

STRATEGY PAPER „WOMEN ON BOARD“

Empowering women in board positions in the MENA region

Experiences and practical recommendations for working within female entrepreneurs organisations

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Strategy paper "Women on Board"

AUTHOR

Pamela Stenzel
Board Advisor / Certified Intercultural Trainer

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Index

1.	Basic principles of the Women on Board (WOB) strategy paper	4
2.	Inventory of project activities to date	4
3.	Basic findings on the project measures taken so far	5
3.1	Results so far	5
3.2	Social, legal and structural factors relevant to differences	6
3.3	Setting parallel priorities for future orientation.....	6
4.	Recommendations for further strategy WOB - Definition of five thematic areas.....	8
4.1	Analysis of the current situation and continuous monitoring	8
4.2	Clarification of the regulatory framework and benchmarking.....	9
4.3	Lobbying in public and professional circles and towards its own members	9
4.4	Sensitization, preparation and placement of suitable candidates / active design of the onboarding process and collegial consultation	10
4.4.1	Recruitment.....	11
4.4.2	Onboarding process	11
4.5	Analysis or design of suitable and needs-based training offers	11
4.6	Coordination with other project activities	12
5.	Concluding remarks	12
6.	Annex	13

**MISSION:
DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY FOR “WOMEN ON BOARD”**

in the framework of the CPP between the Association of German Women Entrepreneurs (VDU) and the women entrepreneurs' associations in the MENA region (Business Women of Egypt 21 (BWE21), Savoir et Vouloir Entreprendre (SEVE) - Algeria, Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) and Chambre Nationale des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises (CNFCE) - Tunisia.

1. Basic principles of the Women on Board (WOB) strategy paper

The following strategy considerations are essentially based on the following research:

- Telephone exchange with the respective contact persons of the associations for Women on Board within the project and representatives of the VDU (including Elisabeth Lehnich)
- Evaluation of the reports on the previous project workshops on “Women on Board” and individual project documents submitted (e.g. minutes of project group meetings)
- Various expert discussions with Monika Schulz Strelow - President of FidAR, Dr. Ghada Howaidy - American University of Cairo, Founder of Egyptian Women on Boards Observatory, Martin Kaspar - PWC Germany on VDU training programme for female supervisory board members
- Participation in project webinar on “Start-ups” between SEVE and CNCEF on 20.05.2020 (“Establishing a start-up and best practice for the successful implementation of own projects”)
- Discussions with various experts at the BW21 Conference in Egypt on the topic of “Women on Board” in February 2020

In addition, the following information has been taken into account in the preparation of the strategy (see lists attached for details - Annex 1):

- Studies by national and international organisations on “Women on Board”
- Training opportunities for (potential) female board members

2. Inventory of project activities to date

Before considering the future strategy for WOB in the following, an analysis of the current status and the previous project measures will be made. The resulting fundamental findings were an important factor for the development of strategic recommendations for the second project phase, especially with regard to the continuation of initiatives started by the individual associations.

The measures were kicked off with the report “Women on boards: Exchange of experience from Germany” in March 2017 on the occasion of the second Academy of Women Corporate Leaders in Tunis. This was followed by a total of four specific workshops on the topic of WOB between 2017-2020, each of which was held in Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt and Algeria with members from the partner associations and some external experts. The workshops essentially followed the same structure and dealt with the following topics:

- **Situation of women in leadership positions** in Germany and Europe and existing structural and social obstacles
- Overview of the **regulatory framework and legislative initiatives** for binding gender quotas in management bodies in Germany and Europe (especially France)
- Discussion of the **relevant ecosystem** (players from the political, public and private sectors as well as essential networks) and presentation of **important lobbying activities** of individual players in Germany (e.g. **Berlin Declaration** of 17 women's associations, establishment of a database for female board candidates, VDU supervisory board training programme with PWC)
- Presentation of the main **activities and experiences of FidAR** as an important lobbying

NGO for more women in management bodies (e.g. creation and evaluation of **WOB indices**, success factors for **FidAR forums**, introduction of the WoB Award, work of the regional groups, important cooperation and initiatives with other players at home and abroad)

- Presentation of some relevant findings of **scientific studies** on the topic of women in management positions as well as on the composition or recruitment practice of management bodies (e.g. FidAR WOB-Indices, McKinsey studies “Women matter”, reports of the Allbright Foundation)
- Overview of **training programs** for board members and their contents
- Preparatory or accompanying measures in the course of a new assumption of mandate (“**onboarding**” - e.g. mentoring, collective counselling, profiling)

The workshops each opened with a lecture on the situation in Germany and Europe. Subsequently, the other topics (e.g. relevant ecosystem, WOB indices, event formats) were introduced on the basis of short impulse lectures and deepened in joint brainstorming sessions with the participants. Possible measures were discussed and defined in the respective country or within the framework of the project as a whole, which were then pursued further on their own initiative.

3. Basic findings on the project measures taken so far

3.1 Results so far

In conclusion, the partner associations took up all the topics addressed in the workshops, but prioritised them differently. For example, the LLBW devoted a great deal of attention to the discussion of possible measures for improving lobbying work (e.g. organisation of specific events, targeted use of studies in communication). At SEVE and CNCFE the focus was rather on conceivable actions to improve transparency (e.g. possible creation of a WOB index, collection and usability of available data). In BW21 there was a very extensive debate on the relevant ecosystem and potential strategic partnerships (see the respective workshop reports for details). In the meantime, the partner associations for WOB are working primarily on the following topics:

LLWF – Follow-up of the initiative “Women on Board 2025” adopted in 2016 with the goal of 30% women on board by 2025 (<https://llwb.org/projectMenu.php?projectId=11>) / Lobbying also with regard to the introduction of a legal quota / Benchmarking through cooperation with companies (pilot project with LibanPost)

SEVE – Promotion of transparency on the situation of women in executive bodies (cooperation with women’s associations and realisation of the study with EBSOMED), promotion of the visibility of role models, expansion of the range of events and training courses, lobbying work

CNCFE – Promotion of transparency on the situation of women in executive bodies (realisation of the study with EBSOMED) and in relation to recruitment practices, lobbying (especially including scientific findings on Female Leadership), expansion of strategic partnerships, and training and promotion of future female executives

BW21 – Continuation of existing cooperation and expansion of the range of training courses (e.g. with the EBRD, IFC and AUC - see Annex 1), lobbying work, especially with regard to the Quota Act introduced in September 2019, promotion of the visibility of role models

3.2 Social, legal and structural factors relevant to differences

The debates at the workshops and the further cooperation were influenced by social, legal and structural characteristics of the individual countries, which are likely to remain relevant for the joint project work in the future. The following is a summary of some factors which I believe are of particular importance:

- First of all, **social and cultural differences** play an important role overall, e.g. with regard to the **importance of traditional roles in the professional environment**. For example, the participants in the workshop in Algeria discussed in detail the limited mobility of women as a significant obstacle to women's professional activity. The restrictions exist due to the potential threat of social sanctions and also make it more difficult for women to rise to leading positions. In Lebanon, too, the prevailing image of women was discussed in depth, but here with strong reference to religious differences and the pronounced cultural diversity within Lebanese society.
- Furthermore, the **legal framework** for supervisory bodies in companies in the four partner countries is not comparable. In Tunisia and Algeria, for example, for historical reasons there is a close proximity to the French legal area. Therefore, the experiences from France and the regulations of the French quota law had been of special interest.
- It should be noted that **Germany is less suitable as a model for potential quota laws**. Thus, the corresponding law, as explained in the workshops, it only works with its sanctions against the background of German co-determination, which is already a special feature in Europe. The "two-tier system" with two separate management bodies ("management board" and "supervisory board"), which is common in Germany, is also rather the exception from an international perspective. In the MENA region, the so-called "one-tier system" with a single management body ("board" or "administrative board") is predominant. A distinction is made here between two types of members: "executive" (= C-level: CEO, CFO, etc.) and "non-executive".
- For this reason, it was important at the workshops to address the **quota legislation in Europe** as a whole, with its various requirements and sanctions, and to describe the experience gained in each case (see DIW Report - Annex 1).
- In addition, existing or planned **legal provisions**

for the presence of women in political bodies are also relevant (e.g. Algeria and Tunisia). Depending on how they are designed, these could serve as a model for the economy or as a blueprint.

- There are also **considerable structural differences** in the respective economic systems, e.g. with regard to the predominant industrial sectors (e.g. oil industry in Algeria). But the importance of the state in the economy is also not uniform. Company sizes vary. The same applies to the importance of national stock exchanges, family businesses or the informal sector for the respective economy. All these aspects are relevant, e.g., to the discussion on the design of potential quota regulations and the definition of target enterprises eligible for regulations (see also below under D 2.).
- Furthermore, the extent of the **presence of foreign corporations and investors** can also influence the framework conditions for women, e.g. if specific diversity regulations exist there and are applied in practice (if applicable, relevant for benchmark).

3.3 Setting parallel priorities for future orientation

Despite these differences, the general conclusion can be drawn that the associations ultimately identified similar fields of action for WOB in the workshops, which were also confirmed in recent discussions. These are the following topics:

- **Improving transparency** - All partner associations complain about the lack of or little reliable data on the presence of women on board. There is a lack of transparency, also with regard to the previous recruitment practice for board mandates. All countries see an urgent need for action in this regard. According to FidAR, transparency on the situation of women in executive bodies was valuable as a tool and a decisive factor for successful lobbying. According to the associations, the experiences made with the WOB indices were very enlightening and informative for the relevant considerations.
- **Scientific support** - In the associations' opinion, the necessary work of persuasion, both internally and externally, can be effectively supported by scientific findings on the potential benefits that more female executives can bring to the economy. Various international studies have already

documented the advantages of diverse teams or female leadership (see Appendix 1 e.g. “Women Matter”). This also applies to individual studies on the MENA region (e.g. IFC for Lebanon and Egypt). For this reason, these scientific findings are to be analysed, communicated and used in a more targeted manner in the future, also in order to counteract resistance against female managers by pointing out demonstrably advantageous economic aspects.

- **Creation of a targeted WOB lobbying strategy** - The focus will be on both internal measures, i.e. for members, and external measures. One goal is to increase awareness of the advantages of women in leadership for business and society. There is also agreement among the associations that a significant increase in the presence of women on boards requires a change in social mentality. Forums and expert input should promote a (factual) discussion of existing gender stereotypes in the individual countries. A further common goal is a stronger integration and visualisation of national and international role models, also through strategic use of the joint platform “Women in Business”. The participants agree that, particularly with regard to WOB, joint actions and events and a coordinated approach are particularly promising in addition to national lobbying activities.
- **Establishment of strategic partnerships/networking as a whole** - In the opinion of all associations, strategic partnerships are important in the area of WOB, e.g. for training courses (see Annex 1), but also for other activities, e.g. following the model of the Berlin Declaration in Germany. This is because partnerships regularly increase the visibility of the actions and their efficiency and help to raise public awareness of the topic as a whole.
- **Training opportunities for board members** - According to all associations, there is a need for targeted training for (potential) female board members. Some associations already have their own programmes or are working with partners (e.g. LLBW, CNFCE and BW21), others are planning such programmes or measures (SEVE with ENSM). Certification is considered to be beneficial, also in order to specifically counter an argument of opponents, namely the alleged lack of adequately qualified female candidates.
- **Placement/onboarding process** - The associations wish to play a more important role in the recruitment process in the future, and may even want to purposefully place members in such positions. So far, however, activities in this regard have been rather sporadic and unplanned. The

same applies to the support of female candidates in the onboarding process.

Another important common feature is that the partner associations appreciate the progressive networking and increasingly close cooperation, especially in the case of WOB, and see this as a mutual enrichment and motivation. Thus, there is an interest in establishing a regular exchange of experience and sharing information on studies, successful events and measures as well as best practice examples. The input on experiences from Europe is also valuable and inspiring. The presence of foreign partners, such as the VDU, also had a positive effect on individual measures taken by the associations on the ground, giving them more weight and attention from local decision-makers. This aspect can be of strategic importance when planning measures or events.

4. Recommendations for further strategy WOB - Definition of five thematic areas

On the basis of previous project experience, five relevant thematic areas for WOB were defined, which are presented below with their respective main objectives. In the interest of a further concretization of these strategic considerations, some suggestions and recommendations for possible measures for each of the areas are given, supplemented by general remarks and recommendations of the experts contacted.

4.1 Analysis of the current situation and continuous monitoring

Objective of the thematic area

ANALYSIS AND MONITORING

Information and creation of sustainable transparency regarding the situation of women on boards (especially in business and politics)

All the associations criticise the unsatisfactory transparency and data situation with regard to recording the situation of women in management positions. According to the associations, the procurement of the necessary data is already proving difficult. Moreover, they are often not reliable. However, apart from Algeria, there are already individual studies on WOB that have been prepared with the help of international organisations (ILO/IFC).

Thanks to EBSOMED, a monitoring report is planned for Algeria and Tunisia in the coming months, which is currently being prepared by an expert from CNFCE. It would therefore make sense to make targeted use of available data and studies within the framework of the project and to communicate about them, e.g. on the websites of the associations and the project website as well as via social media.

However, there is no regular monitoring of the international studies. But according to FidAR's experience, the **regular collection and publication of data** was a central factor for the great effectiveness

of the WOB indices in the context of lobbying work. Dr. Howaidy and her team share this assessment. Since 2018, she has been annually recording the presence of women in the most important Egyptian companies (Egypt Women on Boards Observatory). In her view - at least for the moment - the regularity of data collection is more important than the depth of data. Even if the aim should of course be a detailed investigation, her team has made a conscious decision to limit the data collection to only a small amount of data at present and to cooperate with public institutions (e.g. stock exchange supervisory authority). This was the only way to ensure that the Observatory's monitoring was regularly updated as a benchmark and could establish itself as a sustainable reference. In the long term, this would also minimise the effort involved by integrating the data collection into regular and mandatory surveys. In my opinion, this approach should be considered when planning future monitoring reports. It will have to be weighed up on a case-by-case basis which objective should be given priority. Dr. Howaidy offered to share her experience and to support the associations in monitoring projects. This could be valuable, for example, in relation to the EBSOMED study.

Regular monitoring should therefore generally be a goal. In the interest of possible comparability, the following aspects should also be taken into account:

- Clear **definition of the target group** with **objective criteria** for monitoring (see 4.2.)
- **Regular data collection** (at least once a year)
- Data collection preferably in **cooperation with public authorities** (e.g. stock exchange supervisory authority)
- "Appealingly designed" (e.g. graphics) and easily understandable presentation of the results (**short version**) combined with a scientific analysis/commentary (**long version**)
- **Accompanying PR campaign** for the presentation and "marketing" of the results (events, media appearances, etc.)
- **Strategic partnerships**, e.g. with the media and possible awards for role models / best practice (WOB Award)

Finally, a differentiated monitoring of the board members with regard to the functions they perform would be desirable: Executive or non-executive/committee membership. Studies concerning Europe show (cf. EUROSTAT - Annex 1) that, despite a larger number of female members in executive bodies, the overall presence in operational management, i.e. at

the executive level, has not grown in the same way thanks to legal quotas, but has rather stagnated (e.g. non-executive level 33%, executive level approx. 10% – Germany). The situation is similar in the committees relevant to decision-making, i.e. here too there are proportionally far fewer women represented compared with their presence on the executive body as a whole. Differentiating monitoring would allow an analysis of the influence women actually have on operational decisions in companies.

4.2 Clarification of the regulatory framework and benchmarking

Objective of the thematic area

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Compilation of the respective regulatory requirements regarding the equal participation of women in business, politics, administration and science in order to promote transparency and in the interest of benchmarking

In 2003, Norway introduced the first statutory gender quota for management bodies in Europe. Many European countries followed. Various studies now clearly show that, in relation to their respective areas of application, quota laws, regardless of their form, have always led to a significant increase in the presence of women in executive bodies. In countries without quotas or outside their area of application, on the other hand, a stagnation or very manageable increase can be observed (cf. DIW report - Annex 1). The conclusion can therefore be drawn: The instrument of a statutory quota works regularly.

Thus, positive effects of statutory quotas can also be assumed in the MENA region. The situation in this respect varies greatly in the partner countries. A structured recording of relevant regulatory requirements and communication about them could be helpful, also in the interest of potential monitoring of these requirements. Especially the experiences with the quota law for listed companies introduced last year in Egypt are of interest. In addition, such a compilation - in addition to the experience gained in Europe - would allow a benchmark for further legislative initiatives, e.g. with regard to the following factors:

- Definition of the target companies/organisations
- Selected reference criteria for linking monitoring: company size (e.g. by turnover or number of em-

ployees), stock exchange listing yes/no, private or public companies, family businesses, sectors covered (e.g. financial sector) etc.

- Sector(s) concerned: Economics/politics/administration
- Potential sanctions

4.3 Lobbying in public and professional circles and towards its own members

Objective of the thematic area

LOBBYING WORK

Increasing the awareness of the topic of WOB in the public but also among members, promotion of objective debate in the public and among decision-makers, cartography of the relevant ecosystem and its players and networks (with regard to politics, administration, economy, science and media), further professionalisation of practical lobbying work, increasing the visibility of role models, identification and development of strategic partnerships and actions, also in the interest of a planned positioning of the associations as relevant players on the topic of WOB

All associations are already lobbying for WOB with the aim of placing the topic in the public debate, but also to make their own members more aware of it. Below are some suggestions from the discussions and workshops as well as best practice cases, which can give impulses for the further lobbying work of the individual associations or in the project as a whole.

- **Measures for sensitising members** - Some representatives of the associations have suggested that a short and concise "collection of arguments" should be compiled with reference to relevant studies from Germany and abroad. In addition to informing members about the current situation, such a document should also serve as a "briefing" to adequately support women in potential discussions about WOB in their own environment. In addition, experience reports from female elected officials in informal event formats reserved for members were considered useful by all sides. In this way, the transfer of relevant informal knowledge is promoted and a confidential exchange is made possible.

- **Cartography of the relevant ecosystem** - For all associations it is important for the further lobbying work to continue the work begun on the mapping of the relevant ecosystem and to continuously analyse the potentially important players. Such an analysis provides a valuable basis for decisions on potential strategic cooperation.
- **Improving the visibility of role models** - Role models play a central role in lobbying work. In order to promote their visibility and networking with them, SEVE plans to systematically record such personalities and to establish and maintain contacts. The partner associations can offer such personalities a forum at events, through testimonials etc.. In return, they place themselves as relevant players on the topic of WOB by networking. Especially in this respect, inter-association or supra-regional initiatives and actions are appropriate.
- **Event formats** - Topic-specific events on WOB have only taken place sporadically so far. Here, the creation of special (regular) formats, also in the form of webinars, is a good idea. The publication of monitoring reports should in any case be specifically combined with a launch event (planned for EBSOMED report probably at the beginning of 2021, in Egypt conceivably in cooperation with Observatory). Here, joint initiatives within the project or the mutual promotion of events are the obvious choice. The establishment of a central expert/speaker database / list of role models (see above) would also appear to make sense.
- **Cooperation with men** - Experience shows that a targeted involvement of male advocates for the topic of WOB is promising. Accordingly, targeted measures in this direction make sense and are already being discussed. For some time now, male managers have been internationally involved in the so-called 30% Club (<https://30percentclub.org/>). According to Dr. Ghada Howaidy, an expansion to the MENA region is currently also planned. The Observatory is already cooperating with the worldwide 30% Club Initiative. Initiatives such as <http://www.jamaissanselles.fr/> - no podium without women are also being considered.
- **Strategic partnerships** - With regard to strategic partnerships, an ongoing systematic analysis of the relevant ecosystem and its players remains essential. In particular with measures in the interest of more transparency, synergy potentials regularly arise. In this context, it makes sense to (further) cooperate with international organisations such as EBSOMED, EBRD, ILO or IFC, for example, in order to make data collection and processing as efficient as possible, to increase the visibility of one's own commitment and to consciously position oneself as a relevant actor on the WOB topic. In addition, joint projects with scientific institutions can be beneficial (e.g. within a study or doctorate). But pilot projects with certain companies (e.g. in the interest of benchmarking - conducting gender audits with the participation of LLWB) or other NGOs (e.g. Observatoire Algérien de la Femme) are also possible.
- **Social media strategy** - All associations want to expand their social media activities for their further lobbying work. However, there is agreement that this must be prioritised, also with regard to the selection of suitable or promising channels. Discussions are taking place about the presence on the following channels: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. Good resource management, ensuring a regular content feed and further professionalisation are the most important keywords in the respective debates. Regarding the social media presence, it is essential to develop joint activities within the project, e.g. with regard to training, joint creation and exchange of content, production and marketing of testimonials, mutual likening etc. In addition, the joint website "Women in Business" should be specifically included as a further platform in the respective PR strategy (see also under E).
- **Specific PR campaigns** - LLWB has produced a specific clip on the WOB 2025 initiative (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYUftult93s>). Also according to the experience of FidAR, specific advertising campaigns on WOB in the media increase the attention for the topic and allow the core messages to be placed. For the individual associations as well as for the project as a whole, comparable campaigns seem to make sense.

4.4 Sensitization, preparation and placement of suitable candidates / active design of the onboarding process and collegial consultation

Objective of the thematic area

PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT OF FEMALE CANDIDATES

Active influence on the hitherto poorly transparent recruitment practice, identification and preparation of suitable female candidates as a targeted countermeasure against the argument of an alleged lack of qualified women, empowerment and active support of women in taking office or exercising mandates

Although considered useful in principle, the associations have so far hardly exerted any active influence on recruitment processes for boards, e.g. through targeted placements of potential female candidates.

Experience from Europe shows that the retention period of women in managing boards is regularly significantly shorter than that of men. In recent months there have been some prominent examples of this: ENGIE - Isabelle Kocher, SAP - Jennifer Morgan and Siemens - Janina Kugel. To counter this phenomenon, systematic and professional preparation and strategic support for female candidates in the “onboarding process” is extremely helpful. Here, too, there are no systematic measures as yet. The following would be conceivable:

4.4.1 Recruitment

- “Profiling” - Advisory support for suitable members in positioning and applying for positions on management bodies
- Strategic cooperation with headhunters or own placement of candidates
- Use of offers from other initiatives (e.g. Board Placement Service of the Egyptian Women on Board Observatory: <https://business.aucegypt.edu/outreach/corporate-governance/women-boards-observatory>; The Boardroom Africa: <https://the-boardroomafrica.com/>)
- Establishment of an own database or cooperation with existing databases (e.g. <https://business.aucegypt.edu/outreach/corporate-governance/women-boards-observatory> – Observatory Egyptian Board Ready Women Database at the AUC, Cairo)

4.4.2 Onboarding process

- Specific offers for the preparation for mandates (e.g. coaching, checklists, active design “100 first days”)
- Collegial consultation among board members within the framework of the associations or cross-consultation

- Mentoring programme within the associations or with external partners / other associations
- Strategic alumnae work in training programmes / networking (see under 5)

4.5 Analysis or design of suitable and needs-based training offers

Objective of the thematic area

APPROPRIATE AND NEEDS-BASED TRAINING

Imparting relevant technical knowledge including important soft skills and actively influencing the design of suitable training formats

Closely related to the above is the topic of training courses. As mentioned, all associations are already involved in this field and cooperate regularly with external partners (see list - Annex 1). Notwithstanding this, there is still a need for clarification with regard to the necessary or helpful content of such training courses and suitable formats.

In this context, however, the general question arises as to which technical or other competencies a board member should have. In view of new challenges, e.g. in the course of digitisation, traditional profile specifications should be reconsidered in any case. **Here, a joint reflection on necessary / useful competencies and skills of board members** and the exchange within the project seem to be useful. For example, common demands in this respect could be declared and defended in public. One could think, for example, of a demand for the mandatory creation of a competence profile for each management body, following the model in the German Corporate Governance Code.

What Martin Kaspar of PWC particularly pointed out is the fact that the training courses offered often **focused on technical topics** such as accounting regulations, executive remuneration, financial reporting. Important **additional competencies, especially soft skills** (e.g. strengthening of self-perception, assertiveness, dynamics in groups), which in practice are of high relevance for successful board work, are often neglected. For example, the participants of the VDU training programme particularly

appreciate the simulations of board meetings and consider them valuable. The same applies to case studies and media training.

This impression is also confirmed by own experiences. For this reason, the strategic orientation and **design of training courses should be tailored to the needs** and discussed with the partners, and should contain many practical elements. Relevant here is for example the following:

- Workshops on leadership and important soft skills
- Offers of parallel coaching sessions
- Innovative formats with strong interaction (also digital) / simulations and case studies
- Integration of experience reports from female and male board members (e.g. fireside evenings)
- Linking and exchange of the existing national programmes, design of common modules
- Setting up alumnae networks of its own programmes or networking with alumnae from other programmes, joint actions and events

4.6 Coordination with other project activities

Finally, in the interest of embedding the WOB activities in the overall project, the coordination of strategic considerations and measures on individual related topics seems desirable, e.g. for

- **Promotion of female founders in the start-up scene** - Activities of experienced female entrepreneurs as investors, business angels or advisory board members
- **“Prepare the pipeline”** - Early sensitisation and training of prospective female managers, also with regard to a potential later activity as a member of a management body of any kind (supervisory board, advisory board, project steering group, administrative board etc.)
- **Use of the “Women in Business”** website - Coordinated design of a regular feed of the established “Women on Board” section

5. Concluding remarks

In view of the different starting positions and inconsistent framework conditions, it seems reasonable that the associations continue to pursue their national WOB strategies with their respective focal points as before. Irrespective of this, joint initiatives on WOB can be implemented in the second project phase and cooperation can be further intensified. In my view, the following areas are particularly suitable for this purpose:

- Preparation and scheduled exploitation of monitoring reports
- Collection, analysis, exchange and use of relevant scientific studies
- Strategic cooperation with role models in order to promote their visibility and targeted networking
- Organisation of regular (supraregional) specialist events
- Further professionalization and networking of social media activities / joint production or exchange of content
- Use of digital formats, especially with regard to training / common modules in existing programmes

Against this background, a regular exchange between the WOB commissions of the associations should be established (e.g. 2-3 times a year, also digital). Under the heading “Women on Board” on the website “Women in Business” a common archive for monitoring reports and relevant national and international studies could be created and maintained similar to the structure on the FidAR website - “Studies & Publications” (<https://www.fidar.de/presse-aktuelles/studien-veroeffentlichungen.html>).

A backlash regarding women in leadership positions can currently be observed worldwide and the current COVID 19 pandemic seems to further weaken the position of women in general (keyword: shadow pandemic). In view of this, it is all the more important to continue the work on WOB that has been started, especially since, as mentioned above, women’s leadership and the increase in diversity have been shown to bring benefits to business and society.

6. Annex

Useful studies to WOB

TITLE	PUBLISHER	YEAR	LINK
Women on Board in Lebanon	International Finance Corporation	2019	https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/ifc+cg/resources/guidelines_reviews+and+case+studies/women+on+boards+research+study+in+lebanon
FidAR – Women-on-Board-Indizes	FidAR e.V.	2019/2020	https://www.fidar.de/wob-indizes-studien.html
Women on Board in Egypt How Gender-Diverse Boards Bring Value to Egyptian Companies	International Finance Corporation	2019	https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/ifc+cg/resources/guidelines_reviews+and+case+studies/women+on+boards+-+research+study+in+egypt
Frauen in Führungspositionen - Barrieren und Brücken / Women in Executive Positions - Barriers and Bridges	BMFSFJ	2010	https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/93874/7d-4e27d960b7f7d5c52340efc139b662/frauen-in-fuehrungspositionen-deutsch-data.pdf ; https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/meta/en/publications-en/women-in-executive-positions-/95848?view=DEFAULT
Gender quotas in a European comparison: tough sanctions most effective	DIW	2019	https://www.diw.de/de/di-w_01.c.678694.de/publikationen/weekly_reports/2019_38_1/gender_quotas_in_a_european_comparison_tough_sanctions_most_effective.html
Egypt Women on Boards	The American University in Cairo	2019	https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/Business/Women%20on%20Boards%20Monitoring%20Report%202019%20-%20Highlights%20English.pdf
Publication: Only 1 manager out of 3 in the EU is a woman...	EUROSTAT	2019	https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-press-releases/-/3-06032020-AP
Report of European Women on board - Gender Diversity Index	EWoB	2019	https://europeanwomenonboards.eu/portfolio/gdi-2019/

Trainings

TITLE	ORGANISATOR	LINK
Strategische Kompetenz für Frauen in Aufsichtsräten	Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin	https://www.berlin-professional-school.de/executive-education/zertifikatsprogramme/strategische-kompetenz-fuer-frauen-in-aufsichtsräten
Qualifizierung für den Aufsichtsrat	Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen	https://www.vdu.de/themen/aufsichtsräte/seminare.html
Women on Board Professional Certificate	The American University and Egyptian institutes of Directors EloD in Cairo	http://schools.aucegypt.edu/Business/Documents/Women%20On%20Board%20Professional%20Certificate%20Program%20%28January%202018%29.pdf
Corporate Directors Certification Program	The American University in Cairo	https://business.aucegypt.edu/execed/individual-programs/corporate-directors-certification-program
Women on Board and in Business Leadership	LLWB	https://llwb.org/item.php?itemId=96
Corporate Women Directors (CWD) Certification Program	LLWB	https://llwb.org/item.php?itemId=84
Get African Women on Board	Africa CEO Forum	https://www.acfwomeninbusiness.com/get-african-women-on-board/
OpenDoors Globally Accredited Board Training Programme	The Boardroom Africa	https://theboardroomafrica.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/OpenDoors-Brochure_2019.pdf
Académie des femmes chefs d'entreprises	CNCEF	http://www.cnfce.org/news/fr/news/e467a2cec71499b2

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