



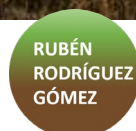
This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 817819

SoildiverAgro

Soil biodiversity enhancement in European agroecosystems to promote their stability and resilience by external inputs reduction and crop performance increase

D1.6 INVENTORY ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY

Universidade de Vigo



Tyynelän





This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 817819

D1.6 INVENTORY ABOUT GENDER ANALYSIS

Summary

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of gender equality in the **SoildiverAgro** project, following the Horizon 2020 emphasis on gender balance in research and innovation. It examines the gender distribution across the consortium's partners, work packages (WPs), and roles, identifying areas of balance and imbalance. Overall, the consortium involves **280 participants, 56% of whom are women**, indicating a female majority in general participation. However, this overall balance masks specific disparities. Some partners show a pronounced **underrepresentation of women** – for example, a few small partners have no female team members at all – whereas others exceed parity with women forming the majority of their teams. Gender participation also varies by work package: certain technical WPs have predominantly male contributors in key tasks, while others (especially dissemination and coordination tasks) feature strong female involvement. Women are well represented in many operational roles and make up a majority of the project's workforce, but they are still fewer in some leadership and decision-making positions (such as WP leaders or scientific committee members) compared to men.

Key findings include: **women constitute the majority of personnel in more than half of the partner organizations**, including the coordinating institution, but **men dominate in a few partners and specific technical roles**. In particular, two partner entities involved as case study leaders have only men participating (0% women), whereas at the other extreme, one partner's team is entirely female (100% women). Across the seven main research WPs and the dissemination WP8, female participation ranges from high (over 60% in some WPs) to low (near 0% in certain technical tasks led by specific partners). For instance, female scientists are very active in WPs related to data analysis and dissemination, but are scarce in some field-oriented trials led by traditionally male-dominated teams. The project's **Scientific Committee (WP leaders and coordinator)** includes both women and men, but women remain a minority in these top decision-making roles.

In light of these findings, the report provides recommendations to strengthen gender equality in **SoildiverAgro**. These include encouraging balanced team composition for all partners (especially those with currently low female involvement), ensuring women have equal opportunities to lead tasks and WPs, and adopting formal measures (in line with EU guidelines) such as gender action plans and mentoring programs. By implementing these actions, **SoildiverAgro** can not only comply with Horizon 2020 expectations but also harness the benefits of diverse teams for better research and innovation outcomes. The analysis is structured as follows: an introduction to the context and objectives, an outline of the methodology, detailed findings on consortium-wide gender distribution, WP-level participation analysis for coordinators and the scientific committee, insights on non-coordinator partners, a cross-sectional view focusing on decision-making, and finally recommendations and conclusions. Annexes provide the supporting data collection.

Deliverable Number	Work Package
D1.6	WP1_Consortium coordination and project management
Lead Beneficiary	Deliverable Author(s)
UVigo	Daniel Arenas Lago [UVigo]

David Fernández Calviño [UVigo]

Versions (updates)		Date	
V1		03.05.2025	
Deliverable Quality Check		Date	
David Fernández Calviño [UVigo]		04.05.2025	
Planned Delivery Date		Final Delivery Date	
31.03.2025		08.05.2025	
Type of deliverable	R	Document, report (excluding periodic and final reports)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	DEC	Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos	<input type="checkbox"/>
	E	Ethycs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissemination Level	PU	Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table of contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
LIST OF TABLES	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. METHODOLOGY.....	6
3. GENERAL GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE CONSORTIUM	8
4. GENDER PARTICIPATION BY WP FOR SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PARTNERS	12
4.1. <i>WP1 (Consortium coordination and project management)</i>	12
4.2. <i>WP2 (Identification of main challenges in European agricultural cropping systems and data mining)</i>	13
4.3. <i>WP3 (Soil genetic and functional biodiversity quantification)</i>	16
4.4. <i>WP4 (Best tools for soil diversity evaluation)</i>	19
4.5. <i>WP5 (Impacts of soil biodiversity on crop production and other ecosystem services)</i>	22
4.6. <i>WP6 (Environmental and socioeconomic assessment of soil biodiversity management and conservation)</i>	25
4.7. <i>WP7 (Development of strategies and tools for sustainable crop management)</i>	28
4.8. <i>WP8 (Communication, dissemination and stakeholder engagement)</i>	31
5. ANALYSIS OF NON-SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PARTNERS	34
6. CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION-MAKING.....	40
6.1. <i>Gender in decision-making bodies</i>	40
6.2. <i>Gender by role category</i>	41
6.3. <i>Influence on Decision-Making</i>	42
6.4. <i>Comparing with EU Gender Equality Goals</i>	43
6.5. <i>Key Strengths and Gaps in Gender Distribution</i>	43
6.6. <i>Impact on Project Implementation</i>	44
7. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	45
7.1. <i>Ensure Gender Balance in Decision Making Roles</i>	46
7.2. <i>Empower and Acknowledge Female Contributors</i>	46
7.3. <i>Leverage Female Strength in Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement</i>	47
7.4. <i>Monitor and Evaluate Continuously</i>	48
7.5. <i>Celebrate and Disseminate Good Practices</i>	48
7.6. <i>Alignment with Horizon Europe and Future Funding Requirements</i>	49
8. CONCLUSIONS	49
9. REFERENCES	51

List of Tables

Table 1. Gender distribution of participants by partner organization in SoildiverAgro.....	6
Table 2. Gender distribution in WP1 coordination roles within SoildiverAgro project structure (UVIGO).....	12
Table 3. Gender distribution in WP2.....	13
Table 4. Gender distribution by activity in WP2.....	15
Table 5. Gender distribution of roles in WP3.....	16
Table 6. Gender distribution by activity in WP3.....	18
Table 7. Gender distribution of roles in WP4.....	19
Table 8. Gender distribution by activity in WP4.....	21
Table 9. Gender distribution of roles in WP5.....	22
Table 10. Gender distribution by activity in WP5.....	24
Table 11. Gender distribution of roles in WP6.....	27
Table 12. Gender distribution by activity in WP6.....	28
Table 13. Gender distribution of roles in WP7.....	30
Table 14. Gender distribution by activity in WP7.....	31
Table 15. Gender distribution of roles in WP8.....	
Table 16. Gender distribution by activity in WP8.....	33
Table 17. Gender distribution by non-Scientific Committee partners and category. (Format: Women / Men (% Women)).....	37

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a core principle in the European Union's research programs. Horizon 2020 (the framework program under which **SoildiverAgro** is funded) stresses the importance of gender balance in project teams and decision-making, as well as the integration of gender perspectives into research content. In practice, this means EU projects are expected to promote equal opportunities for women and men at all levels of participation. Horizon 2020 set specific objectives to achieve this, including **gender balance in research teams, gender balance in decision-making roles, and considering the gender dimension in the research activities themselves** (European Commission, 2016). These objectives align with broader EU targets such as attaining at least 40% representation of the under-represented sex in expert groups and committees, and they have been strengthened further in the successor program Horizon Europe (European Commission, 2021). Ensuring diversity and inclusion is not only a matter of equity but is also understood to enrich the scientific process and improve project outcomes by incorporating varied perspectives and skills.

Within this context, the **SoildiverAgro** is committed to monitoring and enhancing gender equality in its consortium. **SoildiverAgro** brings together 22 partner organizations from different sectors (universities, research institutes, companies, foundations, and farms) across multiple countries. These partners contribute personnel to several Work Packages (WPs) ranging from scientific research and field trials to management, dissemination, and stakeholder engagement. Given this diversity, examining how women and men participate across the project is crucial. Not only does such an examination fulfill reporting requirements of Horizon 2020 (European Commission, 2016), but it also helps identify any imbalances that might need corrective action and highlights successes that could serve as best practices.

This deliverable provides a full analysis of gender equality in **SoildiverAgro** based on updated project data. It covers the overall gender distribution in the consortium, participation by gender in each work package (with particular attention to the partners coordinating WPs and members of the scientific committee), the situation among non-coordinator (implementation-focused) partners, and cross-cutting observations about decision-making and roles. The main goal of this deliverable is to offer an evidence-based assessment and actionable recommendations to ensure that **SoildiverAgro** meets its gender equality obligations but truly leverages the strengths of a gender-balanced team in pursuing its scientific and societal objectives.

2. METHODOLOGY

The analysis in this deliverable is based on project data collected from all **SoildiverAgro** partners via structured reporting forms. Each partner provided data on the number of men and women involved in the project and their roles. The data collection instrument captured both the **overall headcount by gender** and a breakdown by categories such as organizational role (e.g. management, research, technical, administrative) and project role (e.g. work package coordinator, task leader, case study leader). These forms ensured a standardized approach, allowing the consortium to compile a comprehensive gender dataset. Partners were instructed to include all personnel contributing to **SoildiverAgro**, whether full-time or part-time, and at all levels of seniority.

This deliverable includes a comprehensive gender analysis of the **SoildiverAgro** project, drawing on detailed quantitative and qualitative data provided by all consortium partners. The report is structured as follows:

- **A consolidated table of total participants by partner** (number of women and men, totals, and percentages for each institution) to give an overall picture of the consortium's gender distribution (Table 1).
- **Tables detailing gender distribution by Work Package** for partners coordinating or significantly contributing to WPs (Scientific Committee), providing a WP-by-WP breakdown of women's and men's involvement in key activities such as decision-making, technical support, stakeholder engagement, and data collection (Tables 2–16).
- **An expanded analysis of non-coordinator and non-Scientific Committee partners**, examining their gender distribution, roles within the project and the broader implications for project implementation and outreach. This section highlights both examples of strong female leadership and areas with gender gaps, ensuring the report covers the full diversity of the consortium (Table 17).
- **An aggregated summary of leadership and decision-making roles**, including gender distribution among WP leaders, case study leaders, and task coordinators, to assess gender parity in high-responsibility positions.

For accuracy, the latest available figures (as of the most recent project reporting period) were used, superseding any earlier data. The tables provided – including overall partner totals and detailed breakdowns – form the basis of this analysis. We cross-checked the totals and percentages for consistency and corrected any discrepancies in earlier reports. We also consulted relevant European Commission guidelines and reports on gender in research to contextualize the findings and to formulate recommendations consistent with best practices.

It should be noted that the analysis distinguishes between **“Scientific Committee partners”** and **“non-Scientific Committee partners.”** In the context of **SoildiverAgro**, *Scientific Committee partners* refer to the core consortium members responsible for project coordination or leading WPs (generally universities and research institutes, including the Project Coordinator and WP leaders who also make up the Scientific Committee). *Non-Scientific Committee partners* refer to other participating

organizations that do not lead a WP – often these are companies, SMEs, regional agencies, or case-study implementing partners. This distinction is made to assess whether there are differences in gender balance between the central decision-making partners and the broader set of partners focused on implementation.

For transparency, we cite specific data points from the collected data (for example, partner-specific percentages or WP-specific counts). This approach ensures that observations are traceable to source data. Finally, the recommendations were formulated by interpreting the data in light of Horizon 2020 gender expectations and identifying practical steps that **SoildiverAgro** takes. The recommendations also benefited from existing EU resources on gender equality (such as policy briefs and gender action plan guidelines).

3. GENERAL GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE CONSORTIUM

In aggregate, **SoildiverAgro** demonstrates a **moderate gender balance in favor of female participation** (Table 1). Across all 22 partners, the project engages 280 individuals, of whom approximately **157 are women and 123 are men**, yielding about **56.1% women and 43.9% men**. This overall figure indicates that, as a whole, the consortium exceeds the typical parity target (50% female participation) and aligns well with Horizon 2020's encouragement of strong female representation in research teams (European Commission, 2016). It is a positive headline result that more than half of the project's contributors are women. However, this aggregated view encompasses considerable variation between partners – the consortium is heterogeneous, including partners with very different sizes and natures, from large research institutes to individual farms, and their gender balances range from female-majority to entirely male.

Table 1. Gender distribution of participants by partner organization in SoildiverAgro.

Nº	Partner	Women	Men	Total	% Women	% Men
1	UVIGO	29	17	46	63.0	36.9
2	UPCT	10	9	19	52.6	47.4
3	SYM	1	2	3	33.3	66.7
4	FEUGA	9	4	13	69.2	30.8
5	UCPH	2	4	6	33.3	66.7
6	ILVO	11	13	24	45.8	54.2
7	PSKW	3	6	9	33.3	66.7
8	RRG	0	1	1	0.0	100.0
9	TT	0	1	1	0.0	100.0
10	PETLA	5	1	6	83.3	16.7
11	LUKE	30	17	47	63.8	36.2
12	MTJ	1	1	2	50.0	50.0
13	TI	6	5	11	54.6	45.5
14	INORDE	17	8	25	68.0	32.0
15	FYNECO	3	5	8	37.5	62.5
16	ASJA	3	2	5	60.0	40.0
17	EULS	9	2	11	81.8	18.2
18	CONT	6	5	11	54.6	45.5
19	FAR	5	3	8	62.5	37.5
20	INAGRO	4	12	16	25.0	75.0
21	POMONA	2	5	7	28.6	71.4
22	MTÜPK	1	0	1	100.0	0.0
Total		157	123	280	56.1	43.9

Looking at the partner-level data, **the majority of partner organizations (over half of them) have at least 50% female participation** in their **SoildiverAgro** teams, and in many cases considerably more. For instance, the coordinating institution, Universidad de Vigo (UVIGO), has 46 people involved (the largest team in the project) with 29 women and 17 men – **63.0% women**. Several other key partners also show a female majority among their contributing staff:

- **LUKE (Luonnonvarakeskus, Finland):** 30 women vs 17 men (63.8% women), reflecting a strong female presence in this research institute.
- **TI (Thünen Institute, Germany):** 6 women vs 5 men (54.5% women), indicating a slightly female-majority team (though earlier data had indicated 69%, the updated figure is about 55%, still above parity).
- **EULS (Estonian University of Life Sciences):** 9 women vs 2 men, which means **81.8% of its team are women** – the highest female percentage among the main research partners.
- **FEUGA (Fundación Empresa-Universidad Gallega, Spain):** 9 women vs 4 men (69.2% women), a notable female majority in this foundation responsible for outreach and innovation management.
- **INORDE (Instituto Ourense de Desarrollo Económico, Spain):** 17 women vs 8 men, about **68.0% women**, showing a strong female dominance in this regional development agency.
- **ASJA (Agricultural Association, Spain):** 3 women vs 2 men (60% women), also led by women in their contribution.
- **FAR (Flächenagentur Rheinland GmbH, Germany):** 5 women vs 3 men (62.5% women), another female-majority contribution.
- **Contactica, S.L. (Spain):** 6 women vs 5 men (54.5% women), essentially gender-balanced with a slight tilt towards women.

On the other hand, a subset of partners has **male-majority participation**. Notably:

- **UCPH (University of Copenhagen, Denmark):** 2 women vs 4 men (33.3% women). This indicates that in this partner's team, men outnumber women two to one. UCPH has one of the lower female participation rates among the academic partners.
- **ILVO (Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Belgium):** 11 women vs 13 men (45.8% women). ILVO's team is slightly male-majority. While close to parity, it still falls short of 50% female.
- **PSKW (Proefstation voor de Groenteteelt, Belgium):** 3 women vs 6 men (33.3% women). This horticultural research station has twice as many men as women involved.
- **Symbiom, s.r.o. (Czech Republic):** 1 woman vs 2 men (33.3% women). As a small SME partner, Symbiom's contribution skews male.
- **INAGRO (Belgium):** 4 women vs 12 men (25.0% women). This is one of the more pronounced imbalances – only one-quarter of INAGRO's participating staff are women, reflecting a strongly male-dominated team for this partner.
- **POMONA (Belgium):** 2 women vs 5 men (28.6% women). Another partner with a predominantly male team.
- **FYNECO (Fertilizantes y Nutrientes Ecológicos, Spain):** 3 women vs 5 men (37.5% women). A slight male majority is seen here.

- **PETLA / Perunantuotannon Tutkimus ja Kehityssäätiö (Finland):** 5 women vs 1 man (83.3% women). This partner is actually a counter-example with an extremely high female share (we include it here because it is a non-academic partner with a striking gender makeup, opposite to the male-majority trend in other small partners).

It is also important to highlight the **smallest partners and their gender makeup**, as these can represent extreme percentage values due to having only one or a few persons:

- Two partners (designated as RRG and TT, which are individual farm or case study partners in Spain and Finland respectively) each have **only a single person participating, and in both cases that person is male**. Thus RRG and TT report 0 women (0%) and 1 man (100%). While these figures are not alarming, since they reflect the nature of those partners (single-person entities). Nevertheless, they contribute to the overall count of partners with no female participation.
- Conversely, one partner – **MTÜ Põllukultuuride Klaster (MTÜPK, an Estonian cluster organization)** – has **1 woman and 0 men** on its team, effectively 100% female (again a one-person partner, but in this case the person is female).
- Another case is **MTJ (Tuomas J. Mattila, Finland)**, essentially an individual consultant partner, which has 2 people (1 woman, 1 man, i.e. 50% women). This shows an example of an individual partner enlisting both a male and a female member to contribute, achieving gender parity by design.

Considering the consortium as a whole, **14 out of 22 partners (approximately two-thirds) have a female percentage of 50% or higher** in their SoildiverAgro teams. Many of these are public or academic institutions that tend to have significant female representation in environmental and agricultural sciences (e.g., UVIGO in Spain, LUKE in Finland, EULS in Estonia). Meanwhile, **8 partners have less than 50% female participation**, with a few outliers on the low end mainly being small enterprises or specialized research stations (e.g., INAGRO, POMONA, PSKW) and the individual male-led case study farms (RRG, TT).

From a workload perspective, the larger partners (with teams of over 10 people) are generally closer to gender balance or female-majority. For instance, UVIGO, LUKE, ILVO, TI, EULS, FEUGA, INORDE each have substantial teams and none of these teams is overwhelmingly male; most are balanced or female-led. On the other hand, where we see pronounced imbalances, it is often in smaller teams. This suggests that the consortium did not systematically exclude women – rather, the disparities often come from either legacy workforce composition in certain organizations or the coincidence of very small sample sizes. Nonetheless, each partner's situation is critical for understanding where attention might be needed. For example, even if a partner only contributes one or two people, the fact that they are all of the same gender could reflect the internal gender distribution of that partner or could point to the need to encourage that partner to consider diversity when recruiting staff, although most have justified this by stating that staff selection is done solely on the basis of team members' CVs.

Thus, at the consortium level **SoildiverAgro** meets and in some aspects exceeds Horizon 2020's expectations for gender balance in project participation. The **overall female participation of ~56%** is well above the minimum thresholds often sought (e.g., the EU often strives for at least ~40% women in such contexts (European Commission, 2016)). However, the project is not uniformly balanced across all components: there are pockets of male dominance that merit attention. The following sections delve deeper into where these imbalances occur (by work package and partner role), and how the distribution looks when isolating the coordinating/leading partners versus the others.

4. GENDER PARTICIPATION BY WP FOR SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PARTNERS

A core focus of this analysis is the gender participation in each Work Package (WP), particularly among the partners who coordinate those WPs and who sit on the project's Scientific Committee. In **SoildiverAgro**, the Scientific Committee is composed of the project coordinator and the leaders of each WP – these are largely the “coordinator partners” mentioned earlier (primarily universities and research institutes). There are 8 WPs in total (WP1 through WP8, covering management, research, and outreach aspects). WP1 is in charge of the overall coordination and management of the project; WPs 2 to 5 address scientific and technical research tasks; WPs 6 and 7 focus on cross-cutting and integrative activities such as data integration, stakeholder engagement, and results exploitation; and WP8 is dedicated to dissemination and communication. Each of these WPs has a lead partner and involves contributions from several partners. We analyzed the gender breakdown of personnel involved in each WP for the coordinator partners group, which reveals how men and women are distributed in project activities at the WP level (Table 2-16).

4.1. WP1 (Consortium coordination and project management)

WP1 is coordinated by the lead institution UVIGO, which holds the central role in project management and scientific coordination. The position of project coordinator is held by a man, making male representation exclusive in this specific role. However, the broader coordination structure of the **SoildiverAgro** project reflects a more inclusive gender dynamic. Notably, all regional coordination roles (2 in total) are occupied by women, accounting for 100% of the positions. In contrast, work package (WP) coordination roles are exclusively male, with 3 men occupying these positions, representing 100% male participation. Task coordination involves both women and men, with 4 women and 6 men, which corresponds to 40.0% female and 60.0% male representation. Similarly, case study leadership roles include 1 woman and 2 men, translating to 33.3% female and 66.7% male participation. These figures suggest that, while the top-level project coordination remains male-dominated, there is a significant female presence in key areas of regional coordination and operational task management. As such, the management structure of WP1, when viewed in its entirety, demonstrates a moderate level of gender balance and highlights the meaningful contributions of women to strategic and decision-making roles within the Project (Table 2).

Table 2. Gender distribution in WP1 coordination roles within SoildiverAgro project structure (UVIGO).

Role	Women	Men	Total	% Women	% Men
Project coordination / scientific coordination	0	1	1	0.0	100.0
Regional coordinator	2	0	2	100.0	0.0
WP coordinator	0	3	3	0.0	100.0
Task coordination	4	6	10	40.0	60.0
Case study leader	1	2	3	33.3	66.7

4.2. WP2 (Identification of main challenges in European agricultural cropping systems and data mining)

The WP2 brings together baseline surveys, stakeholder consultations and the first rounds of field data collection. Seven coordinator partners supplied personnel for these tasks (UVIGO, UPCT, UCPH, ILVO, LUKE, TI, EULS). The gender split is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Gender distribution in WP2.

Partner	Women	Men	Total	%Women	%Men
UVIGO	12	8	20	60.0	40.0
UPCT	20	20	40	50.0	50.0
UCPH	0	4	4	0.0	100.0
ILVO	6	9	15	40.0	60.0
LUKE	12	10	22	54.6	45.5
TI	0	3	3	0.0	100.0
EULS	9	2	11	81.8	18.2

The partners UVIGO, UPCT, LUKE, EULS had strong female involvement (50–80% women), whereas two partners – UCPH and TI – had exclusively or predominantly male teams in WP2. This suggests that tasks like data mining and baseline analysis in those latter institutions were handled by men only. It's a point of concern because it indicates that expertise or labor for that WP in those organizations might not be gender-diverse. On a positive note, UVIGO as WP2 co-coordinator (or major contributor) ensured significant female presence, and overall WP2 work (pooling all partners) still had roughly half or more female participation, thanks to contributions from partners like UVIGO and EULS.

It is also worth noting the **roles within WP2**. The data provided includes sub-activities like “Data mining and meta-analysis,” “Decision-making roles,” “Field data collection,” “Stakeholder engagement,” “Surveys,” etc., broken down by partner and gender. Highlights from WP2 sub-activities are (Table 4):

- **Data mining and meta-analysis** tasks were carried out with a significant female presence in UVIGO (75% women) and UPCT (50% women), whereas UCPH, ILVO, and TI assigned only men to this task (0% women on their side). EULS notably had this task done entirely by women (100% on their side).
- **Decision-making roles in WP2** (which likely includes WP2 lead and task leaders): UVIGO had one woman and one man in WP2 decision roles (50% women), UPCT also achieved 50% women in decision roles. However, UCPH and ILVO had their decision roles filled by men only (0% women in those roles for WP2). LUKE and EULS each had women in decision roles (LUKE had 2 women of 4 roles = 50%, EULS had 1 woman out of 1 = 100%). This shows that even within WP2, leadership or decision-making was not uniformly balanced across partners.
- **Field data collection** (under WP2) saw balanced contributions from UVIGO, UPCT, ILVO, and LUKE (each around 50% women), whereas UCPH and TI apparently did not participate in field data collection for WP2 (likely not applicable to them, possibly explaining their earlier all-

male team focusing on analysis). EULS again had a balanced approach (50% women) in field data tasks.

- **Stakeholder engagement** in WP2 had high female involvement for UVIGO (67% women) and LUKE (62.5% women), balanced for UPCT (50%), and all-male from UCPH (0% women) and ILVO (they had 2 women, 2 men, 50%). Notably, EULS had women exclusively handling stakeholder engagement on their side (2 women, 0 men).
- **Surveys** (under WP2) were another area with mixed results: UVIGO and LUKE had majority women conducting surveys (60% and 50% respectively), UPCT exactly 50%, ILVO only 40% women, UCPH and TI had only men handling surveys from their teams (UCPH 0% women, TI 0% women), and EULS again 100% women.
- **Technical support** tasks in WP2 were primarily done by UVIGO (which had an even split, 50% women); other partners had little to no personnel categorized under this in WP2.

From WP2 analysis, one can see that **female participation was strong in roles related to data analysis, stakeholder interaction, and surveys for certain partners**, whereas **some partners relied solely on men for those same roles**. This indicates a disparity in internal staffing or role assignment practices among the partners.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 817819

Table 4. Gender distribution by activity in WP2.

Activity	Uvigo			UPCT			UCPH			ILVO			LUKE			TI			EULS		
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W
Data mining and meta-analysis	3	1	75.0	4	4	50.0	0	1	0.0	0	1	0.0				0	1	0.0	2	0	100.0
Decision-making roles	1	1	50.0	4	4	50.0	0	1	0.0	0	1	0.0	2	2	50.0	0	1	0.0	1	0	100.0
Field data collection	2	2	50.0	4	4	50.0				2	2	50.0	2	2	50.0				1	1	50.0
Stakeholder engagement	2	1	66.67	4	4	50.0	0	1	0.0	2	2	50.0	5	3	62.5				2	0	100.0
Surveys	3	2	60.0	4	4	50.0	0	1	0.0	2	3	40.0	3	3	50.0	0	1	0.0	2	0	100.0
Technical support	1	1	50.0																1	1	50.0

W: Women, M: Men

4.3. WP3 (Soil genetic and functional biodiversity quantification)

WP3 involves setting up field experiments, processing samples, and selecting study farms – a mix of laboratory and on-farm work. The coordinator partners' gender distribution in WP3 is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Gender distribution of roles in WP3.

Partner	Women	Men	Total	%Women	%Men
UVIGO	14	6	20	70.0	30.0
UPCT	13	10	23	56.5	43.5
UCPH	2	6	8	25.0	75.0
ILVO	3	9	12	25.0	75.0
LUKE	14	11	25	56.0	44.0
TI	5	3	8	62.5	37.5
EULS	6	2	8	75.0	25.0

In WP3, the pattern is that **most partners achieved a balanced or women-majority team, except ILVO and UCPH**, which again had only about one quarter of women. Drilling down into WP3 activities (from the detailed data) (Table 6):

- **Data processing and storage** tasks in WP3: UVIGO had 75% women, UPCT 50%, UCPH 50%, ILVO 50%, LUKE 50%, TI 0% (their one person was male), EULS 50%. This indicates most partners had balanced or female-led data processing, with TI being an outlier (only a male did it at TI).
- **Decision-making roles** in WP3: UVIGO and UPCT each had 50% women in decision roles. UCPH again had 0% (the one decision role from UCPH was held by a man). LUKE had a very high 80% women in WP3 decision roles (4 women vs 1 man in whatever leadership roles they held). TI had 0% (one male decision role), and EULS 100% (one female decision role). These figures indicate that in WP3, leadership and decision-making tasks were often taken up by women in partners like LUKE and EULS, whereas UCPH and TI had men in those positions.
- **Farm selection**: UVIGO 66.7% women, UPCT 50%, UCPH 0% (only men), ILVO 0%, LUKE 66.7%, TI (no data, possibly not involved), EULS 100% (all done by a woman). So, farm selection teams were male-only in ILVO and UCPH, but female-led or balanced in others.
- **Laboratory sample analysis**: This activity had a notably high female involvement. For example, UVIGO's lab analysis team was 4 women and 0 men (**100% women**). UPCT had 66.7% women (4 women, 2 men). UCPH balanced (50% women, 1 woman/1 man). ILVO has only 33.3% women (1 woman, 2 men). LUKE 50%, TI 66.7% (2 women, 1 man), EULS 100% (2 women, 0 men). This shows that in laboratory work, many partners (UVIGO, EULS, TI) relied heavily on female scientists, whereas ILVO again had mostly men performing lab analyses, and others were mixed.

- **Research-driven conclusions:** Only ILVO had someone specifically under this category – and that was a man (ILVO had 0 women, 1 man for this category). This indicates that in ILVO, drawing conclusions or writing up results from WP3 was done by a male researcher.
- **Soil sample collection:** UVIGO 60% women, UPCT 60%, UCPH 0% (their sampling team was 2 men), ILVO only 20% women (1 woman, 4 men), LUKE ~44% women (4 women, 5 men), TI 100% women (3 women, 0 men), EULS 50%. This indicates that field sampling was male-dominated in ILVO and UCPH, but in some partners like TI it was entirely carried out by women, showing no inherent barrier for female participation in fieldwork where the partner's team composition allowed it. LUKE and others had mixed teams.

In WP3 overall, **the trend is positive for most coordinator partners, with many having women not just participating but also leading certain tasks.** The exceptions remain ILVO and UCPH, where women's involvement in WP3 activities (especially farm-related tasks) was minimal. This is due to those organizations having male leads for agricultural field work or simply fewer female staff in those roles. It is encouraging to see that in tasks like laboratory analysis and data handling, women are very present (even the majority) in multiple partners, highlighting strengths in gender inclusion in scientific roles. The disparity in field operations (like soil sampling) points to a possible gender division of labor in some teams, which might merit attention (ensuring that opportunities for field experience are equally available to female researchers, for example).

Table 6. Gender distribution by activity in WP3.

Activity	Uvigo			UPCT			UCPH			ILVO			LUKE			TI			EULS		
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W
Data processing and storage	3	1	75.0	2	2	50.0	1	1	50.0	1	1	50.0	2	2	50.0	0	1	0.0	1	1	50.0
Decision-making roles	2	2	50.0	2	2	50.0	0	1	0.0				4	1	80.0	0	1	0.0	1	0	100.0
Farm selection	2	1	66.67	2	2	50.0	0	1	0.0	0	1	0.0	2	1	66.67				1	0	100.0
Laboratory sample analysis	4	0	100.0	4	2	66.67	1	1	50.0	1	2	33.33	2	2	50.0	2	1	66.67	2	0	100.0
Research-driven conclusions										0	1	0.0									
Soil sample collection	3	2	60.0	3	2	60.0	0	2	0.0	1	4	20.0	4	5	44.44	3	0	100.0	1	1	50.0

W: Women, M: Men

4.4. WP4 (Best tools for soil diversity evaluation)

WP4 centers on designing and validating molecular, spectral and indicator-based tools to quantify soil biodiversity. Participation is comparatively male-dominated across most coordinator partners (Table 7):

Table 7. Gender distribution of roles in WP4.

Partner	Women	Men	Total	%Women	%Men
UVIGO	1	2	3	33.3	66.7
UPCT	5	8	13	38.5	61.5
UCPH	1	6	7	14.3	85.7
ILVO	2	5	7	28.6	71.4
LUKE	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
TI	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
EULS	2	1	3	66.7	33.3

Aggregated across reporting partners, WP4 comprises **11 women and 22 men** ($\approx 33\%$ women). This lower female representation—especially at UCPH and ILVO—suggests that specialized laboratory or field-instrument tasks (e.g., DNA metabarcoding, HT-qPCR optimization, intensive soil sampling) are currently staffed mainly by male technicians and scientists in those institutions. The absence of LUKE and TI, both of which have large female teams in other work packages, further suppresses the overall female percentage. EULS's two-thirds female contribution demonstrates that, where engaged, women can and do lead high-skill analytical work within WP 4. Partners with strongly male-skewed teams should therefore examine internal assignment practices to ensure that women with relevant molecular-biology or field-monitoring expertise are equally considered for future tool-development tasks, thereby widening the gender balance in this technically demanding work package.

Delving into WP4 tasks (Table 8), the activities included trial implementation, field measurements, and DNA-based analyses of soil biodiversity, such as DNA metabarcoding for nematodes:

- The **“DNA metabarcoding for nematodes”** was carried out primarily by a limited number of partners, with ILVO and UCPH assuming the lead roles in the specialized laboratory analyses. As reflected in the data, both institutions deployed male-dominated teams for these tasks, consistent with their overall gender distribution in WP4.
- In parallel, **field biodiversity surveys** were conducted by ILVO, UCPH, UVIGO and UPCT. In ILVO and UCPH, these intensive monitoring tasks were performed predominantly by men. In contrast, UVIGO and UPCT included some women in their WP4 field teams, although the male presence still outweighed female participation. These patterns point to a gender imbalance in the implementation of core WP4 activities, particularly in those requiring fieldwork or technical laboratory expertise.

In summary, **WP4 was characterized by comparatively low female participation among the active partners**, particularly when contrasted with WPs 2 and 3. This reflects the nature of WP4's core

tasks—such as field monitoring and laboratory analysis—which, in several partner institutions, were carried out predominantly by male teams. Partners like **ILVO and UCPH**, who led key activities in WP4, assigned mostly men to these roles. The exception was **EULS**, where **67 % of the WP4 team were women**, indicating that their contributions—focused on laboratory analysis or data interpretation—were primarily executed by female experts. **LUKE and TI did not participate in WP4**, which significantly influenced the gender balance at consortium level, as both organizations typically field female-majority teams in other work packages. Their absence from WP4 contributed to the overall underrepresentation of women in this technically specialized part of the project.

Table 8. Gender distribution by activity in WP4.

Activity	Uvigo			UPCT			UCPH			ILVO			LUKE			TI			EULS			
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	
DNA metabarcoding for nematodes										2	3	40.0										
Data processing and analysis	0	1	0.0	1	2	33.3	0	2	0.0	0	1	0.0							1	1	50.0	
Decision-making roles	1	1	50.0	2	3	40.0	0	1	0.0										1	0	100.0	
FTIR spectroscopy development				2	3	40.0																
Optimization of HT-qPCR chip							1	3	25.0													
Research-driven conclusions										0	1	0.0										

W: Women, M: Men

4.5. WP5 (Impacts of soil biodiversity on crop production and other ecosystem services)

WP5 is where the consortium implements and monitors innovative soil-biodiversity practices in the field. Overall participation is female-leaning: **69 women and 57 men** out of **126 contributors** ($\approx 54.8\%$ women). Yet the gender mix varies sharply by partner (Table 9):

Table 9. Gender distribution of roles in WP5.

Partner	Women	Men	Total	%Women	%Men
UVIGO	16	10	26	61.5	38.5
UPCT	20	8	28	71.4	28.6
UCPH	1	3	4	25.0	75.0
ILVO	7	24	31	22.6	77.4
LUKE	8	6	14	57.1	42.9
TI	11	3	14	78.6	21.4
EULS	6	3	9	66.7	33.3

UPCT mobilizes **20 women and 8 men** ($\approx 71.4\%$ women) and **UVIGO** 16 women and 10 men ($\approx 61.5\%$ women), showing that Spanish teams rely heavily on female agronomists and technicians for on-farm trials and farmer liaison. **TI** stands out with the highest female share—**11 women and 3 men** ($\approx 78.6\%$ women)—indicating that its sustainable-practice group is largely female-led. **LUKE** and **EULS** also report strong female majorities, with **8/6 (57.1%)** and **6/3 (66.7%)** respectively, suggesting women spearhead many Finnish and Estonian field or evaluation tasks. At the other extreme, **ILVO** deploys **7 women and 24 men** ($\approx 22.6\%$ women) and **UCPH** contributes **1 woman and 3 men** (25% women). **ILVO's** large, male-dominated WP 5 team implies that hands-on Belgian case-study work is carried out mainly by male staff; this contrasts with female-rich teams elsewhere and signals scope for **ILVO** to involve more of its women scientists and technicians in high-visibility field operations. Taken together, WP5 demonstrates that women across most coordinator partners play leading roles in practical implementation, farmer engagement and data collection—not just in laboratory or desk-based work. The clear under-representation of women in **ILVO's** and, to a lesser extent, **UCPH's** WP 5 teams should nevertheless be addressed in future initiatives to ensure that field-based innovation benefits from a fully inclusive talent pool.

Examining WP5 tasks in detail (Table 10), the activities included **demonstration of practices, farmer engagement, data collection at trial sites, and analysis of results**. Some relevant points:

- In this work package, **UPCT and UVIGO deployed teams with a strong female presence**, with women comprising approximately **70% and 61.5%** of their respective WP5 personnel. These teams included **female agronomists and technicians actively involved in liaising with farmers and implementing trials in Spain**, reflecting institutional norms where women frequently occupy extension and applied research roles.
- At the **TI**, the WP5 team was **78.6% female**, led by women and composed predominantly of female colleagues engaged in sustainable agricultural practices. In contrast, **ILVO's WP5 team was 77.4% male**, consistent with a pattern observed in previous work packages. This

indicates that ILVO's field operations were largely executed by male staff, highlighting a potential internal imbalance in gender assignment to on-the-ground activities.

- **UCPH** had a limited role in WP5, contributing only **four people**, with **25 % women**. This reflects UCPH's lesser involvement in WP5, likely due to its focus on other work packages and the regional implementation nature of WP5, which did not include Denmark.
- **EULS** once again reported strong female engagement in WP5, with **66.7 % of its team being women**, who were directly responsible for advising on or evaluating field practices within the Estonian context.

In summary, **WP5 stands out as a key area of female participation within SoildiverAgro**. Most coordinator partners relied significantly on the expertise of women for both research and field implementation tasks. This is particularly encouraging, as it demonstrates that women in the consortium played a leading role not only in scientific analysis but also in the practical deployment of agricultural innovations. However, **ILVO's persistent male dominance in field-related roles** signals an opportunity for improvement, encouraging a more balanced inclusion of female staff in future demonstration and farmer-engagement activities.

Table 10. Gender distribution by activity in WP5.

Activity	Uvigo			UPCT			UCPH			ILVO			LUKE			TI			EULS		
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W
Case study setup and management	5	1	83.3	5	3	62.5				1	7	12.5							1	1	50.0
Climatological data gathering	1	1	50.0	1	0	100.0				0	1	0.0	1	0	100.0	2	0	100.0	1	0	100.0
Crop yield and quality evaluation	2	2	50.0	2	1	66.7				2	8	20.0				2	0	100.0	1	0	100.0
Decision-making roles	2	2	50.0	2	2	50.0	0	1	0.0				2	2	50.0	1	1	50.0	1	0	100.0
Research-driven conclusions										1	3	25.0									
Soil biodiversity monitoring	3	2	60.0	5	1	83.3	1	2	33.3	3	4	42.9	4	4	50.0	4	2	66.7	1	1	50.0
Soil chemical/physical monitoring	3	2	60.0	5	1	83.3				0	1	0.0	1	0	100.0	2	0	100.0	1	1	50.0

W: Women, M: Men

4.6. WP6 (Environmental and socioeconomic assessment of soil biodiversity management and conservation)

WP6 focuses on integrating biophysical results, modelling environmental and socio-economic scenarios, and synthesizing project-wide outcomes. Gender participation across partners presents a mixed picture (Table 11):

Table 11. Gender distribution of roles in WP6.

Partner	Women	Men	Total	%Women	%Men
UVIGO	7	7	14	50.0	50.0
UPCT	5	6	11	45.5	54.5
UCPH					
ILVO	4	5	9	44.4	55.6
LUKE	11	6	17	64.7	35.3
TI	1	7	8	12.5	87.5
EULS	4	0	4	100.0	0.0

In WP6, gender distribution varied significantly across partners. **LUKE fielded the largest WP6 team, composed of 11 women and 6 men, meaning women represented approximately 64.7 % of the team. This indicates that female researchers at LUKE play a leading role in modelling and multi-criteria assessment tasks. EULS contributed a smaller team made up entirely of women (4 women, 0 men, 100 %), highlighting the presence of strong female expertise in impact assessment within that organization. UVIGO achieved perfect gender parity, with 7 women and 7 men involved, while UPCT also showed a nearly balanced team, with 5 women and 6 men (≈ 45.5 % women).** These figures reflect a deliberate effort by both coordinating partners to involve women and men equally in high-level data integration and evaluation activities. In contrast, **ILVO was slightly below parity, with 4 women and 5 men (≈ 44.4 % women),** whereas TI presented a significant gender imbalance, with only **1 woman and 7 men (≈ 12.5 % women)** involved in WP6. Finally, **UCPH did not report any personnel participation in WP6.**

Aggregated data for WP6 show a nearly even split, with **32 women and 31 men**, meaning women account for approximately 50.8 % of total participation. This reflects a **moderate level of gender balance at the consortium level.** However, participation across partners is notably polarized. **EULS and LUKE show strong or exclusive female involvement, while TI's team is heavily male-dominated (only 12.5 % women) and UCPH reported no female participation** in this work package. This imbalance reveals that **certain domains within environmental and socio-economic assessment tasks continue to exhibit gendered staffing patterns** within some institutions. As a result, partners with **single-gender participation, especially those lacking female representation,** should evaluate their internal allocation strategies. Ensuring **equal access to strategic, high-skill roles** for both women and men is key to fostering a more inclusive and representative research environment across all work packages.

WP6 involves higher-level analytical work, including the integration of datasets from previous work packages, economic and ecological modelling, and the synthesis of project outcomes (Table 12).

- Within this context, **LUKE stands out for its strong female involvement**, with women leading or playing a key role in modelling and multi-criteria assessment tasks. This reflects positively on LUKE's commitment to ensuring gender representation in complex and high-skilled technical activities.
- In contrast, **TI's team composition in WP6 is overwhelmingly male**, despite the presence of many women in other work packages. This internal disparity points to a possible concentration of male staff in the modelling and data integration units at TI, which warrants institutional reflection to ensure broader inclusion of women in strategic analytical roles.
- **EULS contributed a small but fully female team (4 women, 0 men)** to WP6, confirming that their assigned tasks—whether data provision or specialized assessment—were entirely handled by women, reinforcing their consistent pattern of female leadership in technical components of the project.
- Meanwhile, **UVIGO and UPCT maintained a nearly equal gender split in WP6**, showing no significant gender disparity in task allocation. Both institutions engaged male and female scientists in data integration and analytical work, ensuring a balanced approach to high-level activities.

Although detailed information on the distribution of leadership positions within WP6 is not explicitly provided, **LUKE's central involvement combined with a predominantly female team suggests that women occupied significant decision-making roles**, possibly including the WP leadership itself. In contrast, the lack of female participation from TI indicates that leadership responsibilities within their WP6 contributions likely fell to male staff.

In conclusion, WP6 shows moderate gender balance overall (with women representing approximately 50.8 % of the personnel), but participation remains polarized by partner. Some organizations are fully or majority female, while men dominate others. This divergence reflects **persistent gendered structures in specific disciplines**, particularly those involving data modelling, IT-based tools, and technical synthesis. These patterns highlight the importance of continued monitoring and proactive measures to ensure equitable gender participation in all high-skill domains of project implementation.

Table 12. Gender distribution by activity in WP6.

Activity	Uvigo			UPCT			UCPH			ILVO			LUKE			TI			EULS		
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W
Decision-making roles	2	2	50.0	1	2	33.3							3	1	75.0	0	2	0.0	1	0	100.0
Environmental impact assessment	2	2	50.0	2	2	50.0							2	2	50.0	0	2	0.0	1	0	100.0
Policy recommendation development	1	2	33.33	1	1	50.0							3	1	75.0	0	2	0.0	1	0	100.0
Research-driven conclusions										2	0	100.0									
Socioeconomic data collection	2	1	66.67	1	1	50.0				2	5	28.57	3	2	60.0	1	1	50.0	1	0	100.0

W: Women, M: Men

4.7. WP7 (Development of strategies and tools for sustainable crop management)

WP7 includes tasks related to strategic decision-making and stakeholder engagement, as confirmed by the available data (Table 13):

Table 13. Gender distribution of roles in WP7.

Partner	Women	Men	Total	%Women	%Men
UVIGO	5	7	12	41.7	58.3
UPCT	7	7	14	50.0	50.0
UCPH	0	1	1	0.0	100.0
ILVO	0	7	7	0.0	100.0
LUKE	8	1	9	88.9	11.1
TI	-	-	-	-	-
EULS	4	0	4	100.0	0.0

Gender participation in WP7 is sharply polarized across the consortium. At one end, ILVO and UCPH rely exclusively on male personnel, with ILVO assigning 7 men and no women, and UCPH 1 man and no women. At the opposite end, **LUKE and EULS field predominantly or entirely female teams**: LUKE contributes 8 women and 1 man ($\approx 88.9\%$ women), and EULS 4 women and no men (100%). The coordinating partner **UVIGO reports a moderate male majority**, with 5 women and 7 men (41.7% women), while **UPCT stands out for its perfect gender balance** (7 women and 7 men). **TI did not report any personnel in WP7**, suggesting limited or unrecorded involvement in this strategic phase of the project. **WP7 focuses on developing strategic recommendations, drafting policy-oriented outputs, and leading high-level stakeholder discussions.** The gender distribution across institutions reflects contrasting internal structures. In ILVO and UCPH, key roles in policy and coordination are held exclusively by men, pointing to a lack of female representation in strategic decision-making. In contrast, **LUKE and EULS demonstrate strong female leadership**, assigning women to core policy engagement and synthesis activities. **UVIGO's composition, while slightly male-skewed, reflects broader participation**, possibly with increased involvement of senior male researchers in final outputs. **UPCT's balanced team** signals an intentional approach to gender equity even in high-level roles.

In summary, **WP7 highlights both good practices and structural imbalances.** Institutions with single-gender participation—whether male or female—should work to open access to strategic roles to all qualified staff. Promoting **gender-diverse leadership in policy tasks** is essential to achieving inclusive and well-rounded recommendations on soil biodiversity across the consortium.

WP7 includes cross-cutting analysis, the coordination of stakeholder workshops, and scientific steering activities (Table 14). The tasks assigned within this work package include compiling final project recommendations, convening forums with stakeholders to discuss outcomes, and contributing to the strategic direction of **SoildiverAgro**. The data clearly reflect internal organizational dynamics regarding gender:

- **ILVO, despite involving women in earlier work packages, assigned exclusively male staff (7 men, 0 women) to WP7**, suggesting that high-level policy engagement and synthesis tasks were reserved for senior male personnel—indicating a potential glass ceiling in their allocation of strategic responsibilities.
- **UCPH contributed a single participant to WP7, who was male**, continuing the trend of exclusively male representation in this final phase of the project. Although the team size was small, the absence of female involvement in high-level engagement or committee work is consistent with their overall gender distribution across WPs.
- In contrast, **LUKE reported a predominantly female WP7 team (8 women, 1 man, ≈ 88.9 % women)**, with multiple women leading or participating in final synthesis, policy development, and dissemination activities—particularly within the Finnish stakeholder landscape.
- Similarly, **EULS contributed an all-female team (4 women, 0 men)**, who took responsibility for drafting policy guidelines and coordinating stakeholder interactions, both locally and in wider project contexts.
- The coordinating institution, **UVIGO, presented a team of 5 women and 7 men (≈ 41.7 % women)**. Compared to previous WPs where UVIGO had a stronger female presence, this slight male predominance may reflect the increased participation of senior male researchers in the final stages of synthesis and policy formulation.

These patterns confirm that WP7 was not only pivotal to the project's external communication and strategic output, but also a lens into how institutions distribute decision-making roles—either reinforcing gender dynamics or actively challenging them.

Table 14. Gender distribution by activity in WP7.

Activity	Uvigo			UPCT			UCPH			ILVO			LUKE			TI			EULS		
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W
Decision-support tool development	1	2	33.3	1	1	50.0				0	1	0.0							1	0	100.0
Development of biodiversity targets	1	1	50.0	2	2	50.0	0	1	0.0	0	1	0.0	2	0	100.0				1	0	100.0
Identification of sustainable practices	1	1	50.0	2	2	50.0				0	3	0.0	3	1	75.0				1	0	100.0
Policy recommendation analysis	2	3	40.0	2	2	50.0				0	2	0.0	3	0	100.0				1	0	100.0

W: Women, M: Men

4.8. WP8 (Communication, dissemination and stakeholder engagement)

Gender participation in WP 8 varies widely across the consortium, showing distinct patterns between partners (Table 15):

Table 15. Gender distribution of roles in WP8.

Partner	Women	Men	Total	%Women	%Men
UVIGO	14	7	21	66.7	33.3
UPCT	19	11	30	63.3	36.7
UCPH	0	6	6	0.0	100.0
ILVO	5	11	16	31.2	68.8
LUKE	12	6	18	66.7	33.3
TI	3	4	7	42.9	57.1
EULS	4	0	4	100.0	0.0

At the extremes, **EULS fielded an all-female team (4 women, 0 men, 100 % women)**, while **UCPH assigned only male personnel (0 women, 6 men, 100 % men)** to WP8 tasks. Most of the other coordinating partners demonstrate a clear female majority. **UVIGO reported 14 women and 7 men (66.7 % women)**, and **UPCT 19 women and 11 men (63.3 % women)**, reflecting that communication and outreach roles within these institutions are predominantly undertaken by women. **LUKE followed a similar pattern, with 12 women and 6 men (66.7 % women)**. In contrast, **ILVO's WP8 team was male-majority, comprising 5 women and 11 men (31.3 % women)**. **TI presented a nearly balanced, but still slightly male-leaning composition, with 3 women and 4 men (42.9 % women)**.

These figures confirm that **communication, stakeholder engagement and dissemination tasks across WP8 were primarily carried out by women in most partner institutions**. This distribution likely reflects internal organizational practices, in which **female staff are more frequently assigned to roles involving outreach, training, or knowledge transfer**. Conversely, in institutions like **UCPH and ILVO**, these roles are executed predominantly by men, indicating a male-dominated staff profile in this functional area.

The detailed breakdown of gender participation by activity type within WP8 across key coordinator partners is shown in Table 16. The data confirm a general trend observed in previous sections: **women play a leading role in most outreach and stakeholder-facing activities** within the **SoildiverAgro** project, although this varies notably between institutions and task types.

- In the production of **dissemination materials**, women represent a majority in all partners except UCPH and ILVO. **UVIGO and UPCT report high female participation (71.4 % and 62.5 %, respectively)**, while **LUKE (66.7 %) and TI (50.0 %)** also show strong female involvement. In contrast, **UCPH reports no female participation in this activity (0.0 %)**, and ILVO presents a balanced distribution (50.0 %).
- Participation in **training programmes** follows a similar pattern. **UVIGO (60.0 %)**, **UPCT (62.5 %)**, **LUKE (50.0 %)** and **EULS (100.0 %)** maintain strong female representation, while

ILVO (25.0 %) and TI (0.0 %) assign this task mainly to men. UCPH again shows no women engaged in this activity.

- In **policy engagement and networking**, a domain typically linked to influence and visibility, the gender gaps are more pronounced. **UVIGO (75.0 %), UPCT (60.0 %) and LUKE (75.0 %)** assign these responsibilities predominantly to women. **ILVO and UCPH, however, show exclusively male participation (0.0 % women)**, highlighting a persistent male hold on strategic representation in those institutions. EULS again reports **100 % female involvement** in this category.
- In **representation at stakeholder events**, **LUKE leads with 71.4 % women**, followed by **UPCT (66.7 %), UVIGO (60.0 %) and EULS (100.0 %)**. Meanwhile, **UCPH (0.0 % women) and ILVO (40.0 %)** again lag behind in gender parity. TI reports a perfectly balanced distribution (50.0 %).

In summary, the data from Table 16 reinforce the observation that **women play a dominant role in WP8 activities across most partners**, especially in communication, networking, and training. However, **some partners (notably UCPH and ILVO) consistently assign these roles to men**, which highlights a structural imbalance in gender assignment to externally visible and influence-related tasks. This underscores the need for **institutional efforts to ensure that women have equal access to communication and policy-engagement responsibilities**, especially in activities that shape the project's public and scientific profile.

Table 16. Gender distribution by activity in WP8.

Activity	Uvigo			UPCT			UCPH			ILVO			LUKE			TI			EULS		
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W
Contribution to dissemination materials	5	2	71.43	5	3	62.5	0	3	0.0	2	2	50.0	2	1	66.7	2	2	50.0	1	0	100.0
Participation in training programs	3	2	60.0	5	3	62.5				1	3	25.0	2	2	50.0	0	1	0.0	1	0	100.0
Policy engagement and networking	3	1	75.0	3	2	60.0	0	1	0.0	0	3	0.0	3	1	75.0				1	0	100.0
Representation in stakeholder events	3	2	60.0	6	3	66.7	0	2	0.0	2	3	40.0	5	2	71.4	1	1	50.0	1	0	100.0

W: Women, M: Men

5. ANALYSIS OF NON-SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PARTNERS

Beyond the core coordinating institutions and WP leaders, **SoildiverAgro** includes several **non-Scientific Committee partners**. These are entities that participate in the project mainly in supportive or implementation roles (for example, providing specific expertise, hosting case study sites, or executing trials in the field under the guidance of WP leaders). They do not lead work packages, but their contributions are vital for on-the-ground project implementation. This group includes SMEs, industry partners, agricultural associations, regional agencies, and individual expert contractors. The gender composition of these partners provides insight into the broader inclusivity of the project and highlights where gender balance successes or challenges lie outside the immediate scientific leadership circle.

The non-coordinator partners in **SoildiverAgro** (excluding those already discussed as coordinators or WP leaders) include: Symbiom, FEUGA – although FEUGA does lead WP8, it is not a scientific coordinator in the earlier analysis, PSKW, RRG, TT, PETLA, MTJ, INORDE, FYNECO, ASJA, Contactica, FA, INAGRO, POMONA, and MTÜPK. We will discuss their gender distributions and roles (Tables 1 and 17):

- **Symbiom** participates in **SoildiverAgro** with a small team consisting of **1 woman and 2 men (33 % women)**. The woman involved works in the **Research and Development department**, contributing directly to the scientific dimension of the project. One of the male participants holds a management role. Despite the small team size, **Symbiom ensures female representation in a core technical position**, setting a solid foundation for gender inclusion in future collaborations.
- **FEUGA** contributes a team of **9 women and 4 men (69 % women)**, making it one of the female-majority partners in the consortium. As the **leader of WP8 (Dissemination)**, FEUGA stands out for **female leadership in strategic communication and stakeholder engagement**, with a woman serving as the WP coordinator. Most of the team members are classified as technicians or engineers, **approximately 69 % of whom are women**. This highlights FEUGA as a **positive example of gender balance and female leadership**, aligning with a broader trend of gender-inclusive staffing in Spanish innovation entities.
- **PSKW** team comprises **3 women and 6 men (33 % women)**. Female staff are present in permanent research and administrative roles, while technical and field service positions are mostly held by men. This distribution reflects a **traditional occupational gender structure**, where women are represented in office-based and scientific functions, and men dominate operational tasks. PSKW maintains a **foundation of female participation in essential roles**, with **opportunities to further integrate women in technical and field-oriented activities**.
- **RRG** is a single-person case study partner, consisting of **1 man and no women**. The male participant is the **owner and operator of a demonstration farm**, acting as case study leader. Although there is no direct female representation within the partner, the case study is **embedded in a broader consortium where female stakeholders, scientists, and extension**

agents are actively involved, ensuring gender diversity in project implementation surrounding the farm site.

- **TT** is a farm-based case study represented by **1 man and no women**, mirroring the configuration of RRG. The sole participant is the male owner of the farm. While the partner itself does not include female representation, **TT's engagement in the wider project context allows for the inclusion of women from other partner institutions** in related activities, such as field visits, evaluations, and stakeholder events. This ensures that **gender diversity is still reflected at the case study level**.
- **PETLA** presents one of the highest female representation rates in the consortium, with **5 women and 1 man (83.3 % women)**. The organization's contributions focus on research and case study leadership. PETLA reported **2 female case study leaders** (100 % of that role within the partner) and **female staff in both permanent researcher and technician categories**. PETLA's team in **SoildiverAgro** is therefore **predominantly female in both leadership and technical functions**, offering a **clear success story of gender balance in applied agricultural science**.
- **MTJ** contributes to **SoildiverAgro** with a team of 1 woman and 1 man (50 % women). As an individual expert in agroecology, Dr. Tuomas Mattila collaborates with a female colleague, resulting in full gender parity within the team. While small in size, the team demonstrates balanced participation and shared responsibilities, contributing to technical and advisory roles. This configuration sets a positive precedent for individual partners, showing that even micro-teams can achieve and model gender equity in scientific collaboration.
- **INORDE** brings one of the largest teams to the project, with **17 women and 8 men (68 % women)**. The organization's roles span across management, technical support, and administration. Leadership within INORDE is gender-balanced (1 woman and 1 man), while **technical roles are held predominantly by women (9 women vs. 4 men, 69 % women)**. The administrative team is also majority female (5 women vs. 1 man). This demonstrates that **INORDE is deeply committed to gender inclusion, with women leading implementation across operational levels**, from project engineering to coordination and stakeholder engagement.
- **FYNECO** team consists of **3 women and 5 men (37.5 % women)**. As a small enterprise working in the agri-input sector, FYNECO includes **women in technical or coordination functions**, while male staff are likely involved in field or product-related roles. Although male participation currently exceeds female, **the presence of women in technical roles reflects the company's ongoing integration of female expertise** in applied agribusiness. This provides a basis for **future growth in gender balance**, especially as the company expands its R&D and project capacities.
- **ASJA** participates with **3 women and 2 men (60 % women)**, reflecting a **female-majority team**. Women occupy technical and engineering positions within the association's activities in the project. Their involvement in training and farmer engagement tasks highlights **strong female participation in advisory and applied agricultural services**. ASJA's contribution

illustrates that **women are central to knowledge transfer and stakeholder work** in regional agricultural organizations, further enhancing visibility and leadership of women in the sector.

- **Contactica** contributes a nearly gender-balanced team of **6 women and 5 men (54.5 % women)**. The technical/engineering category is **perfectly balanced** with 4 women and 4 men. This demonstrates a **clear commitment to gender equality** across both operational and technical roles. The company's inclusive staffing approach in innovation and project management makes Contactica **a strong model among SMEs**, showing that **gender balance in science and technology environments is both achievable and sustainable**.
- **FAR** team includes **5 women and 3 men (62.5 % women)**, showing strong female representation in land-use planning and implementation. The team includes a **gender-balanced case study leadership** (1 woman, 1 man) and a female-majority in fieldwork roles (3 women vs. 1 man, 75 % women). This is particularly notable given the field-oriented nature of the tasks. FAR stands out for having **women engaged in both operational and strategic project responsibilities, challenging gender stereotypes in environmental soil management**.
- **INAGRO** contributes a larger team with **4 women and 12 men (25 % women)**. The gender ratio reflects a male-dominated staffing structure, especially in technical and field roles related to experimentation and farmer engagement. Despite this, the participation of four women in support or research activities **represents a foothold for further progress**. INAGRO has **clear potential to expand the role of female researchers and technicians**, contributing to long-term improvements in gender inclusion across practical agronomic research contexts.
- **POMONA** participates with **2 women and 5 men (28.6 % women)**. Within the team, **field operator roles include 1 woman and 3 men**, reflecting a male-majority structure in implementation tasks. The presence of women in coordination or analysis roles **contributes to gender diversity in strategic activities**, although overall representation remains low. POMONA's configuration is consistent with other Belgian partners in applied agriculture.
- **MTÜPK** is represented by a **single female participant (100 % women)**. This partner contributes directly to stakeholder engagement and represents female leadership within an Estonian agricultural NGO. While the team consists of one person, her participation ensures **complete female representation**, reinforcing the importance of **female-led partner organizations** in achieving gender balance at the consortium level. MTÜPK's contribution adds diversity to the project's governance and outreach activities.

Table 17. Gender distribution by non-Scientific Committee partners and category. (Format: Women / Men (% Women)).

Category	SYMBIOM	FEUGA	PSKW	RRG	TT	PETLA	MTJ	INORDE
Direction / Management	0 / 1 (0%)	–	–	–	–	–	–	1 / 1 (50%)
WP Coordinator	–	1 / 0 (100%)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Case Study Leader	–	–	–	–	–	2 / 0 (100%)	–	–
Permanent Researcher	–	–	1 / 2 (33%)	–	–	2 / 0 (100%)	–	–
Technician / Engineer	–	9 / 4 (69%)	1 / 3 (25%)	–	–	2 / 0 (100%)	–	9 / 4 (69%)
Administrative	–	–	1 / 0 (100%)	–	–	–	–	5 / 1 (83%)
Services	–	–	0 / 1 (0%)	–	–	–	–	–
Worker / Operator	–	–	–	0 / 1 (0%)	0 / 1 (0%)	–	–	–
Researcher (R+D+i Dept.)	1 / 1 (50%)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	1 / 2 (33%)	9 / 4 (69%)	3 / 6 (33%)	0 / 1 (0%)	0 / 1 (0%)	5 / 1 (83%)	1 / 1 (50%)	17 / 8 (68%)

Category	FYNECO	ASJA	Contactica	FAR	INAGRO	POMONA	MTÜPK
Direction / Management	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
WP Coordinator	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Case Study Leader	–	–	–	1 / 1 (50%)	–	–	–
Permanent Researcher	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Technician / Engineer	–	2 / 1 (67%)	4 / 4 (50%)	–	–	–	–
Administrative	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Services	–	–	–	1 / 1 (50%)	–	–	–
Worker / Operator	–	–	–	3 / 1 (75%)	–	1 / 3 (25%)	–
Researcher (R+D+i)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	3 / 5 (38%)	3 / 2 (60%)	6 / 5 (55%)	5 / 3 (63%)	4 / 12 (25%)	2 / 5 (29%)	1 / 0 (100%)

Collectively assessment of the non-coordinator partners:

- Several non-coordinator partners demonstrate **high levels of female participation**, including **FEUGA, INORDE, FAR, PETLA, ASJA, and Contactica**. These organizations include **women in implementation, stakeholder engagement, and technical support roles**, ensuring that the project's connection with farmers, extension services, and regional actors is often facilitated by female professionals. This strong representation enhances **inclusive outreach**, creating visibility for women in agricultural innovation and offering **role models to women farmers and young women entering the field**.
- Conversely, some non-coordinator partners remain **male-dominated**, such as **PSKW, INAGRO, Symbiom**, and the **one-person partner farms**. These patterns reflect **persistent gender imbalances** in specific sectors, particularly in private research stations and some small- and medium-sized enterprises. While these organizational structures are externally established, the project fosters awareness and highlights the importance of gender balance in research and technical environments. Organizations like PSKW and INAGRO are positioned to **enhance gender equity in future recruitment or trainee selection**, and SMEs such as Symbiom have the opportunity to integrate gender diversity as they expand.

It is also insightful to compare **Scientific Committee vs non-Scientific Committee partners**:

- The group of **Scientific Committee partners**, predominantly from academic and research institutions, shows **average gender ratios close to or above parity**, with some exceptions such as **UCPH and ILVO**, which have lower female representation in specific work packages. In contrast, **non-coordinator partners present a broader distribution**: some feature **excellent gender balance or female-majority teams**, while others show **notably low female participation**. This diversity underscores the importance of a **strong presence of female-led partners** to balance out those with less inclusive structures, contributing to the project's overall positive gender ratio.
- **Non-Scientific Committee partners** also **contribute significantly to female leadership in practical field settings**. **PETLA and FAR** each assigned **female case study leaders**, with PETLA including **two women in this role** and FAR reporting a **co-leadership between a woman and a man**. These roles place women at the forefront of **field-based project implementation**, demonstrating that they are not limited to lab or administrative functions but are central to **on-the-ground strategic action**. Additionally, **FEUGA's leadership of WP8 by a woman** reflects female visibility and influence in **dissemination and communication leadership** within the consortium.
- Several non-coordinator partners also occupy **facilitation and support functions**—notably **INORDE, ASJA, and Contactica**—where **women constitute the majority** of the staff involved. These roles are **highly technical**, going well beyond basic administration. For instance, **INORDE's female technicians** and **Contactica's female engineers** carry out **core project tasks** essential to the successful execution of technical work packages. Their contributions exemplify the **diverse and skilled participation of women across multiple areas**, affirming

the value of gender inclusion in both leadership and technical support roles throughout the project.

In summary, the analysis of non-coordinator partners reveals a **complex but generally positive picture**: Many of these partners strengthen the consortium's gender balance by involving women heavily in execution and local outreach. However, there remain a few partners where women's voices are not present, which could be potential weak spots if not addressed (for instance, having no women at all in a partner organization might limit perspectives when that partner interacts with stakeholders). The project should ensure that in such cases (like the all-male farm partners), the broader project team compensates by facilitating inclusive interactions (e.g., sending mixed-gender teams for field visits to those sites). Additionally, sharing best practices among partners – for example, how FEUGA or INORDE achieve high female participation – could inspire other partners to adopt measures to improve gender balance internally.

6. CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION-MAKING

This section synthesizes the gender findings across the different dimensions (consortium-wide, WPs, partner types) with a focus on **cross-cutting themes, especially regarding decision-making and leadership roles** in the project. It also examines whether there are identifiable patterns of gender distribution by type of role or activity (regardless of partner or WP), and how these might influence or reflect the project's decision-making processes.

6.1. Gender in decision-making bodies

Within **SoildiverAgro**, the formal decision-making structures include the **Project Coordinator**, the **Work Package (WP) leaders**—collectively forming the **Scientific Committee**—and, where applicable, advisory or steering committees. Based on confirmed data, **2 out of the 8 WPs (25%) are led by women**. WP8 is coordinated by a woman from **FEUGA**, and LUKE contributes female leadership in at least one of the research-focused WPs. The remaining WPs are coordinated by men, leading to an overall **female representation of 25 % in WP leadership**. At the project coordination level, the core coordination team at **UVIGO** includes both men and women. The primary project coordinator is a man, while key managerial and support roles are held by women, demonstrating shared responsibility across genders. This structure reflects a **gender-inclusive approach to management**, ensuring that both strategic and operational decision-making functions are informed by diverse perspectives. Several partners have made **deliberate efforts to ensure female representation in decision-making roles**. For example, **FEUGA's leadership of WP8**, the involvement of female scientists in coordination roles at **LUKE**, and **EULS's participation in key strategic tasks** all highlight how women are **actively contributing to the direction and oversight of the project**.

At the **task-level decision-making** (below WP leadership), many tasks within **SoildiverAgro** were led by **mixed-gender or gender-balanced teams**. Institutions such as **UVIGO** and **UPCT** consistently demonstrated **50 % female representation in task leadership roles** across several work packages. This confirms that **women play a direct role in managing and guiding project activities** at the operational level. However, in certain partners, task leadership was assigned **exclusively to men** in specific work packages. For example, **ILVO** did not include any women in decision-making roles in **WP7**, and **UCPH** assigned male-only task leaders in **WPs 2 and 3**. In these cases, although **women contributed to the implementation of the tasks**, the individuals appointed as task leaders or official representatives were men. This reflects a structural pattern in which **senior male researchers assume formal leadership**, while **female colleagues, often in junior roles, support the execution of work**.

SoildiverAgro's governance structure demonstrates a clear commitment to progressive gender inclusion, while offering additional opportunities to strengthen equity in leadership and decision-making. With women representing 56 % of the overall project participants, the consortium is well-positioned to reflect this diversity more fully at the highest levels of coordination. The project promotes inclusive practices such as rotating task leadership, co-signing deliverables, and ensuring female visibility in stakeholder meetings and public forums. These measures help to prevent imbalances in authority and recognition, ensuring that leadership is not concentrated within a single

gender. To reinforce this approach, **SoildiverAgro** encourages the appointment of **female deputies in WP led by men**, and supports the **promotion of women to emerging leadership roles**, particularly in cross-cutting or strategic areas.

6.2. Gender by role category

The data collected from partners categorized personnel into key role types such as management, research, technical, administrative, and field operations. The analysis of gender distribution across these categories reveals patterns that align with broader trends in the research and agriculture sectors, while also showing the distinctive profile of **SoildiverAgro**:

- **Management and Direction roles** show a diverse pattern across partners. In organizations such as **UVIGO** and **INORDE**, management responsibilities are shared equally between men and women. In contrast, partners like **Symbiom** have male-only management. However, several partners have designated women to lead their participation in the project, including **FEUGA** and **PETLA**, both of which have female project leaders. At the consortium level, **women are clearly present in management roles**, though not uniformly across all partners. The coordination of the project (WP1) demonstrates gender balance, setting a positive standard for the entire consortium.
- In **Scientific and Research roles**, the gender distribution is varied. **PSKW** reports 33% female researchers, **Symbiom** has an equal 50/50 gender split in its R&D team, and **PETLA** assigns all scientific roles to women. In contrast, partners like **ILVO**, **UCPH**, and **INAGRO** involve male-majority teams in scientific roles. Nevertheless, **female scientists are strongly represented across many partners**, contributing directly to research design, implementation, and data analysis. These differences reflect institutional and regional characteristics, with some subfields still showing persistent gender imbalances.
- **Technical and Engineering roles** in **SoildiverAgro** are often led or carried out by women. Partners such as **FEUGA** (9 women vs. 4 men), **Contactica** (equal gender split), and **INORDE** (female-majority) demonstrate **strong female participation in engineering and technical tasks**. These include soil sampling, field equipment management, lab analysis, and technical support. This challenges traditional assumptions that such roles are male-dominated. At the same time, some partners assign technical tasks solely to men, including **Symbiom**, **RRG**, **TT**, and **ILVO**. The consortium benefits from the balance provided by partners with active female technical leadership and can foster cross-learning between teams by encouraging broader inclusion practices.
- In **Administrative and Support roles**, the data confirm a gender distribution that follows a familiar pattern in research environments. These roles are predominantly held by women, as seen in **INORDE** (83% female) and **PSKW** (100% female). While this ensures strong female involvement in coordination and logistics, it also underlines a gendered segmentation that persists in many institutions. Importantly, in **SoildiverAgro**, many women involved in administrative tasks also participate in technical or organizational decision-making. Their expertise is recognized, and their strategic contributions are encouraged in coordination meetings and reporting activities, ensuring that support roles are not undervalued.

- **Field Worker and Operator roles**, which include tasks such as field monitoring, sampling, and trial plot maintenance, show diverse gender representation. **RRG** and **TT** rely solely on male operators, while **POMONA** is mostly male in these tasks. In contrast, **FAR** assigns the majority of its field work to women (3 out of 4 workers), reflecting a model of inclusion that counters traditional gender norms. In some cases, these roles are filled by **female students, interns, or field technicians**, illustrating that field work is increasingly a gender-diverse space. The project's strategy supports the integration of early-career professionals of all genders into these roles, promoting equitable access to hands-on training and increasing female visibility in applied agricultural research.

6.3. Influence on Decision-Making

The diversity of roles across **SoildiverAgro** has a direct impact on the quality and inclusivity of decision-making throughout the project.

- Women play a central role in data analysis and interpretation, particularly in **WPs 2 and 6**, bringing **complementary perspectives** that enrich the way findings are understood and translated into recommendations. For instance, the strong participation of **female researchers at LUKE in WP6** shapes the integrated assessment outcomes and contributes to the evaluation of ecosystem services. Likewise, the **female-led coordination of dissemination by FEUGA** ensures that communication strategies and knowledge transfer are designed to resonate with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, aligning with research demonstrating that **gender-diverse teams produce more inclusive and widely applicable outputs**.
- In contrast, areas with **low or absent female participation**, such as **ILVO's all-male contribution to WP7 policy engagement**, present a risk of **limited representativeness** in the outputs. In such cases, the lack of gender diversity may lead to certain perspectives being overlooked, including the **differentiated impacts of soil management practices on male and female farmers**. To address this, the project integrates **inter-partner collaboration**, drawing on input from **female-rich teams at LUKE and EULS**, thereby ensuring a **more comprehensive and inclusive approach to stakeholder recommendations and strategic deliverables**.
- The active participation of women in **stakeholder engagement roles**, as seen with **EULS and LUKE in WP7**, and **INORDE and ASJA in local dissemination activities**, reinforces the inclusivity of the project's outreach. Through these engagements, women professionals not only ensure **gender-sensitive communication**, but also act as **visible role models** for female farmers and agri-workers. For example, training sessions led by **female agronomists from INORDE** foster trust and openness among women in farming communities, strengthening their involvement in project activities.
- In **internal decision-making spaces** such as consortium meetings and annual assemblies, **women represent approximately half of the participants**, reflecting the overall composition of the project. Ensuring that all participants have an **equal opportunity to contribute** remains essential. While leadership roles are still somewhat male-skewed, **the presence of senior**

female figures, such as the **WP8 leader at FEUGA** and **senior scientists at LUKE**, reinforces **female authority in governance and technical decision-making**. **SoildiverAgro** actively cultivates an **inclusive meeting culture**, where team members from all backgrounds—including junior and female staff—are **encouraged to present their work**. This practice **normalizes diverse leadership** within the consortium.

- Beyond team composition, **SoildiverAgro incorporates gender sensitivity in the substance of its research**, particularly in **stakeholder interactions**. Although the core topic—soil biodiversity—does not inherently include a gender dimension, the way knowledge is transferred and innovations are introduced **does influence men and women differently**. In many rural contexts, agricultural work is **shared within households**, and having both male and female staff engaging with stakeholder's fosters **greater inclusivity**. The project encourages reflection on **gender-differentiated responses** to innovations or practices and highlights these observations where relevant. By doing so, **SoildiverAgro integrates gender awareness not only in team structure but also in the outcomes it produces**, contributing to the broader Horizon 2020 objective of embedding gender equality in research and innovation.

6.4. Comparing with EU Gender Equality Goals

The cross-sectional analysis confirms that **SoildiverAgro** meets or exceeds several key expectations of the European Commission regarding gender equality in research projects.

- The overall composition of the team, with **56 % women**, reflects a **strong and proactive approach to gender balance**. Female participation is particularly notable in **technical, research, and stakeholder engagement roles**, demonstrating the consortium's commitment to ensuring that women are actively involved in the scientific and operational core of the project. According to **Horizon 2020** guidelines (European Commission, 2016), projects are expected to aim for gender balance, and **Horizon Europe** has reinforced this by establishing **gender balance as a tiebreaker** in the evaluation of equally scored proposals. **SoildiverAgro's** achievement in surpassing the 50 % mark for female participation clearly aligns with these policy goals and likely contributed to the project's successful evaluation (European Commission, 2021).
- However, when focusing on **decision-making bodies**, specifically the **Scientific Committee**, the current representation of **approximately 30 % women** falls slightly below the **European Commission's recommended minimum threshold of 40 % for boards and committees**. This identifies a specific area where the project could have further strengthened its commitment to gender equity.

6.5. Key Strengths and Gaps in Gender Distribution

- One of the most notable strengths of **SoildiverAgro** is the **high engagement of women in outreach, dissemination, and stakeholder engagement activities**, particularly in **WP8**. The **female-led dissemination team at FEUGA** ensures that communication outputs—such as videos, articles, and training materials—are shaped by a **strong female perspective**. This

positively influences the **framing and tone of project messages**, making them more inclusive and accessible. Moreover, it **showcases women in scientific and innovation roles to the public**, actively contributing to **breaking gender stereotypes** in agricultural research and communication.

- Another clear strength lies in the **outstanding gender balance achieved by several partners**, with some surpassing average gender equity levels in the broader academic or institutional context. For instance, **EULS reports 82 % female participation**, which exceeds typical ratios in higher education and research, while **INORDE reaches 68 % women**, demonstrating that women are **thriving in regional development and technical implementation roles**. These examples can be highlighted in project communications and reporting as **success stories**, in line with EU narratives promoting women's growing role in environmental sciences and sustainability.
- The project data also reveal cases of **underrepresentation of men in certain teams or tasks**. While the central focus remains on addressing the historical underrepresentation of women, it is relevant to note that **some partners show a reverse imbalance**, with men in the minority. For example, **FEUGA and INORDE** report female-majority teams, **EULS** has had minimal male participation in some work packages, and **LUKE's WP7 team** was almost entirely composed of women. These situations underscore that **diversity and balance are valuable in both directions**, and **gender equity should be promoted across all roles and contexts**. While empowering women in male-dominated sectors remains a priority, **SoildiverAgro** also recognizes that **gender-balanced teams foster innovation, representativeness, and cohesion**, regardless of which gender is underrepresented.
- A specific area for improvement is the **complete absence of female participants in some small partners**, such as **RRG and TT**, which are **individual demonstration farms represented exclusively by men**. Although these are small partners, their role in the project is significant and their gender composition **limits the inclusion of female perspectives** at the case study level. To address this, the consortium integrates these partners into the wider, gender-diverse project network. For example, **female scientists from UVIGO or INORDE** participate in case study reviews and stakeholder discussions involving these farms, ensuring that **multi-gender representation is maintained** in all strategic and technical conversations. Looking ahead, future projects can **proactively recruit women-led or co-managed farms** for similar roles, ensuring more **inclusive representation across all partner types**.

6.6. Impact on Project Implementation

The cross-sectional gender distribution in **SoildiverAgro** has a direct and measurable impact on how decisions are made and implemented throughout the project.

- Generally, **gender-diverse teams are more innovative, adaptive, and effective in problem-solving**, as they incorporate a wider range of perspectives and experiences. **SoildiverAgro's broadly gender-balanced teams**, particularly in the **analytical and operational phases** of the project, clearly benefit from this diversity. In field trial diagnostics, for instance, mixed-gender teams explore **multiple approaches** and engage with **stakeholders from different**

backgrounds more effectively, fostering inclusivity and innovation in methodology and interpretation.

- The presence of women in decision-making processes contributes to a **more collaborative and communicative environment**. Within internal committees and coordination groups, women have demonstrated a capacity to **foster consensus-based approaches** and **enhance the quality of dialogue and engagement**. In the **Scientific Committee**, the involvement of both men and women reinforces this dynamic, enhancing decision quality and group cohesion through **diversity of perspective and leadership styles**.
- **SoildiverAgro** ensures that this diversity is **active and impactful**, not merely nominal. The **high proportion of women in key roles**, including technical coordination, case study leadership, and work package management, guarantees that women are not only present but also **fully engaged in shaping project decisions**. For example, the **female leadership of WP8 at FEUGA** directly influences the strategic direction of the project's dissemination and stakeholder engagement activities, demonstrating effective and visible female leadership in a critical component of project implementation.
- At the same time, the project acknowledges that **female representation declines slightly in the highest governance roles**, particularly among work package leaders and the Scientific Committee. While overall balance is maintained across most levels, this indicates a **need to continue strengthening female participation in top-level decision-making**. Conversely, in areas where women dominate (such as certain outreach and administrative teams), the project also encourages **inclusive male participation** to ensure **diversity in all directions**.

Thus, **SoildiverAgro** fosters a culture in which **scientific, technical, managerial, and operational contributions are equally valued**, regardless of gender. This inclusive approach aligns fully with **Horizon 2020's gender equality principles** and enhances the project's internal functioning and long-term impact (European Commission, 2016). By promoting active participation, equitable leadership opportunities, and visible recognition for both women and men, the project not only delivers on its research objectives but also contributes to training a **new generation of female scientists and practitioners** in agro-environmental research.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

With these insights consolidated, this section presents concrete **recommendations to reinforce the project's strengths and address the remaining gender-related gaps**, ensuring the success and inclusivity of **SoildiverAgro**.

Building on the analysis above, the following recommendations aim to further strengthen gender equality in **SoildiverAgro** and serve as guidance for future research initiatives. These actions support the European Commission's objectives for gender balance in research and innovation and are designed to ensure **equitable participation in all aspects of project execution and governance**. Several of these measures can still be implemented during the remaining timeframe of the project,

while others offer long-term strategies for similar EU-funded efforts. The overarching goal is to foster a project culture in which **women and men have equal access to leadership and decision-making opportunities**, and the project benefits fully from the diversity of its team.

7.1. Ensure Gender Balance in Decision Making Roles

While **SoildiverAgro** maintains a commendable gender balance overall, **women remain underrepresented in the Scientific Committee and in certain task leadership positions**. Specific, actionable measures are being promoted to close this gap:

- **Appoint female deputies or co-leads** for work packages or major tasks where leadership is currently male. For example, in WPs such as WP4, if led by a male scientist, the project should designate a woman as co-leader or deliverable lead—ideally from the same or a collaborating institution—to elevate female representation in strategic positions.
- **Rotate chairing responsibilities** in internal meetings, enabling female WP leaders, task coordinators, or senior scientists to take turns leading discussions. This promotes inclusive leadership and enhances visibility of women in governance roles.
- **Guarantee female participation in advisory structures and panels**, including any stakeholder or end-user groups convened by the project. This applies to both internal and external contributors—gender balance must be a guiding principle in all invitations to participate in consultative or evaluative bodies.
- **Actively promote women for public-facing roles**, such as speakers at conferences, workshops, EU events, or media engagements. Ensuring women are featured in these roles underscores their central contributions and **projects SoildiverAgro's gender-inclusive identity to external audiences**.

These actions directly align with **Horizon 2020's and Horizon Europe's expectations for balanced representation in decision-making**, which set a target of at least **40% participation from the underrepresented gender** in committees and boards (European Commission, 2016, 2021).

7.2. Empower and Acknowledge Female Contributors

The data confirms that **women play a central role** in the implementation of **SoildiverAgro**, particularly across technical, scientific, and field-based tasks. It is essential that their contributions are **formally recognized** and that they are provided with **structured opportunities for visibility, leadership, and professional development**. The following actions support this objective:

- **Explicit Acknowledgment in Deliverables and Reports:** All technical and scientific outputs, including project deliverables and the final report, must clearly acknowledge individual contributions. **Women who lead analyses, field trials, or coordination activities must be recognized as lead or co-authors** where appropriate. For instance, a female researcher responsible for the soil biodiversity analysis in WP3 should be visibly credited in the corresponding deliverable. Such recognition **supports professional advancement** and reinforces the visibility of women in research roles.

- **Opportunities for Skill Development and Visibility:** Early-career women researchers and technicians are actively encouraged to **take on tasks that enhance their leadership capacity**, such as presenting project results in consortium meetings, drafting technical sections of reports, or contributing to stakeholder workshops. Senior partners provide mentorship and support to facilitate learning and confidence-building. This approach **expands the pipeline of female professionals qualified for future leadership roles**.
- **Establishment of Mentoring or Peer-Support Networks:** A **project-internal mentoring initiative** supports knowledge sharing and career guidance. Senior women scientists mentor junior women from other institutions. Cross-gender mentoring is also encouraged. This initiative contributes to **building a robust network of support and fostering the next generation of female leaders** in agroecological research, aligned with EU recommendations on advancing women in STEM.
- **Highlighting Female Role Models through Communication Channels:** Project communication tools—such as newsletters, the project website, and social media—regularly feature **team member spotlights**, giving visibility to women scientists, engineers, and field operators.

7.3. Leverage Female Strength in Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

SoildiverAgro demonstrates strong female representation in outreach, communication, and stakeholder-facing roles, particularly through partners such as ASJA, INORDE, PETLA, and FEUGA. These contributions are actively leveraged to maximize the project's impact on the ground and to foster inclusive engagement with external actors.

- **Inclusive Stakeholder Events:** Workshops, demonstration days, and stakeholder forums are designed to ensure balanced representation of male and female project staff in visible roles. The presence of female agronomists, technicians, and dissemination experts fosters an inclusive environment where women farmers, agri-professionals, and rural entrepreneurs feel represented and empowered to participate. SoildiverAgro field events regularly involve women from ASJA and INORDE as facilitators and technical contacts, enriching the dialogue and strengthening local connections. These interactions also help break down barriers for women in agriculture, demonstrating female leadership in innovation and research-driven practices.
- **Gender-Sensitive Communication:** All communication outputs—including brochures, videos, factsheets, and website content—are reviewed to avoid unconscious bias and promote a balanced representation of genders. Images and stories highlight both women and men in their roles as farmers, scientists, technicians, and coordinators. FEUGA's female-led dissemination team plays a key role in ensuring this gender-sensitive approach is embedded across materials. The team also ensures gender-neutral language is consistently applied and includes success stories that feature both male and female farmer-adopters, presenting a more accurate and inclusive vision of rural innovation.

- **Reporting Gender Impact:** Project reports submitted to the European Commission explicitly include qualitative and quantitative analysis of gender participation and outcomes. For instance, SoildiverAgro documents increased participation of women in training sessions, higher engagement from women-led farms in stakeholder activities, and improved reception of materials due to inclusive communication.

7.4. Monitor and Evaluate Continuously

SoildiverAgro maintains a proactive approach to gender balance by integrating ongoing monitoring and assessment throughout the project's implementation phase. This ensures that achievements are sustained and any emerging imbalances are promptly addressed.

- **Annual Updates of Gender Data:** The gender-disaggregated data collected for this deliverable are updated annually across all partners. Changes in staff composition—such as new hires or departures—are reflected in revised gender tables, allowing the consortium to track progress in real time. These updates also help identify trends, such as increasing female participation in previously male-dominated partners or work packages.
- **Use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** *SoildiverAgro* implements clear, trackable KPIs to measure gender balance, including goals such as maintaining **at least 40% female participation in consortium meetings** and ensuring that **every WP includes at least one woman in a task leadership role**. These indicators are reviewed at each general assembly or WP coordination meeting. If any KPI falls short, the project management team discusses corrective actions to realign with equity goals.

7.5. Celebrate and Disseminate Good Practices

SoildiverAgro provides a compelling example of how gender equality can be actively integrated into a Horizon 2020 project with a technical and scientific focus. The project capitalizes on its achievements by documenting and disseminating effective practices that promote gender balance and inclusion.

- **Documenting Successful Measures:** The project systematically identifies and records practices that have contributed to gender equity. For example, the leadership of WP8 by a female coordinator at FEUGA led to the development of communication strategies that effectively reached diverse audiences, including female farmers. These experiences are compiled into internal reports and external communications, serving as transferable lessons for future initiatives.
- **Recognizing Partner Achievements:** The project promotes positive reinforcement by publicly acknowledging partners that exemplify good practices in gender equality. For instance, if a partner increases its proportion of female team members significantly over the course of the project—such as by integrating female interns or expanding recruitment channels—this improvement is recognized in project meetings and communications. Highlighting these efforts motivates other partners and reinforces the project's inclusive ethos.

7.6. Alignment with Horizon Europe and Future Funding Requirements

SoildiverAgro positions itself strategically in alignment with Horizon Europe (European Commission, 2021), which expands upon the gender equality principles established under Horizon 2020 (European Commission, 2016). The project anticipates and integrates the more stringent requirements now in place, including mandatory Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) for public institutions and the use of gender balance as a tie-breaker in funding evaluations.

- **Promoting Gender Equality Plans:** All partners in *SoildiverAgro*, particularly smaller entities and SMEs, are actively encouraged to implement institutional Gender Equality Plans. Many academic and public partners—such as UVIGO, UCPH, and LUKE—already meet this requirement, while others may be taking steps to align with Horizon Europe standards (European Commission, 2021).
- **Integrating Gender in Research Outputs:** The project systematically analyses and reports sex-disaggregated data wherever relevant. For instance, socio-economic surveys conducted during the project include gender-specific analyses, allowing for the identification of differing perceptions, barriers, or adoption rates between male and female stakeholders. These insights enhance the scientific quality of the outcomes and contribute valuable knowledge to the field of agroecology and soil biodiversity, reinforcing **SoildiverAgro's** contribution to gender-aware research.
- **Advancing Female Leadership in Future Initiatives:** Female researchers and technical experts within **SoildiverAgro** are actively positioned for future leadership roles in follow-up projects and consortia. The experience, visibility, and recognition gained through their contributions in this project build a strong foundation for them to lead upcoming proposals. This strategic empowerment of women strengthens the project's legacy and expands its impact beyond the immediate timeframe.

By implementing these actions, **SoildiverAgro** not only complies with current European Commission expectations but also demonstrates leadership in advancing gender equality in research and innovation. The project's proactive stance ensures the sustainability of its achievements and sets a benchmark for excellence under Horizon Europe and beyond.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- The gender equality analysis of **SoildiverAgro** demonstrates that the project has made **meaningful progress in building a diverse and inclusive research team. Women represent approximately 56% of all participants**, a clear indicator of strong commitment to inclusivity in a sector—agricultural and environmental research—where such balance is not always the norm. **This female majority is reflected across a wide spectrum of roles:** women are actively engaged as researchers, engineers, field technicians, project managers, and leaders. This widespread participation reflects **SoildiverAgro's alignment with Horizon 2020's goals** of

promoting gender balance within research teams and integrating gender dimensions across project activities.

- At the same time, the analysis reveals **specific imbalances at a more granular level**. A number of partners and work packages remain **male-dominated**, particularly in certain technical teams or leadership roles. These disparities emphasize the need for **continuous improvement and structural efforts** to ensure equality. The absence of women in some **WP leadership positions** or in **field-based roles** at certain institutions points to systemic gaps that must be addressed. The recommendations outlined in this report propose **targeted strategies** to tackle these gaps—such as **enhancing women's visibility in decision-making**, **building on the strengths of female-majority teams**, and **promoting inclusive participation** across all aspects of project execution.
- One of the most important takeaways is that **gender diversity has strengthened the project's overall performance**. **Mixed-gender teams have carried out complex tasks**—ranging from laboratory analyses to field implementation and stakeholder engagement—with strong results. The project's **communication and outreach components, led predominantly by women**, have been especially effective in engaging diverse stakeholder groups. By showcasing both male and female experts across scientific, technical, and practical interfaces, **SoildiverAgro** reinforces the message that **innovation in soil science and sustainable agriculture is collaborative and inclusive**.
- **SoildiverAgro** also serves as a **microcosm of broader developments in gender equality across EU research projects**. It demonstrates that a consortium in a traditionally male-dominated field can **exceed gender balance thresholds** through **conscious recruitment, inclusive project culture, and alignment with European Commission guidance**. At the same time, the persistence of **gendered role patterns** in some areas—such as field trials or senior WP leadership—highlights the **need for ongoing effort**. By recognizing and addressing these trends, **SoildiverAgro** contributes meaningfully to the **EU's long-term strategy for gender equality in science and innovation**.
- Thus, **SoildiverAgro has upheld a commendable level of gender balance**, achieving or surpassing Horizon 2020's expectations. **Women have contributed decisively to the project's scientific and practical achievements**, and the consortium now has the opportunity to **reinforce this strength**. By implementing the proposed measures—**enhancing representation in leadership, fostering inclusive communication, and addressing remaining imbalances**—the project will **amplify its impact both within and beyond its immediate objectives**. In doing so, **SoildiverAgro not only supports excellent research but also sets a benchmark in gender equality** for future interdisciplinary projects funded under Horizon Europe. **SoildiverAgro** consortium is encouraged to **embed these practices into future collaborations, institutional strategies, and daily work environments**. In this way, **SoildiverAgro's** legacy will endure not only in scientific innovation and soil health, but also in advancing gender equality in European research.

9. REFERENCES

European Commission (2016). Horizon 2020 Guidance: *Gender Equality in Horizon 2020*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/gender-equality>

European Commission (2021). *Gender Equality: a strengthened commitment in Horizon Europe*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en