



European
Commission

Five key actions to foster **women's entrepreneurship** in Europe

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Europe needs to acknowledge and build on the economic and social potential of women entrepreneurs to master the twin transition to a digital and green society. The following recommendations are a final output of the project “Peer-Learning Activities in Entrepreneurship Education and in Women’s Entrepreneurship”. They provide guidance for concrete actions. Decision makers on local, national and European level can readily put the actions into practice:

- 1 Raise awareness about women’s entrepreneurship** (WE) and acknowledge the importance of women entrepreneurs through a European media campaign.
- 2 Ensure entrepreneurial competences** and life-long entrepreneurial learning especially for women and create gender-sensitive educational programmes.
- 3 Improve access to finance for women entrepreneurs** by setting up a women’s entrepreneurship funding platform and increasing financial literacy.
- 4 Build a pan-European umbrella organisation** and community for women’s entrepreneurship. Continue to advance WE as a policy priority on EU level.
- 5 Support data collection and analysis** about women’s entrepreneurship to enable evidence-based decisions, particularly in policy making.

Find out more: <http://www.ee-we.eu>

There is also an extended Guide about fostering women’s entrepreneurship.

#WEgate #WomenEntrepreneurs #peers4we #weaccelerate

Women entrepreneurs can play a key role in building a digital, green and resilient Europe

Why we need more women entrepreneurs and more policy support now

Data shows that women are underrepresented in entrepreneurship in many respects: For example, women represent 52% of the European population but only 34% of the EU self-employed and 30% of start-up entrepreneurs. 93% of the capital invested in European companies in 2019 went to all-male start-ups. Hence, key resources to tackle the twin transition to a digital and green society as well as pandemic recovery remain largely unused. We need targeted policies and measures to support women entrepreneurs and to build entrepreneurial competences of women and girls. Beyond the measures outlined below, the European Commission and national governments can leverage their efforts by incorporating women's entrepreneurship into the European Semester as well as national recovery and resilience plans.

Background of the recommendations: European peer-learning project

The following recommendations have been formulated as a final output of the project "Peer-Learning Activities in Entrepreneurship Education and in Women's Entrepreneurship", implemented 2018–2021 (contract number EASME/COSME/2017/021). The recommendations are based on three interactive workshops about women's entrepreneurship as well as online communities, surveys of participants, and literature reviews. The project involved more than 140 experts from all over Europe.

1 Raise awareness about women's entrepreneurship

A European-wide media campaign can promote women's entrepreneurship. It could share real-life stories of women entrepreneur champions. At the same time, governments can put inclusiveness and gender equality at the centre of their strategies and legislative activities.

Local campaign leaders and existing networks with good reputations can form a task force of champions at the national level to implement and promote the media campaign.

Governments can appoint a national work group that collaborates with local campaign leaders. They can also foster WE through favourable national legislation about family services provision.

European institutions can drive the campaign from the EU level by providing additional visibility and sharing national content through EU media channels.

Women 20 (W20), as one of the G20 Engagement Groups, aims to boost the world's economy by an additional 2 % of GDP over the next five years by acknowledging and promoting women's economic contributions. It focuses on policies that foster gender equality and women's economic empowerment. / More information: <https://w20italia.it/>

2 Ensure women's life-long entrepreneurial learning

Experiencing entrepreneurial education early at school develops entrepreneurial competences and motivates students to choose entrepreneurship as a career path. Education programmes for teachers and parents as well as life-long learning opportunities and special training centres could be put in place to educate the next generation for a green, digital and resilient society.

Schools and higher education institutions can provide gender-sensitive entrepreneurial education, extracurricular programmes and lifelong learning offers.

Governments could adopt entrepreneurial competences into curricula for schools and higher education. The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), together with the Digital Competence Framework (DigComp), can provide methodical guidance.

European institutions can provide funding for women's entrepreneurship educational programmes as well as visibility and support to WE focused events and educational activities.

The project **Women Entrepreneurs in Science (WEIS)** of Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Germany, supports female students and academics who intend to pursue an entrepreneurial career at higher education institutions (HEI). It also offers training for the HEIs' entrepreneurship consultants in train-the-trainer concepts to educate university staff. / More information: <https://www.exzellenz-start-up-center>

3 Improve women entrepreneurs' access to finance

Setting up a women's entrepreneurship funding platform that offers finance, technical assistance and networks would help women entrepreneurs build and grow their ventures. Financial literacy is equally important and should become an integral part of curricula at schools and in higher education as well as a cornerstone for educational programmes focused on women's entrepreneurship.

Civil society organisations can partner with education and financial institutions to develop and provide financial literacy educational programmes.

Governments can introduce long-term national strategies for women's entrepreneurship with special attention to access to finance.

European institutions can promote women's entrepreneurship as a policy priority and define measures for affordable funding to women entrepreneurs.

The **Strategy of Women Entrepreneurship Development** in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020 identifies gaps and underrepresentation of women in economic and entrepreneurial activities. Within the main objectives, the strategy defines measures for funding that are favourable for women's entrepreneurship. / More information: https://www.mingo.hr/public/Poduzetnistvo/Strategy_of_Women_Entrepreneurship_Development12117.pdf

4 Build a pan-European umbrella organisation

To strengthen women's entrepreneurship all over Europe, an overarching umbrella organisation is needed. The WEgate platform or a similar organisation might become a middle link between grassroots organisations and policy makers at EU and national levels and complement services offered by existing WE organisations

Grassroot organisations can identify the requirements of the local ecosystem of women's entrepreneurship and advance the national and international discussion on common goals.

National and regional governments can support workshops about developing common goals and advancing WE policies. Such workshops could take place in a coordinated way in many countries.

European institutions shall continue to advance women's entrepreneurship as a policy priority at EU level.

The **European Gateway for Women's Entrepreneurship (WEgate)** connects numerous WE stakeholders ranging from individual women entrepreneurs to policy makers. The platform presents good practice examples, success stories, tips for starting a business and opportunities to develop own skills and knowledge. / More information: <https://wegate.eu/>

5 Collect and analyse data on women entrepreneurs

There is a need for comparable and gender disaggregated data on women's entrepreneurship to allow for analysis and evidence-based policy making. Stock-taking of what data is missing could be followed by modifying official data collection and increasing empirical research on women's entrepreneurship.

Civil society organisations can engage in data collection field work. They can complement information about WE at a local level and establish cross-country collaborations.

Governments can define national WE data collection strategies and governance measures. Moreover, they can provide incentives for enterprises to participate in data collection.

European institutions can provide a framework and standards of WE data collection on the national level. Towards this end, they could establish a European expert group for WE research.

Project Sunlight is a data-oriented initiative driven by the Do Good Only Company. The project analyses current barriers for women entrepreneurs and emphasises the lack of data or the inadequacy of the data currently collected. / More information: <https://dogoodonly.nl/>

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