

WOMEN VOICE MECHANISMS MODEL

This report outlines the comprehensive steps taken in the successful creation of the Women Voice Mechanisms Model, reflecting the collaborative effort of all project partners and the integration of diverse cultural perspectives to promote gender diversity in corporate governance.

The initial step in developing the Women Voice Mechanisms Model involved the leading partner, Turkiye (DEU), preparing a comprehensive gender diversity awareness questionnaire to facilitate collaboration among project partners. This questionnaire results served as a central repository for data collection and organization. In addition, a detailed timetable was established to outline the timeline for each task, delineating responsibilities, deadlines, and milestones. This preparation phase was crucial for setting the groundwork for subsequent project activities and establishing mutual expectations among partners.

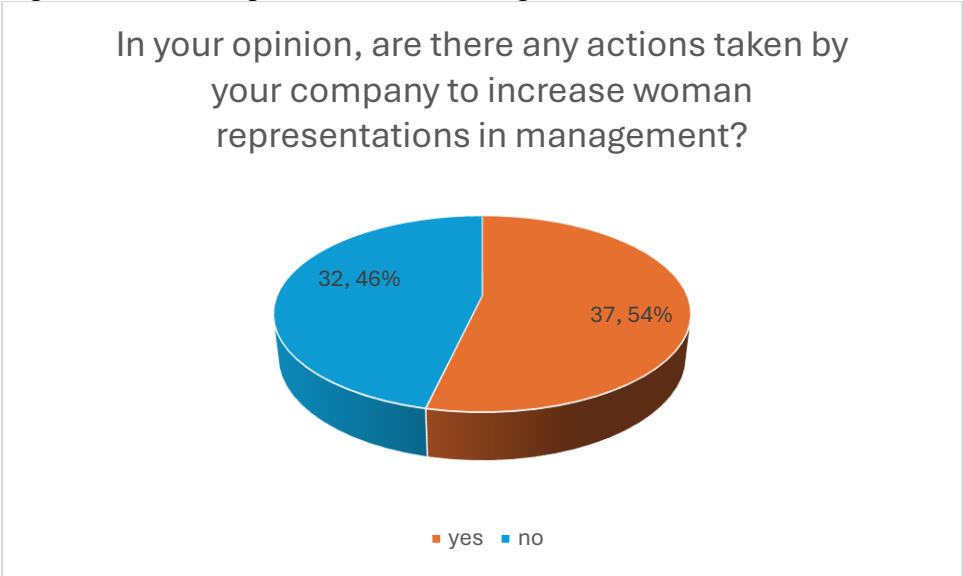
In an effort to gauge perceptions and knowledge levels regarding gender diversity, the project team prepared a gender diversity awareness questionnaire. This tool was designed to capture quantifiable data that could later complement qualitative insights from focus groups and interviews. The questionnaire included various items focused on attitudes, experiences, and perceived challenges related to gender diversity in corporate governance mechanisms. The dissemination of the gender diversity awareness questionnaire marked a crucial step in gathering direct feedback from a broader audience. The questionnaire is translated into six languages (Turkish, Spanish, Lithuanian, French, Dutch, and English).

	Web site links for surveys:
Turkish	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpwu0r6iqqkpgVscu3Fjhg5iQOFD3jG2g4Estq0Pv0oHh7A/viewform
Spanish	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd_iLsbprlZ8NF31-37RKnzQA_IdT-M7n3afJrljc3647KL5g/viewform
Lithuanian	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScYbm-2bx0ymtstDxuPZ4eJixpY8MHhxDZ-JZ-KzrCZIIt3A/viewform
French	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUCmvWbaM4ZN8MRXPY4jKPMiikLYl_AsAfXfWzkXQtOhgtcw/viewform
Dutch	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeJKoUY6ciii1oXqAe8BshdFGsOTrDFU_rbhwQJG5XiO-NX8Q/viewform
English	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScodR2O7-iMFm9EZ2PifF2whVpUEvfkJraLIYpgZ30LFjUVPw/viewform

Each partner implemented the questionnaire within their networks, trying to ensure representation across various demographics and industries. Because the sample group is active board members and active board members are quite busy and hard to reach, the total number of respondents to the survey was not high (69 people in total). This phase not only provided quantitative data but also increased awareness about gender diversity issues among participants. Collectively, the responses offered an extensive dataset that would further inform the project's findings and contributions. Some of the key findings are showing that organizations are in an increasing understanding of gender equality issues in their management teams.

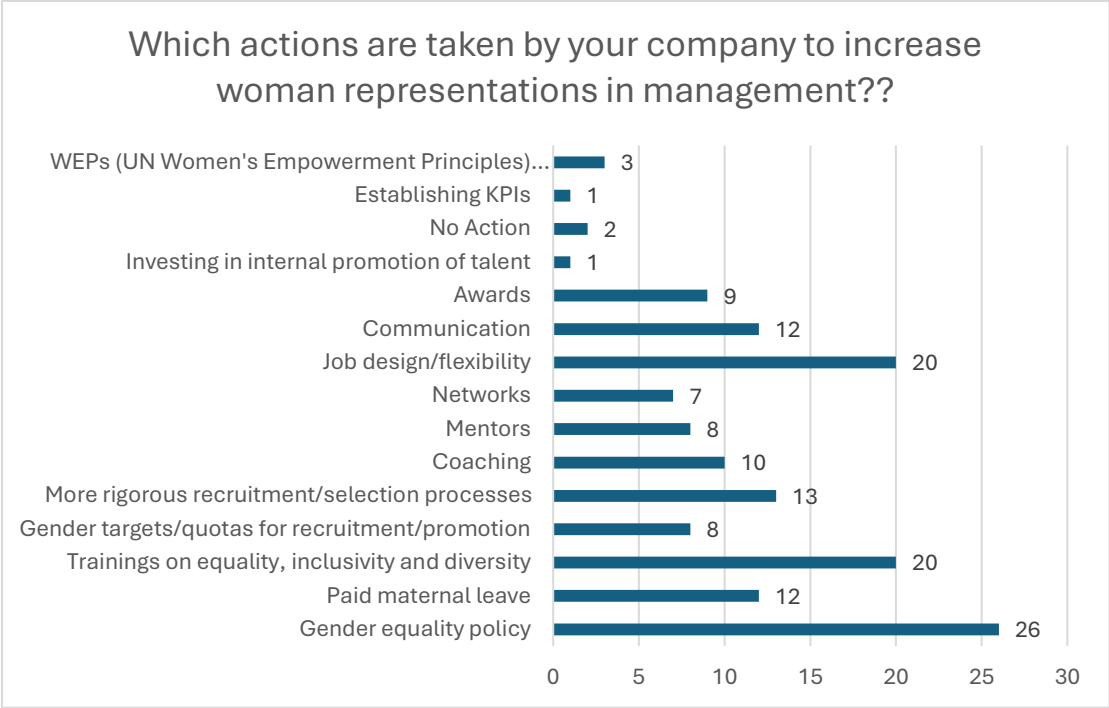
After collecting questionnaire responses, data analysis commenced to extract meaningful insights. This involved statistical analysis to determine trends and correlations related to gender diversity perceptions and practices across countries. The results were then cross-referenced with the initial worksheet data, providing a deeper understanding of how cultural contexts influenced attitudes towards women on corporate boards. This analytical phase was instrumental in validating previous findings and highlighting areas that required further investigation during subsequent focus group discussions.

Figure1: Women representation in management awareness



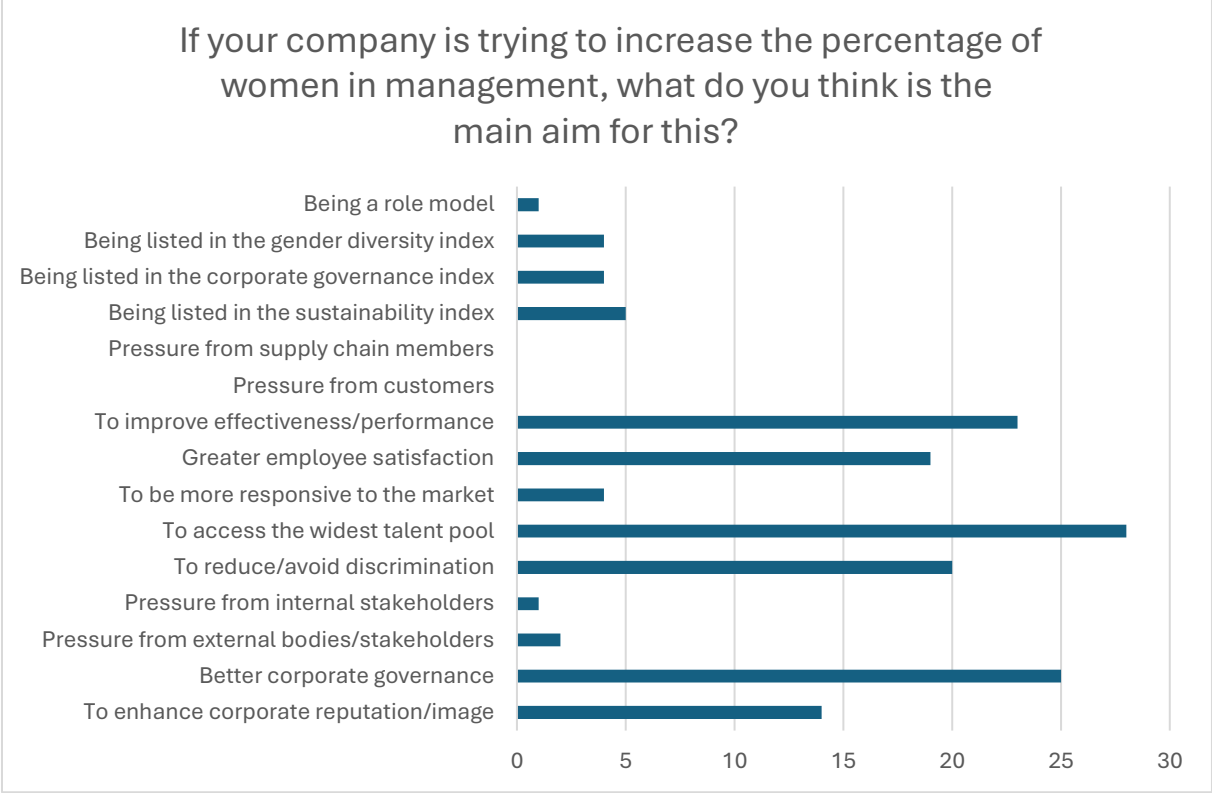
Participants from different countries and various industries mostly agree that having a gender equality policy, providing trainings on diversity, equity and inclusion, and designing jobs in a flexible manner are the important factors for increasing women representation in top management levels.

Figure 2: Actions for increasing women representation in top management



Board members from different European countries see performance improvement, access to a wider talent pool, and better corporate governance as the main reasons of their organization’s commitment to gender diversity in top management.

Figure 3: Motive of companies for increasing women in management



Leading Partner's Design of Focus Groups and Interviews

After gaining important insights into how companies understand and reply to gender-equality issues, a qualitative study has started to develop the Women Voice Mechanisms Model. The leading partner (DEU) designed a framework for focus groups and sampling. This framework was developed based on insights gained from the initial data analysis, aimed at ensuring that diverse voices were included in the discussions about gender diversity. To delve deeper into the qualitative aspects of the research, interviews and focus group studies were conducted with selected participants. These sessions aimed to explore personal experiences, opinions, and suggestions regarding gender diversity. By nurturing an open dialogue, it became possible to uncover nuanced insights that quantified data could not fully capture. The diversity of perspectives emphasized the complexity of the issues surrounding women in corporate governance, setting the stage for impactful model development. Each partner identified participants from their respective regions, considering various factors such as industry background, gender, and organizational hierarchy. This approach ensured a rich and varied set of insights that would be critical for understanding the barriers and facilitators of women's voices on corporate boards.

Within the expansive scope of this project, the pivotal endeavor to construct the 'Women Voice model' commenced with an intricate series of interviews and focused group dialogues involving individuals from diverse partner nations. For the project's partners, the coordinator DEU team provided a detailed guideline on how to conduct focus groups and in-depth interviews.

The questions asked during focus groups are these:

<p>A. MECHANISM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ What can you tell about the factors (personal, company-related, external factors) that contributed you for being a board member?)⇒ Which factor(s) do you think has/have been most effective for your career to be a board member? <p>B. VOICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Did you ever face difficulty in being included in the decision-making process? If yes, please explain.⇒ What would help diverse board members to feel comfortable in raising their opinions on the boards? <p>C. TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ What are the knowledge and skills that you think must be present to be an effective board member? If you would have a training for being a board member, which topics do you think should be included?

The questions asked during in-depth interviews are these:

<p>1. Women Voice on Corporate Boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can you tell about the factors (personal, company-related, external factors) that contributed your career as being a board member?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Which factor(s) do you think has/have been most effective for your career?

- Did you ever face a difficulty in being included in the decision-making process? If yes, please explain.
- What do you think would help woman board members to be more included in the decision-making process?
- If you are the only board member, what are the difficulties you face regarding your gender?

2. Factors Influencing Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards

- What is your interpretation of the efforts your company has taken to foster gender diversity on corporate boards? What are the strengths and weaknesses of those efforts?

3. Barriers to Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards

- From your perspective, what barriers exist or have been created, even unknowingly, that inhibit open access to opportunities for women within the organization? How are those barriers created? How is it that the barriers continue to function?

4. Strategies to Enhance Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards

- What are the best strategies for managing gender diversity on corporate boards?

5. Diversity Training Programs

- What can be the components of effective gender diversity of a corporate board training program?

6. Future Trends Related to Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards

- In your opinion what are your expectations on future trends (social, economic, legal etc.) related to gender diversity on corporate boards?

Partner country researchers carefully selected participants in focus groups and in-depth interviews based on their direct involvement in board governance or active participation in board roles. Each partner diligently captured the insights gleaned from these profound interviews, preserving them in audio recordings of their dialogues. Subsequently, these auditory records underwent meticulous transcription into written form. Additionally, comprehensive focus group discussions were organized, and their rich deliberations were meticulously documented. The process of conducting interviews and focus group discussions persisted until saturation was achieved, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of perspectives.

The data gathered from interviews and focus groups underwent rigorous content analysis to identify recurring themes, sentiments, and critical issues women face in corporate environments. This qualitative analysis complemented the quantitative findings from the questionnaires, allowing for a holistic understanding of the research topics. The insights obtained from this phase were instrumental in shaping the Women Voice Mechanisms Model, ensuring it addressed the real challenges and opportunities identified through participant input. Upon collating responses from all participating nations, the coordinator DEU team meticulously classified them into primary and secondary thematic categories. These insights were then shared during a collaborative session with partner representatives in Brussels during TNM3, facilitating constructive discourse on lexical nuances and subtle refinements.

Consequently, the distilled findings from this qualitative inquiry, aimed at fostering enhanced representation and empowerment of women in boardrooms, are succinctly synthesized below.

With all data analyses complete, the next step was the synthesis of insights to develop the Women Voice Mechanisms Model. (See Figure4 below)

Figure: 4: WOMEN VOICE MECHANISMS MODEL:
The Factors Effecting Women Inclusion to Top Management (Corporate Boards)



The model was crafted to integrate findings from quantitative and qualitative research, aiming to enhance gender diversity and amplify women's voices in corporate governance. This development process involved iterative refinement, drawing from best practices and recognized frameworks in corporate governance. The result was a comprehensive model that was adaptable to various cultural contexts while addressing common barriers.

In conjunction with the model development, best practices and policy guidelines were formulated to provide actionable recommendations for organizations and included in the open-access E-book (Project Result 2) prepared by all partners. Drawing from insights gathered throughout the project, this e-book aimed to assist corporate boards and governance structures in implementing effective mechanisms for promoting gender diversity. The creation of this e-book was an essential output, intended to bridge the gap between research findings and practical applications in corporate policies.

The final step involved disseminating the Women Voice Mechanisms Model across various platforms and among stakeholders. This included organizing workshops, presentations, and publication of reports aimed at sharing the findings with a broader audience. By engaging key stakeholders such as corporate leaders, policymakers, and advocacy groups, the project sought to raise awareness of gender diversity issues and foster dialogue on the implementation of the model. Dissemination efforts were critical not only for visibility but also for encouraging actionable change in corporate governance practices worldwide.