is a public university in Cyprus, the second largest in Cyprus, focusing on Science and Technology fields. CUT has already implemented gender-sensitive practices, specially focused on work-life balance. The Human Resource Services have been actively engaged and recognised for the practices they have implemented the last 5 years at the University. CUT designed a “Equality Diversity and Inclusion” survey to collect data and information from its employees about their experience with the working conditions at CUT. Using these data, CUT revisited its recruitment and promotion procedures which are now included in the revised intersectional Equality Plan of the University. In order to eliminate any form of bias, the University has introduced a new guideline that raises awareness and important forms of bias that can occur, just before a job interview. The members of the recruitment/promotion committee are required to allocate time to read the material before conducting the job interview. In addition, this action was preceded by a training on unconscious bias for middle and top management which has been officially institutionalized.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- The involvement of the Human Resources Services and the mobilisation of middle management were key for the success of the practice as it was already a priority in their agenda.
- The practice is introduced indirectly to the members of the committees which made it easy to adopt without resistance from their side. Practices which are easily embedded in the already established procedures seem to be more efficient than those which rebuild or revise a procedure in general.
- Due to Covid-19 challenges, this practice has been delayed and not many challenges nor lessons learned are experienced yet.

Sustainability of the measure

- Both gender-sensitive practices were introduced as part of the Gender Equality Plan of CUT, a measure that made both the implementation and their sustainability “easier” to ensure.
- This practice has been applied in a small number of occasions/interviews until now, as it has been introduced at the beginning of 2022.

Transferability & resources

- The current practice can be transferable to any organisation that has a fixed procedure to job interviews and performance assessments. The practice then can be easily introduced without an obvious engagement from their side since it is not requiring much initiative or effort from them.
- A team of 2 persons were allocated for these activities.

2.3 Mentoring policies and practices

2.3.1 Individual mentoring and mentoring circles at Teagasc

Description and rationale

Teagasc’s second gender-sensitive practice focused on mentoring which was already offered at the institution. The mentoring program has recently expanded with mentoring circles in advisory services. Advisory services is an area within Teagasc which is male-dominated, therefore this practice is expected to be a useful tool for the women within advisory services. The mentoring program is addressed to participants from all genders, not only women. The aim of the circles is to create a safe place where the participants can discuss their experience and challenges they face related to gender bias. They exchange advice and agree upon actions together. Teagasc had already three circles running with great success. Participants expressed that the environment was dynamic and helped them to become more aware about gender issues and how to support each other in how to address them. The first cohort welcomed 80 participants, and the feedback received via review was positive.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- For more impactful outcome, a mentoring program should be addressed to all staff, not only women.
- In order to support participants to understand the purpose and impact of the mentoring, it is important to have supporting mechanisms such as a website or a platform for discussion purposes.
- In some cases, mentoring in the form of groups was more impactful than one-on-one mentoring.

- The circles need a common purpose to be successful and helpful. It doesn't necessarily have to be from people of the same gender. If there is a different purpose or goal then consider creating a different group.
- A good practice is to share supporting materials such as handbook, tools, guidelines, to the mentors of the programs.
- Government dependency can slow implementation of new activities down.

Sustainability of the measures

- A dedicated space on the Teagasc LMS (learning management system) has been created to publish all resources, templates, guides on how to join or become a member of a lean in circles.
- Teagasc ran an all-staff webinar to share with staff how the women lean in circles work but also showed how the application could work for other groups, e.g., new staff, international staff coming to Ireland, staff who have changed roles.
- One of the staff members who is leading one of the gender groups spoke at our International Women's Day event to share the benefits of the group.

Transferability & resources

- An expression of interest was done again in 2022 calling for staff who would like to become members of new groups.
- A network session was also organised for all the lean in circle leaders to come together and share experiences and offer support.
- Materials used by leaders have been published on our LMS space so that leaders are not re-inventing the wheel when thinking of new ideas for the groups.

2.3.2 Mentoring of female employees at ANR

Description and rationale

The second practice chosen by ANR was a mentoring program which is included in ANR's Gender Equality Plan as well as in the GPEC agreements, signed in 2016. The "Jobs and Skills Management Plan" is an approach that allows, depending on the institution's strategy, to continuously foresee and organize the adjustment between required skills and skills detained by the agents. In that respect, it allows the institution to reinforce its dynamism and to contribute to the success of its projects. It also allows the agents to get the information and tools they need to be actors of their career paths and to get an appropriate support from management and Human Resources.

The latest version of these agreements (February 2018) contains a specific action on mentoring: "launch of the mentoring program for women, which aims to promote

professional diversity and encourage women to apply for positions of responsibility”. It is in this perspective that a specific mentoring action was included in the GEP and was selected as “good practice”. Indeed, the aim of the mentoring program is to establish a formal sponsorship system whose main functions are career support and psychosocial support. The benefits of such programs is to gain career development advice, salary negotiations skills, and expand women’s network through the support of the mentor’s experience and network. The mentoring is addressed to all women of the institution who wish to achieve professional mobility. As women have a great deal of difficulty in promoting themselves, negotiating wage increases or achieving professional mobility because of their socialization, external support should help them. The mentors of program are experienced women of the agency.

The implementation of the mentoring program was scheduled in 2020 within the agency and somewhat delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic context. In 2020, four female employees participated; two had external coaches and two had internal mentors. The mentees could choose for a mentor among the Executive Committee members of the agency, and benefit from the support of an external coach and a management training programme. Now ANR examines the option to expand the effort to creating an (external) network of tutors/mentors among more public institutions.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- The Covid-19 pandemic did not help to promote gender policies and programs, since other priorities prevailed and has made setting up the mentoring practice difficult; indeed all agents were teleworking during most of the year 2020 and 2021.
- The considerable small size of the agency and the number of agents raised several issues:
 - ANR has a small structure and the top management has few agents. In the middle of the covid period, the agents were very mobilized and it was difficult to ask for an additional time investment to mentor someone.
 - The limited number of agents does not allow for a great diversity of mentor and mentee profiles.
 - Issues with direct working relationships may have prevented agents from taking the step to be a mentee or mentor.
- Women may be reluctant to mentorship for fear of being perceived as favoured because they are women and not for their skills.
- Human Resources did not have prior experience or expertise on the topic of gender equality, however they became aware of the notions of diversity and inclusion when they started implementing new activities, which really helped to implement the mentoring program. However the implementation of this practice lacked monitoring and evaluation and no specific person was in charge to set up the practice inside the Human Resources Department.

Sustainability of the measures

- This practice has been interrupted because of the Covid-19 situation. Anyway, this practice must be readapted, taking into account new forms of work in a still post-pandemic situation with a renegotiation of teleworking conditions.
- Integrating the program in the Gender Equality Plan facilitates to formalize the aim and positioning/involvement of the Human Resource services in gender and diversity policies. It also supports the development of indicators and take further steps beyond analysing and reporting on gender issues.

Transferability & resources

- The size of the organization is important for the success of a mentoring program (appr. 300 employees). In small organisations, it may not be realistic to implement an internal mentoring program. Due to the limited numbers of managers and their high workload, a (internal) mentoring program may not be achieved successfully.
- After discussion with CIRAD in particular, who wishes to implement this practice, ANR is thinking more broadly: first establish a partnership between several institutions, for example, a research and funding organization and create a common “contact book” of mentors. This expansion of the scope of mentors makes it possible to respond to the internal problems encountered and raised in the previous point “obstacles encountered and lessons learned”.

2.3.3 Equality Ambassadors Network for career progression at CUT

Description and rationale

This pilot at CUT sought to create a network of internal staff acting as ambassadors for equality. The role of these ambassadors is not only to promote equality values and inclusive behaviours, but also to contribute to the promotion of underrepresented groups in the higher rank positions. Each Ambassador (staff of CUT) receives a certification, posted on the office door. The ambassadors take on responsibilities to promote (gender) equality practices in their daily life. A list of “duties” is assigned to them, aiming to provide everyday actions on how they can advocate for the advancement of gender equality during frequent interactions, meetings, and events. The network focuses in particular to the promotion of women in higher leadership positions by promoting potential positions to eligible candidates through creating a support and empowering system. The Equality Ambassadors are members of the middle and top management who have already been advanced in their career, therefore their role is to empower others and encourage women to aim for leadership roles. The members of the network were chosen after they participated to a training offered by Human Resources Services on unconscious bias. The trainees were members of the middle and top management.

Lessons learned / sharing experience

- The involvement of Human Resources was important in terms of announcing the Network on behalf of Gender-SMART Team, as it contributed to the perception of the network as more central and institutionalized.
- This practice is institutionalized as it is part of the GEP of the university. Therefore the implementation of the network was easier to be introduced as part of the GEP.
- CUT has been outstanding in terms of inclusive practices in work-life balance and its national recognition as “Equality Employer” made the introduction of this network easier.
- Due to COVID-19, there was significant delay in the conduction of trainings, so the establishment of this network took place in the beginning of 2022. Therefore, not many experiences or challenges were faced yet.

Sustainability of the measures

- Both gender sensitive practices were introduced also in the Gender Equality Plan of CUT, a measure that made the implementation and sustainability of the practices “easier” to secure.

Transferability & resources

- Creating networks of people who have common values and advocate for a particular belief, is an empowerment practice for culture change. These groups/networks of change agents and equality ambassadors can be formed in organizations in which a group of people with common values can create the critical mass necessary for change. The resources used for this practice were HR staff members.

2.4 Mobility policies and practices

2.4.1 Gender-sensitive geographic mobility at CIRAD

Description and rationale

This practice aims to integrate gender considerations in the facilitation of the geographic mobility of CIRAD staff. In 2021, women posted abroad (including the overseas territories) represented 32% (170 / 538) of CIRAD personnel based in foreign countries and territories. This gap is decreasing, following the higher number of female recruits in the recent years (women represented 42% of geographical mobility movements in 2018 compared to 20% in 2017).

CIRAD does not have a specific geographical mobility scheme for women, but the institutional roadmap towards a new mobility policy - which was presented to the Board of Directors in June 2019 - sets out the objective of "engaging into a skills management and attractiveness

policy (...)", in order to "contribute to the rejuvenation of the expatriate population and promote expatriation for all, including women".

This subject was perceived as a major barrier in the career of women in the organisation who are obliged to work abroad during their career. In view of this challenge, a series of negotiations on this subject took place, aiming on finding solutions to better meet the employees' expectations, especially those of the youngest, women and spouses.

CIRAD directors signed an agreement in May/June 2021 concerning the mobility policies within CIRAD. The new agreement enables a smoother career path for everybody, but especially for women and single parents since it allows them to go abroad for a shorter time and gives a financial incentive for the partners as compensation for changing their job when the employee goes on expatriation. The new agreement is implemented in September 2021.

In addition, the institution has recently set up a "geographical mobility process" to advertise certain positions to be filled abroad, so that all employees have the opportunity to position themselves there.

The target group of this practice is all personnel desiring a geographical mobility plan with a special focus on young researchers and women. Geographical mobility of researchers is part of CIRAD's identity and attractiveness, and therefore, a priority issue.

The goal of this practice is to encourage women who may be reluctant to move geographically (due to insecurity in the country, need to be close to hospitals and schools, difficult accompaniment of spouses, etc.) to increase their participation. It also aims at developing career paths in a context of geographical mobility in which private and professional life can be reconciled.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- Due to Covid-19 pandemic, negotiations were on stand-by and resumed in September 2020.
- An unforeseen challenge was the introduction of a higher spousal allowance in order to take into account the problem of retirement of a spouse who cannot work. Consideration was also given to employees who are single parents.
- Due to the short period of implementation, it is still early to conclude on the effectiveness of this practice in terms of inclusion.
- The involvement and contribution of managers in the process of creating a new practice is important.
- An important decision taken was to apply these measures to all employees not just women.

Sustainability of the measures

- Corporate Agreement signed with social partners to develop geographic mobility within CIRAD.
- Having to move abroad during one's career in the organization was a major obstacle for women. The agreement will allow a more flexible career path for everyone, but especially for women and single parents, as it allows for working abroad for a shorter period of time and gives a financial incentive to the partner when the employee goes abroad.
- The use of inclusive design and writing is found important to ensure that all staff learn about and can make best use of the new measures. Any agreement should also include flexibility in the design and implementation to accommodate all types of professional and personal situations and therefore regardless of gender.
- Increase in allowances to better take into account the impact on the spouse's career.
- Introduction of an allowance to take into account single-parent situations.
- Creation of a long-term mission system to respond to specific situations requiring a regular presence in the South or to take into account personal constraints of the employee who does not wish to be part of a long-term expatriation system.
- Use of the vacation ticket envelope for the benefit of family members remaining in France as well as during paternity or maternity leave.
- Dedicated resources for training spouses, particularly to facilitate their return to work after expatriation.
- Integration of specific gender indicators in the monitoring of the agreement.
- Appointment of a dedicated person (geographic mobility officer) whose mandate is to develop a detailed action plan, based on the engagements taken in the corporate agreement. This should allow for greater mobility for all employees (including women) within the organization.

Transferability & resources

- A dedicated officer was nominated by the Directors for the implementation of this practice.
- This pilot practice can be transferable to institutions which national law supports the implementation of such policy.

2.4.2 Promoting women's geographic mobility at CIHEAM Bari

Description and rationale

Formalized policies to promote women's mobility have never been set up at CIHEAM Bari. However, this organisation is active in the Mediterranean region, from the Middle-East to North Africa. Many of its female researchers and staff work variable periods of time abroad to run activities for its International Cooperation Department.

Assignment conditions and incentives to work abroad apply now without any distinction for both men and women. At present, CIHEAM Bari intends to add more women-tailored measures to promote their mobility. A scheme based on economic incentives or career advancement opportunities may drive the process. Moreover, the set-up of an expats' network liaising with CIHEAM Bari's Alumni will foster interaction, provide support, and ensure greater safety locally. The gender dimension will be integrated in the already existing pre-departure training for all expats. Finally, the mobility of female researchers will become a performance indicator of forthcoming projects in alignment with the CIHEAM framework of multilateral cooperation in the Mediterranean area and beyond.

Obstacles encountered & lessons learned

- The focus on this policy and its implementation has been downsized by travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The legal and administrative framework takes time to be updated.

Sustainability of the measure

- The proposal of incentives (i.e., economic incentives or career advancement) and targeted awareness raising actions for staff and researchers are expected to increase interest in and encourage women's mobility.
- The inclusion of a reference to women's mobility in CIHEAM Bari vacancies can attract a growing amount of women willing to take up the challenge of working abroad.
- Tracing the number of women involved in project activities abroad as a performance indicator is introduced in CIHEAM policies and in many cases supported by donor and funding requirements.

Transferability & resources

- The current practice can be transferred to organisations with a similar profile and which are active in the field of international cooperation.

3. Conclusions: Recommendations and Reflections

The gender-sensitive pilot practices selected and developed in Human Resources Management (HRM) at the partner institutions were to be tested over a year period. The ultimate goal was to have them fully and sustainably integrated in the institutional daily routines and procedures. In chapter two, the partners provided descriptions of their pilot practices and captured the lessons learned from their implementation as gender-sensitive HRM measures. In this final chapter three, we examine and share our reflections and recommendations based on the specifics of the pilot designs and lessons learned in the light of transferability and sustainability of them as good practices to be adopted by other organisations.

Good practices and lessons learned were identified according to the criteria that they:

- build on what was learned from past experience(s) and would be used to inform new planning of strategies and actions;
- lead to improve information and knowledge for better decision-making,
- use existing opportunities or overcome barriers,
- are therefore transferable.

The lessons learned can be positive or negative. Negative are those which identify (an) element(s) that can be better avoided or prevented in future planning. They can also include identification of specific issues to take into account when engaging in planning implementation. For assessing transferability it is also important to address which specific organisational contexts can be of influence. We will also reflect on the methodology and approach including the main criteria and priorities used to select these pilot practices as good practices.

Covid-19 circumstances

Specific attention requires the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Selecting and practicing the pilots under Covid-19 circumstance offered a window of opportunity for aligning gender-sensitive pilots to the urgently needed design and implementation of teleworking policies at most partners or to a formalisation or an adaptation of already existing teleworking practices for some other partners.

The Covid-19 circumstances also turned out to be a constraint for some other pilot practices because it slowed down the required co-creation and decision-making processes. The partners attributed delay to the accompanying sudden changes in priorities, difficulties to streamline planning remotely and just 'fatigue' to take on even more changes to happen.

Type of measures and policies

The selected pilot practices address various specific domains of HRM under which we grouped them accordingly:

- **Work-life balance measures**, including flexibilization of work policies around teleworking, homeworking and parental leave;
- **Recruitment policies and practices**, including gender-sensitive coaching of selection committees and bias-free recruitment;
- **Mentoring policies and practices**, including individual mentoring, mentoring circles and an ambassador network;
- **Mobility policies and practices**, especially focusing on geographic mobility.

These are all identified as main areas for concern in the Grant Agreement Proposal and the audits that were conducted and reported about by all partners in Deliverable 4.1 in the first project year.

The selected gender-sensitive measures managed to

- a) broadening and specifying of regulations around working conditions, especially regarding work-life balance,
- b) expansion of available support structures as well as internal network support, and
- c) specifying of procedures and incentives in recruitment and career promotion.

The selected pilot practices of some partners are not necessarily absent practices at other partners. For instance, was this was especially the case for tele- and homeworking measures due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions to travel and mingle beyond the household environment. Other actions suggested in the audits were not addressed as pilot practices but still included in the partners' GEP actions, for instance regarding salary pay gaps, dual career support, and changes in performance assessments that lead to promotion or a permanent position. Other areas for action were not selected for piloting since they only required streamlining across the organisation such as fairly compensating time for parental leave when eligibility for next career steps or prestigious funding pose a fixed maximum duration of working years after PhD graduation. Also new so-called road-blocks to women's careers were meanwhile collected for immediate action such as practices of not hiring young women by anticipating that they would leave their work with animals or in laboratories from pregnancy up to ending breast feeding due to safety regulations.

In short, the selected pilot practices do not reflect all what was experimented with or implemented and it is obvious that new gender issues keep on popping up when more gender-sensitive eyes look around. They though represent systematic efforts that challenge to think through and reflect on its sustainable effects and the conditions to success to be fulfilled.

Towards sustainable change

Since we define good practices as ones that last, we first address the remarks made around the sustainability of the pilot practices. These will be distinguished by their focus.

Selection and management of the right pilot levels

Levels of initiative and design: top-down, bottom-up and co-creation

According to the principles of the Gender-SMART project, most initiatives suggested pilot practices in line with the results of the audits for Deliverable 4.1 which were shared internally and led to co-creating a GEP with actions. The pilots are mostly in line with this planning process or intensified during the process. This was, for instance, especially the case for policies on teleworking which appeared as a window of opportunity due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Partners took the opportunity to frame them in the light of advancing a better work-life balance for all.

Levels of implementation: authorities and middle management

Most of these measures required and ultimately gained support from higher management to be implemented within the organisational HRM measures, regulations and procedures. The importance of such official or formal status is broadly recognized as key to the sustainability of a piloted practice. All partners closely cooperated with HR entities with permanent staff to ensure the embeddedness after the pilot time or time of hiring of experts as was the case for the gender coach at WUR. Most partners also reflected on the importance to include middle management in the operationalisation of new measures and procedures. As the practices are mainly included in the current GEPs, it is recommended to see how these can be transferred to updated or prolonged GEP versions after the Gender-SMART project and whether they keep on needing attention or adjustment.

Levels of inclusion and support to actual practitioners and scaling out processes

Besides the backing of the top and middle management, it was also stressed that everyone affected had to become knowledgeable and skilful to apply or access any new options offered. This is seen as a condition for both the employees to make effective use and profit equally as for HRM staff and management to normalize and effectively include these options in their HRM package.

Mostly the pilots included training or coaching to first involve and acquaint a small group of staff with the basics from the beginning and later on use training and workshops to scale the practice up to a larger scale. Most partners see this as a prerequisite to sustainable continuation for a longer time and for expansion over more units or staff categories of the organisation.

The continuation of training or coaching is not yet secured at most partners' and will be a point of attention for the coming period, partly because most pilot processes are still ongoing. They can still be included in the action plans of the current GEPs and the post-project GEPs.

Monitoring & Evaluation tools

Most practices lack monitoring and evaluation tools to follow the effect and effectivity of the practices. Despite some mentioning of giving follow-up or tracing numbers of who applied and what the experiences are, it seems not yet be secured that monitoring and evaluating will be taken up to reveal desired and undesired impacts.

Therefore, it appears to be very useful and needed to design how to follow who is actually practicing and profiting from the new or widened measures and procedures from the various perspectives such as HRM, middle management and staff (m/f) in various positions, and what positive and negative direct and indirect impacts do they observe in relation to the aims as determined but also beyond.

Sex-desegregated data or more specified data according to age category and other social dimensions to trace how gender⁺ equality is advancing can be recommended. Another exercise to use as tool can be the regular repetition of auditing practice all partners did in the beginning, for instance every three years.

Transferability

How institutional context matter

Dependencies of governmental, umbrella or other external authorities and frames

Several partners referred in their pilot descriptions and lessons learned to their specific contexts to explain the slow decision-making processes. CICYTEX and Teagasc pointed at their governmental embeddedness that made them dependent on a decision-making process beyond their direct institutional control. Interesting to see is for both how they managed to start implementing practices that were within their reach and can be backed up later to formalize them. Nevertheless, these institutions have less control over the sustainability of measures taken on their own initiative than others with a more independent status.

Surely, all organisations have to respect national, European and international regulations as were sketched as context for all participating partners in D 8.2, section 5.4. This would have been especially important if more fundamental changes in policies and practices were selected to be implemented. This is though not the case for the partner GEP actions or pilot practices.

Variety in national and international orientation

Another significant context appeared to be the focus of the partners, either more national or international which is reflected in the difference of the (inter)national staff composition among partners and the concurrent mobility requirements to their staff.

We learned from CIRAD and CIHEAM Bari how important geographical mobility is for career progression in their organisations and increasingly also for improving project team and institutional performance assessments. This in contrast to WUR and Teagasc where an extensive international portfolio is an advantage too, but they had no pilot on this but can certainly learn from the mentioned CIRAD and CIHEAM Bari pilot practices.

Quite specific for CIRAD staff -and for no other partner of Gender-SMART consortium- is that rotation over the CIRAD entities worldwide is mandatory for a permanent position and career promotion. Although it is globally widely understood that gaining international experience advances expertise and a next career step, it is also more and more seen as hindering family life without dual career or other provisions for addressing job change for a joining partner and in cases when there are school aged children. Opening space for tailor-made arrangements seems to have been a first step towards more flexible career scenarios. Compensations for job loss for the partner or dual career scenarios for mobility support seem to require more time to be solidly elaborated.

CIHEAM Bari started to reduce the underrepresentation of women in foreign project teams with very practical support measures. There is no mandatory scheme and also here mobility appears to require a long-lasting breath. Establishing support networks with alumni and integrating gender aspects in expat training before leaving seems to be a stepping stone to advance equal opportunity to safely working abroad without giving up a life with a partner and children.

Specifics in the composition of staff

The partners differed much in the composition of their staff and addressed why they targeted specific groups or not for their pilot practices. The ratio of researchers, teachers and lecturers, and supportive staff with variations in m/f distribution led to specific considerations.

CICYTEX, for instance, had to deal with the practical reality that not all staff can be allowed to work from home for specific fixed days. Especially when working in a lab or experimental set-up in very specialized work, it is not easy to leave work and only can come back the next week nor to find substitution to compensate for parental leave. Above that, CICYTEX and others questioned how to avoid that especially women working from home were risking to end up with extra caring and other house work. Both seem to appear in need of long-lasting attention and concern since it cannot be easily solved by teleworking policies as such.

From the pilots it appears to work best if these policies are embedded in the wider context of improvement of work-life balance for all from the start and all options are discussed with line managers for their feasibility and practical solutions to prepare for and support changes in cooperation, dialogue, in-person contacts when frequently persons are not on-site. CIRAD, for instance, resorted to training for managers and to the provision of good information, self-awareness and -assessments tools and guidelines to support staff in weighting the advantages and disadvantages for their situation and come to a balanced arrangement.

CIRAD also emphasized the principle to design inclusive policies for all and not only targeting women. This was actually the case for more pilot practices. We see that most practices had gender-sensitive approaches in the sense they addressed specific aspects valuable for women. Support measures for women in career promotion and mobility though have the risk to be women only focused and 'fixing the women' if not aligned to changing structural or generic measures.

At last, some partner organisations provide for a broad range of domains beyond agri-food life sciences and others are specialized in that domain. It is to be explored whether practices are field specific or can be transferred to other domains as well.

Size, scale and institutional culture

Some organisations also mentioned their rather small size as a specific characteristic for success of transferability. None of the Gender-SMART consortium partners is an extremely large institution although they differ in size.

Institutional culture or more egalitarian or hierarchical decision-making practices were not really mentioned but for sure is and should be taken into account.

Resources

Since the pilot practices were mainly operationalized within HRM services, most practices did fall back on institutional resources for HR staff, HR packages and support from the Gender-SMART core team, partly paid by the Gender-SMART project.

Most partners are working on GEPS beyond the Gender-SMART project as to stay eligible for EU funding. Dedicated budget for activities and staff is required and supported by the criteria for a GEP to become eligible for EU funding.

From the descriptions it was not clear for all practices yet how budgets would further support the sustainability of good practices and what would be needed for other organisations to mirror and adjust a practice for their own institutional context.

It needs to be recommended to further identify which budget and staff investments are needed both for the sustainability and transferability of the piloted practices.

Practical Tips

We close the chapter with providing some remarkable practical tips that were listed in relation to the pilot practices throughout the document.

- Think of an inclusive design to start with and work in co-creation with various groups who will practice the policies and who will be benefitting of otherwise affected. This ensures larger backing and thus supports positive impacts within various staff groups. Furthermore, it improves the elaboration of the practice along the way and its sustainability since it has been looked at from multiple stakeholders' perspectives.
- Start with a pilot on a smaller scale and align it to existing initiatives, take time to experiment and monitor the steps and adjustments, and work towards a stage that others notice it is functioning well. Enlarge the compliments, and do the same for others. They are possibly very good allies and can support by spreading the word, providing wider attention and recognition up to reaching a momentum to scale out by including more (HR) staff at other entities and covering more (groups or units) of employees.
- By bringing initiatives in line with existing or new projects, creative and financial resources can be more easily combined than when starting in isolation with entirely new ideas. It also enhances that the group of persons in the organisation who look around with gender+ aware eyes will be growing.
- Designing trainings and workshops or information materials, tools and guidelines helps to better articulate the basics of the pilot practices and is very practical to have for scaling out processes or adopt practices at other organisations.
- Institutionalization can be helped by including a new practice as pilot action in a GEP, by including supportive trainings in broader defined programmes, maintaining and preferably naming and regularly meeting up with relevant (Ambassador) networks, partnership structures, and co-creation relationships. This all will enlarge sustainability and maintain expertise for transferability.
- Be patient :)

Annex: List of pilot practices and contact person per partner

ANR Contacts:

Laurence Guyard, E: Laurence.Guyard@agencerecherche.fr

Angela Zeller, E: Angela.Zeller@agencerecherche.fr

- (1) Gender-sensitive policy in recruitment.
- (2) Mentoring of female employees

CICYTEX Contact:

Francisco Hinojal Juan, E: Francisco.Hinojalj@juntaex.es

- (1) Gender-sensitive teleworking.
- (2) Maternity/paternity leave substitution.

CIHEAM Bari Contacts:

Elvira Lapedota, E: Lapedota@iamb.it

Marina Marini, E: Marini@iamb.it

- (1) Integrating a gender lens into a flexible work policy
- (2) Promoting women's geographical mobility

CIRAD Contacts:

Emma Milhau, E: Emma.Milhau@cirad.fr

Cindy van Hyfte, E: Cindy.van_Hyfte@cirad.fr

- (1) Gender-sensitive teleworking.
- (2) Gender sensitive geographic mobility

CUT Contact:

Panayiota Polykarpou, E: Panayiota.Polykarpou@cut.ac.cy

- (1) Bias-free recruitment and promotion procedures
- (2) Equality Ambassadors Network for career progression

Teagasc Contact:

Valerie Farrell, E: Valerie.Farrell@teagasc.ie

- (1) Agile working policy / homeworking
- (2) Individual mentoring and mentoring circles

WUR Contact:

Eva Siebelink, E: diversity@wur.nl

- (1) External gender-sensitive coaching in recruitment committees