



FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN HIGH-TECH ENTERPRISES



GOBIERNO
de
CANTABRIA
VICEPRESIDENCIA

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE IGUALDAD Y MUJER



SODERCAN
Sociedad para el Desarrollo Regional de Cantabria

Firma 1: 04/08/2021 - Consuelo Gutierrez Fernandez
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The FEMINA Project

FEMINA partners believe that increased female participation can make high-tech SMEs more competitive. This belief, based on academic studies and practical experience, must become part of mainstream policy.

The gender gap is still visible in high-tech sectors across EU-28: women represented 29% of entrepreneurs in 2014 and 32.5% of employees in high-tech manufacturing and knowledge-intensive services in 2015. This is not a question of social inclusion. It is about economic growth: studies show that the women's specific skills can help to diversify and consolidate enterprises; that closing the gender gap could generate an EU GDP increase of 13%.

In this context, FEMINA partners cooperate at interregional level to reach their overall aim: to ensure that selected policy instruments are integrated with measures to promote female engagement in their high-tech sectors, with a focus on sectors in their RIS3.

FEMINA considers how to identify, implement, monitor and evaluate policy measures that break down barriers to female high-tech entrepreneurship, to employment and career progression in high-tech SMEs and to the gender dimension of innovation in funding schemes for high-tech start-ups and SMEs.

Policy improvements are foreseen through specific projects funded to address these barriers, through improved policy management (e.g. gender criteria in monitoring) and through strategic focus, whereby partners work to include female participation in high-tech as a fundamental principle of their policies for SME competitiveness.

FEMINA's main outputs are Action Plans, detailing these desired changes, which partners and selected stakeholders will implement and monitor over a 2-year period. The results of this implementation will benefit SMEs and the territory. An increase in female participation in high-tech entrepreneurship, employment and leadership should establish a culture of gender parity in these sectors, with impact on inclusive growth and regional competitiveness.



Content

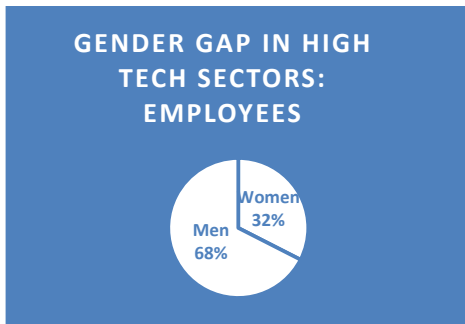
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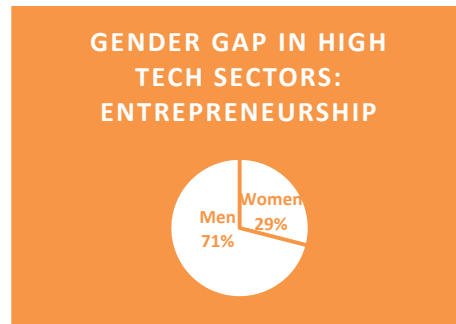
1. Introduction

FEMINA partners believe that increased female participation can make high-tech SMEs more competitive. This belief, based on academic studies and practical experience, must become part of mainstream policy.

The gender gap is still visible in high-tech sectors across EU-28: women represented 29% of entrepreneurs in 2014 and 32.5% of employees in high-tech manufacturing and knowledge-intensive services in 2015.

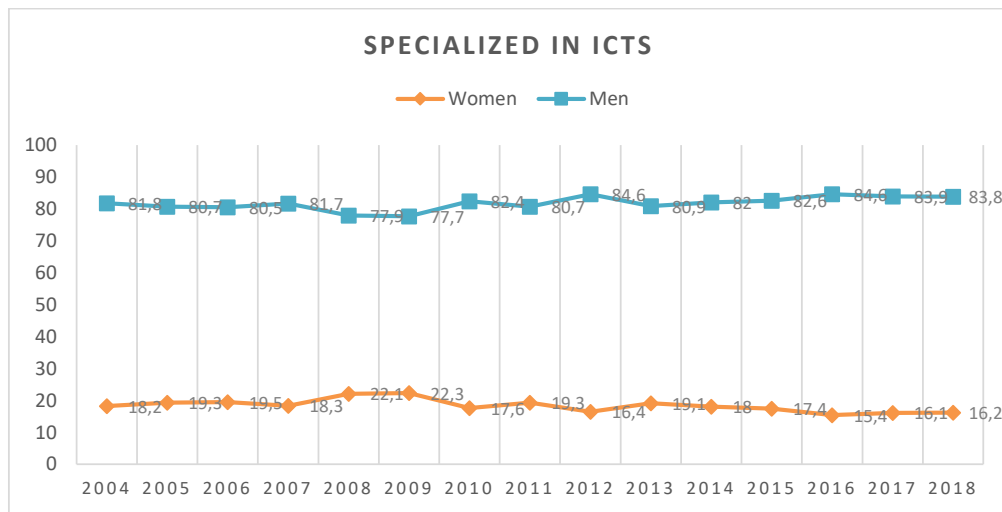


Across EU-28 (2014)



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This is not a question of social inclusion. It is about economic growth: studies show that women's specific skills can help to diversify and consolidate enterprises; that closing the gender gap could generate an EU GDP increase of 13%.



Source: Eurostat (2018)

The next figure comes to support the previous assumption: women are underrepresented in ICT sector. Now we can notice by professions exclusively dedicated to technology or ICT. There is no profession in which women involve more than 26% of the total, which means that they are residuary, countless, and practically invisible.



By professions exclusively dedicated to technology or ICT

	MEN		WOMEN	
	nº	%	nº	%
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS, ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERS	56.712,63	87,05	8.434,94	12,95
TECHNICAL ENGINEERS IN ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS	17.812,09	89,95	1.991,15	10,05
ANALYSTS AND MULTIMEDIA AND SOFTWARE DESIGNERS	106.504,7	74,15	37.136,85	25,85
DATABASE SPECIALISTS AND IT NETWORKS	51.551,65	84,56	9.411,24	15,44
ICTS OPERATIONS TECHNICIANS AND USER ASSISTANT	84.746,3	79,6	21.719,2	20,4
IT PROGRAMMERS	111.034	80,47	26.945,03	19,53
AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING TECHNICIANS, BROADCASTING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS	44.429,35	87,42	6.392,21	12,58
ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS INSTALLERS AND REPAIRERS	66.066,14	94,48	3.860,67	5,52
TOTAL	538856,86	82,3	115891,29	17,7

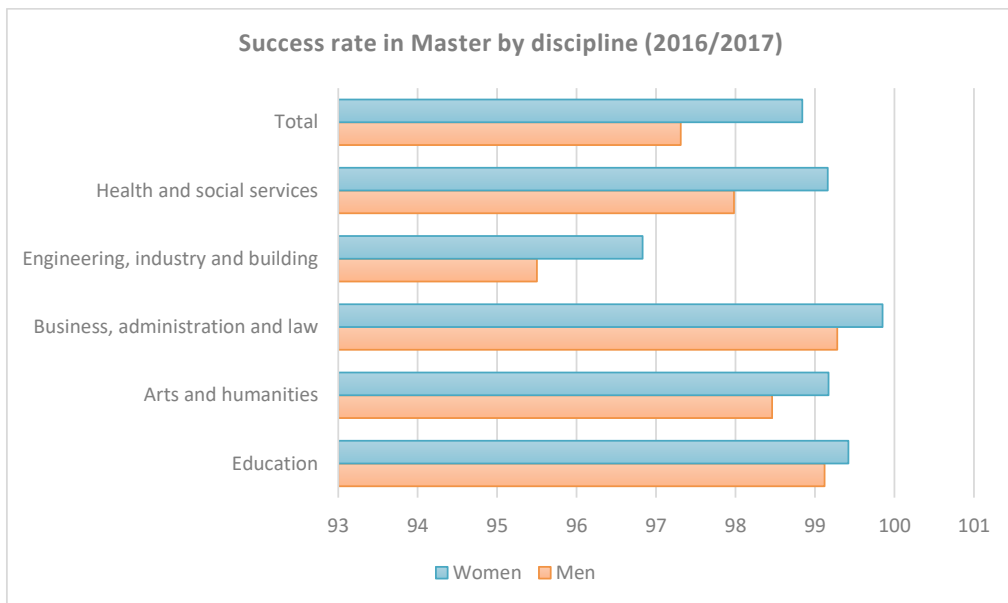
Source: EPA 3T2019 (INE)

At regional level, Cantabria follows the trend that we have described until now. If we focus on the differences between women and men by academic disciplines, we can see the pattern. There is no difference in the total, in all the three stages (degrees, masters and PhD). The higher level of training, the smaller number of people who study, but there are no significant differences disaggregated by sex. We can find these differences if we heed by disciplines: women participate much less than men in scientific/technological studies, in a very significant way (figure below).

STUDIES	ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES	2015/2016				2017/2018			
		Nº		%		Nº		%	
		W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Degree's studies	Social sciences	2836	1690	62,66	37,34	2950	1823	61,81	38,19
	Engineering and architecture	692	1981	25,89	74,11	612	1907	24,30	75,70
	Arts and humanities	140	179	43,89	56,11	167	174	48,97	51,03
	Medicine and health	1213	717	62,85	37,15	1292	941	57,86	42,14
	Sciences	109	220	33,13	66,87	132	277	32,27	67,73
	Total	4990	4787	51,04	48,96	5153	5122	50,15	49,85
Master's studies	Social sciences	210	139	60,17	39,87	595	312	65,60	34,40
	Engineering and architecture	132	366	26,71	73,49	214	455	31,99	68,01
	Arts and humanities	91	47	65,94	34,06	390	171	69,72	30,48
	Medicine and health	81	16	83,51	16,49	62	19	76,54	23,46
	Sciences	5	14	26,32	73,68	8	14	36,36	63,64
	Total	519	582	47,14	52,86	1269	971	56,65	43,35
PhD studies	Social sciences	21	24	46,67	53,33	49	34	59,04	40,96
	Engineering and architecture	45	92	32,85	67,15	66	143	31,58	68,42
	Arts and humanities	30	35	46,15	53,85	42	44	48,84	51,16
	Medicine and health	64	26	71,11	28,89	105	50	67,74	32,26
	Sciences	10	15	40,00	60,00	15	40	27,27	72,73
	Total	170	192	46,96	53,04	277	311	47,11	52,89

Source: ICANE (2019)





Source: ICANE (2019)

Finally, we can show that this differentiation that we have been expressing is not explained by the common idea in which women are intended for the social disciplines, and men are the best in scientific/technological. The previous figure shows us that women have better results in all the disciplines than men, which means that there is no professions or knowledge not suitable for women. The gap is a social construction, there is nothing in women's nature that explain and justify the differences.

In this context, FEMINA partners cooperate at interregional level to reach their overall aim: to ensure that selected policy instruments are integrated with measures to promote female engagement in their high-tech sectors, with a focus on sectors in their RIS3.

FEMINA considers how to identify, implement, monitor and evaluate policy measures that break down barriers to female high-tech entrepreneurship, to employment and career progression in high-tech SMEs and to the gender dimension of innovation in funding schemes for high-tech start-ups and SMEs.

The Regional Ministry of Universities, Equality, Culture and Sports (Government of Cantabria) is the competent body in the field of gender equality in Cantabria. This competence has a transversal character. The Directorate General for Women Issues and Gender Equality is the coordinating body, is in charge of promoting gender equality across the region and in all policies and has a networking capacity to involve other local and regional stakeholders. Its functions include:

1. Coordination and promotion of the gender perspective in public policies.
2. Support and coordination of policies and actions in the field of gender equality within the Regional Administration.
3. Hold in the process of planning and elaborating guidelines in the field of equality between women and men; support in the process of adapting and creating structures.
4. Programmes and procedures to integrate the gender perspective into the administrative activity.



5. Specialized technical assistance in the field of equality between women and men within the Public Administrations of Cantabria.

SODERCAN, as the Regional Development Agency of Cantabria is the major stakeholder in the region dealing with the promotion of competitiveness and general development of the economy, with companies (especially SMEs) as the main target group of the activities involved. As the institution belongs to the Regional Ministry of Industry, Innovation, Tourism and Commerce, all the policies and programmes aimed at the promotion of Research and development amongst companies, increasing competitiveness through internationalization, and encouragement of entrepreneurship pass through the executive role of SODERCAN.

SODERCAN has a deep knowledge of Cantabria's industrial sector, after 35 years of intense and direct link with regional companies. It has also a great experience in managing R&D and innovation strategies for SMEs, entrepreneurs and setting up business cooperation structures.

SODERCAN was responsible for supporting, among others Strategic Axes LE3.2 "Policies for R&D Human Resources" and LE5.2 "Enhancement of R&D in priority areas and technologies of Cantabria" of the Cantabrian Plan for Innovation in the framework of Strategy for Research and Innovation for Smart Specialisation. SODERCAN is also entrusted with promoting and executing the RTDI Regional Plan and has an experience managing European Social Fund (EQUAL) for female enterprise creation. Since 2011 SODERCAN has been participating in the InterDepartmental Technical Working Group to promote gender equality. SODERCAN collaborates in different initiatives which promote gender equality within young girls such as STEM Talent Girl, a Free programme for the development of talent and encouragement of STEM vocations in girls in their 3rd and 4th years of secondary school via master classes and shadowing sessions with mentors.

FEMINA Project will help to provide answers to the challenges of regional authorities in Europe face when trying to improve women's technological based entrepreneurship. Thanks to interregional Exchange, DG Women Issues and Gender Equality and SODERCAN will find inspiration in other EU regions. FEMINA will contribute to promote policy measures that break down barriers to female high-tech entrepreneurship, to employment and career progression in high-tech SMEs and to the gender dimension of innovation in funding schemes for high-tech start-ups and SMEs, and also to create a network of more effective and inclusive strategies.



2. General information

Project: FEMINA: Female participation in high- tech enterprises

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3. Policy context

3.1. Overall policy framework in Cantabria

The development of the actions projected in this plan follow the current legislation on gender equality.

Equality between women and men is a universal legal principle recognized in various international human rights texts, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1979 and ratified by Spain in 1983. Besides, it is worth mentioning that several world conferences, such as the Nairobi Conference held in 1985 and the Beijing Conference held in 1995, have led to a significant progress regarding this field.

Equality is also a fundamental principle in the European Union. Since the Treaty of Amsterdam, equality between women and men and the elimination of inequalities have



been considered an objective, and, therefore, they must be integrated into all policies and actions of the Union and its members.

Article 14 of the Spanish Constitution proclaims the right to equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. Article 9, paragraph 2, establishes the obligation of the public authorities to promote the conditions for real and effective equality.

At regional level, Cantabria has been working in the creation of a strong and transversal legislation to support and promote the equality in all situations. The most relevant is the Law 2/2019, 7th of March, for effective equality between men and women, which regulates multiple areas to spread and consolidate real equality and the eradication of any kind of discrimination based on sex. We can find several items related with our commitments, but we are going to profound on this in the next point.

The FEMINA Action Plan for Cantabria has two actions, each directly impacting on different policy instruments as shown in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 below.



DGIM

- Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the Government of Cantabria
- Plan Corresponsables



SODERCAN

- Regional Innovation Strategy 2016-2030

3.2. Policy being influenced by Action 1

At regional level, the basic legislative framework in this area is the Law of Cantabria 2/2019, of 7 March, for the effective equality between men and women¹. This law is applicable for all entities that constitute the public sector of Cantabria, as well as for all those companies and entities that sign contracts, collaboration agreements or are beneficiaries of public aid. The Law has a marked cross-cutting nature.

Action 1 will make effective the principles related with the educational system in the law. The activities will put the following mandates of the political instrument into action: educate free from prejudice, building an educational system based on coeducation in a gender neutral environment. Through our action, we will contribute to start up the law, upgrading its implementation and management to promote an educational system based on equal rights and eradicating discriminations based on, principally, gender.

¹ https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2019-4565



Specifically, thanks to the FEMINA project, we will create a new resource for the Government of Cantabria to introduce education free from sexist barriers at early ages, because we believe that the main task for the promotion of women inclusion in the STEM fields is to educate the future generations unattached of the sexual prejudices. For this purpose, we will develop a coeducational itinerary, which is going to make effective the principles of the law, collected in the 29 article:

1. To integrate curricula content related with the respect for the equal rights and opportunities between women and men, by creating the regional educational project.
2. The fundamental right of assurance the equality and the elimination of multiple discrimination, by promoting conciliation for those women who work in the STEM field.
3. The global intervention in the Cantabria's educational system through the implementation the coeducational perspective, by proceeding since early ages.

The action is also related with the mandate of the article 34 of the law, which calls the Cantabrian educative administration "to develop and to boost programs and actions about vocational and professional orientation, which promote the stereotypes and gender roles' eradication in the training, related with expectations and labor and academic options, during the complete scholarship period." We are going to fulfill this mandate through our regional educational project, based on the gender-neutral perspective socialization since early ages. The final goal is that the academic and professional orientation should be free from gender bias, to promote the diversification and making the students able to choose professional careers in which their sex is underrepresented (article 31).

It is also remarkable that our purpose is going to be tested in a STEM context. Our pedagogical itinerary will be piloted in areas where many companies related with the STEM field are located, to facilitate conciliation for, mainly, women who are already working in these labor sectors.

This law is our framework, but this law is implemented through various tools, taking into account that the law is referring to all the spheres of the daily life. For our action, which is focus on the educational system, the tools that are going to be influenced by FEMINA with Action 1 are:

1. Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the Government of Cantabria². The regional public administration has to incorporate progressively the gender equality in the educational system: "to promote, to identify and to incorporate coeducational proposals in the school centers' plans and projects, by introducing coeducational objectives in curricula and developing materials without sexist stereotypes and cultural prejudices." Now we are implementing the second gender mainstreaming strategy, which will end by 2022. FEMINA will influence the internal strategy in the way that the results of the action implemented by the DGIM (the pilot of the educational itinerary) will be introduced to the third internal strategy. Thus, the experience acquired in FEMINA could be extended to the entire network of nursery schools, to all educational stages, and finally, produce this improvement in

² <https://boc.cantabria.es/boces/verAnuncioAction.do?idAnuBlob=355821>



the governance in a complete way.

2. Cantabria is working on the future implementation of the “Plan Corresponsables”. This plan is a national policy, driven by the Ministry of Equality of the Government of Spain, in which the DGIM has the competence for the development in the regional territory, in collaboration with the local entities³. In Cantabria, the design of the plan, aimed at promoting conciliation and liberation of women from the mental burdens attached to double and triple shifts carried out at home to facilitate their inclusion in the labor market, is under the responsibility of the DGIM. In the future, the experience of the pilot project carried out in FEMINA, for the testing of the educational project, could be vital when it comes to making agreements with local entities from 2022. Specifically, it could be included coeducation criteria to be implemented, based on our model, in centers where children at early ages are cared for and that receive funding from this plan. It is also remarkable that there is a part within the Plan addressed to the “education of educators”; the contents from the FEMINA project will be based for training of professionals in the education field. And these professionals are not just related with the *Corresponsables* frame, so it extend the influence outside the plan, because the training enable whoever undertakes this training to educate.

3.3. Policy being influenced by Action 2

In the framework of the Regional Innovation Strategy 2016-2030, SODERCAN receives an annual budget from the Regional Government, to work towards the objectives of the Strategy, under the guiding principles and broader framework of law 2/2019 for the effective equality between men and women.

The activity 2 of our Action Plan, includes the following actions:

- A. Development of a specific grant in the framework of a SODERCAN general grant programme in order to promote female entrepreneurship in the economic sectors for which a significant number of jobs are expected to be created in the medium term, because of economic, social and technological changes.

With the aim of promoting the female STEM entrepreneurship, as a key tool to increase the presence and leadership of women in a fundamental field for the country’s future – technology based start-ups- , a specific line of grants will be opened within SODERCAN’s general programme for supporting technology-based start-ups and entrepreneurship led by women.

This action aims to fund technology-validation, new technology-oriented Business plans, the launching of new products in the market, Business scale-up and projects with the goal of having access to potential investors.

- B. To promote gender mainstreaming in regional businesses by including as objective criteria for funding the integration of gender mainstreaming in the

³

<https://www.igualdad.gob.es/prioridades/plancorresponsables/Documents/Acuerdo%20Conferencia%20Sectorial%20Plan%20Corresponsables.pdf>



Business plan with a special focus on those Business plans promoting stable and quality employment for women in those sectors with underrepresentation.

Action 2 seeks to influence the Regional Innovation Strategy 2016 - 2030. The strategy aims to capitalize on the proven strengths and opportunities of the regional innovation system, as well as to solve weaknesses and threats. The strategy is composed by four strategic axes: Cultural and industrial model change; Generation of new knowledge; Technology transfer; and Innovative industrial entrepreneurship. Exploitation of results and it's divided into different programmes: Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Knowledge and technology transfer, Business cooperation, Promotion of R + D + I, Energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainability, Financing for SMEs, Digital Agenda, Participatory, coordinated and results-oriented innovation governance system.

FEMINA project deals with Cultural and industrial model change improving the competitiveness of SMEs and entrepreneurship. In particular, it seeks to improve the capacity of SMEs to grow regionally, nationally and internationally and to participate in innovation providing funds for business startup or self-employment and by promoting equality measures to be implemented in Cantabria's business community.

The article 55 of the Law 2/2019 for effective equality between men and women, includes the promotion of female entrepreneurship as a task of the different Regional Ministries of the Regional Government of Cantabria. In this sense, SODERCAN as public body attached to the Regional Ministry of Innovation, Industry, Transport and Commerce, develops programmes aimed at promoting the entrepreneurship, with specific positive actions in favour of women. Those actions are in line with the FEMINA project by providing funds for business startup or self-employment and by promoting equality measures to be implemented in Cantabria's business community.

Thanks to interregional exchange in the FEMINA project, SODERCAN can adapt the funding received through the annual regional budget integrated within the regional innovation strategy programme. SODERCAN will adapt an existing funding programme in order to open a specific grant scheme for female business technology-based startup or self-employment. The improvement is generating/launching/approval of new projects.

Entrepreneurship, start up and scale up are essential factors in any economy as potential drivers for employment and economic reactivation. Policies supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship as well as policies promoting business competitiveness are key issues for the abovementioned Regional Innovation strategy Plan.

According to the Spanish Confederation of Small and Medium Size Company (CEPYME, Spanish acronym), the role of women in business is a factor for improving competitiveness so that it is necessary to promote women's employment in sectors where they are underrepresented and their promotion in their professional career. Both actions as part of public policies, since the gender analysis of the sector highlights the underrepresentation of women in all the stages of the entrepreneurship process, different behavior when starting up and managing a business, different problems faced during that process, as well as a different profile in their business initiatives.

Those factors are precisely on which SODERCAN is willing to have an impact with the actions included in this Action Plan. Their main objective is to encourage SMEs to include gender mainstreaming in their management processes in order to achieve and effective equality between women and men, the employment of women's talent in STEM sectors



and the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in these high-tech sectors where they are underrepresented.

In order to achieve a real gender equality in entrepreneurship and business in general, the current law on gender equality should be observed: this legislation tackles, amongst other issues, the obligation of Public Administration of increasing the number of business women and entrepreneurs, increasing visibility, competitiveness and internationalization of their business projects, promoting their presence in sectors where they are underrepresented and suppressing barriers which are an obstacle for women to become entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is essential, as a link between SODERCAN'S actions included in this plan and the political instrument on which those are based, the role of the Regional General Directorate of Innovation, Technological Development and Industrial Entrepreneurship, which is promoting Innovation culture in the regional society, and more specifically in the business and scientific sectors, as a driving force for economic growth and social development. In this sense, this Regional Directorate General is responsible for setting up the guidelines SODERCAN has to comply with, concerning the ERDF objectives for the period 2014-2020. Despite the fact the actions included in the Action Plan are not financed by the ERDF since the institution belongs to the Regional Ministry of Industry, Innovation, Tourism and Commerce our actions and programmes will impact in the regional innovation strategy including new axes, indicators and specific programmes addressed to women. Not only in the existing programmes but also in the new European schemes: ERDF and MRR.

The actions included in the Action Plan are not financed by the ERDF.

4. Policy need

The Gender Equality Index of EIGE of Spain describes the uneven concentration of women and men in different study fields in tertiary education continue to be a challenge for Spain. Nearly half of all women students study education, health and welfare, or humanities and arts, compared to only a quarter of men students. In Cantabria, in 2019 we had a gender gap of 74.09 in Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees.

STEM fields are notably important for economic development. However, these fields are highly gender-skewed, regardless of whether the population considered is students, faculty members, graduates, top managers, or entrepreneurs. This underrepresentation of women in innovation-driven business startups highlights existing gender biases and systemic disadvantages in social structures.

Less women than men gain qualifications in high technology. Young women show a lack of interest in new technologies and a preference for social careers (medicine, nursing, teaching, etc.). Cultural factors linked to gender stereotypes mark these inertias. Agents who have participated in different meetings organised within the FEMINA Local Stakeholder Group also point out the existence of a gender bias in primary education, both in school and coming from the family.

In the EU's STEM sectors, women represent a 20% out of the total of entrepreneurs and a 32,5% out of the total persons employed in high tech and intensive knowledge sectors. In a SODERCAN'S study carried out in 2019, the following is highlighted:



- According to a survey conducted by the Spanish National Statistics Institute concerning people in work (with some parameters: professional situation, sex and Autonomous Community), there are 5.100 women acting as employers whereas there are 8.400 men. On the other hand, amongst the self-employed persons without employees, there are 9.900 women and 16.500 men.
- A 32,3% of self-employed women generate jobs as opposed to a 32,7 % of men.
- Concerning people in work in Cantabria self-employed women are a 6,6% as opposed to a 10,7% of men.
- Out of the total people in work in Cantabria, 2,1% are businesswomen as opposed to a 3,5% men.

In order to improve this situation, experts recommend that entrepreneurial activity should be introduced as subject at all educational levels. Already as an infant the child starts to organize the world according to gender, what is masculine, what is feminine, what is for both genders. In navigating, sorting the world and finding its place, the child is exposed to a number of symbols and narratives. Action 1 is related to bias directly on this sphere.

There are also important barriers to work-family balance, linked to social perception of a potential incompatibility with traditional female social roles. However, there is an expanded social perception about the huge personal demand that is.

In this context, institutional support to work-family balance is needed to foster the rationalization of working time schedules and implementation of work-life.

Female entrepreneurs report a lack of institutional support, specifically in self-employment. In consequence, specific programmes and grants to boost participation of girls and women in STEM and entrepreneurship are also needed.

5. List of actions

The Action Plan for the Region of Cantabria includes two Actions:

Action 1: Pilot and roll out of gender-neutral kindergarten for high- tech centres

Policy change typology: Generating new projects and improved management of political instruments. We are going to improve the governance thanks to the interregional exchange, creating a resource to facilitate conciliation for women in STEM area. It will happen while children are trained free from stereotypes, for a future in which the roles within the scope of STEM (and in general, all the roles associated with any field) do not exist and these people, in the future, are free to do and to decide what they believe best in their lifetime.

Policy instrument:

1. Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the Government of Cantabria
2. Plan Corresponsables

Description: This action involves the implementation of two kindergartens with a gender focus: one in the PCTCAN (Cantabria Science and Technology Park), where many companies linked to high technology are located and another one in the University of Cantabria, where work many scientists. It will contribute to support work/family balance of women working in tech through a subsidy line. Furthermore, this action promotes the disappearance of gender stereotypes from early ages. After the implementation of the



pilot project in the PCTCAN and University of Cantabria, it is expected that the project will be implemented at a regional level in Cantabria through the Sub-directorate General of Childhood and Adolescence. It is also expected that the tested educational itinerary will influence the future Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the Government of Cantabria (the third) and the Plan Corresponsables.

Action 2: Breaking Barriers for Entrepreneur Women in STEM

Policy change typology: The improvement is generating/launching/approval of new projects.

Policy instrument: Regional Innovation Strategy 2016-2030

Description: Through this new action, we address the difficulties faced in accessing finance and the credit risks by potential female entrepreneurs and by those women that want to develop their professional career in sectors in which they are under-represented.

The goal is to promote gender mainstreaming in Cantabrian companies, by introducing a new grant scheme that supports female technology-based start-ups and employment. The scheme will include objective criteria awarding aid or subsidy based on the integration of the gender perspective into applications for funding Details of the Actions Envisaged.

6. Details of the Actions Envisaged

ACTION 1

Pilot and roll out of gender-neutral kindergarten for high- tech centers

Policy Need Addressed

The political needs that this action aims to address are linked to the barriers identified by the working groups of the FEMINA Project.

These barriers are horizontal, i.e., they can be observed throughout the economy, not only in the sectors with high technological content.

In the first place, the problem of work-family balance was one of the barriers pointed out by the three discussion groups (female entrepreneurship, access to employment and professional career in SMEs with a high technological content and the gender dimension in innovation). Workplace childcare facilities are key to promoting work-life balance and reducing absenteeism. The Government of Cantabria, through this action, intends to promote their implementation and to generalize their use regardless of the family's economic situation (economic barrier).

Furthermore, this action promotes, through its innovative teaching methodology, the disappearance of gender stereotypes from early ages. This was precisely another of the barriers highlighted by the stakeholders. The design, testing and then implementation of the non-sexist teaching methodology oriented towards technological content will generate social awareness of these issues.

Moreover, vocations in STEM fields are not only insufficient, but women also represent a low percentage of them. In a 4.0 world, it's crucial to awaken vocations in STEM, especially among girls, so that their talent is not wasted.

Finally, the kindergartens, in which the programme will be implemented, are located in the PCTCAN in Santander (Cantabria Science and Technology Park), where many companies linked to high technology are placed and in the University of Cantabria, where work many



scientists. Therefore, we find that this action will have a direct impact on the specific high technology sector, since with the implementation of the project we will contribute to support work/family balance of women working in tech.

In summary, this action brings together policies in three areas: equality, education and industry and tech.

Overview of the Policy Improvement that this Action refers to	
Overall Topic	<p><i>Working towards gender equality and high-tech vocations from an early age.</i></p> <p>Working towards gender equality from childhood can help to eliminate stereotypes and prevent future discrimination. Cultural ideas about gender are acquired at an early age and these stereotyped notions affect children's interests.</p> <p>Modifying the contents of the educational programme, training teachers in pedagogical proposals, selecting teachers according to equality criteria, as well as making changes oriented towards gender equality in both the play areas and the materials of the kindergartens are some of the actions to be developed in this action. These measures are direct connected with the Law of Cantabria 2/2019, of 7 March, for the effective equality between men and women. It will have a direct influence in the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the Government of Cantabria and the Plan Corresponsables.</p> <p>It will be the first specific resource implemented in relation to coeducation. Thanks to the interregional exchange provided by the FEMINA's network, we are going to develop an improvement in the implementation of the equality by creating an instrument capable of fulfilling the mandates. We are going to improve the governance thanks to the interregional exchange, creating a resource to facilitate conciliation for women in STEM area. It will happen while children are trained free from stereotypes, for a future in which the roles within the scope of STEM (and in general, all the roles associated with any field) do not exist and these people, in the future, are free to do and to decide what they believe best in their lifetime.</p>
Specific Description	<p>The implementation of this action involves the development of three stages:</p> <p>(1) diagnosis and design of an itinerary with a gender equality perspective, focused on technological content and respectful of the principles laid out in the 2030 Agenda;</p> <p>(2) development of a pilot phase;</p> <p>(3) Regional education project.</p> <p>Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be running in parallel. Stage 3 will be developed after them. It will be necessary to formalize the collaboration agreements between all the agents implied in the Project (<i>see below "Specific Activities and Timeframe" for detailed timing</i>).</p> <p>In the first stage, the curriculum will be updated, establishing coeducation, as a pedagogical proposal, and it will guide the project, which will be implemented at PCTCAN and University of Cantabria kindergartens. Therefore, this curriculum is focused just to stage 2 at this project, not applied to regional level. If the pilot phase is successful, we will extend the model of the curriculum to a regional education project. We can also modify those aspects we consider necessary based on stage 1 experience.</p> <p>DGIM will entrust the curriculum making at the University of Cantabria, through the correspondent contracting. Once this is done, DGIM will be the organism that will supervise the implementation of the curriculum and</p>



the responsible for the modifications and updates that will be necessary.

The curriculum, will be based around:

- Selection of educational resources and non-sexist games linked to activities with a high technological content.
- Promotion of differentiated recreational spaces (a quiet play area, an area for movement and psychomotor skills and an area for experimentation with nature), instead of the traditional gender-based distribution of the playground.
- Periodic training of teachers in strategies, aimed at boosting education for gender equality.
- Collaboration with families to provide them with non-sexist guidelines and criteria.
- Positive discrimination regarding the hiring of male employees. If possible, minimum 20% of the staff will be men (teachers, caretakers, cleaners, etc.). The aim is to make children more sensitive and to make it visible that men can also carry out these care tasks, traditionally attributed to women.

In **the second stage**, collaboration agreements will be signed between the Directorate General for Women and Equality of the Government of Cantabria and the participating entities: University of Cantabria and the Management Society of the Science and Technology Park (PCTCAN). These agreements will establish the principles of application of the initial pilot action, on the basis of what has been defined in the first stage.

The second stage will then see a pilot phase of the gender-neutral kindergarten. This will be carried out at PCTCAN and University of Cantabria kindergartens.

Finally, in **stage 3**, a Regional Educational Project, based on the developed by the University of Cantabria for this project, will be developed thanks to the experience acquired in the pilot phase and the involvement of the Department of Education, Vocational Training of the Government of Cantabria. This Regional Educational Project will be applied to the kindergartens integrated in the public system of kindergartens dependent on the Government of Cantabria (Sub-directorate General of Childhood and Adolescence). Evaluation of the results in this stage will be really important as an input to design together with the Department of Education, Vocational Training of Government of Cantabria, a coeducational model that could be spread into all Cantabrian kindergartens in a first step in the near future and even evolve into higher educational levels into the regional education system.

Also, the Regional Educational Project will influence in two political instruments:

1. Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the Government of Cantabria. FEMINA will influence the internal strategy in the way that the results of the action implemented by the DGIM (the pilot of the educational itinerary) will be introduce to the third internal strategy. Thus, the experience acquired in FEMINA could be extended to the entire network of nursery schools, to all educational stages, and finally, produce this improvement in the governance in a complete way.
2. "Plan Corresponsables". In the future, the experience of the pilot project carried out in FEMINA, for the testing of the educational project, could be vital when it comes to making agreements with local entities from 2022. Specifically, it could be included coeducation criteria to be implemented, based on our model, in centers where children at early ages are cared for and that receive funding from this plan. It is also remarkable that there is a part within the Plan addressed to the "education of educators"; the contents from the FEMINA project will be based for training of



professionals in the education field. And these professionals are not just related with the Corresponsables context, so it extend the influence outside the plan, because the training enable whoever undertakes this training to educate.

Background		
Regional / Local input, including input from FEMINA Stakeholder Groups	<p>The proposed action arises from the analysis of the document "Understanding barriers and Enablers" (May 2019).</p> <p>The need to work on gender stereotypes from an early age was one of the recurrent ideas shared in the working groups with regional stakeholders. The need for greater institutional support for family-work balance was also highlighted, as well as the positive effects of including teaching materials related to high-tech professions and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>The action designed directly addresses three of the barriers identified in the first phases of the FEMINA project: gender stereotypes, family conciliation and insufficient institutional support. Moreover, this action will also boost the number of qualified women enrolled in STEM sectors in the long term, breaking the glass ceiling in our society.</p> <p>In order to involve the local actors, the first phase of the action (i.e. the pilot action) will be carried out at SODERCAN (FEMINA partner) and at the Management Society of the Science and Technology Park and at University of Cantabria. This Business Park is a reference point for economic and business innovation in Cantabria. It groups and promotes the creation of innovative companies based on technology and the development of knowledge. Most of the business stakeholders who have participated in the project are based there. Also, University of Cantabria, has participated in the stakeholders meetings and also allocates a high number of groups that research and innovate in high-tech.</p>	
Transfer of FEMINA Solutions (GP) and other input from interregional exchange in FEMINA		
Description of Solution	Elements to be transferred for my policy improvement	Exchange process
Hokus Pokus kindergarten (Norway)	<p>This good practice is a gender-neutral kindergarten.⁴</p> <p>It is a resource for students and teachers to achieve a better work/study and family life balance, and also a best practice in terms of gender-neutral education. The kindergarten promotes various initiatives aimed at creating a gender-neutral environment and at guaranteeing gender balance. The pedagogical approach focuses on guaranteeing the same opportunities to all children and leaves them free to explore and play in a gender-free environment. In 2004, it</p>	<p>Our first contact with this good practice was during the third convention of the FEMINA Project in Norway (Grimstad, 24th - 25th October 2019).</p> <p>The second day of the Convention started with a study visit to the University of Agder, one of the main actors in the Region, and to the Hokus Pokus kindergarten. During that visit, we got to know both the facilities and the staff. We also could deepen on the framework plan for the kindergarten's content and tasks. It has highlighted that awareness of the female potential to access male-dominated sectors must start from an early age.</p> <p>On 17/11/2020, an on-line mentoring group session was carried out with the owners of the good practice. As a</p>

⁴ <http://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3235/gender-equality-in-hokus-pokus-kindergarten/>



	<p>launched an active campaign to recruit male employees, which has led to a working environment in which they represent the 20% of the staff.</p>	<p>result, they provided a translated version of the Framework for Norwegian Kindergartens and the Hokus Pokus own plan for the kindergarten. Moreover, the GP owner shared and discussed a number of important sources of information related to gender equality in childcare. All these tools support the creation of the curriculum for the gender-neutral kindergarten.</p>
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Specific Activities and Timeframe	
Activities developed in Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding barriers and enablers for women. For this purpose, we developed a regional analysis by heterogeneous working groups with the regional stakeholders. - Understanding solutions by the identification of good practices, based on the barriers and enablers identified previously. These good practices were identified by the interregional and regional exchange moments. - Participation in a mentoring group with the Hokus Pokus Norwegian Kindergarten, by develop of our Action Plan and its implementation, by adapting the main characteristics at our region. - During 2020, DGIM carried out an economic assessment to justify the implementation of the actions of FEMINA project. The assessment was accepted by the responsible organism and approved at the regional parliament in December, 2020.
Activities planned for Phase 2	
March 2021 - December 2021 (stage 1)	<p>Diagnosis and design of an itinerary with a gender equality perspective (based on the mandates of the 2/2019 Law for the Effective Equality of Women and Men and the exchange of communication with both stakeholders and FEMINA network), focused on technological content and respectful of the principles laid out in the 2030 Agenda. // Milestone: Detailed educational itinerary.</p> <p>The main actions in this stage will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DGIM will hire the University of Cantabria to develop the curriculum. This curriculum will be the structure of our educational model on the kindergarten. The material provide by the Hokus Pokus kindergarten will provide an important foundation for this curriculum. - The collaboration agreement with be defined with all the agents who will be implied in the project (particularly important to define the role of the actors involved in the pilot action – stage 2).
June 2021 – June 2022 (stage 2)	<p>Pilot phase // Milestone: Testing of the Detailed Pedagogical Itinerary.</p> <p>The exact content of this stage will depend on the curriculum and the collaboration agreements in stage 1. It will certainly include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) SWOT analysis of the kindergarten model. 2) Collaboration of staff to run to pilot action; 3) Pilot of the newly developed curriculum over a minimum period of 6 months; 4) Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the pilot. 5) Diffusion of the project.
From May 2021 - Onwards (stage 3)	<p>Regional Education Project // (Sub-directorate General of Childhood and Adolescence). This stage will start in parallel with the pilot phase, so that the stakeholders that need to be involved in the regional project can follow the pilot and see the evaluation results directly.</p>



	<p>Our kindergarten model will be applied progressively to other children's centers related with the public administration in the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Firstly, at a reduced number of children's center. - For the complete extension of our kindergarten model in all Cantabria region, a project will be designed in this stage with the Regional Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of the Government of Cantabria taking into account the evaluation results and the region stakeholders. - We will try to extend our kindergarten model at a large number of the regional children's centers, as a proposed regional project after FEMINA project ends. <p>Also, the steps that we will take to mainstream results from the pilot into the new Gender Strategy and the Plan Corresponsables. From the beginning of the pilot phase, we will use the contents for the creation of both, the regional strategy and the plan, for the best way to use the knowledge acquired in the project.</p>
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Stakeholders involved	
Name of Organisation / person	Role in Action Plan
Management Society of the Science and Technology Park.	<p>PCTCAN is a Business Park that is a reference point for economic and business innovation in Cantabria. It groups and promotes the creation of innovative companies based on technology and the development of knowledge. Most of the business stakeholders who have participated in the project are based there.</p> <p>The main kindergarten, in which the project will be implemented, is located in this park.</p>
University of Cantabria (UC).	<p>The educational itinerary to be developed in the kindergarten will be developed in collaboration with the Faculty of Education of the University of Cantabria (UC). On the other hand, in the second phase of the project, also in the second stage, work will be carried out with the University of Cantabria implementing the pilot project in the private kindergarten and nursery school of the University of Cantabria itself.</p> <p>University of Cantabria is also a high technology and innovation area in Cantabria where a great number of women scientist work in diverse departments and investigation groups.</p>
Sub-directorate General of Childhood and Adolescence	<p>This department of the Government of Cantabria is in charge of managing public kindergartens in the region. The objective is to coordinate the implementation of the programme in the public kindergarten it manages.</p>

Costs and Funding Sources	
Costs	Funding Sources
<p>18.000 €</p> <p>Design of the educational itinerary and specific training programmes for staff and families</p>	<p>DGIM budget, Government of Cantabria</p> <p>Cantabria Official Diary (BOC) published on December 30th, 2020</p> <p>https://boc.cantabria.es/boces/verAnuncioAction.do?idAnuBlob=357009</p>



5.000 € Acquisition of educational materials for kindergartens. Pilot phase.	DGIM budget, Government of Cantabria Cantabria Official Diary (BOC) published on December 30th, 2020 https://boc.cantabria.es/boces/verAnuncioAction.do?idAnuBlob=357009
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Risk and Contingency Plans		
Description of Risk	Level of probability (High, Medium, Low)	Description of Contingency Plan
Lack of interest in the staff of the kindergartens who are to run the programme	Low	Continuous monitoring of the evolution of the programme and its implementation. Specific training programmes are included.
Obstacles or reticence on the part of families linked to the programme	Low	Additional work with families, by reinforcing the dissemination of the program. E.i, we will schedule more meetings with families to promote the link with our kindergarten.

Monitoring		
Self-defined Performance Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Adherence of most influential stakeholders to specifically the gender-neutral kindergarten project.	Increase 10 %	Collaboration agreement signed between the agents (in pilot stage and in regional project stage).
Output Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Number of new curricula (educational itinerary report) prepared and piloted	1	Officially approved Educational itinerary report (prepared in stage 1) Reports from pilot action (stage 2)
Families/children (in percentage) users of the pilot kindergarten /nursery schools which participate in the pilot phase	100%	Report on pilot action
Level of satisfaction of users in the pilot phase	90 %	Report on continuous monitoring and evaluation during the pilot-
Number of kindergartens involved in the wider regional project	5	Official approval of the regional project and cooperation agreements with kindergartens



ACTION 2
Breaking barriers to female entrepreneurship to STEM through public funding criteria and grants

Policy Need Addressed

SODERCAN believes that fostering the spirit of female entrepreneurship and enhancing female contribution in business organizations are the two main working lines for the driving force to the development of nations and regions, employment generation and innovation. These actions go beyond the economic and financial support since companies, therefore, become visible and profiles of professional and women entrepreneurs surely will serve as a boost in female entrepreneurship and female professional development in sectors in which they are under-represented. Finance is one of the keys of business. That is why it is essential for women entrepreneurs to approach for financial assistance.

Women are critically underrepresented in STEM professions in Cantabria.

In order to create a truly innovative economy, the government needs to empower young women through science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Through this new action, we address the difficulties that potential female entrepreneurs and women seeking further professional development find in accessing finance and credit in sectors in which they are under-represented. This has been a conclusion which has been reached after the stakeholder's meetings held in September 2018.

The article 55 of the Law 2/2019 for effective equality between men and women, includes the promotion of female entrepreneurship as a task of the different Regional Ministries of the Regional Government of Cantabria. In this sense, SODERCAN as public body attached to the Regional Ministry of Innovation, Industry, Transport and Commerce, develops programmes aimed at promoting the entrepreneurship, with specific positive actions in favour of women.

According to a survey conducted by the Spanish National Statistical Institute, there is a lower rate of activity and employment. According to the date obtained from the National Institute of Statistics for the first trimester of 2018 the rate of feminine activity was 50,28%, nine points and two tenths bellow men, and also below the national rate (52,94%). The employment rate was 43,1% for the mentioned period, close to the national level but with a gender gap of almost ten points.

The regional government is especially interested in encouraging female-led businesses with high-growth proposing policies that stimulate participation in STEM and raising awareness of women's potential as economic drivers.

The goal is to promote gender mainstreaming in Cantabrian companies, including objective criteria awarding aid or subsidies for the integration of the gender perspective in companies' business plans. Funding schemes will favor those plans that propose stable and quality employment for women, in professional sectors where they are under-represented.

The project will contribute to the promotion of high-tech participation of women, by offering tools and grants to encourage female business.

By working towards these goals, Cantabria will reach higher levels of development, increase their research output and build capacity, thereby reducing inequalities.

Overview of the Policy Improvement that this Action refers to

Overall Topic	<p>Specific programme and grants to boost participation of women in STEM activities and promote gender mainstreaming in Cantabrian companies.</p> <p>These grants will encourage more women to be self-employed especially in STEM fields and encouraging them to startup businesses.</p>
Specific Description	<p>This action will develop a grant within an aid scheme in SODERCAN to boost female entrepreneurship in economic sectors, where it is expected to be a significant number of jobs in the medium term because of economic, social and technology changes.</p>



The action 2 proposed by SODERCAN addresses the same problems which are focused on women's underrepresentation in SMEs and the low number of women financed by grants in the field of entrepreneurship.

The activity 2 of our Action Plan, includes the following actions:

A. Development of a specific grant in the framework of a SODERCAN general grant programme in order to promote female entrepreneurship in the economic sectors for which a significant number of jobs are expected to be created in the medium term, because of economic, social and technological changes.

With the aim of promoting the female STEM entrepreneurship, as a key tool to increase the presence and leadership of women in a fundamental field for the country's future – technology based start-ups- , a specific line of grants will be opened within SODERCAN's general programme for supporting technology-based start-ups and entrepreneurship led by women.

This action aims to fund technology-validation, new technology-oriented Business plans, the launching of new products in the market, Business scale-up and projects with the goal of having access to potential investors.

B. To promote gender mainstreaming in regional businesses by including as objective criteria for funding the integration of gender mainstreaming in the Business plan with a special focus on those Business plans promoting stable and quality employment for women in those sectors with underrepresentation.

With the aim of promoting the female STEM entrepreneurship, as a key tool to increase the presence and leadership of women in a fundamental field for the country's future – technology based start-ups- , a specific line of grants will be opened within SODERCAN's general programme for supporting technology-based start-ups and entrepreneurship led by women.

This action aims to fund technology-validation, new technology-oriented Business plans, the launching of new products in the market, Business scale-up and projects with the goal of having access to potential investors.

This specific action has been officially agreed between DG Women and gender issues (Regional Government of Cantabria) and the Regional Development Agency of Cantabria (SODERCAN).

The following stages will be followed in order to launch the programme and the inclusion of the gender mainstreaming as an objective criteria for funding – internal procedure established for the design, implementation and monitoring of grants and supporting programmes.

1- DRAFTING THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

A responsible in charge of the programme is designated and he/she is responsible for drafting the call. A Working team is set up and it will be composed of a representative of the legal department, another from the Audit department and experts of the organization working in the field of entrepreneurship. The group (including the person responsible) will work on the call's draft.

2- APPROVAL OF CALL FOR PROPOSALS CONTENT:

Once the Working team agree on the final content, the Call for proposals is officially approved and signed by SODERCAN's legal representative. The call for proposals will be aligned with the additional provision 9 bis of the Regional Law 10/2006, 17 July on regional public grants.



	<p>3- DESIGN OF THE VIRTUAL PLATFORM IN ORDER TO INCLUDE THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS OFFICIALLY APPROVED:</p> <p>The responsible for the programme will hold meetings with the expert responsible for designing the virtual platform (a member of the IT department) in order to adapt it to the new call for proposals approved. All the grants are channeled through a virtual platform both for proposals and evaluation.</p> <p>4- OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS IN THE REGIONAL OFFICIAL BULLETIN</p> <p>The call for proposals will be published in the Regional official Bulletin (BOC, Spanish acronym for "Boletín Oficial de Cantabria") and on SODERCAN'S official website.</p> <p>5- ADMISSION IN THE GENERAL REGISTRY OF REGIONAL GRANTS</p> <p>Once the call is officially published it will be passed to the Regional General Directorate of Economy and European Affairs in order to be registered in the Regional Registry of Regional Grants (ARGAYU, as it is known in its Spanish acronym). If the COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014, of 17 June 2014, declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, is applicable, the call for proposals will be sent to the Regional Directorate of Economy and European Affairs that will be notify its publication to the European Commission.</p> <p>Once the call is published an average of two months is left open for proposals, evaluation of proposals and finally the outcome of the call and the specific grants awarded has an average time of eight months.</p> <p>At the same time we launch a new funding programme. objective criteria for awarding aid / subsidies that integrate the gender perspective, with special incidence for those that favor stable and quality employment for women, in professional sectors where they are underrepresented, shall be established through all the future grants to SMEs.</p> <p>SODERCAN has already worked on the content of this new grant and can provide some initial details. The potential beneficiaries of this scheme will be companies and scale-up businesses meeting a series of requirements (either for teams or for companies).</p> <p>Requirements for teams (to be justified in a report attached to the application for the grant):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A minimum of one woman should be in the founding team (a physical person with shares in the company and holding a position of relevance in the company). This woman should hold a minimum of a 50% of the company's official shares. It is not necessary that women hold the CEO position although they should be a part of the business' management board.- The founding team should be committed to the business growth and take part in the company's performance for most of their working hours (working hours should be justified). <p>Requirements for companies (in addition to the gender requirements above and highlighting the link with high-tech sectors):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The company should have a potential technological scaling up. This requirement should be justified in the report by including a business plan which explains the scaling up potential (customers, market, technology, etc). <p>Potential beneficiaries will be requested to provide a sworn statement that gender mainstreaming requirements are being met. Furthermore, in every</p>
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grant issued, most specifically in those aimed at staff recruitment, the funding will be increased by an additional 5% when the applicant has an Equality plan or it is carrying out conciliation measures in the company – development of social and labour measures to reach gender equality.

Background	
Regional / Local input, including input from FEMINA Stakeholder Groups	<p>The Understanding Barriers and Enablers document (also described in Action 1) was a tool to analyze the reasons behind the gender gap in high-tech sectors. It helped to identify and categorise existing barriers and introduce potential enablers, which could facilitate important changes in the economic and social structure of Cantabria.</p> <p>After having listed horizontal barriers and enablers regarding the inclusion of women in high-tech enterprises at the regional context, we are working with regional stakeholder to compare them to our regional policy context.</p> <p>Through this new action, we address the difficulties that potential female entrepreneurs and women seeking further professional development find in accessing finance and credit in sectors in which they are under-represented. This has been a conclusion which has been reached after the stakeholders meetings held in September 2018. According to a survey conducted by the Spanish National Statistical Institute, there is a lower rate of activity and employment. According to the date obtained from the national institute of statistics for the first trimester of 2018 the rate of feminine activity was 50.28%, nine points and two tenths bellow men, and also below the national rate (52.94%). The employment rate was 43.1% for the mentioned period, close to the national level but with a gender gap of almost ten points.</p> <p>During the process, we collaborated with the regional STEM Talent Girl Programme. They played a key role in discussing the barriers and potential ways to address them. Given that their programme encourages STEM vocations among girls in their 3rd and 4th years of secondary school, they will be involved in the implementation of the Action, helping us to identify potential female entrepreneurs that may be interested in the aid scheme.</p>
Transfer of FEMINA Solutions (GP) and other input from interregional exchange in FEMINA	
<p>Differently from Action 1, the main inspiration for this action comes not from specific GPs, but rather from the exchange during the project on barriers.</p> <p>The difficulty of female entrepreneurs to access funding is one of the main barriers to female entrepreneurship in the high-tech sector identified within FEMINA. Project partners recognised that this barrier regards the access to both public and private funding. This initially came up during group work at the FEMINA Convention 1 (Arezzo, September 2018), it was further investigated at regional level in the first project semesters and validated as a project level barrier at Convention 2 (Sterea Ellada, March 2019).</p> <p>Further interregional discussion on this barrier took place at Convention 3 (Grimstad, October 2019) in the framework of the design-thinking exercise on Dream Action Plans and at a virtual project meeting in February 2020, focusing on Good Practice (GP) exchange. Partners highlighted that, while various GP exist in their regions dealing with networking initiatives, leadership programmes and education / mentoring schemes, measures supporting female entrepreneurship in the high-tech are less common. Therefore, more work on this specific topic was sought after by various regions, including Cantabria, in order to improve their policies.</p> <p>Partners undertook analysis to see if there were suitable GPs within their territories, but nothing was found. In Tuscany, within the ESF funded Giovani Si initiative, there is a funding line for female entrepreneurship. However, following meetings with the Managing Authority of the programme, it emerged that none of the funding had gone to high-tech female start-ups. The vast majority were hairdressers, beauticians and shops. The GP "Protocol for development and</p>	



growth of female enterprises and female entrepreneurs" (shared by the FEMINA LP)⁵ offers some interesting elements in this sense. However, its national scope (cooperation between national government, banking authorities and business associations) and focus on access to private funding do not make it applicable to regional funding.

Therefore, the Cantabrian partners decided that they should start their own such funding programme. As such, the inspiration came from FEMINA, as it offered the chance to look in detail at the question of funding for female entrepreneurship. Subsequently, once SODERCAN had decided to develop the grant scheme, in addition to regional expertise to develop the content, they also had support from the FEMINA mentoring group. During the Mentoring Group session on 17 November 2020, the FEMINA Advisory Board members looked in detail at the proposed action and advised on various elements. The Group discussed the overall concept and the specific requirements that the Spanish partners were proposing.

When developing this Action, the Cantabrian partners also looked in detail at the Good Practice EMPOWA - Supporting women entrepreneurs 'activities in Horizon 2020 (Greece)⁶. EMPOWA is a strategic alliance of research, innovation and business stakeholders, aiming to boost the participation of women in H2020-SME Instrument calls. The main problem EMPOWA addresses is that despite the EC support mechanisms for enhancing women entrepreneurship and the H2020 targets for gender equality in Research and Innovation, women are still under-represented in the flagships programme of H2020, the SME Instrument.

Our first contact with this good practice was during the third convention of the FEMINA Project in Norway (Grimstad, 24th - 25th October 2019). On 17 November 2020, a virtual mentoring group session was held with the GP owners. The GP owners gave a presentation of the GP, answering specific questions. In particular, it was important to see the results of the online survey performed to identify the needs of women entrepreneurs related to SME Instrument proposal submission. This GP served to confirm that a specific grant for female entrepreneurs could indeed stimulate participation. No specific elements are transferred, but the GP did help with the analysis of how this action can take place.

Specific Activities and Timeframe	
October 2021 - December 2021	New funding scheme. It will also draw on comments and input from other regional stakeholders (Companies, Stem Talent Programme, e.g.) government members and others. A draft will be issued as a consequence of stakeholders' input // Milestone: Results of the regional working group and new draft funding scheme.
February 2022- March 2022	Approval of the new funding scheme in order to submit the programme for budgetary considerations – political decision. An internal procedure will be launched for the grants' publication. Together with the legal and financial department, the Entrepreneurship department will adapt the draft to legal requirements and available budget together with technical considerations which might arise. Among the various inputs, we have input from regional stakeholders, internal expertise in SODERCAN for grant preparation and the input from the EMPOWA survey on female needs when applying for high-tech schemes. Milestone: Official publication of the new grant on the Official Regional Bulletin.
From March - July 2022	Programme Dissemination through different events. The EMPOWA experience showed the importance of raising awareness and proposed a strategy, which can help to provide input to a specific dissemination strategy for this grant. This will also build on SODERCAN and the Region of Cantabria's existing communication channels, particularly those designed to reach women.

5 <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/2830/protocol-for-development-and-growth-of-female-enterprises-and-female-entrepreneurs/>
 6 <http://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3136/empowa-supporting-women-entrepreneurs-activities-in-horizon-2020/>



	One example is that SODERCAN always organize an event in order to spread the different new grants available for the year. A specific session can be organized on this grant, with focus work to ensure that women are aware of the event and can attend.
August - December 2022	Results analysis and feasibility of implementing the policy improvement. It is intended to establish indicators in order to monitor the number of women as applicants for starting up companies in the STEM field.

Stakeholders involved

Name of Organisation / person	Role in Action Plan
DG of Innovation, Technological Development and Industrial Entrepreneurship.	<p>The General Directorate of Innovation, Technological Development and Industrial Entrepreneurship (DGIDTEI), dependent on the Ministry of Innovation, Industry, Transport and Commerce, was created in July 2015. The purpose of the General Directorate is to promote the Culture of Innovation in all Cantabrian society and especially in the business and scientific environment of the Autonomous Community, as an engine of economic growth and social development, to improve the quality of life of all Cantabrians. SODERCAN, as the Regional development Agency is attached to the same Regional Ministry and works closely with DG Innovation in different fields concerning supporting entrepreneurs and business in general in the field of Innovation, as a key element to scale-up. DG Innovation is the political responsible for establishing the guidelines to be followed in the Innovation field by SODERCAN, although the pilot action won't be financed by the ROP.</p> <p>Regarding the action plan (Action 2) it will be involved in checking the feasibility of the grant.</p>

Costs and Funding Sources

Costs	Funding Sources
100.000€ allocated to the grant. The exact amount may vary on the basis of budgetary availabilities in the 2021/22 budget.	The General Budget Law of the Community of Cantabria in favor of SODERCAN for the year 2021/2022 will assign SODERCAN an annual budget under the framework of the abovementioned Regional Innovation Strategy.

Risk and Contingency Plans

Description of Risk	Level of probability (High, Medium, Low)	Description of Contingency Plan
Lack of funding availability on the SODERCAN budget line for 2021/2022	Low	<p>The action can still run with a lower budget, in a reduced capacity.</p> <p>If the total budget is not allocated to the grant, we can analyse the potential scope of the action on the basis of budget availability. The scope of the action could be slightly reduced (fewer number of grants awarded / lower amount (€) allocated to each grant / lower level of co-financing).</p> <p>Moreover, we could investigate the possibility of mixed public / private</p>



		financing, by engaging with other partners and investors (e.g. Banks, companies) to co-finance.
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Monitoring		
Self-defined Performance Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Increased percentage of women participating in initiatives related to entrepreneurship, business creation and technical assistance.	Increase 10- 15 % Starting from data concerning entrepreneur applicants in 2019 and 2020 data of female entrepreneurs in STEM / compared after the programme's implementation in 2022.	Number of applications received by female entrepreneurs in STEM
Output Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Number of meetings organized with relevant stakeholders for collecting inputs in order to draft the grant programme	3	Minutes
Number of events for dissemination.	2	Minutes and participants' list
Percentage of female participants in the events	80% out of the total.	Participants' list
Number of female entrepreneurs involved (beneficiaries of the grant)	15	Lists of female entrepreneurs granted
Allocated budget vs budget spent	Total budget 100% of the initial budget allocated.	Financial control of allocated money



7. Signature

Institution: DG Women Issues and Gender Equality (Government of Cantabria)

Name of Signatory: Consuelo Gutiérrez Fernández

Position: General Director

Date:

Stamp (if available):

Signature:

Institution: SODERCAN (Regional Development Agency of Cantabria)

Name of Signatory: Rafael Pérez Tezanos

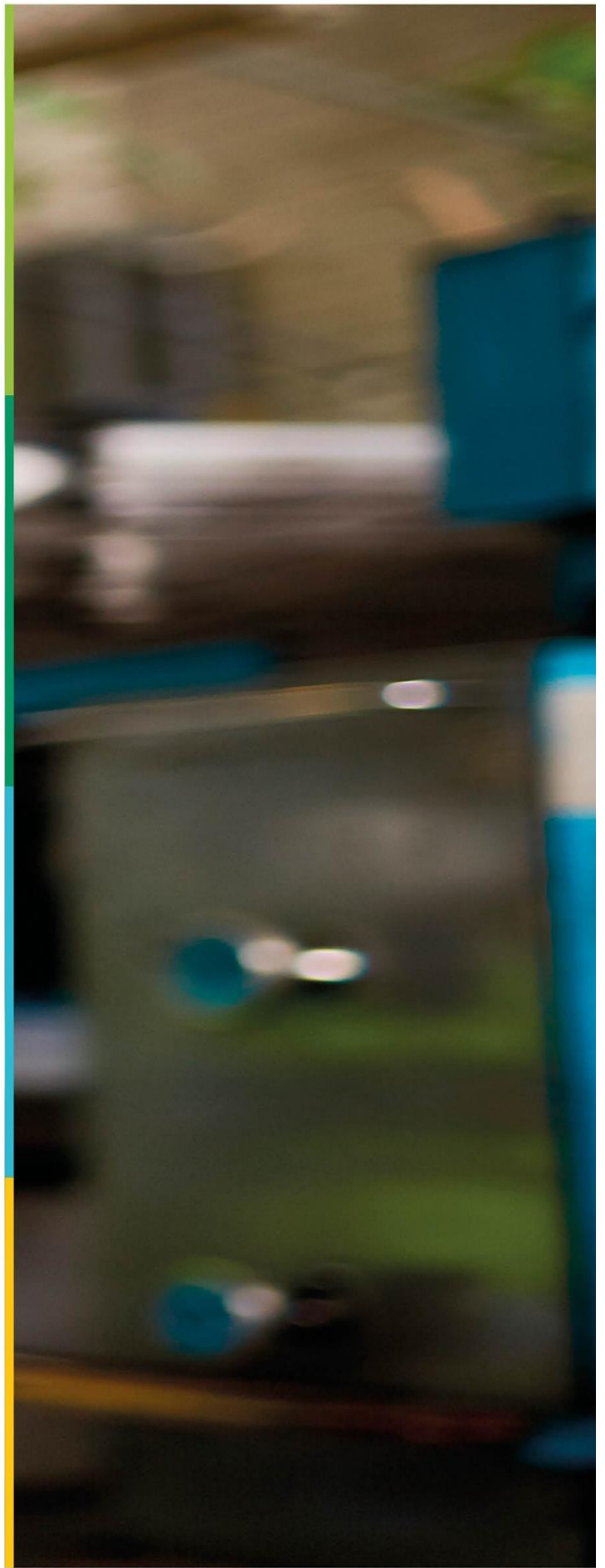
Position: Deputy Chief Executive

Date:

Stamp (if available):

Signature:





Firma 1: **04/08/2021 - Consuelo Gutierrez Fernandez**
DIRECTORA GENERAL-D.G. DE IGUALDAD Y MUJER
CSV: A0600AjjfRaq8CQci5McwsYpceVyDJLYdAU3n8j

