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C1.5.5 Overview of existing GAP related initiatives in EDIT institutions

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	x
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Assessing the GAP related initiatives - Presentation

The EDIT GAP has developed until now two main actions to support female scientists in their career: a) the fellowships for women scientists, covering their travel, subsistence and training/research costs to a partner institution and b) the work-life balance grants, helping parents find appropriate and affordable childcare options while they are abroad attending EDIT international meetings. These initiatives were welcomed by the EDIT partners and are notably taking advantage of the mobility provided by the network to female scientists. Towards the end of the EDIT project, it seemed interesting to have an overview of such initiatives implemented by the partners, with the impulse or not of the EDIT GAP or of the emerging gender equal chances policies within the EU that influence the national policies towards a more gender awareness society. In this respect, a survey was conducted at the end of 2009.

The survey

The survey¹ was sent to the GAP representatives and consisted in presenting them with a series of 14 initiatives applicable to scientific institutions. A detailed answer was expected for those activities implemented and for their specific initiatives.

The respondents

From the 15 EDIT partners or associated members having a GAP representative, 14 responded to the survey: National Botanic Garden of Belgium (NBGE), Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA), National History Museum of Denmark (NHMDK), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, (CSIC), Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN), Hungarian Natural History Museum (HNHM), Ecological Consultancy Services SMEBD (Ecoserve), University of Groningen (RUG), Natural History Museum Naturalis (NNM), Centraalbureau Schimmelcultures – KNAW Fungal biodiversity Centre (CBS), Museum and Institute of Zoology PAS (MIZPAS), Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (RBGK) and the Natural History Museum London (NHM).

Note that RUG, the University of Groningen, is a SAC member.

The initiatives described by the partners have been grouped in the following categories:

A. The initiatives that are encouraging women in the job positions

- The **participation of the female staff to the EDIT project's activities** is something all the respondents are encouraging.
- Nearly all of them (13) ensure **equal opportunities in recruitment** at all levels and notably some have to abide to their government's employment rules. Still, among these, several have pointed out that the staff was selected on their skills, experience and personal qualities and not based on their gender.
- Half (7) of the respondents declared they **encouraged women to apply for research positions** with 5 specifying they did "but no more than encouraging men" and 2, RUG and MIZPAS, explicitly said that their applications encouraged women and proposed them good wages and good working conditions. Similarly, the noes to this question argued that encouraging women was a positive discrimination which they didn't want to apply willing to make no difference between men and women among their scientific staff.
- More than 75% (11) of the respondents are encouraging women to participate to the **management and scientific committees**, from which 3 specified that they also encouraged men to avoid any discrimination.
- Two partners provide **training programmes** on gender issues, the NHM with trainers' expert in gender and the RBINS providing information on programmes like "TopSkills"

¹ See the questionnaire of the survey "Overview of existing GAP related initiatives" in Annex 1

in Belgium enabling women to train themselves and participate to selections for management positions.

- In terms of female presence at workshops and conferences, women are encouraged to **give keynote talks** among seven of the respondents, notably, as the NHM specifies, for the keynote talks organised on invitation.
- Four of the respondents mentioned their links with **female scientists networks** be them with national associations (e.g. Belgian Women in Science), international networks (e.g. European Platform for Women Scientists) or on a personal basis.
- Four institutions have mentioned a type of **mentoring programme** which either their institutions or the university their institution belongs to has implemented:
 - ⇒ The University of Groningen runs a special tenure-track programme for female scientists (assistant professor level) called the Rosalind Franklin Fellowships. A minor note is that women since then only get hired in special programmes and seldom in regular research.
 - ⇒ A mentoring programme is at work at the University of Copenhagen focused on female post-docs and assistant professors accessible to NHMDK staff.
 - ⇒ The NHM London provides mentoring skills training for experienced Nature Live presenters so that they can support other scientists who are developing a competence in potential advanced presentation.
 - ⇒ RBGK staff members sitting on external boards have participated to a mentoring programme as mentors for future board members.

B. The initiatives linked to the monitoring of the staff gender

Among the 7 respondents that **monitor the gender balance** of their staff, 6 monitor also the gender of their EDIT staff. This monitoring is reported in the respective annual reports. Among the Belgian partners for instance a staff monitoring is not yet officially implemented but shortly the principles of gender-mainstreaming will be imposed by government law.

C. The Family-friendly initiatives

=> Half (7) of the respondents have a **work-balance programme travel grants**, among which 4 mentioned the EDIT WLB action as only source. Five respondents (RBINS, RMCA, NHM, RBGK, SMEBD) mentioned the flexi hours their staff can benefit from and two propose to its staff various career breaks or leaves possibilities with as well in the future the introduction of the telework.

=> Four institutions provide a support for **nursery care** at meeting places through notably childcare vouchers at RBGK and day care for children between 0 and 3 years old at RBINS.

=> None of the respondents organise **Girl's days**, but some like RMCA do organise days for the staff and their families.

D. the initiatives such as gender action plans

=> Four respondents have a **local gender action plan**, which in RUG takes the form of a monthly lunch, the NHM diversity plan is currently under review to be extended to further practice, MIZPAS provides support to female scientists with children and at CSIS an equal opportunities plan exists for the scientific staff.

=> The appointment of an **equal opportunities officer/women's representative** is to be found among 2 partners; MNHN and HNHN, but several like RMCA and KBGE have one through their unions representing their employees. NHM has a diversity policy with diversity issues reviewed and monitored by its Human resources department.

F. Examples of new policies on gender from the partner's governments

Among the 14 respondents, 3 have mentioned a recent or coming law requesting them to take new measures under the light of gender equality.

These policies take the form of:

- The implementation of a gender-mainstreaming and of a gender budgeting and a diversity plan (BE);
- The publication and analysis of the sex disaggregated statistics of the scientific staff. Encouraging since 2005 a minimum of 40% of women in the promotion and recruitment committees. The implementation of a commission of women and science to advice the Presidency for the analysis, tracking and improvement of the scientific career of women. (SP)
- A new UK Equality Bill (UK)

Conclusion and recommendation

The panel of initiatives already at work in the partners' institutions clearly show them as quite aware on the gender issues and involved in the improvement of the gender balance. A mentoring programme dedicated to the EDIT partners' female scientists could be a new initiative encouraging directly the female scientists in their career and reinforcing the EDIT networking.