

PILLAR 2: Gender and WEFE Nexus.

P1: Assessing the BONEX Project Through a Gender Lens: Individual and Collective Perspectives on Gender Dynamics

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Abstract

The BONEX project, focused on addressing challenges related to the water, energy, food and ecosystem (WEFE) nexus, has committed to integrating a gender perspective as a cross-cutting dimension in its activities. These collaborative efforts aim to align with international equality standards and enhance the project's impact by ensuring equitable and inclusive participation among its members. To assess progress, perceptions, challenges in gender equality, representation, and working conditions, a gender survey was conducted among consortium members. The survey was structured into thematic blocks: gender perspective within BONEX, identified gender related challenges, and participant demographics. Responses were collected from 35 consortium members across different entities and countries, with anonymity assured to encourage honest feedback. Quantitative data were analysed statistically, while qualitative responses were categorised into themes, such as representation, power dynamics, and salary equality. Findings were validated against BONEX's internal policies and international standards, including the European Commission's guidelines and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Survey responses revealed that 94.3% of participants perceived BONEX as addressing gender issues. However, only 26.7% had reviewed the gender deliverable. Key challenges identified included unequal gender representation in male-dominated sectors, negative power dynamics, and insufficient mechanisms for addressing discriminatory behaviours and promoting women's empowerment. Recommendations included prioritising experience exchanges (68.6%), networking (65.7%), and gender training activities (62.9%). While BONEX has made important progress in integrating a gender perspective,

significant challenges persist. Addressing these requires enhanced internal communication, targeted training, and robust mechanisms to ensure inclusivity and equity. These efforts align with the core theme of the conference: *Gender and WEFEX Nexus: Exploring gender dimensions and promoting women's empowerment in WEFEX resource management*, and with key SDGs, particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), reinforcing BONEX's commitment to fostering a fair and inclusive research environment.

Keywords: Equity in research, Gender equality, Gender perspective, Inclusive work, Reduction of inequalities