RestPoll Gender Equality and Diversity Plan

WP7: COORDINATING, NETWORKING, AND DATA MANAGEMENT
TASK 7.3: DEVELOP A GENDER, DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY PLAN

Milestone MS25

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RestPoll

Restoring Pollinator habitats across European agricultural landscapes based on multi-actor participatory approaches

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*This is a public version of the Milestone. Email addresses of members and links to internal documents have been removed. *

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1. Introduction

"Restoring Pollinator habitats across European agricultural landscapes based on multi-actor participatory approaches" (RestPoll) is a pan-European transdisciplinary project (Innovation Action) aiming to provide society with tools to reverse wild pollinator declines and to position Europe as a global leader in pollinator restoration. The present document lays out the RestPoll Gender Equality and Diversity Plan (henceforth - the Plan) to serve as a common source of reference for the principles guiding the project regarding recruiting and employing the RestPoll staff, managing the multi-actor network, elaborating the research design, engaging stakeholders, gathering and analysing data, and communicating the obtained results. Such a plan is crucial for ensuring inclusivity, equal opportunities, equity, and diverse perspectives in our transdisciplinary research and innovation activities and multi-actor work environment, promoting a culture of openness and mutual understanding, as well as reducing biases along socio-demographic, cultural, academic, and other dimensions (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0FNvHRmhUE).

Lack of or inadequate consideration of gender and diversity in research, land management, and development of agricultural policy is known to constrain successful long-term implementation of sustainable land use. Hence, we aim to carefully embed overall gender and diversity dimensions throughout our research and innovation activities. This Plan outlines our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment throughout the project's lifespan. It characterises the state-of-the-art of the project in terms of gender equality and social inclusiveness, identifies the relevant activities in support of it, as well as defines measures to be taken for the implementation of the Plan.

While most partner organisations in the beneficiaries status (i.e. UFR, TUM, UFZ, CIHEAM-IAMM, ENSFEA, CYFNU-YFCNU, ULUND, AU, CREAF-CERCA, UTH, CER, TCD, INPT, INN, BSC, IRTA-CERCA, WU, BNPI, SLU)[1], as well as associated partners (UCAM, UREAD, MLR-BW, UM-BW, PennState, WBF, INNOCENT LTD)[2] have their institution-specific gender equality plans that come as a prerequisite for all public bodies and research institutions taking part in projects funded under the EU "Horizon Europe" framework programme, the present Plan sets out the general principles that are applicable to all consortium members, irrespective of the possession and content of the individual institutional plans. Each consortium member is thus personally responsible for acquainting themselves with the Plan and for adhering to the defined values and principles in their daily activities in the RestPoll project.

This Plan is released at the beginning of the project, with all partners given the possibility of commenting on the initial draft, with a subsequent update of the document to be carried out during the project implementation to accommodate any issues emerging over the course of its execution.

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[1] No plans reported by CONFAGRI, ADASEA DU GERS; HVR Group does not have such an internal plan.
[2] No plans reported by BBCT and Avalon Fresh.

2. Mission statement and objectives

Our **mission** is to foster an inclusive and diverse project environment. Through deliberate and proactive measures, we aim to create a culture that promotes equal opportunities, embraces diversity, and ensures that every voice is not only heard but actively included. By prioritising gender equality and diversity, we strive to cultivate a collaborative space where all project partners, advisory board members and collaborators feel respected and valued. Together, we commit to building a project community that reflects the diversity of human experiences and perspectives and promotes a culture of mutual understanding, respect, and growth.

The main **objectives** underlying this Plan are to:

- Promote gender equality, diversity, and social inclusion across all project activities;
- Foster respectful, inclusive, and supportive work environment;
- Ensure fair and equal opportunities and access to resources for all participants, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, or any other characteristic;
- Encourage diverse perspectives to enhance the project's creativity, innovation, effectiveness, and acceptance of measures.

While RestPoll acknowledges the broad spectrum of specific target groups of social inclusion, not least in terms of being respectful of and non-discriminatory towards individuals based on their social background, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, care-giving responsibilities, health status, physical and mental disabilities, and others, the **dimensions of equality and diversity** specifically highlighted and targeted by this Plan in view of the RestPoll project pertain mainly to the following ones:

- Gender, with a focus on promoting equal opportunities for both women and men and non-binary persons in employment, leadership positions, stakeholder engagement and other areas;
- Age, with a focus on promoting equal opportunities for individuals of all age groups, including combating ageism in the workplace;
- Career stage, with a focus on ensuring the inclusiveness and promoting career advancement of early-stage researchers;
- Cultural and national diversity, with an aim of celebrating and embracing cultural diversity, fostering an inclusive environment for individuals from various cultural and national backgrounds;
- Academic background, with an emphasis on promoting collaboration between project partners and stakeholders with varying degrees and domains of formal education that can foster our understanding of how to restore habitats in light of a wider society;
- Disciplinary background, with an aim of promoting equality and inclusiveness in science disciplines by fostering an environment where individuals from diverse disciplinary profiles feel welcome, respected, and have equal opportunities to contribute and succeed;
- Sex, with a focus on the sex-specific biological differences in pollinator behaviour that bear implications for research on pollinators and restoration of their habitats.

We are aware that gender is not a stand-alone category and that there is significant diversity within the broader categories of "women" and "men" and acknowledge that experiences and challenges may vary based on factors like ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, and sexual orientation. Building on the concept of intersectionality, we recognise that individuals possess multiple social identities that intersect to shape their experiences and opportunities, resulting in potentially unique combinations of discrimination and privilege. We also recognise that gender and sex are not non-binary categories and that there can be notable variation within those.

Given the specific multi-actor nature of the RestPoll project, which involves collaboration among various organisations, entities, and stakeholders, the target groups for gender equality and diversity initiatives extend beyond individual partner organisations to encompass a broader range of stakeholders and thereby reflect a commitment to inclusivity in its broader ecosystem.

3. State-of-the-art of gender balance and diversity in the project

At the submission stage of the project proposal, which serves as a point of reference for further monitoring, there was a good gender balance with 55 (51.4%) male and 52 (48.6%) female participants listed in total by project partners (see Table 3.1). The project consortium is represented by a rich composition of 19 nationalities across Europe and beyond (the USA).

Table 3.1. Gender and career stage of project participants by nationality at the proposal submission stage.

Nationality	Number	Gender		Career stage			
		Male	Female	Categ. A	Categ. B	Categ. C	Categ. D
Austria	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Denmark	3	3	0	1	2	0	0
France	17	7	10	3	5	3	6
Germany	13	5	8	6	0	7	0
Greece	5	4	1	1	0	2	2
Hungary	7	5	2	0	1	3	3
Ireland	3	0	3	1	0	1	1
Italy	5	3	2	0	2	0	3
Latvia	5	2	3	1	2	1	1
Luxembourg	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Netherlands	7	5	2	1	1	3	2
Spain	7	4	3	0	3	3	1
Sweden	5	2	3	2	1	1	1
Switzerland	2	2	0	0	2	0	0
Tunisia	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Turkey	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ukraine	6	0	6	1	2	2	1
United Kingdom	15	9	6	1	6	2	6
USA	3	1	2	1	0	2	0
TOTAL	107	55	52	21	28	30	28

The composition of the consortium also features an equal distribution of nominated participants across the four different research career stages, ranging between 20% and 28%

per stage category (see Table 3.2). Yet, viewed from a gender balance there is a trend of a progressively higher representation of male researchers at higher career stages and female researchers at lower ones. In terms of the overall composition of the consortium, 14 of the 31 partners are represented by females. Gender balance in the consortium has been integrated throughout the work packages. Above all, the coordinator of the consortium, UFR, is led by a female researcher. According to the Grant Agreement, five of the seven work packages are led by females (WP1, WP2, WP5, WP6, WP7) and two by male participants (WP3, WP4). Each work package has been assigned two co-leads, of which five are female and nine are male. Thus, the project aids in closing the gaps in the participation of women in research teams. Meanwhile, efforts shall be made to ensure that both genders are equally represented in decision-making processes about the progress of the project and involved in the execution of the tasks of the work packages.

Table 3.2. Career stage and gender balance of project participants at the proposal submission stage.

Career Stage	Total per category (% of all participants)	Males (% of all participants / per category)	Females (% of all participants / per category)
Category A- Top Grade Researcher (Full professor/ Director of research)	21 (19.6%)	13 (12.1 / 62%)	8 (7.5 / 38%)
Category B- Senior Researcher (Senior Researcher/ Associate professor)	28 (26.2%)	16 (15.0 / 57%)	12 (11.2 / 43%)
Category C- Recognised Researcher (Researcher/ Assistant professor)	30 (28.0%)	14 (13.1 / 47%)	16 (15.0 / 53%)
Category D- First stage researcher + non-researcher	28 (26.2%)	12 (11.2 / 43%)	16 (15.0 / 57%)
TOTAL	**107 (100%)**	**55 (51.4%)**	**52 (48.6%)**

As noted above, a crucial built-in aspect of RestPoll is the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of the consortium, which adds to the overall diversity mix. Table 3.3 illustrates the initial attribution of partners to the two broader groups of sciences, with natural scientists making up 61%, while social scientists represented by 15% of all team members, along with 23% of non-research partners. The smaller share of social scientists among the scientific staff, as well as the dominance of research partners in the consortium needs to be kept in mind when undertaking the collaborative work.

Table 3.3. Disciplinary attribution of consortium partners.

Disciplinary profile of partners	Total per category (% of all participants)	Males (% of all participants / per category)	Females (% of all participants / per category)
Natural sciences	65 (60.7 %)	30 (28.0 / 46.2 %)	35 (32.7 / 53.8 %)
Social sciences	16 (15.0 %)	12 (11.2 / 75.0 %)	4 (3.7 / 25.0 %)
Other (non-research)	26 (24.3 %)	13 (12.1 / 50.0 %)	13 (12.1 / 50.0 %)

It should be noted that many aspects of the consortium composition (e.g. involved organisations by profile, country, formal role; assigned team members by their gender, age, nationality, career stage, disciplinary background, etc.) and project design (e.g. objectives, activities, tasks) are largely pre-defined by the process and outcome of RestPoll project proposal development and the subsequently signed Grant Agreement prior to the more refined elaboration and implementation of this Plan and as such inevitably provide some already built-in characteristics in terms of gender equality and diversity. Yet, this does not preclude from specifying and integrating the strategies outlined below to ensure effective enforcement of the principles defined by this Plan in the further internal and external activities pursued by the project.

4. Implementation strategies

4.1. STAFF RECRUITMENT

The project aims to recruit qualified researchers, assistants, and professionals in the field in a fair way by giving equal opportunities to all candidates regardless of gender, age, social background, or ethnicity. Inclusive language for any project-related job descriptions is to be promoted. When hiring investigators, we will strive for a balanced gender, age, career-stage, as well as cultural and national diversity. Fair recruitment and hiring processes to attract a diverse pool of candidates will be promoted by ensuring this diversity both among recruiters and selected candidates. RestPoll aims for an equal number of female and male post-docs and PhD students to be employed. Apart from internal training and mentoring on gender equality in research careers, female junior scientists will be strongly encouraged to participate in other mentoring programmes and workshops adapted to the challenges of women in science, offered by the participating institutions and beyond.

4.2. MANAGEMENT OF THE MULTI-ACTOR CONSORTIUM

The project consortium is made up of a diverse set of organisations, including research institutions, ministries, industrial partners, and representatives of the non-governmental sector. While each organisation has a specific set of roles and responsibilities within the consortium, effective and thoughtful collaboration is necessary not only for successful implementation of the project but also for ensuring that the diversity of project partners is treated with respect and appreciation. To achieve this goal, special attention is to be paid to balancing the leadership roles and equal involvement of consortium members representing countries from different geographic regions and levels of socio-economic development, teams with academic and non-academic background, researchers from natural and social sciences. As diverse partners' perspectives and experiences enhance the project's creativity, innovation and effectiveness, all partners will be encouraged and empowered to contribute their ideas during the implementation of the project.

An important aspect in this context also pertains to the publication etiquette by ensuring that all partners are given equal opportunities to substantially contribute to, and accordingly assume authorship of, scientific publications and other public documents resulting from the project activities. The latter aspects are addressed in the RestPoll's Code of conduct regarding authorship policy & data management (D7.1).

4.3. WORK ENVIRONMENT

The project consortium will undertake efforts to promote a respectful and inclusive work environment, not least in terms of ensuring work-life balance and family-friendly practices. This will be achieved by implementing flexible working arrangements (including reduced working hours, part time work to support families) to accommodate diverse needs and ensuring accessibility in physical and virtual spaces for all team members. Project-related activities, e-mail correspondence, organisation of online and face-to-face meetings are to

be avoided outside working days and hours, respecting the differences in time-zones and national holidays applicable to countries represented by the consortium.

In terms of leadership, diverse representation in leadership roles and decision-making processes will be promoted, along with encouraging open communication and active participation from all team members. To achieve this, equality among different team members will be promoted at all stages of the project's life cycle, with special attention to project implementation and valorisation and ownership of project results. The decision-making process will be organised in a fair, democratic and transparent way and all members of the consortium will be involved in different stages of the decision-making processes, including planning, developing, approving, and carrying out the actions according to the decisions taken.

4.4. COMPOSITION OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

In considering and establishing the composition of the project's advisory board, the gender, geographic location, background, and areas of expertise of the individual board members are taken into consideration to ensure diversity of personal profiles, perspectives, and stakeholder groups represented by the board. The advisory board consists of two females and four males and includes persons working in industry, policymakers in the field of agriculture and nature conservation, and researchers.

4.5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In relation to the community and stakeholder engagement, RestPoll will pursue outreach efforts to encourage diversity in the selection of interviewees and participants and facilitate representation of male and female participants as well as consider gender-, age-, and socio-cultural diversity-specific experiences and perceptions of local communities. Efforts are to be undertaken to effectively collaborate with communities affected by the research to understand their needs and perspectives. Both through the process of recruiting participants and elaborating the form and content of workshops, Living Lab activities, surveys, and focus groups these diversity-specific aspects will be considered in studying, designing, demonstrating, implementing, and assessing pollinator restoration measures and policy measures. Inclusive language and diverse recruitment channels will be employed to attract a broad range of participants. RestPoll specifically aims to support the empowerment of women and young people in academia, farm management, and conservation, and to embrace socio-cultural diversity in the different case-study areas throughout the project.

Further additional aspects of stakeholder engagement are to be elaborated and covered in WP3-6, especially in the Guidelines for Living Lab establishment and facilitation (D4.1), Communication and engagement strategy (D6.1), Communication plan (D6.4), Dissemination and exploitation plan (D6.5, 6.5, & 6.6). Moreover, these will also form part of the reports on Perception & representation of stakeholders (D3.1) and on Enabling conditions for pollinator restoration measures (D4.3.).

4.6. RESEARCH PROCESS AND CONTENT

Integrating principles of gender equality, intersectionality and diversity into data collection and analysis is essential for producing comprehensive and unbiased results. Alignment with these principles in RestPoll pertains to developing an inclusive research design, including the definition of research questions, elaboration of methodologies, as well as execution of data gathering, analysis and dissemination. This implies upstream involvement of partners representing different scientific fields and sectors to avoid disciplinary silos and facilitate inter- and trans-disciplinary collaboration and mutual learning. Attention is to be paid to the integration of perspectives of research partners of different ages, genders, and nationalities as these can bring complementary and enriching views on the research topic.

An inclusive research process also involves the development of a sampling strategy that ensures diversity in the study population, considering gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and other relevant factors. Survey questions, interview scripts, and data collection instruments need to be designed by using inclusive language and avoiding reinforcing stereotypes. During the process of data collection sensitive topics related to gender and diversity are to be handled with care, providing options for participants to skip questions if uncomfortable. In the context of the natural science component of RestPoll research, attention is to be paid to the importance of sex-specific differences in pollinator behaviour among certain species depending on reproductive roles, energy requirements, mating strategies, etc.

During the data analysis stage, disaggregation of data by sex, gender, and other relevant demographic factors to identify disparities or patterns that might be overlooked in aggregated data is to be used. Subgroup analyses are important to understand variations within different demographic groups. Particular attention is to be paid to the aspects of gender, age, and socio-cultural diversity of human subjects in the interpretation of research findings to identify potential socio-cultural nuances and differences (e.g. farmer's safety concerns, physical activity, active travel, mental health, and well-being), which may influence the co-implementation and the adaptive management of restoration measures. We also aim to capture the nuances of intersectionality and analyse data based on multiple identity factors to identify disparities and to inform targeted strategies for different groups.

The RestPoll project management team will carefully evaluate all deliverables, including research results, reports, and publications, prior to submission to make sure the interpretation of results fully embraces gender, diversity, and equality aspects, and that any limitations in the data related to these are acknowledged and discussed. Inclusive language for all RestPoll result-based communication is to be ensured by all project partners. They will do so with the [RestPoll Gender equality and diversity checklist for equal opportunity officers](#).

4.7. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

All RestPoll partners assume the responsibility for ensuring equality in chances and will work against discrimination and under-representation of any kind. To raise awareness and further sensitise partners, especially those in leading roles of RestPoll (WP and Task leads and co-leads), to these issues, their participation in respective workshops offered by their institutions or national contact points is required. These training and capacity building activities will provide them with guidelines on how to detect problems and on respective countermeasures. All project members will be encouraged to undertake training on unconscious bias, stereotypes, diversity, and inclusion, fostering a culture of continuous learning and awareness through dedicated workshops and seminars. Lectures given by invited speakers will be organised for all project members throughout the project (i.e. during the AGMs) to provide expert insights into the issues of gender equality and diversity in research and innovation projects.

4.8. WHISTLE-BLOWING AND SUPPORT SYSTEM

A crucial part of ensuring the enactment of the gender equality and diversity principles is represented by the existence and utilisation of support systems for addressing discrimination or bias. Establishing a whistle-blowing mechanism for gender equality and diversity in research and innovation projects is crucial for creating a transparent and accountable environment. Whistle-blowing provides a channel for individuals to report concerns or instances of discrimination, harassment, or unfair practices related to gender and diversity.

In case of concern that has to do with issues within a team coming from a single partner organisation, the related matters are advised to be handled internally in line with the rules guiding such a system within that organisation. Yet, given the scope of the RestPoll project, the size of the consortium, and the envisaged collaborative work of different teams and individuals spanning across organisational boundaries, there is also a potential for concerns that go beyond single organisations. In those cases, it is encouraged to bring the issue to the attention of the RestPoll project management team who will then bear the responsibility for handling the issue in question.

The project management team will help to ensure that the members of the consortium are aware of the aspects of inclusion and equality during the different stages of project implementation. It is possible for discrimination to also occur when developing the content of a project; if such a case occurs, the project management team will remind the participants to ensure that the project outputs are not discriminatory of women or any other potentially marginalised participants due to any causes.

The RestPoll project management team consists of the following people: Amibeth Thompson, Nina Kranke, and Alexandra-Maria Klein

In case of any complaints related to gender equality and diversity, any member of the consortium shall feel equally permitted to contact the members of the project management

team and inform about the case. The team further investigates the case and resolves it in communication with the rest of the project consortium.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

In order to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Plan and the set objectives, a regular update of gender equality and diversity metrics across project activities will be carried out based on a set of key performance indicators (KPIs): (1) share of male/female project staff members (incl. advisory board), (2) share of male/female participants and stakeholders in project-related engagement activities, (3) career stages of project research staff members, (4) gender and disciplinary attribution of WP and task leads, (5) any additional indicators that will emerge as relevant over the course of the project. KPIs for gender equality and diversity are essential to assess progress, track the impact of initiatives, and ensure accountability. Regularly monitoring and evaluating these indicators helps ensure that gender equality and diversity remain integral to the project's success.

To this aim, regular evaluations to assess the effectiveness of gender equality and diversity initiatives as well as highlight potential problem areas will be performed, soliciting feedback from team members to identify areas for improvement. The assessment will include the perceived level of gender equality, satisfaction with involvement in decision-making, the level of integration of different partner perspectives and proposed solutions, among others. The RestPoll project management team will carefully evaluate all deliverables, including research results, reports, and publications, prior to submission to make sure the interpretation of results will fully embrace gender equality and diversity aspects. A dedicated section on gender equality and diversity initiatives will be included in project reports, highlighting achievements, challenges, and proposed actions for improvement. Action strategies will be adapted based on the outcome of these internal reviews, feedback, changing circumstances, and emerging best practices.

Table 5.1 summarises the specific measures and activities planned for the implementation of the principles laid out in this Plan, identifying their content, expected results, time-frame, and organisations in charge, as well as their implementation status at the time of the regular update of the plan.

Table 5.1. Measures to be taken for the implementation of the Plan. [Text in brown was added or updated in version 2 and 3 of the Plan]

Planned activity	Result	Due date(s)	Responsible	Status
Assignment of the RestPoll Equal opportunities officer	A concrete person assigned to serve as the contact point for identifying and resolving any disputes involving gender equality and diversity issues in the project	M4	UFR	The RestPoll project management team assigned with the responsiblity for

				performing the Equal opportunities officer duties
Create a protocol/checklist to guide the consortium and project management team throughout the project	A concrete protocol/checklist that lists the important points that need to be considered when developing a project, creating documents, and ensuring an inclusive work environment	M6	UFR, BSC, TUM	The checklist developed, linked in this document and sent to all consortium members
Data collection on gender equality and diversity within the consortium (incl. advisory board)	Annual update of data on the composition of the consortium, advisory board, as well as WP and Task leads in terms of gender, career stage, and disciplinary attribution	M15, M27, M40	UFR	M15-updated data covered by V3 of GEDP
Data collection on gender equality and diversity among the project's stakeholders	Data collected on the gender and diversity profiles of participants involved in project outreach activities and reported in respective reports	M4-M48	Leads of WPs and Tasks that involve stakeholder engagement	Data being collected by individual LL leaders to be reported during their monitoring
Invited lecture on gender equality and diversity aspects of research and innovation projects	An online lecture by an invited speaker on gender equality and diversity aspects organised for and attended by consortium members	M6	BSC, UFR	Online workshop with two external speakers held on 27 March 2024
Invited workshop on gender equality and diversity aspects at research institutions	A hybrid workshop by an invited speaker at the AGM in Freiburg and Barcelona	M14, M25	UFR	Workshop with Robert Kötter held on 13 November 2024
Dedicated section in all project	All deliverables contain either a dedicated section on the	M3-M48	Leads of individual	Ongoing

deliverables highlighting any relevant gender equality and diversity aspects	aspects of gender equality and diversity or have these explicitly addressed in relevant sections throughout the document		deliverables	
Pre-submission evaluation of all project deliverables in the light of gender equality and diversity aspects	Feedback provided to the lead authors of draft deliverables on the gender equality and diversity issues that need to be further elaborated and/or added in the respective documents	M3-M48	UFR, BSC, TUM	Data management plan commented; Living Lab guidelines screened
Regular annual assessment by and feedback from consortium members	Annual internal assessments (incl. brief surveys, reflexive discussion sessions with a focus on gender equality and diversity) organised, providing input for self-monitoring reports	M15, M27, M40	BSC	M15- Assessment conducted at 1. AGM (Nov 2024), results reported in V3
Annual update of the Plan	Updated Plan that features an annex on the main project developments regarding gender equality and diversity implementation in the respective period and highlights any emerging aspects that need to be addressed in the project	M15, M27, M40	BSC, UFR, TUM	M15- Plan update (V3) in March 2025

6. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the RestPoll Gender Equality and Diversity Plan represents a significant stride towards fostering an inclusive and equitable environment within the project, by embedding overall gender and diversity dimensions throughout our research and innovation activities. As we navigate the complexities of the modern workplace and research environment, it is imperative that we recognise the strength that diversity brings to our team and the innovation that arises from a variety of perspectives. By implementing this Plan, we aim to create a project environment that values and respects the diverse perspectives, talents, and contributions of all team members. Together, we can ensure the success of our project while promoting a culture of equality and inclusion.

As we move forward, it is crucial that each member of the project actively participates in the implementation of this Plan. This requires a collective effort to challenge stereotypes, eliminate bias, and cultivate an atmosphere where every voice is heard and respected. We are not just shaping a diverse work environment; we are building a culture of inclusivity that empowers everyone to reach their full potential. Regular assessments, feedback mechanisms, and a commitment to adaptability will guide our strategies, ensuring that our initiatives remain effective and relevant.

Gender equality and diversity are not just goals, but ongoing processes of learning, development, assessment, feedback, and adjustment. By fostering an environment where individuals are valued for their unique qualities and feel seen, respected, and empowered, we are not only investing in the success of our project but also contributing to a more just and equitable society.

7. Updates Version 2.0

The RestPoll project management team (Amibeth Thompson, Nina Kranke, Alexandra Klein) is responsible for the Equal opportunities officer duties outlined in this Plan. The respective passages in this document have been changed accordingly. Instead of appointing a single person as Equal opportunities officer, we decided to appoint a team of three people to ensure that problems can be identified and solved quickly and reliably. In case an issue is raised by one of the consortium members, concrete procedures, measures and problem-solving approaches will be discussed within and executed by the RestPoll project management team. In cases of conflict of interest, the team will seek the support of a suitable person outside the consortium.

Creation of a protocol/check-list was added to the planned measures, to help guide the management team efficiently, thoroughly, and impartially evaluate the milestones, deliverables and other documents created throughout the project.

An online workshop on gender and diversity aspects was organized on 27 March 2024 from 10:00 – 12:00 (CET). 19 members of the RestPoll consortium attended the event.

Programme:
10:00 – 10:15: Welcome and introduction of the RestPoll Gender Equality and Diversity Plan (Anda Adamsone-Fiskovica, BSC)
10:15 – 11:00: Gender perspectives and the diversity of reproductive ecologies (Ingrid Ahnesjö, Uppsala University)
11:00 – 11: 45: Don't Believe All Your Thoughts – Diversity in Daily Academia (Carolin Demus, University of Leipzig)
11:45 – 12:00: Joint final discussion

With the workshop we promoted the Plan among RestPoll members and raised awareness for gender and diversity aspects at research institutions/in research projects as well as the social dimension of knowledge production. The workshop was recorded with the permission of the speakers and participants to allow for members that could not attend to view at a later date. The video recording is available for members to view on the RestPoll drive. The presentations and a list of links from the guest speakers is also available on the RestPoll drive.

Some of the suggestions for a more inclusive work environment by Carolin Demus were included in the RestPoll gender equality and diversity checklist for consortium members. We also followed her suggestion to design the next workshop without mentioning that it is a diversity measure and without explicitly mentioning 'gender' or 'diversity' in the title to avoid potential reservations or negative preconceptions and to encourage broad participation and engagement (see 8.3).

To have one male and one female speaker, we had originally invited Matt Fortnam (University Exeter) to present alongside Carolin Demus, but he was not available on the day of the

workshop. We will try to find a male speaker for the AGM 2024 to present another topic on Gender and Diversity. With Ingrid Ahnesjö, professor emeritus, Uppsala University, and Carolin Demus, acting head of the office for equality, diversity and family affairs, University of Leipzig, however, we found two speakers with different ages, disciplinary backgrounds and positions within the academy from two different European countries.

8. Updates Version 3.0

This update includes the annual update from 2024 to the gender balance and diversity within the project (8.1), results from the first annual internal assessment conducted during the first annual group meeting (8.2), and the workshop at the first annual group meeting by Robert Kötter (8.3).

8.1. MONITORING AND EVALUATION UPDATES

This section is an annual update to section 3 "State-of-the-art of gender balance and diversity in the project". It includes data on the composition of the consortium (Table 8.1), advisory board (Table 8.2), as well as WP and Task leads (Table 8.3) in terms of gender, career stage, and disciplinary attribution by the end of 2024 (Month 15). Changes from the proposal submission stage are indicated with an increase arrow (↑) or a decrease arrow (↓) after a percentage. No change are indicated with an equal sign (=).

At the end of 2024 (Month 15), there was a good gender balance with 57 (48.7%, ↓) male and 60 (51.3%, ↑) female participants listed in total by project partners (see Table 8.1). The number of participating nationalities did not change from the proposal submission stage and still includes 19 nationalities across Europe and beyond (the USA).

Table 8.1. Gender and career stage of project participants by nationality at the end of 2024 (Month 15 of project).

Nationality	Number	Gender		Career stage			
		Male	Female	Categ. A	Categ. B	Categ. C	Categ. D
Austria	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Denmark	4 ↑	3	1 ↑	1	2	0	1 ↑
France	19 ↑	8 ↑	11 ↑	2 ↓	4 ↓	5 ↑	8 ↑
Germany	12 ↓	4 ↓	8	3 ↓	1 ↑	6 ↓	2 ↑
Greece	8 ↑	5 ↑	3 ↑	1	0	4 ↑	3 ↑
Hungary	7	5	2	0	1	3	3

Ireland	3	0	3	1	0	1	1
Italy	6 ↑	4↑	2	0	2	0	4 ↑
Latvia	6 ↑	3 ↑	3	2 ↑	2	1	1
Luxembourg	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Netherlands	5 ↓	4 ↓	1 ↓	1	1	2 ↓	2
Spain	6 ↓	3 ↓	3	0	4 ↑	2 ↓	1
Sweden	8 ↑	4 ↑	4 ↑	2	2 ↑	3 ↑	1
Switzerland	2	2	0	0	2	0	0
Tunisia	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Turkey	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ukraine	7 ↑	0	7 ↑	1	2	3 ↑	1
United Kingdom	15	7 ↓	8 ↑	2 ↑	5 ↓	1 ↓	7 ↑
USA	4 ↑	2 ↑	2	1	0	3 ↑	0
TOTAL	**117 ↑**	**57 ↑**	**60 ↑**	**19 ↓**	**29 ↑**	**34 ↑**	**25 ↑**

Table 8.2 Gender balance and career path of our advisory board.

Gender		Career		
Male	**Female**	**Industry**	**Policy**	**Research**
4	2	2	3	1

Table 8.3 Gender balance, career stage, and disciplinary attribution of the WP and Task Leads

Gender		Career stage				Disciplinary profile		
Male	**Female**	**Categ. A**	**Categ. B**	**Categ. C**	**Categ. D**	**Natural science**	**Social science**	**Other (non-research)**
12	9	7	8	6	0	14	6	1

The composition of the consortium also features an increase in Category B-D researchers (see Table 8.4). Yet, viewed from a gender balance there is still the trend of a progressively higher representation of male researchers at higher career stages and female researchers at lower ones.

Table 8.4. Career stage and gender balance of project participants at the end of 2024 (Month 15 of project).

Career Stage	Total per category (% of all participants)	Males (% of all participants / per category)	Females (% of all participants / per category)
Category A- Top Grade Researcher (Full professor/ Director of research)	19 (16.2%, ↓)	13 (11.1 ↓ / 68.4% ↑)	6 (5.1 ↓ / 31.6% ↓)
Category B- Senior Researcher (Senior Researcher/ Associate professor)	29 (24.8%, ↑)	17 (14.5 ↓ / 58.6% ↑)	12 (10.3 ↓ / 41.4% ↓)
Category C- Recognised Researcher (Researcher/ Assistant professor)	34 (29.1%, ↑)	15 (12.8 ↓ / 44.1% ↓)	19 (16.2 ↑ / 55.9% ↑)
Category D- First stage researcher + non-researcher	35 (29.9%, ↑)	12 (10.3 ↓ / 34.3% ↓)	23 (19.7 ↑ / 65.7% ↑)
TOTAL	**117 (100%)**	**57 (48.7%, ↓)**	**60 (51.3%, ↑)**

The interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary composition of the consortium evolved slightly, with a higher percentage of social scientists joining the team (Table 8.5). An additional category was introduced, recognizing two researchers who identify as both natural and social scientists. Overall, gender balance was relatively equal across disciplines, though there was a slight male bias among social scientists.

Table 8.5. Disciplinary attribution of consortium partners.

Disciplinary profile of partners	Total per category (% of all participants)	Males (% of all participants / per category)	Females (% of all participants / per category)
Natural sciences	66 (56.4 %, ↓)	29 (24.8 ↓ / 43.9 % ↓)	37 (31.6 ↓ /56.0 % ↑)
Social sciences	22 (18.8 %, ↑)	15 (12.8 ↑ / 68.2 % ↓)	7 (6.0 ↑ / 31.8 % ↑)
Other (non-research)	27 (23.1 %, ↓)	12 (10.3 ↓ / 44.4 % ↓)	15 (12.8 ↑ / 55.6 % ↑)
Both (natural and social sciences)	2 (1.7%)	1 (0.9 / 50%)	1 (0.9 / 50%)

The monitoring of stakeholders involved in the RestPoll project is conducted by individual Living Lab leaders and will be documented in the corresponding reports (MS14-17).

8.2. ANNUAL INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

At the first annual group meeting on 13 November 2024 in Freiburg, Germany, the first annual internal assessment was conducted with the RestPoll members present. In 30 minutes, 40 members were asked eight (8) questions and were prompted to respond via Mentimeter, an online tool where participants can anonymously respond to questions in the moment. Below we share the results from the assessment.

1. *What's the word that best describes your overall feeling about the project's first year?*
Overall, the member's feelings of the first year within the project were positive, with "exciting", "promising", and "interesting" as the highest rated feelings (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Word cloud that described the member's feeling about the first year of the project (40 responses from 40 respondents).

2. *On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate your personal involvement in the project during its first year? (1 = not involved at all, 7 = extremely involved)*
The average rate of personal involvement in the project was 4.7, which is above average (40 responses from 40 respondents).

3. *What was your most significant success or proudest moment in the project this year?*
RestPoll members submitted 50 responses regarding this question. The responses were categorized to get an overview of the success within the project (Figure 8.2). The biggest

successful moment was conducting or completing the first round of the pollinator monitoring fieldwork (21 responses). Other successes included, engaging with stakeholders (8), establishing or conducting workshops within the Living Labs (7), gaining new skills or experiences (5), completing project milestones or deliverables (3), social media or communication engagement (3), recruiting good staff (2), or successful project communication (1). Additionally, one member was proud that "We are changing things."
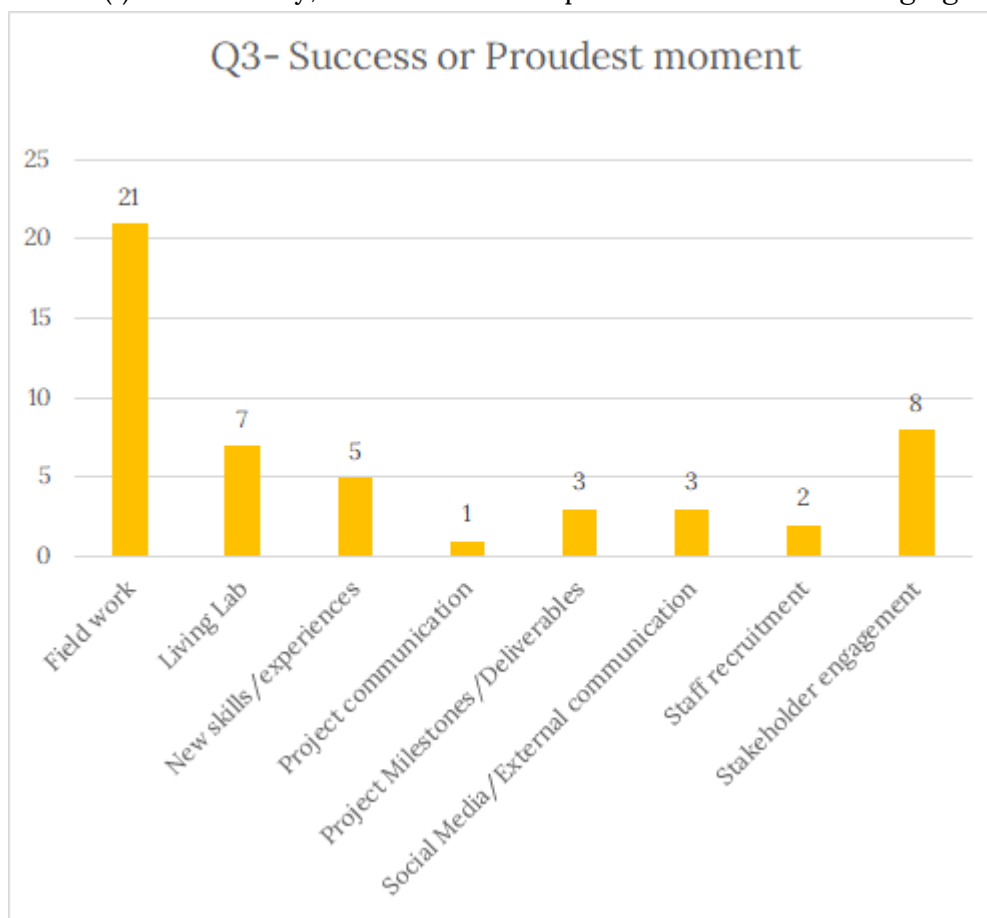

Figure 8.2 Overview of participants' responses about their most successful or proudest moment in the first year of the project (50 responses from 32 respondents).

4. *What was the most significant challenge you encountered while working on the project?* RestPoll members submitted 32 responses regarding this question. The responses were categorized to get an overview of the challenges that were encountered within the project (Figure 8.3). The biggest challenges were lack of project overview or clear definitions (10 responses) or weather/time constraints (9). Additionally, members faced communication issues (6), challenges when establishing the Living Labs (4), engaging stakeholders (3), constraints during fieldwork (1), or a lack of experience (1). One member reported that "All went smoothly."
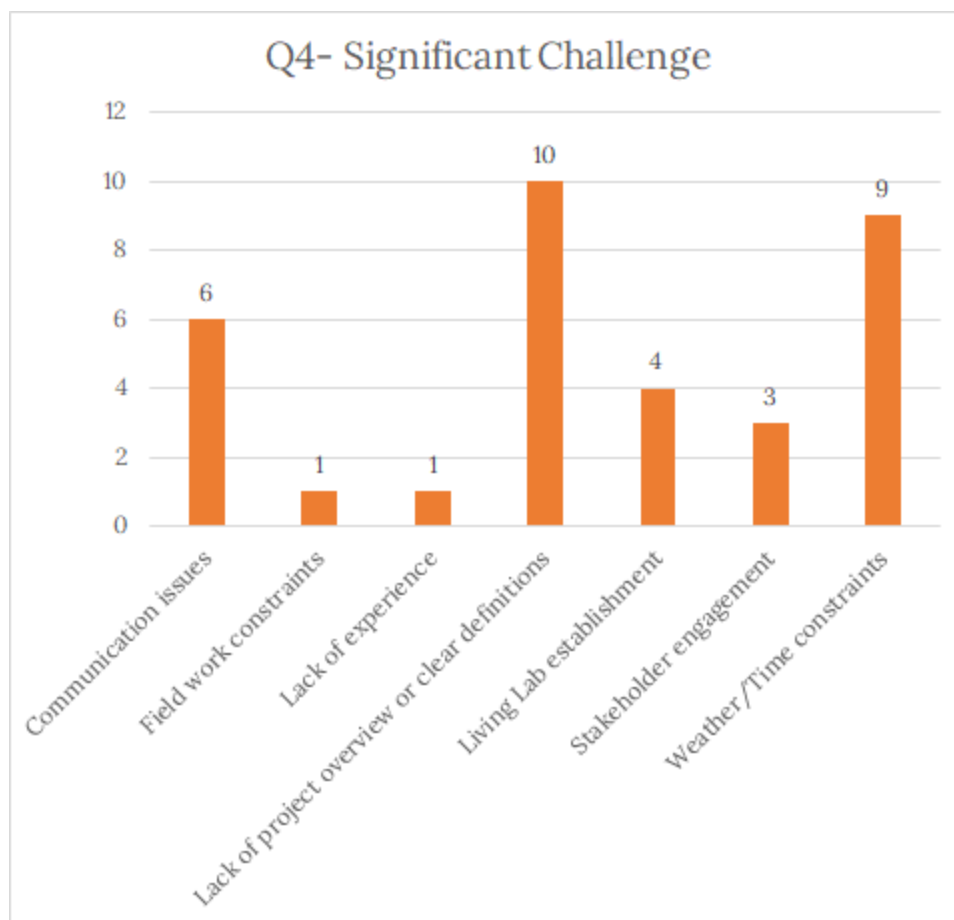
Figure 8.3 Overview of participants' responses about their most significant challenge in the first year of the project (32 responses from 32 respondents).

5. *How would you rate the overall level of collaboration within the consortium?*
Most members reported an average to excellent overall level of collaboration within the project (92.5 %, Figure 8.4). Only three members reported a low level of collaboration within the project.
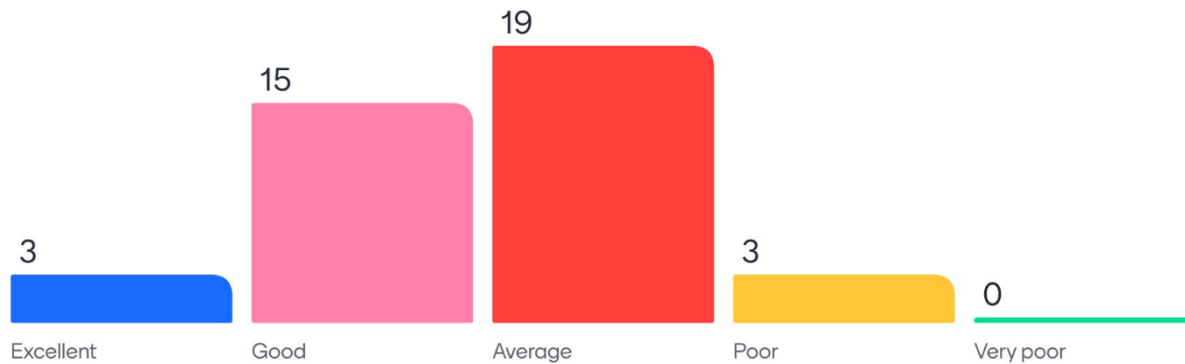
Figure 8.4 Responses of RestPoll member's overall level of collaboration within the project rated from excellent to very poor (40 responses from 40 respondents).

6. *Have you ever personally felt disadvantaged due to any of these aspects during the project implementation?*

There were eight aspects that were presented to the RestPoll members: age, gender, career stage, nationality, academic vs. non-academic background, disciplinary scientific background, other or none. Overall, there were 47 responses from 41 respondents. Most members did not feel any disadvantage (33 responses, 70.2 %). Five members reported feeling disadvantaged due to their career stage (10.6 %), three due to their disciplinary scientific background (6.4 %), two due to their nationality (4.3 %), and one due to their gender (2.1 %). Three respondents reported "other" aspect (6.4 %). We encouraged respondents to report what disadvantages these were, both during the session or afterward confidentially. However, none came forward.

7. *How would you rate the project's overall contribution to involving different external stakeholders in the previous project steps?*

Most members reported a moderate to very high involvement of external stakeholders within the project (91.2 %, Figure 8.5). Three members reported a very low to low involvement of external stakeholders (8.8%).
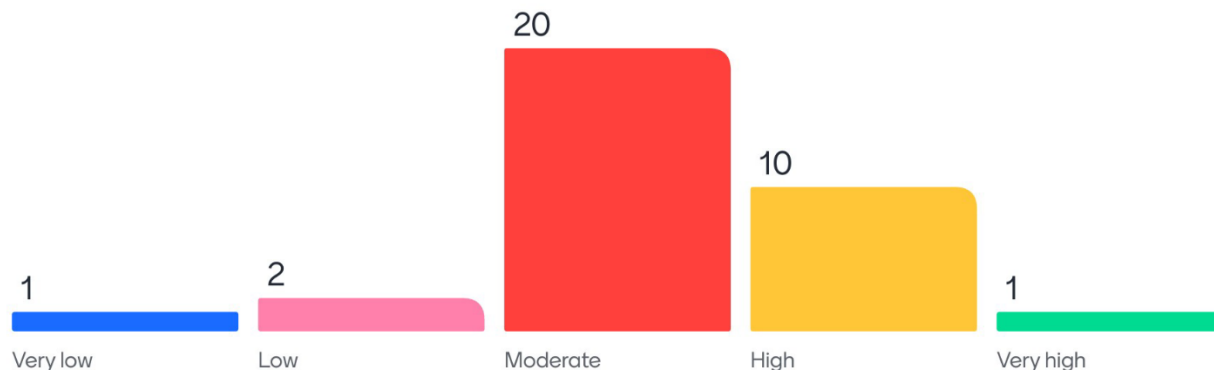
Figure 8.5 Responses of external stakeholder's involvement within the project rated from very low to very high (34 responses from 34 respondents).

8. *What would you like to see improved or changed in the next year?*

From 36 respondents, we received 59 responses regarding improvements within the project for the upcoming year (Figure 8.6). The highest rated responses were communication, collaboration, and integration.

Figure 6 Word cloud of improvements anticipated to be implemented within the next year of the project (59 responses from 36 respondents).

Conclusions

Overall, there were positive and motivated responses from RestPoll members. This internal assessment helped members to voice and address issues, such as those with communication and integration within the project. Due to this concern, changes were implemented to foster

better involvement of members within the project (WP retrospectives and regular meetings) and the communication structure was revised (updated [D7.1 Communication & Management plan](#)).

As this annual assessment only surveyed a small portion of the RestPoll consortium (34 %), potentially biased towards national team leaders attending the first in-person annual group meeting, and we did not receive any direct feedback regarding the responses to question 6 and to address these biases in the group, we plan to put an anonymous reporting system in place that will be accessible for all members to report throughout the project, so that we can address any major discrimination issues and implement measures to address them.

8.3. WORKSHOP AT THE ANNUAL GROUP MEETING

A hybrid workshop on gender and diversity aspects was held at the first Annual Group Meeting in Freiburg on 13 November 2024 by Robert Kötter (TwentyOne [Skills](#)). We were pleased to have a male speaker for this workshop, following two female speakers in our previous workshop in March 2024. We deliberately chose not to include the terms 'gender' and 'diversity' in the workshop title to ensure an open and welcoming atmosphere. This approach aimed to avoid potential reservations or negative preconceptions and to encourage broad participation and engagement and was recommended by Carolin Demus at the online workshop in March 2024. The workshop on Meeting Design naturally incorporated gender and diversity considerations at various points. For instance, we explored ways to foster inclusive discussions, ensuring that PhD students felt empowered to participate rather than leaving the floor predominantly to professors. By weaving these aspects into the broader conversation on effective meeting structures, we sought to enhance awareness and encourage more balanced interactions.

The workshop was very well received, and we received a lot of positive feedback. Some participants highlighted that the strategies and insights shared were highly relevant to their everyday work.

The video recording is available for members to view on the RestPoll drive. The workshop reader from the guest speaker is also available on the RestPoll drive.