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WOMEX



WOMEX Newsletter

Our First Steps Towards Gender-Responsive Internationalisation

Achieving gender equality in internationalisation policies is a growing priority across Europe and a key driver of more inclusive and competitive economies. One of the most widely recognised approaches to address this challenge is **gender mainstreaming**, a strategy that places gender equality at the heart of policymaking.

According to the **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)**, gender mainstreaming involves the systematic integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and funding programmes, with the aim of promoting equality between women and men and combating discrimination.

Advancing Gender Equality in Internationalisation Policies

The **WOMEX project** is a European initiative co-funded by the **Interreg Europe Programme** and led by **ACCIÓ-Catalonia Trade & Investment** as Lead Partner. Its mission is to integrate a gender perspective into public internationalisation policies, increase the presence of women in leadership and decision-making

WOMEX consortium

The project brings together partners from **Lithuania, Serbia, Poland, Austria, Hungary and the Basque Country**, working collaboratively to apply a gender mainstreaming approach throughout policy design, implementation and evaluation, strengthening more inclusive and competitive internationalisation ecosystems across Europe.

roles within exporting SMEs, and promote equal representation of women in international business activities.



A Collaborative Way of Working

The WOMEX partners work closely together through regular coordination via **Microsoft Teams**, a dedicated **project website**, and active engagement with **regional stakeholders** in each partner region. **Interregional Policy Learning Events (IPLEs)** also provide a valuable platform for exchanging knowledge and sharing best practices.

The project officially kicked off with an online **Kick-off Meeting on 29 May**. Since then, partners have participated in monthly online meetings, focusing on **regional mappings** and receiving methodological guidance from the Lead Partner, **ACCIÓ – Catalonia Trade & Investment**.

First Interregional Policy Learning Event (IPLE) – Barcelona

Interregional Policy Learning Events (IPLEs) are the **core instrument of the WOMEX project** for enabling the exchange of **good practices and knowledge** among partners, with the goal of **improving public policies** in each participating region. Each IPLE focuses on a specific theme aligned with the project objectives.

The **first IPLE** took place in **Barcelona**, under the theme “**Women and Internationalisation**” bringing together all partner regions and their regional stakeholders

The IPLE combined interactive working sessions and high-level policy discussions, fostering exchanges between partner regions and their local ecosystems and enabling the sharing of good practices on women and internationalisation. The programme also included a SWOT workshop led by Dr. Sara Berbel, which explored the strategic role of public sector professionals in internationalisation policies and their capacity to drive gender equality in leadership and decision-making.

The event continued with a roundtable discussion at CIDOB, which brought together high-level speakers who emphasised the importance of embedding gender mainstreaming across all policy levels to promote equal opportunities and enhance the competitiveness of exporting SMEs. The IPLE concluded with a visit to Fundació Privada SORLI, where a successful case study illustrated how integrating a gender perspective can be effectively implemented within a Catalan SME.



Upcoming IPLEs

Two upcoming **IPLEs** will further advance **policy learning and exchanges** among **partner regions**:

Warsaw, 25–26 February

Access to finance for women-led exporting SMEs

This IPLE will focus on challenges faced by women-led exporting SMEs in accessing finance and public policy instruments that can help address these barriers.

Hungary, 21–23 April

This IPLE will present regional mappings from all partner regions. ACCIÓ, as Lead Partner, will present both its regional mapping and a comparative interregional study, providing a cross-cutting analysis across all territories.

Project Video

During the first months of the project, we have also produced a video in which all project partners share **what connects them to WOMEX and outline the expectations the project has generated within their institutions.**

 [Watch the video](#)

Over the coming semesters, the WOMEX partnership will continue to implement the project objectives and analyse the impact of gender bias on the competitiveness of exporting SMEs. The ultimate goal is to advance the integration of a gender perspective into internationalisation policies and business strategies, embedding it at the core of our institutions and the SMEs we support.

Don't miss the latest WOMEX developments! Stay up to date with our activities, insights, and upcoming events, and be part of a growing community committed to gender-responsive internationalisation.

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