

# Common WP2 Strategy and Action Plan

## Introduction

Common WP2 Strategy and Action Plan are compiled for assigning the main objectives and activities to achieve the goals of WP2 in FEM project. The main aim of WP2 is to build up the networks and joint strategies for advisers and resource centre leaders for promotion of female entrepreneurship. Herewith, the international joint strategy holds crucial importance for WP2 in FEM project. Strategy is compiled on the basis of national goals and activities announced by participating countries of FEM project (Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). National action plans are tied up and linked with each other for common strategy plan.

Current strategy consists of three parts. Firstly, there is given a brief overview about FEM project and more exactly about WP2 activities. Second part analyses more theoretically the process of strategic planning and making the strategy. In the third part, there are fixed the strategic goals and activities for WP2 in international level.

## **FEM – Female Entrepreneurs' Meetings in the Baltic Sea Region<sup>1</sup>**

FEM is a project for female entrepreneurs in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The overall aim of the FEM-project is to create a structure for the support of women's entrepreneurship in the Baltic Sea Region. The results of the activities will strengthen the role of women in local and regional development and promote the access of women to the labour market. In the emerging market economies women who want to start a company of their own face many social and institutional obstacles. Training, meeting-places, networking and other ways to promote women's entrepreneurship are the main issues.

The FEM-project is using the experiences of networks and bilateral projects to support women's entrepreneurship. Experiences are transferred between the W-BSR-countries and E-BSR-countries to build a strong transnational network between institutions and organizations and give them a common structure. The BSR will profit from using "best practices" of the participating countries and thus more women are encouraged and supported to become entrepreneurs.

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<sup>1</sup> Project's website is available on <http://www.feminfo.net>

FEM project started in August 2004 and will last for three years. The participating countries are Finland, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. North-West Russia (Kaliningrad) and Belarus will follow the project.

### **FEM consists of five work packages**

**WP1** Transnational networks of Resource Centres and Meeting Places to strengthen the role of women in society and in local and regional development.

**WP2** Networks of training and exchange of experience for the advisers

**WP3** Mentorship Program for female entrepreneurs

**WP4** Networking in Network Credit Groups and other financial solutions for female entrepreneurs

**WP5** Internationalisation of women's entrepreneurship

### **WP2 in FEM project - Networks of training and exchange of experience for the advisers**

The main goal of WP2 is to build up networks and joint strategies for advisers and resource centre leaders for promotion of women entrepreneurship.

The exact aims are following:

- transnational networks between advisers and resource centre leaders
- active exchange of experience, training models and good practises
- web site and in continuous learning

Generally, selecting the advisers, the personal level has to be kept in mind. Advisers have to be interested in cooperation and networking and committed to the transnationality and other issues at FEM. The most desirable qualitative claims for advisers in FEM project are: preparedness to work with a gender perspective, creative ideas in general for advisory methods, interest for transnational contacts. Two general principles are important for advisers: giving examples of good practice; sharing the experience of starting own business. Advisers have gained knowledge about women's entrepreneurship and gender equality. Joint strategies are created to better enhance women entrepreneurs' internationalization. Advisers exchange also existing good practices. Project's website is used for continuous learning.

Resource centres are places, where especially women can go to seek advice, and where also a new kind of strategic thinking of women is enhanced in order to become stronger actors in society. The aim of the resource centres for women is to support local and regional development by promoting the integration of women into the economic, social and political life by the "empowerment" methodology. The network of centres will be a consultative and activating framework, a counselling

and mentoring service, a tool for increasing knowledge and design capacity of women to promote the Equal Opportunities policies.

## **Strategic planning and strategy formulation**

Strategic planning consists of the process of developing strategies to reach a defined objective. As we label a piece of planning "strategic" we expect it to operate on the grand scale and to take in "the big picture". Long range planning typically projects current activities and programs into a revised view of the external world, thereby describing results that will most likely occur. Strategic planning tries to "create" more desirable future results by influencing the outside world and/or adapting current programs and actions so as to have more favourable outcomes in the external environment. The preparation of a strategic plan is a multi-step process covering vision, mission, objectives, strategies and programs<sup>2</sup>.

Most strategic planning methodologies depend on a three-step process (sometimes called the STP process):

- Situation - evaluate the current situation and how it came about
- Target - define goals and/or objectives (sometimes called ideal state)
- Path - map a possible route to the goals/objectives

Strategy formulation involves:

- Doing a situation analysis: both internal and external; both micro-environmental and macro-environmental.
- Concurrent with this assessment, objectives are set. This involves crafting vision statements (long term view of a possible future), mission statements (the role that the organization gives itself in society), overall corporate objectives (both financial and strategic), strategic business unit objectives (both financial and strategic), and tactical objectives.
- These objectives should, in the light of the situation analysis, suggest a strategic plan. The plan provides the details of how to achieve these objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> Strategic Planning, Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic\\_planning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_planning), date accessed 05/04/2006

**VISION 2007:** FEM advisers' and resource centre leaders' network is a leading support institution for women's entrepreneurship in the Baltic States Region

**VISION 2013:** Well functioning structure of advisers and resource centres for the support of women's entrepreneurship and women's active participation in society.

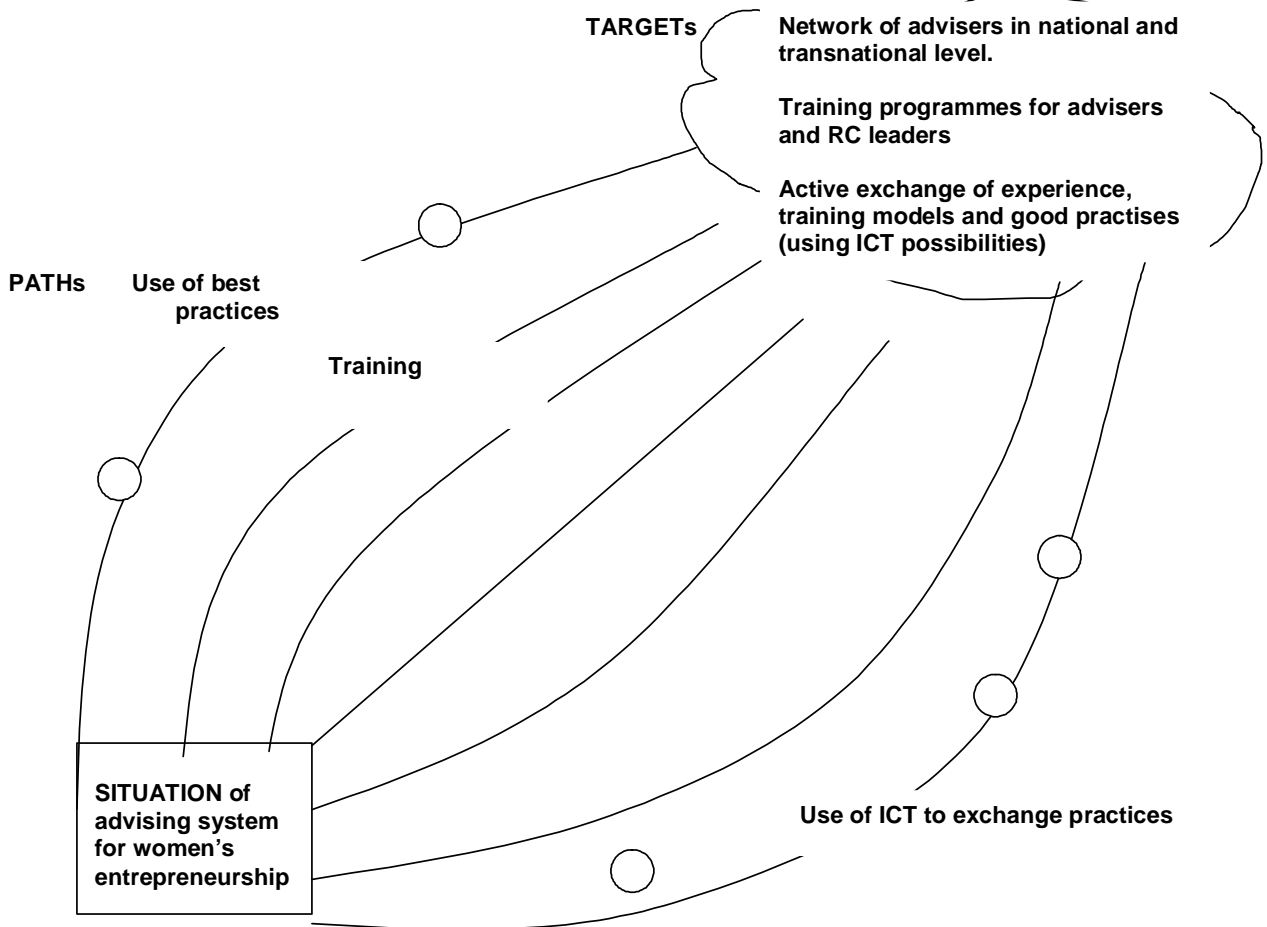


Figure 1. Common WP2 Strategy using STP method

## Common WP2 strategy in FEM project

By enhancing similar activities at the same time in all participating countries we are involved in building a culture together, in which women start to see entrepreneurship as a possible livelihood, and in which society approves women as entrepreneurs. At the same time we are creating structures of entrepreneurship that are more suitable from women's point of view.

The project involves partners at local, regional and national levels, who all apply a new thinking and implement changes in societies' structures. This new thinking refers to learning by experience, co-operation and collaboration, joint responsibility and influencing and participating. The new way in which the partners think is reflected also in the new way of doing of the entrepreneurs involved.

By creating international co-operation and collaboration networks between women, with constant process of learning from one another and learning by experience, the operational environment of companies becomes stronger and the internationalisation processes of the companies take place.

The Strategic Working Group of the FEM seeks for new common lines of co-operation and action between the countries and also looks into the future<sup>3</sup>.

### Situational analysis

- Analysis of existing national, regional and local structure of advisory services to women entrepreneurs including current policy actions and trends.
- Analysis of legislation mapping out the influence of state policy and law to female entrepreneurs.
- Expert study on statistics on women's entrepreneurship and matters related to women's entrepreneurship.
- Developing promotion strategy and action plan for female entrepreneurship.

### Formulation of goals

Main goal

**Viable network of advisers and RC leaders in national and transnational level**

Sub goals

- Appropriate training programmes for advisers and RC leaders
- Active exchange of experience, training models, and good practices inside the network

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<sup>3</sup> International Strategy and Action Plan of FEM, 13.02.2006 <http://www.feminfo.net>, date accessed 05/04/2006

## Description of courses of action and activities

### **Creation of national networks**

- Network of advisers – national database of advisers.
- Strengthening the relations between advisers (share the practice and the experience, better news spreading). Exchange of experience and knowledge between advisers through web-site and online chat-room.
- National workshops, seminars and meetings for advisers
- Improve the existing situation by strengthening existing advisory services and creating new possibilities.
- Meetings with entrepreneurs, teaching what are the possibilities offered by advisers and how to use advisory services.
- Meetings and workshops with politicians and authorities in different national levels discussing structural changes on policies and legislation – linking different stakeholders.

### **Creation of transnational networks**

- Improving skills for internationalization of advisers
- Network of advisers – international database of advisers.
- Strengthening the relations between advisers (share the practice and the experience, better news spreading). Exchange of experience and knowledge between advisers through web-site and internet forum
- Joint training sessions for advisers in all partner countries.
- International workshops, seminars and meetings for advisers
- Elaboration of common structure for the strategy and action plan between partners.

### **Creation of training programmes**

- National work-shops on the exchanging of knowledge on training programs of advisory services
- Using the experts from different range: economy, business management and administration, marketing, accountancy, computing, psychology etc.
- Middle questionnaires to advisers: what are their special needs and interests connected with training?

- Training programme for advisers consists of modules of different topics of counselling. Advisers gain knowledge in women's entrepreneurship and gender equality and mainstreaming
- Final questionnaires to advisers in order to prepare a final report and to get suggestions for further needs of training.
- Final report with recommendations for the future concerning continuous training in the network.

### **Creation of website**

- Creation and further development of national websites, organise national seminars of using the website and chat-room.
- Releasing e-newsletters
- Create cooperation for the international website implementation: create possibilities for effective information exchange (chat-room for advisers), e-database of advisers, promotion and activities of advisers through website
- Intensive use of FEM websites by the advisers in the BSR and promotion for their use in the countries.