

Publishable Executive Summary

Networks and databases are an important strategy to promote women in science and to increase the percentage of women in top-positions in the scientific field. The EU-project “Study on databases of women scientists – DATAWOMSCI” closes a gap by collecting information on existing databases of women scientists, clarifying what kinds of databases already exist and how they can be distinguished from other data collections. The study aims at drawing a line between networks and network databases and actual databases of women scientists. The latter might, of course, include network databases.

Once databases of women scientists have been identified the questions arising are how they can be linked and which criteria are considered essential for high quality databases.

This project thus has three main objectives:

1. to collect information on databases of women scientists in the EU member states and the countries associated to the 6th Framework Programme and to present a structured coverage and overview of databases already existing,
2. to undertake a feasibility study on the technical possibilities of linking those databases, and
3. to develop criteria of quality and formulate recommendations to build up future databases of women scientists and to improve the existing ones. This third objective will include references to best-practice examples that can be detected in the course of the project.

Objectives of the databases in question in this project should be to support universities, women’s representatives and equal opportunities officers as well as scientific and political institutions in their search for qualified women scientists and women experts in order to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions at universities and research institutions, on panels and committees.

All objectives are based on the different functions databases have, e.g. making visible the existing potential of women scientists, the possibility of a targeted search for new members of boards and monitoring panels by the EU, scientific organisations, ministries, universities or research centres or supporting the building of networks by enabling women scientists to find project partners, especially on an international level.

With this study we will ensure that existing databases will be taken stock of and knowledge about those databases will be made accessible for the use of everyone in the European Research Area.

The consortium consists of six well-established partners from five countries who stand for profound gender knowledge with particular respect to women and science:

1. Center of Excellence Women and Science (CEWS), Bonn, Germany
(<http://www.cews.org>)
2. National Contact Centre for Women in Science (NCC), Prague, Czech Republic
(<http://www.soc.cas.cz>)
3. Norwegian Information and Documentation Centre for Women’s Studies and Gender Research (KILDEN), Oslo, Norway
(<http://kilden.forskningsradet.no>)

4. Observatoire des Sciences et des Techniques (OST), Paris, France
(<http://www.obs-ost.fr>)
5. dimeb working group, University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany
(<http://www.dimeb.de>)
6. School of Business and Social Science, University of Surrey Roehampton, London, United Kingdom
(<http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/staff/JudithGlover/>)

The work already performed consists of a short manual for the identification of the databases, the identification, listing, the definition and selection of databases and the development of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of questions according to general criteria, content criteria of datasets, quality and evaluation criteria and last but not least technical information and equipment. Finally, it is used for a further in-depth analysis of the selected databases.

The results achieved so far are:

1. a definition of databases and additional criteria and definitions relevant for this project
2. an evaluation of the collected questionnaires from selected databases including general information about the specific situation in different parts of Europe and other clusters and database categories
3. a structured overview of existing databases relevant for this project presented in alphabetical order of the names of the countries and the names of the databases and
4. a list of organisations, institutions and networks from those European countries having no database or data collection in accordance with the definition used in this study. This list may be used for finding out contact points in order to get in contact with female scientists and experts.

This report will be completed during the next months by the development of criteria of quality and the formulation of recommendations to build up new databases of women scientists and to improve the existing ones.

Concerning the technical part of this project the main objective is to study the feasibility of the linking of existing expert women databases. This can be done by approaching the objective from two perspectives: the first a technological perspective, the second a content/status-quo perspective. The technological perspective includes a study of existing technologies and models for linking databases. The content perspective requires a study of the existing databases with regard to the organisation of content (data models) as well as underlying technologies.

The main achievement of the first six months of the project at the technical level was the evaluation of existing technologies for database integration, specifically data harvesting appropriate for the Datawomsci project. In addition, usability reports of the databases selected for the feasibility study containing an evaluation of the databases for usability and quality were written. The usability reports also form a starting point for the best practice catalogue to be developed in the next phase of the project.

At the end of the project all results will be published in a final report on the websites of the consortium partners and will be available in print. In addition, in order to reach the goals of the project a well directed dissemination of the results is necessary. The products of the project need to be disseminated in different ways and are directed to different target groups:

1. The dissemination of the structured overview of databases and the list of organisations, institutions and networks from those European countries having no database or data collection in accordance with the definition used in this study must reach a broad public. Target groups are:
 - Women scientists and networks and associations of women scientists
 - European Platform of European Women Scientists
 - (potential) users of databases in higher education institutions, in research institutions and in science administration on a national and a European level
 - gender experts on a national and a European level

2. The recommendations for a meta-database are directed to specialists like:
 - Gender experts on a national and a European level
 - European Platform of European Women Scientists
 - Organisations which hold databases or are planning to establish them

3. The catalogue for criteria of quality and recommendations are directed to specialists and gender experts but women scientists or other users of databases may as well profit from such a catalogue to check the quality of existing databases. Target groups are:
 - European Platform of European Women Scientists
 - Organisations which hold databases or are planning to establish them
 - gender experts on a national and a European level
 - Women scientists and networks and associations of women scientists
 - (potential) users of databases in higher education institutions, in research institutions and in science administration on a national and a European level

This study enables anyone to search for top women scientists by providing tools to collect information on and to find women scientists in all fields of research and give them a better chance to participate in research or committees. The structured overview will also clarify where future efforts have to be made to build up new databases or refine existing databases. It can also be used to promote existing databases so that more women scientists will be part of such databases and therefore ensure that more women scientists are available for building up the European Research Area. It presents the basis to start European-wide co-operations and mobilisation. In addition, presenting a technical guideline for the building up of new databases and setting standards of quality this project will also have a strong influence on the process of harmonisation within Europe.