



D1.3 Gender Strategy



Project no. 644367

Project acronym: MY-WAY

Project title: Strengthening the web entrepreneurship ecosystem and the services offered across the chain of actors by actively engaging student networks and student entrepreneurship centres

Instrument: Horizon 2020 ICT-13-2014

Start date of project: 01.01.2015

Duration: 24 month

Deliverable title: D1.3 Gender Strategy

Due date of deliverable: Month 3

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: Europa Media (P1)

Author list:

Name	Organisation
Gabriella Lovasz	Europa Media
Krisztina Varga-Toth	Europa Media

Dissemination Level

PU	Public	X
CO	Confidential, restricted under conditions set out in Model Grant Agreement	
CI	Classified, information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC	

History

Version	Date	Reason	Revised by
First Version	27/03/2015	Sent to WP1 members	WP1 members
Final Version	31/03/2015	Sent to PMB for approval	Approved by PMB

* PMB – Project Management Board



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 644367.



Partnership



Europa Media Non-profit Ltd. (EM)



The London Association of Enterprise Agencies Ltd. (trading as Capital Enterprise) (CE)



Bar-Ilan University (BIU)



Sabanci University (SABU)



AEGEE European Students' Forum (Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe) (AEGEE)



EU-Startups.com (EU-S)



National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs (NACUE)



European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs (YES)

EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION
OF
YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS



EUCLID Network (EUCLID)



H-FARM Italia SRL (H-Farm)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 644367.



Table of Contents

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	5
1.1 Definition of female (web) entrepreneur	5
1.2 Analysis of existing conditions and obstacles for starting a business	7
1.3 Recommendations for closing gender gap in the entrepreneurship field	9
2. NETWORKS AND PROJECTS TARGETING FEMALE WEB ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY	11
3. MY-WAY GENDER ACTION PLAN	14
3.1 Objectives	14
3.2 Gender Aware Work Plan	15
3.3 MY-WAY contribution to promoting gender equality in the EU	18

1. Background information

1.1 Definition of female (web) entrepreneur

The European Union has been continuously committed to promoting gender equality in all its policy areas including (web) entrepreneurship. The definition of a female entrepreneur can be found in the European Commission's Best Report 2¹: **'a woman who has created a business in which she has a majority shareholding and who takes an active interest in the decision-making, risk-taking and day-today management'**. The document highlights that women **"represent a large pool of entrepreneurial potential in Europe"**, as they make up 52% of total population in Europe, but only a third of entrepreneurial workforce. Moreover, "women entrepreneurship is the largest unexploited source of economic growth and yet it is being neglected and sidelined"², even pushed away³ according to NY Times. In general, women face greater difficulties in accessing the self-employed market segment, due to the lack of available finances, trainings, networks as well as due to family obligations.

Web entrepreneurs are defined in various policies regardless of gender; however, numerous studies confirm that women face greater obstacles in starting-up their business. That is why the EU and national Member States implement various measures, aimed at increasing access to finance, educating women about existing opportunities and legal regulations, providing facilities, enabling them to balance work and family and promoting mentoring.

For example, the **Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan "Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe"** adopted by the European Commission in January 2013 lists women among categories of "demographic groups that are underrepresented within the entrepreneurial population and especially founders of start-ups".

The Plan proposes concrete steps to be taken in order to enhance ways for women to be involved in business creation and running and have improved opportunities for creative work. The Commission believes that such actions should have a basis, which encompasses human capital and provides financial support as well as includes training and educational activities.

¹Promoting entrepreneurship amongst women. Best Report No. 2, 2004, available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/1972/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/pdf>.

²<http://womenentrepreneurshipplatform.eu/about-us/>

³http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/06/technology/technologys-man-problem.html?_r=0



MY-WAY project will contribute to creating such basis, putting special emphasis on educational activities bringing together successful and aspiring female web entrepreneurs, mentors and active members of student networks that work on promoting gender equality.

The study "**Evaluation on Policy: Promotion of Women Innovators and Entrepreneurship**" undertaken by DG Enterprise and Industry in 2008 provides data on women/men ratio in self-employment (only about one third of women), start-up business (20.3% of businesses started with venture capital were run by women), innovation, such as patent awards (only 8.3% of patents were awarded to women), doctorate degrees, research activities in innovative enterprises, spin-offs and business incubators); as well as on entrepreneurship aspirations (39% of women compared to 50% of men).

Such data, namely the share of self-employed women, share of women who are business owners and entrepreneurship rate of women, is used to construct the broad definition of women entrepreneurship. The last indicator, entrepreneurship rate, demonstrates a large gender gap across EU Member States, being the smallest in Sweden and the largest in Ireland.

The study also separated women inventors/innovators among female entrepreneurs, emphasizing that there is "no common or consistent definition of women innovators/inventors exists in the literature" and the specific policy targeting such women is being developed in the EU. As with the general definition of women entrepreneurship, women involved in innovative activities, can be defined based on the general principles (regardless of gender) and through analyzing the relevant share of women.

1.2 Analysis of existing conditions and obstacles for starting a business

The EU approach towards promoting female entrepreneurship⁴ emphasizes that there are fewer female entrepreneurs than men, even though increased number of entrepreneurs is needed for the economic development in Europe. That is why it is of crucial importance to eliminate obstacles that prevent or discourage women from choosing to start a business. The actions need to be taken both on the EU wide level and by the national governments of EU Member States.

The Commission acknowledges the fact that both male and female entrepreneurs face certain risks when starting a small business, however, “there are certain additional factors which make entrepreneurship an even less attractive or viable option for women (in addition to those factors which count against women in all sections of the labour market)”.

The Commission emphasizes that even though the number of female running businesses has increased over the last 10 years, situation needs to be improved in terms of favourable environment both for setting up a small firm and expanding it. Some of the actions include legislation improvement, exchange of good practices and experiences between Member States, eliminating existing stereotypes.

The Commission identified insufficient access to finance as the key problem for entrepreneurs, regardless of gender, emphasizing the need for specific measures aimed at easing the funding opportunities for women. For example, women need to be better informed about existing possibilities through more active networking. Such networks should involve successful and aspiring female entrepreneurs, as well as relevant governmental bodies and organisations, providing support and encouragement.

The study “**Evaluation on Policy: Promotion of Women Innovators and Entrepreneurship**” was carried out in order to provide recommendations on ways to “support the contribution of women innovators and entrepreneurship to the Lisbon Agenda”. The recommendations were based on extensive literature review. The study defined three types of obstacles, faced by women on the way to innovative entrepreneurship:

- **contextual obstacles**, which involve education, views, existing stereotypes concerning the place of women in science and innovation;
- **economic obstacles**, relating to investment needs, when women are viewed as “less credible financially than men”;
- **soft obstacles** that imply “lack of access to technical scientific and general business networks”, insufficient business training, role models and entrepreneurship skills.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/index_en.htm

On the national level, reports from EU Member States identified the following obstacles encountered by women inventors/innovators/entrepreneurs: cultural bias (services ‘designed for men by men’); ambiguous investor perceptions concerning women inventors/innovators’ low tech and low growth activities and consequent lack of credibility; work/life balance forcing women to stay at home; lack of relevant educational tools and skills leading to insufficient soft skills (assertion, management).

Most studies define insufficient access to finance by women as the main obstacle, as “women have less access to credit and financial instruments, despite the fact that women entrepreneurs have more positive rates of investment return”.

The study pays attention to entrepreneurship aspirations of females, as they are formed by existing culture and barriers, forcing women to choose different priorities (lack of finances and entrepreneurial skills, not having secure fixed income, necessity to work long hours, lack of social security).

The study emphasizes that “women’s entrepreneurship is a key policy agenda for the European Commission”. The Commission encourages such measures as including promotion of female entrepreneurship into the European Charter for Small Enterprises, promotion of projects targeting women entrepreneurship, creating relevant portals, supporting relevant networks, events, public debates, studies, reports, and, most importantly, promoting entrepreneurship among young women.

A **study on women entrepreneurs**⁵ finds the following obstacles to increased participation of female entrepreneurs in the IT sector: fear of new things; unwillingness or lack of courage to be a leader, fear of the responsibility, work-life balance, competing with men, and professional competence. The researcher provides tips for female entrepreneurs in the technology sector encouraging them not to be afraid of technology and proposes ways for a successful work- life balance.

Possible obstacles to great participation of women in web entrepreneurship include: cultural stereotypes and traditional view on their role; internal barriers and psychological factors, which were already mentioned in the analysis (risk aversion, lack of self confidence); external barriers, work-family balance, insufficient information on successful examples.

⁵http://www.womenandtechnology.eu/digitalcity/servlet/PublishedFileServlet/AAACQJSO/WeCannotHaveChange_UnlessWeHaveMenintheRoom.pdf

1.3 Recommendations for closing gender gap in the entrepreneurship field

In line with gender equality regulations, namely Directive 2010/41/EC, the Commission envisages the following actions:

- **on the EU level:** create online mentoring, advisory, educational and business networking platforms targeting female entrepreneurs with the participation of national ambassadors and mentors networks in order to “support female entrepreneurship at national and regional level by promoting the exchange of best practices between Member States”;
- **on the national level of the EU Member States:** development and implementation of relevant national strategies aimed to increase the share of companies run by women; data collection on gender balance in the entrepreneurship sector; expansion of existing networks Female Entrepreneurship and Ambassadors and Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs; implementation of policies favouring work-life balance (securing affordable children and elderly care) through support activities under the EAFRD, ERDF and ESF.

The MY-WAY project is aligned both with the EU-level actions (special focus on mentoring, educational and business networking) as well as with the national level actions of partner countries involved (contribution to policy recommendations, expansion and involvement of existing networks targeting female entrepreneurs).

The study undertaken by DG Connect in 2013⁶ calls for policy change, especially in the sphere of education, as only 29 out of 1000 female graduates have a degree in technical/computing sciences and only 4 continue with employment in ICT sector. The study defines four priority areas for actions:

- Renewed image of the sector among women and society (disseminating most appealing ICT topics for young women (exciting, diverse, profitable etc.);
- Empowering women in the sector (promoting harmonised European educational curricula to foster clear and straightforward ICT careers paths);
- Increasing the number of women entrepreneurs in ICTs through improved access to seed and venture capital programs);
- Better working conditions in the sector.

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/women-ict>



MY-WAY will focus its actions on the area of women empowerment and increased number of female (web entrepreneurs).

OECD⁷ summarized available data of women entrepreneurship, admitting that it is rather scarce and further research is needed. Key policy OECD recommendations MY-WAY takes into account are cited below:

- Increase the ability of women to participate in the labour force by ensuring the availability of affordable child care and equal treatment in the work place.
- Listen to the voice of women entrepreneurs. The creation of government offices of women's business ownership is one way to facilitate this.
- Incorporate a women's entrepreneurial dimension in the formation of all SME-related policies
- Promote the development of women entrepreneur networks.

⁷ <http://www.oecd.org/industry/smes/31919215.pdf>



2. Networks and projects targeting female web entrepreneurs and their contribution to promoting gender equality

MY-WAY will closely cooperate with existing networks and projects targeting female web entrepreneurs through engaging their members into MY-WAY activities.

For example, the **European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors** which was created in 2009 and the **European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs** (the network of female mentors from 17 countries who provide advice and support to new and early-stage businesses run by female entrepreneurs), created in 2011. These networks serve as volunteering counselling service for those women who intend to start a business. In addition, general recommendations include informing women about funding opportunities, business support and giving them access to high managerial positions in terms improved gender balance in boards of publicly listed companies, as “more women in senior management positions could serve as a role model for other women”.

The European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors includes 270 entrepreneurs from Albania, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The female Ambassadors conducted an informational campaign through meetings, TV and other media presentations targeting unemployed women, female university graduates, those women who would like to start up their business, women after maternity leave, women employed or interested in the R&D sector, manufacturing and innovation. That is why the Network’s wide outreach capacity is of crucial importance for MY-WAY dissemination actions.

Apart from the network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors and Network of Mentors for Women, MY-WAY plans to engage another important **Network to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship (WES)**⁸. It includes delegates from 31 countries (EU Member States+ Iceland, Norway and Turkey). The network represents central national governments and institutions and its members provide advice and information on existing support measures targeting female entrepreneurs.

The **Women Entrepreneurship Portal**⁹ set up by the EU Commission lists national and international organisations of women entrepreneurs, networks that promote female entrepreneurship, projects aimed

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/wes-network/index_en.htm

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/portal/index_en.htm

at fostering women entrepreneurship as well as relevant events. The Commission highlighted the findings of the project, that “networking and access to information for women entrepreneurs should be further promoted.” MY-WAY will incorporate this recommendation and will commit to promoting networking of women entrepreneurs and providing necessary information.

A related international network, which serves as an online community for women entrepreneurs - **MYente** - allows women to advertise their enterprises locally, nationally and internationally, to put their products on the market, exchange experience and build up networks.

A Network of Women Innovators for Europe promotes access to international networks for women scientists and innovators. Young Women Entrepreneurs Association accelerates experience exchanges and best practices for young female entrepreneurs across the world.

The Women Entrepreneurship Platform¹⁰ is an umbrella organisation uniting the organisation of women entrepreneurs and women in business in order to exchange best practices and experiences and report on regular activities on the EU level. The platform serves as “the first point of contact for policy makers, politicians and stakeholders willing to press the issue (of women entrepreneurship) further.” The platform emphasizes that “women entrepreneurship is the largest unexploited source of economic growth and yet it is being neglected and sidelined.” The platform urges to encourage women entrepreneurship through education programs, straightforward access to financial support and improvement of entrepreneurial culture and business options for women.

Numerous projects supported by the EU within the Leonardo Da Vinci programme, Lifelong Learning programme or national funds, aim to include women into business set-up and knowledge society through the creation of special e-learning platforms and tools, trainings for women business starters, providing consultations, creating a favourable business climate, roundtable sessions with successful entrepreneurs, training programs and mentoring networks.

Among many projects aimed at promoting female entrepreneurship, **the FE:male project**¹¹ should be underlined. The FE:Male project (female entrepreneurship mentoring and lifelong learning across Europe) offers training and networking events across Europe, Enterprise Academy for business skills development as well as business networking with other female entrepreneurs. Partners in the project found that women “were extremely underrepresented in the field of entrepreneurship and suffered more than men in the economic downturn seen in recent years.” The project offers practical coaching activities through “Mentoring Circles” and case studies of successful entrepreneurial efforts taken by women through the “Be Inspired” section. Such gender sensitive approach towards entrepreneurship mentoring is of crucial importance for MY-WAY activities and will be duly incorporated in various Work Packages.

¹⁰ <http://womenentrepreneurshipplatform.eu/about-us/>

¹¹ <http://www.femaleproject.eu/>



Another important project implemented under LLP is **WISE - Women Integration and Skills for Entrepreneurship**¹². The project aimed at “supporting the needs of women entrepreneurs in the ICT/ICT-supported sector and to create gender-awareness between all players in ICT”. The project offered online self-assessment tools for testing entrepreneurial skills (both for women and men) and guidelines for women who would like to set-up the business (Vademecum). The report developed within the project suggests that labour market inflexibility (difficulties for women to re-enter the labour market) serves as one of the barriers for female entrepreneurship. The report also highlights extremely low participation of women in the ICT sector (only 10% as of 2004), even though the number of female graduates in relevant disciplines has increased.

MY-WAY will work in close cooperation with WeHubs project which has also received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the ICT-13-2014 call. **WeHubs - The European network of Women web Entrepreneurs Hubs**¹³ - aims at providing a strong support to women web entrepreneurs (existing and potential) in Europe and coordinating existing web entrepreneur’s ecosystems to provide dedicated services to women. WeHubs will create a favourable environment for women web entrepreneurs, by linking together local fragmented ecosystems nodes, and foster networking and exploitation of synergies, into the first European Network for Women Web Entrepreneurs Hubs.

The **Young Women Entrepreneurs Association**¹⁴ aims to accelerate “the growth and internationalization of young women-owned companies as well as supporting women who want to start own business creating new opportunities” by facilitating business creation (through exchange of best practices, research and international exchange), promoting entrepreneurial culture and cross-cultural interaction.

Based on the reviewed projects, the following recommendations for female entrepreneurs can be defined: making extensive use of available technologies and online tools, networking, participating in online forum discussions, exchanging experience, use social media for marketing, consult available forms for draft business plan and participating in EU projects targeting successful and aspiring women entrepreneurs. These recommendations will be incorporated into **MY-WAY Gender Action Plan**.

¹² <http://www.ubique.org/wise>

¹³ <http://wehubs.eu/>

¹⁴ <http://www.ywea.org>

3. MY-WAY Gender Action Plan

3.1 Objectives

In line with the Guidance on Gender Equality in Horizon2020¹⁵ and the relevant Work Programme encouraging female participation in web entrepreneurship and based on the extensive research described in the sections above, MY-WAY carefully drafted the Gender Strategy comprising of concrete actions to be taken within the project in order to reach the following five objectives:

- **contribute to gender equality**

Gender equality is the core principles in all MY-WAY activities. It means that MY-WAY partners will implement their actions in such a way that no participation, wage or career gap exists among project participants on the basis of gender. The management and experts were selected on the basis of unambiguous criteria in order to maintain excellence in coordination and project activities. Equal working conditions and gender sensitive working culture will be provided, the work within the project will be valued equally, performance will be monitored by the Coordinator without any gender prejudice, project data will be analyzed, reported and disseminated in a gender sensitive way, the language used in terms of the project will be gender neutral.

- **maintain well balanced gender representation**

MY-WAY will aim **for at least 35% female representation** throughout its activities. Gender equality is supported through gender balanced representation both on the structural (project meetings, conferences) and organisational level (within the institutional set up of personnel involved from partner organisations). The project is aligned with the EC's proposal on improving the gender balance in management and is set to work towards the goal of having 42% of female managers (Project Management Board, External Advisory Board, Sustainability Group and Work Package Leaders). **At the initial stage the male/female ratio in the project management activity is 50%-50%**. MY-WAY partners believe that surmounting gender stereotypes is absolutely critical to management at any level. In addition, equal representation will be ensured at all project activities and during dissemination outreach. Gender balance will be continuously monitored through gender audits.

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/gender/h2020-hi-guide-gender_en.pdf

- **embed gender aspects into MY-WAY recommendations**

Gender aspects will be embedded into MY-WAY recommendations in order to secure the gender dimension in web entrepreneurship eco system.

- **secure networking of female (web) entrepreneurs**

MY-WAY will ensure involvement of female mentors, aspiring web entrepreneurs and members of student networks.

- **promote gender aware mentoring and support scheme as well as develop gender aware tools**

MY-WAY engendering also presupposes **development of gender aware tools and support system** which will be a useful addition for overall EU's efforts aimed at promoting gender equality in web entrepreneurship.

3.2 Gender Aware Work Plan

MY WAY will address and enhance visibility of existing gender issues in the field of web entrepreneurship as well as contribute to promotion of gender equality by implementing the following actions throughout the Work Plan:

- **WP1: Well-balanced gender representation** during project implementation: ensure participation of women in project management, decision making, encourage women to participate in project events and activities; conduct **annual gender audits** (starting with the kick-off meeting) in order to monitor the implementation of the below actions; provide adequate working conditions and environment during project events taking into account gender specific needs. The working environment will be flexible and enable female participants to combine work and family life. According to Horizon2020 rules, employment will be based on national legislation regulations, including maternity leave and other employment rights. The Project Coordinator will monitor if there are any gender based issues during the project implementation through regular communication with partners and consider seeking external advice from the gender expert, if problems persist. MY-WAY partners will also maximize the Gender Strategy's visibility; the strategy will be available online (Task 1.5)

Practical suggestions for partners:

- Involvement of female colleagues and professionals with relevant expertise into the project management activities.
- Discussions/consultations with external gender equality experts if relevant.

- **WP2:** In line with EC recommendations to promote access to information for women entrepreneurs¹⁶, WP2 will **map the web entrepreneurship ecosystem with gender considerations**. The survey (Task 2.2) will be constructed in a gender sensitive way.

Practical suggestions for partners include:

- Pay special attention to the female entrepreneurs in the ecosystem mapping activity – highlight the successful female entrepreneurs, mentors and accelerators in the respective eco-system.
 - Ensure the equal participation of the young female adults in the online questionnaire.
 - At least 35% of the face-to-face interviews have to be conducted with female leaders/decision makers of the student networks.
- **WP3:** MY-WAY will help to identify available mentoring and support for female entrepreneurs. The project **will try to ensure that the stakeholder database (Task 3.1) will include at least 30% of female mentors**. Female mentors and successful women entrepreneurs will be invited to the project events (conferences, online discussions, workshops, etc.). MY-WAY will try to reach at least 30% female representation among speakers/coaches during such events (Task 3.3). MY WAY will closely cooperate (Task 3.4) with the organisations already providing counselling services, such as European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs, European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors, as well as with those, providing coaching services, for example, “Mentoring Circles” within FE:male project¹⁷.

Practical suggestions for partners include:

- Prepare the shortlist of potential female stakeholders (mentors, accelerators, entrepreneurs) of your eco-system, and engage them in MY-WAY activities.
 - Invite successful female entrepreneurs, mentors and accelerators from your eco-system to the stakeholder meetings.
 - Define cooperation possibilities with projects (e.g WeHubs) and initiatives promoting female entrepreneurship.
- **WP4: Focused awareness-raising about existing opportunities for female entrepreneurs** in terms of trainings, support from other startups, incubators and accelerators as well as professional services. Educational and information sharing activities will be organized as a two-way process: MY WAY will also enable female entrepreneurs share their ideas, thus informing potential investors or cooperation partners. In this aspect MY WAY will incorporate instruments offered by the Women Entrepreneurship Platform¹⁸. In addition, OER targeting female entrepreneurs will be collected. MY-WAY will provide links and information about **trainings, workshops, and other instruments** aimed at enhancing professional

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/portal/index_en.htm

¹⁷ <http://www.femaleproject.eu/>

¹⁸ <http://womenentrepreneurshipplatform.eu/about-us/>

skills of female entrepreneurs (Task 4.1). The project will consider gender issues when developing the action plans in four European locations (Task 4.2). Equal gender participation will be also ensured at the Student Enterprise Conferences (Task 4.2)

Practical suggestions for partners include:

- Partners responsible for the Student Enterprise Conferences should identify and engage female speakers for encouraging female students and have to make sure the equal representation of male/female students at the conferences.
- **WP5 and WP6: Encourage communication and networking with relevant stakeholders and networks for female entrepreneurs** through the established website, via dissemination and exploitation activities (WP5, WP6). Women Entrepreneurship Platform; Network of Women Innovators for Europe, BPW International, FEM-Female Europeans of Medium and Small Enterprises, the Women's Organisation, Turkish Federation of Business and Professional Women, YENTE and online community for women entrepreneurs MYente. Specific attention will be devoted to synergies with other relevant initiatives, such as Young Women Entrepreneurs Association and Young Women Entrepreneurs Association. Cooperation and establishment of Disruptors' Network Secretariat will be done taking into account gender balance (Task 5.3) **gender aware web tools will be shared to** help aspiring female entrepreneurs understand the infrastructure and establish connections (Task 5.1).

Practical suggestions for partners include:

- Share scientific papers and data explaining the gender equality in web-entrepreneurship via the project website and the common platform (that will ensure the joint communication actions of the selected ICT-13 Startup Europe projects).
- Identify potential female representatives of the Young European Disruptors for supporting MY-WAY contribution to this initiative.
- **WP6: Increase communication with universities and students networks, by encouraging female students** to participate in the events, to provide feedback and evaluation about the existing policy gaps and needs of aspiring female and project platform (Task 6.2, 6.3). **Policy recommendations** will include specific issues targeting female entrepreneurs (Task 6.4).

Practical suggestions for partners include:

- Promote events dissemination MY-WAY results among networks of female entrepreneurs.
- Write articles /blog posts/ announcements on female entrepreneurship on a regular basis.
- Create opportunity and facilitate discussion among female students and female entrepreneurs through the MY-WAY social media channels.

3.3 MY-WAY contribution to promoting gender equality in the EU

The necessity to promote female entrepreneurship and encourage participation of women in business and start up activities is confirmed by numerous statistical findings. Numerous studies^{19, 20, 21, 22} confirm that women face greater obstacles in starting their business due to a number of factors, such as

- greater investment needs;
- insufficient skills;
- insufficient opportunities for professional development.

MY-WAY gender strategy is planned to raise awareness concerning gender issues in web entrepreneurship and it is aimed at promoting gender equality, empowering female web entrepreneurs in the EU Member States through increased participation in management and networking activities, stimulating leadership and establishing network cooperation. Continuity of the cooperation after project implementation within the web entrepreneurship eco-system should incorporate the MY-WAY gender strategy principles in future activities.

Gender Strategy of the MY-WAY is developed on the basis of existing EU regulations and practices, with specific focus on the following documents:

- Gender Toolkit of EU-Funded Research;
- 2013 EC's Report on Gendered Innovations;
- 2005 EC's Gender Action Plans (Compendium of Good Practices);
- Midterm Review of the Strategy for Equality between Men and Women (2010);
- 2012 EC's report on structural change in research institutions (and efficiency in research and innovation);
- Guidance on Gender Equality in Horizon2020.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan "Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe" (2013)

²¹ http://www.womenandtechnology.eu/digitalcity/servlet/PublishedFileServlet/AAACQJSO/WeCannotHaveChange_UnlessWeHaveMenintheRoom.pdf

²² Niels S. Bosma (2013) "The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) and its Impact on Entrepreneurship Research", Foundations and Trends® in Entrepreneurship: forthcoming.