



## ENSEMBLES First Annual Gender Action Report May 2006

### Introduction

This is the first annual report (covering the period September 2004 to August 2005) of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) for the ENSEMBLES project. According to the ENSEMBLES description of work, the annual gender action report will document the extent to which actions promoting gender equality have been performed at the project level, and will chart the rates of female participation at all levels of the project. It is intended to provide a critical assessment of the monitoring statistics provided by partners, with recommendations for action, where appropriate.

The basis for this report is the gender action reporting forms which should have been completed by all partners at the end of the first year. These forms were sent to Brussels as part of the package of annual reports, and were also provided to the Gender Action Committee (see below), in order to prepare this report. 51 partner reports were available to the committee.

This report also draws on Section 6.6 of the ENSEMBLES Description of Work (which outlines the GAP) and a document on implementation of the GAP (dated 15 August 2005) presented to the ENSEMBLES General Assembly and Management Board in September 2005.

### Gender Action Committee

As of May 2006, the Gender Action Committee (GAC) consists of three members:

Sari Kovats, LSHTM, UK  
Aristita Busuioc, NMA, Romania  
Ileana Mares, NIHWM, Romania

Clare Goodess, UEA, UK is an *ex. officio* member of the GAC from the ENSEMBLES Management Board.

The GAC met once last year - during the ENSEMBLES annual General Assembly, September 2005 (CG, AB, IM), but are in regular contact by email, e.g., in order to produce this report.

The terms of reference of the GAC (agreed by the ENSEMBLES management board on 23 March 2005) are: *To advise and report to the ENSEMBLES General Assembly and the Management Board on the development, implementation and monitoring of the ENSEMBLES Gender Action Plan.*

### Monitoring of gender balance within the project workforce

Information on the gender of researchers and administrators in ENSEMBLES in the first year provided by partners and by Research Theme leaders is summarised in Table 1.

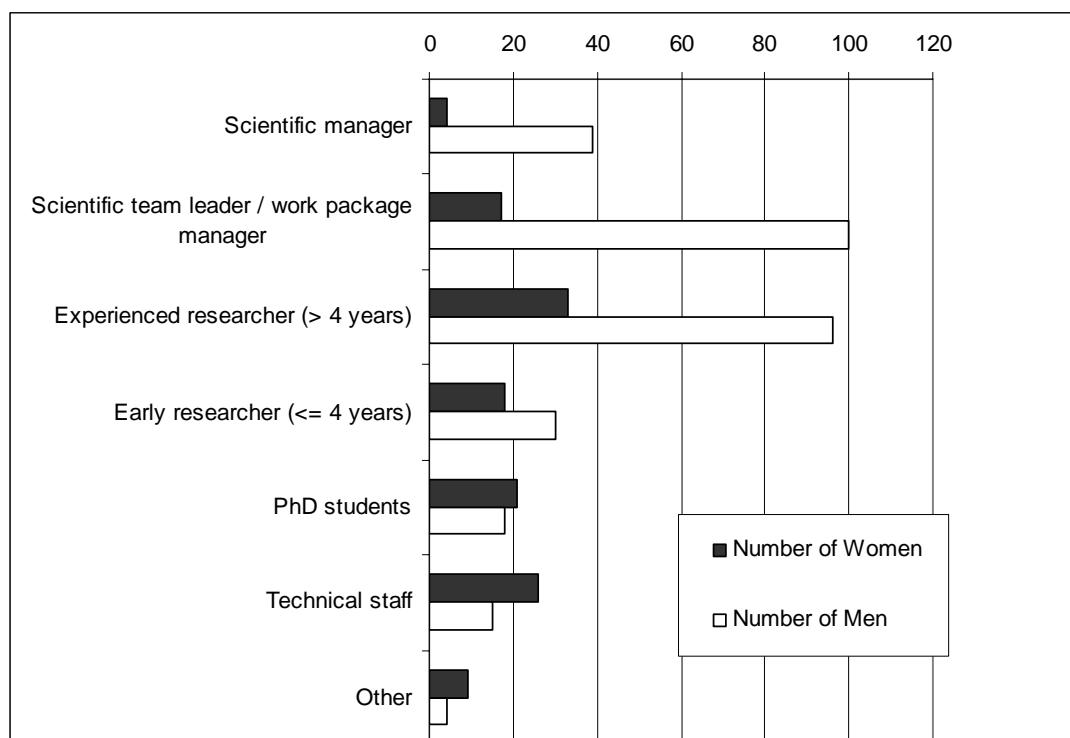
The European Commission has a 40% target for women's representation in FP6 committees, groups and panels. It is clear from Table 1, that ENSEMBLES (like the Commission) falls well short of this target with respect to the management board and workshop attendance.

With respect to project staff, overall, women are significantly under-represented at the senior academic staff levels (Table 1 and Figure 1). However, gender balance is evident at the PhD student level and for technical/other staff.

Table 1 Gender balance: Year 1 statistics

	No. women	No. men	% Women
Management Board	3	19	14%
Workshop attendance	10	35	22%
Mobility Scheme	2	2	50%
Senior staff [Experienced researchers/workpackage leaders/senior management]	54	235	19%
Early researchers	18	30	38%
PhD	21	18	54%
Technical staff and "Other"	35	19	65%

Fig 1. Numbers by job description [some exclusions and misclassifications]



Qualitative comparison with European-wide figures on the gender balance in science and engineering (see for example, the graphs in Appendix 1 of the ENSEMBLES GAP implementation document), indicates that the ENSEMBLES workforce is very typical of the wider European scientific community - neither noticeably worse or better than 'average'. Thus the ENSEMBLES statistics demonstrate the typical rapid fall-off in the representation of women higher up the career ladder.

The individual ENSEMBLES partner teams are all relatively small, in a number of cases only consisting of one or two people. Thus it was not considered appropriate to carry out detailed analyses of individual countries or partners. Country-level statistics are available at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women-science/women-science\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women-science/women-science_en.html)

## Gender actions undertaken by ENSEMBLES partners

Partners were also asked to provide information about gender actions taken during the year. 24 partners provided some information on this section of the report. Activities implemented by partners were quite hard to determine from their reports. The GAC considers that this is largely due to the poor design of the questionnaire. Many partners (14) reported hiring female staff, but this does not constitute an action in relation to the gender action plan, and there was clear confusion about the information required. A few partners mentioned the implementation of equal opportunities policies in recruitment. Many partner institutions are likely to have Equal Opportunities Policies and it would be useful next year to ask a specific question on this subject. ULUND, for example, reported that departmental and university policy is towards an equal gender distribution in all classes of employment. One partner has a research programme (QUEST) which has a policy of gender balance on committees and expert groups. This is a model of good practice that could be recommended to other partners. In the next annual questionnaire there needs to be specific questions about recruitment, as many actions are only relevant if active recruitment for the project has taken place.

The activities reported by partners are summarised below, with the number of respondents indicated in brackets.

- Institution has an equal opportunities policy (6)
- Women encouraged to apply for ENSEMBLES positions (8)
- Active search for female applicants (1)
- Women required to be represented on the interviewing panel (2)
- Appointments process subject to scrutiny by equal opportunities commissioner (1)
- Encouraging women to get involved in ENSEMBLES activities such as workshops and applying for mobility fellowships (3)
- Monitoring participation in workshops (1)
- Encouraging/supporting female PhD students (3)
- GAP issues discussed in project meetings (1)
- Encouraging women to attend international meetings (1)
- Organising local events for women (2) e.g., MPI involved with 2005 Girls Day
- Promoting family friendly policies (3) e.g. providing more than legal minimum paternity leave; family friendly and flexible working conditions.

One partner noted the difficulties of travel and the number of meetings in international projects such as ENSEMBLES. It was suggested that more use should be made of small workshops and teleconferencing.

Four partners reported that there was a lack of women applicants for posts. This suggests that advice on recruitment practices may be helpful. It also indicates a need for further research on the underlying reasons for the shortage of applicants.

## Gender issues in research

Finally, partners were asked to indicate any gender issues associated with the research content. Only one partner is undertaking research that may quantify sex differences in climate change impacts (LSHTM). The relevant deliverables from WP7.4, on *Impacts of Climate Change on the Population* are due in Year 2. No other research-specific gender issues have been identified.

## Implementation of the ENSEMBLES GAP

The August 2005 document on implementation of the ENSEMBLES GAP reported that setting up a gender action webpage, based on material provided by the GAC, was an immediate priority. This webpage has been created and posted on the ENSEMBLES website - with a prominent link from the

frontpage. This webpage will be developed and updated on a continuing basis through the project. Activity on this page will be monitored and ways of making it more attractive/useful sought if activity is low.

The implementation document lists seven issues to be addressed by the GAP/GAC. These are listed below, with a brief report on activity/progress over the first year of the project.

- Monitoring of gender balance within the project workforce: see this annual report
- Annual gender action reporting: see this annual report
- Identification and promotion of best institutional practice: a few examples have been identified from the partner reports, but further examples should be sought and publicised
- Networking and mentoring: no progress at the project level
- Promotion of women in science: no progress at the project level
- Gender issues related to the ENSEMBLES research: see this annual report
- Raising gender awareness: presentation made to the ENSEMBLES General Assembly

## Recommendations and proposed priorities

The first annual monitoring statistics from ENSEMBLES (see above) indicate that the gender balance of the ENSEMBLES workforce is no better or worse than might be expected, given the current composition of the European scientific community. Clearly this balance is not equal and reflects major and complex structural and social issues. While some further recruitment to ENSEMBLES posts may take place, it is likely that the majority of posts have already been advertised and filled, thus the balance of the workforce is unlikely to change substantially over the course of the project.

Therefore, it is recommended that the focus of ENSEMBLES gender actions should be the development of practical and feasible strategies to:

- Promote a high profile of women within ENSEMBLES (e.g., by recommending all meeting/workshop organisers to include women as speakers and chairs/convenors)
- Provide support to women within the ENSEMBLES community (through networking activities and, if possible, mentoring)
- Encourage, and where possible facilitate, women to stay in and progress within the scientific research community at the end of ENSEMBLES (e.g., encourage research team leaders to provide careers advice and appropriate training opportunities)
- Identify and promote best practice on gender issues and family friendly policies (e.g., from other EU projects, and from ENSEMBLES institutions)
- Promote female ENSEMBLES scientists as role models (e.g., through the profiles suggested below)

The following specific actions are proposed for the coming year:

- Identify a gender action/equal opportunities 'champion(s)' as a contact for each ENSEMBLES institution
- Develop active links with gender activities in other FP6 projects (e.g., the women in science day proposed by ACCENT)
- Organise a plenary session and social event on gender action at the next General Assembly (if possible, with an inspiring high-profile external speaker)
- Develop ENSEMBLES-specific gender action monitoring questionnaire for the next annual report
- Further develop and promote the ENSEMBLES gender action webpage
- Provide advice via the webpage on best practice in recruitment
- Develop a series of ENSEMBLES role model profiles on the webpage (these could include a photo, and a few paragraphs on the persons role within the project, academic background/career and views on gender issues, career aspirations, etc. Ideally, one new one each month)
- Encourage all interested ENSEMBLES colleagues to contribute to gender and equal opportunity actions (e.g., providing material for the webpage and newsletters, suggestions for activities/meetings, help with organising the latter)

The first and last specific actions listed above are considered crucial if gender actions are to be effectively implemented within ENSEMBLES. While the committee has a formal role within the project advising and reporting to the General Assembly and the Management Board, it needs the support and active help of the wider ENSEMBLES community. The proposed gender action/equal opportunities champions are seen as playing a vital role in this respect. They would provide the first point of contact with the committee and their help would be sought in ensuring that both the formal EU gender questionnaire and the ENSEMBLES-specific questionnaire it is proposed to introduce next year are completed. Their advice on the design of the latter questionnaire would be sought and they would also be asked to provide specific examples of best institutional practice for the webpage. They would also provide the starting point for developing future networking activities. In this way, it is hoped that we can move towards 'mainstreaming' of gender action and equal opportunities issues within the wider ENSEMBLES activities.

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