GeNeus

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INTRODUCTION

The Project

GeNeus is a 2-year project funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme: Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Education and Training, which aims at reducing gender inequalities in selection and evaluation processes in the professional (public and private sectors) and educational fields. The consortium is composed by six partners from five different countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Spain), which are working together on the development, promotion and mainstreaming of a Set of Gender-neutral Selection Tools and Test.

By improving the selection and evaluation processes in the labour market and professional education, namely by using gender-neutral testing when assessing men and women, it is possible to increase gender-neutrality and thus contribute to equal educational and professional opportunities for both genders.

As such, the objectives of GeNeus project are:

- To get an overview of the reality, demands and gaps of the evaluation processes in different environments (public administration, SME and post-secondary professional education), as well as analyse and assess those procedures in a gender-neutral perspective

- To produce and deliver useful and free materials, guaranteeing through those a gender-neutral approach in the selection and evaluation processes

- To contribute to gender-neutral access and equal opportunities to the labour market and professional education

Set of Application of Gender-neutral Tools and Test for Selection Processes in SMEs

In the framework of the GeNeus project, partners have developed a Set of Gender-neutral Tools and Test for Selection Processes meant to support Human Resources professionals from Small to Medium Enterprises, Public Administration and Post-Secondary Professional Education institutions in guaranteeing a fair, effective and gender-neutral recruitment and selection process.

The present intellectual output is the Set of Application of Gender-neutral Tools and Test for Selection Processes in SMEs. The objective of the output is to provide professionals from SMEs with specific insights on the issues at stake and benefits of improving gender balance in their enterprises. Concomitantly, it provides practical guidance for an effective use of the GeNeus tools in their staff recruitment and selection processes with a view to raise awareness

on the importance of gender-neutral testing and motivate them to adopt gender-neutral testing and promote the download of quality testing templates for free on the project homepage.

1. GENDER-NEUTRAL TOOLS FOR SELECTION PROCESSES

1.1 METHODOLOGY

1.1.1 Background research

In the first phase of the project, partners conducted research at a local level and conducted interviews with a total of 31 representatives from the project's target groups (Small and Medium Enterprises, Public Administration and Post-Secondary Professional Education). Here is a summary of the information gathered, with a specific focus on SMEs: what do SMEs evaluate in their recruitment processes? How is this evaluation done? What unmet needs can professionals from the field identify?

What is evaluated

As a result of the conducted interviews, it was revealed that all three target groups (SME, PA and PSPE) evaluate both hard and soft skills, that is, the professional and academic competencies of the candidates, as well as their personal competencies. However, the importance given to each type of skills depends on the target group: while PSPE organizations put more emphasis on academic competencies, SMEs and PAs focus more on personal and professional competencies. Considerable differences exist between the partner countries.

For SMEs, professional competencies are very important, since four out of five partner countries mention them (Austria, Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain). IT and language skills are also considered important factors for SMEs, as well as logical and special reasoning. Even though, considerable differences exist between the partner countries. For example, in Portugal and Italy the personal competencies are more important, whereas in Austria the emphasis is on academic and professional competencies. Other aspects that are being evaluated differently by SMEs depending on their nationality: communication skills (Austria and Spain), organisational skills (Austria) and professional goals (Bulgaria).

How the evaluation is done

The interview is the most common instrument used during a selection process in all countries and all three target groups. In some cases, this is often the only selection tool used (besides the review of documents/curricular screening: CV, diplomas, certificates).

SMEs are the target group which presents a more diverse/complex evaluation and selection process of candidates. They often complement the interviews with tests and other evaluation methods, even though its combination is different depending on the country. For example, none of the Austrian SMEs use tests, but most of the Portuguese SMEs use them.

However, even when tests and other methods are used, interviews still weigh more. Due to it, that is why around 50% of the SMEs have standard procedures for the interviews (with a structured script, for example).

3 of the 5 partner countries (Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain) report the usage of **tests** as an evaluation tool. Although both in-house and standardized (external) tests are being used, the majority of the reports show that standardized tests are more common. For example, intelligence tests are used in Spain and Portugal to evaluate logical and spatial reasoning, while English written or oral ones are used by 50% of the interviewed SMEs in Portugal.

Unmet needs

In general, the interviewed entities state that they do not have major needs that have to be addressed or, if there are some, that those are not connected to testing. Still, some suggestions related to testing were made, in particular:

- SMEs in Spain and Portugal state that testing would be more useful if it was more specific and corresponding to a specific position;
- According to the SMEs interviewed in Portugal, tests for the evaluation of social and emotional intelligence are needed but not available.

The interviews unveiled that most SMEs make use of interviews – supported by intelligence and/or language tests in some partner countries – in order to select their personnel, and more often than not these are conducted by managers or supervisors/leaders of specific tasks instead of an HR professional. Most respondents didn't seem to regard gender as being an issue in their selection process, and all of them stated that their companies do not offer gender-sensitivity training of any sort. For more information on the background research the partners conducted at a national level, consult the project's first intellectual output: *IO1 - Generic Report on Gender-neutral Testing*.

1.1.2 Testing

With the information gathered during the interviews, partners were able to develop the GeNeus tools for gender-neutral selection – which will be described in more detail in section 1.2 of this document. In order to ensure the gender-neutrality of the tools, specifically of the General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire and the Analysis Exercises, the partners tested them at a national level, both online and face-to-face, with a total of 1 095 respondents from 3 target groups: unemployed people willing to look for jobs in Small to Medium Enterprises, unemployed people looking for employment in Public Administration and young students willing to enter Post-Secondary Professional Education institutions.

Partners gathered all the answers and information received and analyzed the results of the testing statistically, standardized and finalized the instruments and developed the *IO3 – Guide on Implementation of Selection Tools and Test.*

1.1.3 *Statistical analysis of the results*

The General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire and the Analysis Exercises were administered to a large pool of respondents in order to reach a statistically significant number from across Europe and determine the correlation between gender and score (as determined through evaluation methods described in *IO2 – Set of Gender-neutral Selection Tools and Test*). Once the answers from all partner countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Spain) were gathered, the analysis of the results was conducted with statistical rigor, by taking care of identifying statistically significant differences in the performance levels of both genders, in order to provide guidance to the end users (human resources teams from SMEs, PA and PSPEs) and ensure the gender-neutrality of the tools.

The answers were evaluated through standard evaluation grids which were the same for all countries and helped partners to classify the answers they gathered and produce analyses that considered gender and country specificities. More information on the statistical analysis of the testing results can be found in point 1.3 of this document or in *IO2 – Set of Gender-neutral Selection Tools and Test*.

1.2 THE TOOLS

The GeNeus Project consortium developed 5 different focused-oriented tools that can be used in different situations depending on the country's customs or on the recruiter perception and aim. They were developed on the base of the first phase of the project, namely the needs analysis, through which some issues on the recruitment and selection process emerged. Given the resulting situation, these tools were created in order to select the right person for the desired job position focusing on personal and job-related skills, avoiding gender stereotypes and biases. Some of the tools developed by the GeNeus partnership are standardized, the others can vary or can be adapted for each country, at least for those part of the project's partnership. The five tools are texts, questionnaires, exercises and templates for the analysis and the evaluation of candidates. More information on the effective application of the tools in SMEs, can be found in point 3 of this document.

1.2.1 Job analysis template

This tool, developed for the pre-selection phase, has an asset that ensures that the tool is naturally neutral, because the template describes only competencies, skills, responsibilities and knowledge, directly connected to the job position, thus not being associated to personal characteristics or traits, avoiding any kind of bias. Through the job analysis template, a profile of required skills is designed according to the specific job position. What is analysed is the job position itself thus not reducing it to any specific person, making the process impersonal and not linked to any gender.

Job Analysis Template

JOB NAME

HIERARCHICAL POSITION

MAIN RESPONSABILITIES

KNOWLEDGE, QUALIFICATIONS, AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
School level
Foreign languages knowledge
Computer usage competencies

Professional knowledge, professional qualifications and certifications

Professional experience

COMPETENCIES PROFILE, ABILITIES AND APTITUDES
Transversal Competencies
Specific Competencies

VALIDATION	
Supervisor	
Validation date	
___/___/_____	
Observations	

1.2.2. General competencies for employment questionnaire

This is a standardized tool developed for the GeNeus partner countries and thus needs to be analysed and interpreted according to each national specificity. It consists of 20 questions upon three core transversal competencies: *Initiative/Proactivity, Organization, Social Competencies*. Each question must be rated with a number from 1 to 5 (with 1 "hardly ever" and 5 "almost every time") basing the answers on how much the person agrees/disagrees with the statements. The final quotation is based upon a coloured system, that varies for each country and goes from "very below average" to "well above average", corresponding to the level of suitability for the job position based on the level of competence/performance.

General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire

Below you will find a set of statements about how you act. Identify the frequency at which each statement happens by thinking about how you usually behave and not how you like or should behave. There are no right or wrong answers; there are simply different ways of dealing with situations. Be as true as possible.

1	2	3	4	5
Hardly Ever	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Every Time

1)	I take the initiative, trying new ways to do my tasks	1	2	3	4	5
2)	I like new challenges, which force me to think of new ways to develop my tasks / my work.	1	2	3	4	5
3)	I like to present solutions when I see situations that can be improved.	1	2	3	4	5
4)	I do not like it when a new method is proposed that forces me to change the way I work.	1	2	3	4	5
5)	I need to be motivated for work-related tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
6)	I like routines and avoid making changes to my day-to-day life.	1	2	3	4	5
7)	I prefer others to set my priorities.	1	2	3	4	5
8)	I focus on what is most important and do not get distracted by other activities.	1	2	3	4	5
9)	I cannot complete the execution of the tasks in the time I initially estimated.	1	2	3	4	5
10)	I consider it important to know exactly who is responsible for each task and with whom I should articulate.	1	2	3	4	5
11)	When I am developing an important activity, I perform various tasks. It is very difficult to advance step by step.	1	2	3	4	5
12)	I always start with the tasks I enjoy less.	1	2	3	4	5
13)	During the performance of my projects, I identify deviations which lead me to adjust the plan to achieve the objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
14)	In a situation of tension, I manage my impulses.	1	2	3	4	5
15)	I feel at ease when I speak in public.	1	2	3	4	5
16)	When someone is not nice to me, I will have a similar response.	1	2	3	4	5
17)	When I fail, I moan about it and blame myself.	1	2	3	4	5
18)	I consider that seeing how everyone feels in the team is a waste of time, since acting quickly is necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
19)	When someone asks me for something inappropriate, I say 'no' easily.	1	2	3	4	5
20)	When someone criticizes me, I try to understand if he/she is right in the criticisms.	1	2	3	4	5

1.2.3. Analysis exercises – Problem solving

This is another standardized tool developed for the GeNeus partner countries and it consists of three different exercises about certain situations that requires to take actions (*Office Party, Store situation, Office Situation*), each independent from the others, in which the candidate needs to answers to 5 questions about: *Problem identification, Data collection, Generation of ideas and evaluation of ideas, Implementation planning,* and *Evaluation of the implemented solution*. The questions – the same for all exercises – are:

Q1. Please identify which problem(s) you are experiencing.
Q2. Please indicate whether you would need to collect additional information and, if so, what would you do.

Q3. Please provide several possible alternatives to solving the problem and point out its pros and cons.

Q4. From the alternatives identified in Q3, select the one that you consider most appropriate, indicating what actions would you take to implement your idea.

Q5. Given the situation, what would you consider a good result? What lessons have you learned from this situation?

For this tool, there is also a colour system to identify the performance level (from "inexistent" to "high level") in which the evaluation criteria consist examples of adequate answers. For more information on the evaluation criteria of the exercises, consult point 3 of this document.

Exercise 1 (*Office Party*).

Situation:

Every year your company prepares the annual meeting where it presents the new guidelines to the main customers and partners (suppliers, representatives of relevant institutions in your business field, local entities).

Considering that the company recently changed facilities and that this meeting always takes place in the first days of July, they decided to have the meeting followed by a cocktail in the outdoor garden.

As this event has some new features compared to previous meetings (new facilities, meeting in the garden, employees are also invited, presentation of new markets where they are to expand) it was announced in due time, highlighting these innovations. Even pictures of how the meeting was to be held in the garden were announced.

The morning before the event, when the last preparations are taking place, the weather is unstable and there is no clear idea whether it will rain or not during the time of the meeting and the cocktail.

Imagine that you are part of the team that is organizing this event, which is so important to the company's image. Given the situation, and not knowing what to do, they asked your opinion on how to act.

Exercise 2 (*Store Situation*).

Situation:

A colleague of yours has placed an order of € 10,000 for a client. This order was urgent for the customer. Your colleague consulted the supplier (in France), requesting the information about the delivery time and was informed that it would take a maximum of 5 working days.

Your colleague indicated that he would inform the client, by SMS, as soon as the order arrived. After 5 working days, the customer went to the company facilities to collect the order. It had not yet arrived and your colleague was on his day off on that day.

When the customer realized that the order was not available, he was very upset, and said that he really needed those materials not to delay the activity of his business. The customer also said that this situation meant a loss of confidence in the company. Indeed, he was already a loyal and a good customer (he ordered much material and always paid within the time limits). Considering this situation, indicate how you would act.

Exercise 3 (*Office Situation*).

Situation:

Imagine you are working in an import/export firm that owns its office in a good suburb of a big city.
Due to the growth of your company in the past 2 years, more people were admitted to work in the office facilities. Two years ago, there were 6 people working in the office, and you had an entrance hall, with a chair, and a meeting room where 6 people could seat comfortably.

In these two years, the company grew to 10 people in the same space, along with their desks, computers and paper files furniture. The meeting room was transformed into an office where 4 people work, and the entrance hall was transformed to receive 2 clients in a small meeting open space room. The space is divided, but it is not possible real privacy, for more sensitive business and brainstorm ideas. Only the manager, has a closed office.

There are some conflicts among staff due to being confined some many people in a stuffed, small space. The need for more space is absolutely necessary, as a new member was hired and starts in about a month. But the firm made some new investments and is not in a good moment to buy new facilities.

Imagine that you are part of the managing team and need to make space for the new hire, keeping in mind that you need to spend as little money as you reasonably can. Given the situation, let us now your opinion on how to advise the managing director how to act.

1.2.4. Job interview template

This template was developed for the interview phase, the most utilized tool in the SMEs recruitment process. It is a semi-structured and competency-based job interview template, divided into four phases, created to ensure that every applicant is going through the same

process, with the same questions, making the process fair and objective, namely free from biases. This tool can be adapted to different situations/contexts of the organization.

Job Interview Template

- **PHASE 1:** Introduction by the interviewer (1-10 minutes)
    - Welcome, small talk, introduction
    - Creating a positive atmosphere
- **PHASE 2:** Get to know the applicant and Assess competencies (15-60 minutes)
    - Background analysis (educational and professional)
    - Competencies:
        - Communication Effectiveness / Interpersonal Communication
        - Rigor and organization
        - Managing Risk
- **PHASE 3:** Career and Job vacancy (5-15 minutes)
    - Desired career paths
    - Job description
    - Administrative and financial aspects of the position
- **PHASE 4:** Conclusion (5-10 minutes)
    - Next steps of the selection process

1.2.5. Template of evaluation checklist of the applicant

This tool is a template that works as an individual report, in which the results obtained in each evaluation moment are described. The gender-neutrality is ensured by the fact that the template does not contain any personal data, the identification is done by "an individual identification number" letting the recruiter focus only on job-related skills. This tool has better results when the final decision is made by a different person from the one who conducted the other selection phases. Generically, the checklist is focused on: *Qualifications, Results on the different selection tools, Logistic/administrative aspects.*

Template of Evaluation Checklist of the Applicant

INDIVIDUAL REPORT

RECRUITMENT REFERENCE	
Date	

INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	

Evaluation regarding requirements

QUALIFICATIONS		
School level		
Other qualifications		
Certificates		

General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire		
Score		
Regarding the average		
Observations		

SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

Language Knowlegde		
English		
Other		

Computer Skills		
Word		
Excel		
PowerPoint		
Other		

Problem Solving		
Score		
Regarding the average		
Observations		

…		
Observations		

…		
Observations		

Practical exercise		
Observations		

Interview		
Observations		

Current situation (employed/ employed):		
Desired remuneration:		
Availability to start working:		

FINAL REMARKS & EVALUATION		

1.3. RESULTS OF THE TESTING IN PARTNER COUNTRIES

The tools presented so far were developed from the GeNeus partner countries but three of them *(Job Analysis Template, Job Interview Template, Template of Evaluation Checklist of the Applicant)* are templates for the recruiters, patterns to be used in order to avoid gender biases during the selection and hiring process; whilst, two of them are standardized tools, designed, developed and tested only in the partner countries. In the following sections the results will be presented for all the partner countries, of the testing of the two standardized tools: *General competencies for Employment Questionnaire, Analysis Exercises – Problem Solving.*

1.3.1. General competencies for employment questionnaire

(For further information about every single country result, with more detailed statistics, see Annex 3 of the GeNeus IO 2 *"National General Competencies For Employment Questionnaire"*)

❖ <u>Austria</u>

From the testing in Austria, it has emerged that for 8 items there was a significant difference between men and women, in particular women were evaluated more positively than men. The remaining 12 resulted free from gender bias but only half of them,

corresponding to just 6 items, had the statistical robustness to be considered valid for the purpose of evaluating professional competencies- This means that they have discriminative power and sensitivity to compare different candidates. The relevant items that can be used in Austria are:

1. I take the initiative, trying new ways to do my tasks.
2. I like new challenges, which force me to think of new ways to develop my tasks/my work.
3. I like to present solutions when I see situations that can be improved.
7. I prefer others to set my priorities.
8. I focus on what is most important and do not get distracted by other activities.
9. I cannot complete the execution of the tasks in the time I initially estimated.

[Sentences 7 and 9 should be quoted in reverse]

Considering there are five points of agreement in the scale, and that there are 6 sentences, the score ranges from 6 to 30 points. To interpret results 5 levels of performance regarding average were defined and adapted to Austrian context:

Much below average - 10 to 16 points
Below average - 17 to 19 points
On average - 20 to 22 points
Above average - 23 to 25 points
Well above average - 26 to 30 points

❖ Bulgaria

From the testing In Bulgaria, it has emerged that for 1 item (no. 12) gender was evaluated differently with statistical significance, thus not being neutral. The remaining 19 were free from gender bias but were tested to analyse the correlation between them in order to exclude those not robust enough to be considered valid for the purpose of evaluating professional competencies. 10 out of 19 had not discriminative power and sensitivity to compare different candidates, so just 9 items remained. The relevant remaining items for Bulgaria are the following:

1. I take the initiative, trying new ways to do my tasks.
2. I like new challenges, which force me to think of new ways to develop my tasks / my work.
3. I like to present solutions when I see situations that can be improved.
7. I prefer others to set my priorities.
8. I focus on what is most important and do not get distracted by other activities.
10. I consider it important to know exactly who is responsible for each task and with whom I should articulate.
13. During the performance of my projects, I identify deviations which lead me to adjust the plan to achieve the objectives.
14. In a situation of tension, I manage my impulses.

20. When someone criticizes me, I try to understand if he/she is right in the criticisms.

[Item 7 should be quoted in reverse]

Considering there are five points of agreement in the scale, and that that there are 9 items, the score ranges from 9 to 45 points. To interpret results, 5 levels of performance regarding average were defined and adapted to the Bulgarian context:

Much below average - 14 to 23 points
Below average - 24 to 26 points
On average - 27 to 31 points
Above average - 32 to 37 points
Well above average - 38 to 45 points

❖ Italy

From the testing in Italy, it has emerged that for 5 items there was a significant difference between men and women, namely they lead to gender discrimination. The remaining 15 resulted free from gender bias but only one-third of them, corresponding to just 5 items, had the statistical robustness to be considered valid for the purpose of evaluating professional competencies. This means that they have discriminative power and sensitivity to compare different candidates. The relevant items that can be used in Italy are:

1. I take the initiative, trying new ways to do my tasks.
2. I like new challenges, which force me to think of new ways to develop my tasks / my work.
6. I like routines and avoid making changes to my day-to-day life.
13. During the performance of my projects, I identify deviations which lead me to adjust the plan to achieve the objectives.
17. When I fail, I moan about it and blame myself.

[Item 17 should be quoted in reverse]

Considering there are five points of agreement in the scale, and that that there are 5 items, the score ranges from 5 to 25 points. To interpret results, 5 levels of performance regarding average were defined and adapted to the Italian context:

Much below average - 7 to 13 points
Below average - 14 to 15 points
On average - 16 to 17 points
Above average - 18 to 19 points
Well above average - 20 to 25 points

❖ Portugal

In Portugal, the test revealed that for 5 items gender was evaluated differently with statistical significance, thus not being neutral. The remaining 15 were free from gender bias but were tested to analyse the correlation between them in order to exclude those not robust enough to be considered valid for the purpose of evaluating professional competencies. 10 out of 19 had not discriminative power and sensitivity to compare different candidates, so remained just 10 items. The relevant remaining items for Portugal are the following:

2. I like new challenges, which force me to think of new ways to develop my tasks / my work.
4. I do not like it when a new method is proposed that forces me to change the way I work.
5. I need to be motivated for work-related tasks.
8. I focus on what is most important and do not get distracted by other activities.
9. I cannot complete the execution of the tasks in the time I initially estimated.
10. I consider it important to know exactly who is responsible for each task and with whom I should articulate.
11. When I am developing an important activity, I perform various tasks. It is very difficult to advance step by step.
13. During the performance of my projects, I identify deviations which lead me to adjust the plan to achieve the objectives.
14. In a situation of tension, I manage my impulses.
20. When someone criticizes me, I try to understand if he/she is right in the criticisms.

[Items 4, 5, 9 and 11 should be quoted in reverse]

Considering there are five points of agreement in the scale, and that that there are 10 items, the score ranges from 10 to 50 points. To interpret results, 5 levels of performance regarding average were defined and adapted to the Portuguese context:

Much below average - until 32 points
Below average - 33 to 35 points
On average - 36 to 37 points
Above average - 38 to 40 points
Well above average – 41 to 50 points and over.

❖ Spain

In Spain, the test revealed that for 1 item gender was evaluated differently with statistical significance, thus not being neutral. The remaining 19 resulted free from gender bias but only 6 items had the statistical robustness to be considered valid for the purpose of evaluating professional competencies. This means that they have discriminative power and

sensitivity to compare different candidates. The relevant items that can be used in Spain are:

1. I take the initiative, trying new ways to do my tasks.
2. I like new challenges, which force me to think of new ways to develop my tasks / my work.
3. I like to present solutions when I see situations that can be improved.
8. I focus on what is most important and do not get distracted by other activities.
10. I consider it important to know exactly who is responsible for each task and with whom I should articulate.
20. When someone criticizes me, I try to understand if he/she is right in the criticisms.

Considering there are five points of agreement in the scale, and that that there are 6 items, the score ranges from 6 to 30 points. To interpret results 5 levels of performance regarding average were defined and adapted to the Spanish context:

Much below average: 6 - 20 points
Below average: 21 - 22 points
On average: 23 - 24 points
Above average: 25 points
Well above average: 26 - 30 points

1.3.2. Analysis exercise – Problem solving

(For further information about every single country result, with more detailed statistics, see Annex 5 of the GeNeus IO2 "National Specificities of the *Analysis Exercises*")

❖ Austria

In Austria, statistical analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between men and women with respect to the results of exercises 1, 2 and 3. This means that in Austria, the three exercises can be used for evaluating the competence "Analysis and Problem Solving" , without incurring in gender biases.

Considering there are four levels of evaluation for the answers of the 3 exercises (inexistent, low level, intermediate level, high level), and that that there are 5 questions, the score ranges from 5 to 20 points. To interpret results, 5 levels of performance regarding the competence Analysis and Problem Solving were designed and adapted to the Austrian context.

• For Exercise 1, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average - 5 to 7 points

Below average - 8 to 9 points
On average - 10 to 11 points
Above average - 12 to 13 points
Well above average - 14 points and over.

- For Exercise 2, the scheme is:

Much below average - 5 to 7 points
Below average - 8 to 9 points
On average - 10 to 12 points
Above average - 13 to 14 points
Well above average - 15 points and over.

- For Exercise 3, the scheme is:

Much below average - 5 to 6 points
Below average - 7 to 9 points
On average - 10 to 12 points
Above average - 13 points
Well above average - 14 points and over.

❖ <u>Bulgaria</u>

In Bulgaria, statistical analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between men and women with respect to the results of exercises 1 and 3, but some statistical differences between men and women were found in exercise 2. This means that in Bulgaria, the exercises 1 and 3 can be used for evaluating the competence "Analysis and Problem Solving" without incurring in gender biases, but the exercise number 2 should not be used because it can lead to gender biases.

Considering there are four levels of evaluation for the answers of the exercises (inexistent, low level, intermediate level, high level), and that that there are 5 questions, the score ranges from 5 to 20 points. To interpret results, 3 levels of performance regarding the competence Analysis and Problem Solving were designed and adapted to the Bulgarian context, each representing one-third of the responses in the pilot testing.

- For Exercise 1, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Below average - 5 to 7 points
On average - 8 to 9 points
Above average -10 points and over.

23

- For the Exercise 3, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Below average - 5 to 6 points
On average - 7 to 8 points
Above average - 9 points and over.

❖ Italy

In Italy, statistical analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between men and women with respect to the results of exercises 1 and 2, but some statistical differences between men and women were found in exercise 3. This means that in Italy, the exercises 1 and 2 can be used for evaluating the competence "Analysis and Problem Solving" in a neutral way, but the exercise number 3 should not be used because it can lead to gender biases.

Considering there are four levels of evaluation for the answers of the 3 exercises (inexistent, low level, intermediate level, high level), and that that there are 5 questions, the score ranges from 5 to 20 points. To interpret results, 5 levels of performance regarding the competence Analysis and Problem Solving were designed and adapted to the Italian context.

- For Exercise 1, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average: 5 – 8 points
Below average: 9 – 10 points
On average: 11 points
Above average: 12 – 13 points
Much above average: 14 points and over

- For Exercise 2, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average: 5 points
Below average: 6 – 7 points
On average: 8 points
Above average: 9 – 10 points
Much above average: 11 points and over

❖ Portugal

In Portugal, statistical analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between men and women with respect to the results of exercise 1, 2 and 3. This means that in Portugal, the three exercises can be used for evaluating the competence "Analysis and Problem Solving", without incurring in gender biases.

Considering there are four levels of evaluation for the answers of the 3 exercises (inexistent, low level, intermediate level, high level), and that that there are 5 questions, the score ranges from 5 to 20 points. To interpret results, 5 levels of performance regarding the competence Analysis and Problem Solving were designed and adapted to the Portuguese context.

- For Exercise 1, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average: 6– 9 points
Below average: 10 points
On average: 11 points
Above average: 12 – 13 points
Much above average: 14 points and over

- For Exercise 2, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average: 5 – 7 points
Below average: 8 – 9 points
On average: 10 points
Above average: 11 – 12 points
Much above average: 13 points and over

- For Exercise 3, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average: 8 – 10 points
Below average: 11 – 12 points
On average: 13 points
Above average: 14 – 15 points
Much above average: 16 points and over

❖ Spain

In Spain, statistical analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between men and women with respect to the results of exercises 1, 2 and 3. This means that in Spain, the three exercises can be used for neutrally evaluating the competence "Analysis and Problem Solving".

Considering there are four levels of evaluation for the answers of the 3 exercises (inexistent, low level, intermediate level, high level), and that that there are 5 questions, the

score ranges from 5 to 20 points. To interpret results, 5 levels of performance regarding the competence Analysis and Problem Solving were designed and adapted to the Spanish context.

- For Exercise 1, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average: 5 – 8 points
Below average: 9 – 10 points
On average: 11 – 12 points
Above average: 13 – 14 points
Much above average: 15 points and over

- For Exercise 2, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average: 5 – 7 points
Below average: 8 – 9 points
On average: 10 points
Above average: 11 – 12 points
Much above average: 13 points and over

- For Exercise 3, the evaluation pattern/scheme is:

Much below average: 5 – 7 points
Below average: 8 – 9 points
On average: 10 – 11 points
Above average: 12 – 13 points
Much above average: 14 points and over

2. SMEs AND RECRUITMENT PROCESSES: WHY ARE GENDER-NEUTRAL TOOLS NEEDED?

2.1 SMEs IN EUROPE

2.1.1 What is an SME?

SME stands for Small to Medium Enterprises, however, what exactly an SME is, depends on who's defining them. In fact, SME definitions vary from country to country. That's because, depending on the country, the size of the enterprise can be based on the number of the employees, on the annual sales, on the asset or on any combination of these; and, even when the same criteria is considered for categorization, the lower and upper limits may vary among countries. Given that, in general, SMEs are defined as non-subsidiary, independent firms which employ less than a given number of employees (that varies across countries).[1]

2.1.2 EU definition of SMEs

After what was said above about the different SMEs' definitions, a European definition is needed. According to the *EU commission recommendation of 6 May 2003*,[2] about the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, the first step for being classified as an SME is to be considered an enterprise; about that, the EU recommendation defines an enterprise as any entity engaged in economic activities, irrespective of its legal form. At the same time, another clarification is made in order to establish a clear picture of an enterprise's economic situation.

This brings to 3 categories of SMEs:

- Autonomous enterprise, if it is completely autonomous or has one or more minority partnerships with other enterprises but each less than 25%.

- Partner enterprise, if the partnership with other enterprises rises to at least 25% but no more than 50%.

- Linked enterprises, if the partnership exceeds the 50% threshold.

Moreover, to be considered an SME, the main and mandatory criterion is the staff headcount. There are other two important criteria to be taken into account, namely the

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1 OECD, 2005

2 HTTPS://EUR-LEX.EUROPA.EU/LEGAL-CONTENT/EN/TXT/PDF/?URI=CELEX:32003H0361&FROM=EN

annual turnover and the annual balance sheet total but in these cases, it both of them, each enterprise can exceed one of these two criteria, as long as it satisfies the other.

Given this information, the types of SMEs are described as:

- Medium-sized enterprises, those which employ less than 250 persons, and which have an annual turnover not exceeding € 50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding € 43 million.

- Small-sized enterprises, those which employ less than 50 persons, and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed € 10 million.

- Micro-size enterprises, those with less than 10 persons employed and whose annual turnover or balance sheet total does not exceed 2 million.[3]

This European SME definition mostly includes family businesses and self-employed persons and partnerships or associations regularly engaged in economic activities. Nevertheless, SMEs are not a homogeneous group of businesses; they have different sizes, different weights in the economy, different rates of growth in numbers, and most importantly, they have different market relation profiles.

2.1.3 Types of SMEs

Even if data say that SMEs are prevalent in almost every sectors and industries, they dominate some sectors more than others. For example, SMEs are more prevalent in constructions, accommodations, business service, retail trade and, in particular, in knowledge-intensive services, and less predominant in sectors such as transportations.[4]

Given the heterogeneity of this group, the market relation profile can be classified depending on the purpose. For the project's purpose, during the research phase, the SMEs' profiles have been divided in:

- Social enterprises, commercial organizations with specific social objectives that serve its primary purpose pivoted on social changes; they create employment and reinvest their profits back in the local community, addressing social problems, improving people's life chances, providing training and employment opportunities for those excluded from the market and helping the environment. They mostly are non-profit businesses, autonomous of the state, that earn incomes and use it to address social and environmental issues, providing valuable services to populations in need or

3 EU, USER GUIDE TO THE SME DEFINITION, 2015

4 ESPON, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN EUROPEAN REGIONS AND CITIES, 2017

performing volunteer or paid consulting works. Nevertheless, social enterprises exist in nearly every sector, from consumer goods to healthcare, restaurants to facilities management, associations and communities to creative agencies. [5]

- Commercial enterprises are those enterprises whose primary goal is to increase its profit; other objectives come from the profitability, in fact, the performance of commercial enterprises is typically measured by financial returns. Given this definition, there can be many types of commercial enterprises; the simplest form of it is a sole proprietorship, namely a business with a single owner, who usually works in the enterprise itself. Commercial enterprises can also include partnerships, cooperatives and corporations.[6]

- Services enterprises; those enterprises engaged in providing or rendering services and are defined in terms of investment in equipment. They can be either for profit or not for profit, what they have in common are some basic characteristics, in particular the services they offer, namely intangible products such as accounting, banking, consulting, cleaning, landscaping, education, insurance, treatment, transportation services, information technology, events support, infrastructures, financial services, professional services, logistics, hospitality, culture, medicine, wellness and so on.[7]

- Industrial enterprises; this group of enterprises comprises those who manufacture goods or services with the help of relatively small machines and few employees and workers. They produce goods for sale to wholesalers, retailers or end customers, depending on their size and structure. In the case of SMEs, they mostly are small-scale industries, artisanal enterprises or family enterprises.

2.1.4 SMEs in the European economic landscape

In the European landscape, small and medium enterprises constitute the backbone of European economies. They constitute almost 99% of all European businesses and are the most important source of innovation and employment.

5 HTTPS://WWW.SOCIALENTERPRISE.ORG.UK/WHAT-IS-IT-ALL-ABOUT

6 HTTPS://WWW.EHOW.CO.UK

7 HTTP://WWW.BUSINESSDICTIONARY.COM/DEFINITION/SERVICE-BUSINESS.HTML

According to the Annual Report on European SMEs 2017/2018[8], 99 out of every 100 businesses are SMEs, employ 2 out of every 3 employees and produce 57 cents of every euro of value-added (net contribution of the company to the economy).

Small and medium-sized enterprises are thus viewed as important players in the well-being of local and regional communities, with a high potential for employment creation. They also play an important role in Europe's 2020 strategy, contributing to the economic health of the European economy. As such, SMEs have a central role in the EU economy, especially in their contribution to employment. In particular, micro-enterprises are the ones that employ more people than any other size enterprise, within many sectors.[9]

2.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESSES IN SMEs

2.2.1 How is the selection process carried out in SMEs?

As small organizations, in SMEs the owner-manager tends to be responsible for Human Resources Management (HRM). A Diversity Survey conducted by the EIM Business Policy and Research and Focus Consultancy, suggested that in two-thirds of SMEs the owner-manager personally deals with HRM issues, while just 22 percent rely on a designated HR manager. As would be expected, larger SMEs more often appoint a designated HR manager than smaller SMEs. This is mainly dictated by the reduced size of many SMEs. Yet there is a higher risk in SMEs that the person responsible for HRM may not have had the necessary training to ensure that the best possible systems of recruitment and promotion have been developed, including diversity training.[10]

According to experts interviewed during the first phase of this project, for the recruitment and selection process SMEs use different evaluation methods. They use tools such as role-play, written and/or oral tests, interviews, CVs analysis, diplomas and certificates analysis, task to be performed at the moment, or even at home as "homework" and short work trial periods. Most SMEs prefer to use face to face interviews as their main tool for the selection of candidates; even if some country or SMEs use tests or other tools, these are used in combination with interviews.

Even if interviews are oral, many SMEs use standardized procedures for the interviews. They can be individual or group interviews, but their aim is the same, namely, to evaluate the suitability of the candidate for the job position. This is done focusing on specific work-

8 EU, ANNUAL REPORT ON EUROPEAN SMES 2017/2018, SMES GROWING BEYOND BORDERS, 2018

9 EUROSTAT, KEY FIGURES ON EUROPEAN BUSINESS WITH A SPECIAL FEATURE ON SMES, 2011

10 DIVERSITY FOR TALENT AND COMPETITIVENESS: THE SME BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY HTTP://WWW.IEGD.ORG/PDF/TASK%202%20-%20SMES.PDF

related characteristics of the candidate such as teamwork, ability to work under pressure, technical competencies, know-how and professional experience and the reactions of the candidate. According to what experts said during the research phase, interviews are preferred because of their more personal character and because they allow the interviewer to get to know better the candidate.

In particular, the main questions and topics addressed during the interviews are both professional and personal ones. The personal ones are focused on personality and self-knowledge such as strengths and weakness, personal motivation for the job position, expectations about salary, willingness or intentions about what they want or hope to learn, their self-description, the contribution they can bring, personal data, interests and values, etc. The professional ones are mainly focused on IT and linguistic skills, technical competencies, availability to travel, professional and academic path, skills related to the job position, reasons why they quit the last position, ability to work independently or in a team, what makes them the best candidates for the position, past professional experiences and job-positions, etc.

Other very important competencies, halfway between personal and professional ones, that are commonly analyzed during the selection process are mathematical intelligence, logical and spatial reasoning, IQ level and social and emotional intelligence. This last one competence comprehends creativity, self-knowledge, self-motivation, emotional control and empathy and interpersonal relationship abilities. All of this contributes to the personality of the candidates, that's why face to face interviews are the most commonly used tools, because verbal and physical language, such as posture, sociability, extraversion, proactivity, communication, concentration, are the windows for people's personality.

Even if personal and professional characteristics are mainly analyzed through interviews, the same questions and topics are analyzed using the other tools mentioned above. Soft and hard skills are both evaluated, but as we have seen, SMEs mainly concentrate their analysis on personal and professional competencies, with differences depending on single countries and SMEs.

According to the information gathered during the research phase, it has emerged that SMEs are a category that presents a diverse and complex evaluation and selection process, using the interviews as the first tool, but combining it with other tools, especially tests.

2.2.2 Risk factors for gender discrimination in the selection process

Nonetheless, even if in SMEs a lot of attention is paid to personal characteristics and personality, most of the time the perception of the person who is being evaluated is filtered by some subjective categorization. A lot of studies have been undertaken about gender

discrimination and, most of the time, it has emerged that the process of formation of impression is driven by subjective factors and not by objective factors.

This subjective filter brings to categorizations and labelling, moving the focus from the individual attributes to the category/label attributes. Once a person has been categorized, reactions to him or her are driven by and based on stereotypes. The more the attributes and characteristics of a person are ascribable to a category or a label, the higher is the probability to be categorized based on a stereotype. This unconscious stereotyping process may be expressed behaviorally, leading to discriminations.

In selection contexts, stereotypes that negatively depict minority group members, such as it often happens with race and gender, may lead to discrimination in the form of poor and incorrect evaluations and, consequently, leading to sex discrimination. Moreover, the process of stereotyping is not limited to the perception of the person, there are other factors that can influence an HR manager in evaluating someone. These other factors are less recognizable because they do not lead to evident discrimination.[11]

About that, in selection contexts, some of the main risk factors that could bring to sex discrimination are the type of the job and job-position under consideration, the sex of the evaluator and gendered language.

Gender discrimination can occur in every step of the recruitment process, starting from the job advertisement. In this first phase, what mostly creates discrimination is the language used to announce the job position. In fact, according to many studies/analyses, the language of adverts can inadvertently exclude one gender of applicants by employing gendered language. Some adjectives, verbs, phrases and desired attributes are stereotypically attributed to men or women, and are therefore more likely to attract one gender instead of another, creating a self-selection process from the beginning. For example, studies reveal that words such as "leadership" or "competitive" and "assertive", are more likely to be addressed to male-dominant job positions, making the job listing less appealing to women, as the society tends to regard this kind of words as masculine. At the same time, words such as "collaborative", "supportive" and "nurturing" are frequently used to describe feminine traits and are more likely to be addressed to female-dominant job positions.[12]

In addition, women suffer from two different types of discrimination. On one hand, a horizontal discrimination/segregation, given by the fact that women tend to be found in

11 DAVISON, BURKE 2000

12 HTTPS://WWW.FORBES.COM/SITES/HBSWORKINGKNOWLEDGE/2016/12/14/HOW-TO-TAKE-GENDER-BIAS-OUT-OF-YOUR-JOB-ADS/#28729F3B1024

similar occupational groups and in the same economic sectors. Therefore, for male sex-typed jobs and work positions, female applicants are more likely to have lower ratings than male ones. The same is for men in the case of female sex-typed jobs, but males are distributed across a wider range of occupations and sectors, lowering the probability that this occurs.

On the other hand, women suffer a vertical discrimination/segregation, related to the fact that women are more employed in lower or intermediate levels of professions and job positions, being significatively less represented in higher and leadership and management positions. All of this, in the same way as the gendered language in the job advertisement, leads to a self-selection process among the applicants and, in addition, creates and continues the gender discrimination in all the subsequent phases of the recruitment and selection process.[13] This also occurs because women are often excluded from job positions that require more responsibilities than other positions.

This structural discrimination happens because, as already said, skills such as leadership and managerial ones are stereotypically attributed to men. This brings to gender biases especially when a woman has this kind of skills or personal traits, non-corresponding to the stereotype of the female figure, thus leading to a negative perception of her. Given that, the type of job and the position offered, such as the evaluation phase, are more likely to be influenced by this unconscious stereotyping. Moreover, the social and psychological literature indicates that people see others as being part of their own group (the in-group) or being part of another one (the out-group), in relation to personal identities. This means that people are more likely to relate with people apparently part of the in-group and less likely to relate with those from the out-group, leading to an unfavourable vision of the out-group members. This because people usually assume that the characteristics of in-group members are more positive and favourable.

Given that, during the evaluations for a job position, the sex of the evaluator is an influencing factor because raters may see same-sex applicants as members of their own group, and consequently opposite-sex applicants as out-group members, making them subject to stereotypes. This bias is part of the "person similarity bias" because of which we tend to favor people that are more similar to us or to people we like.[14] A male HR/rater is thus more likely to choose a male applicant over a female one and a female rater is more likely to choose a woman.[15]

13 EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, BRAKE GENDER STEREOTYPES, GIVE TALENT A CHANCE, 2008

14HTTPS://WWW.FORBES.COM/SITES/PRAGYAAGARWALEUROPE/2018/10/19/HOW-CAN-BIAS-DURING-INTERVIEWS-AFFECT-RECRUITMENT-IN-YOUR-ORGANISATION/#395F13601951

15 DAVISON, BURKE (2000)

Gender discrimination can, therefore, occur in every single step of the selection and recruitment process. The usage of gendered language influences the steps of creating a job announcement and advertising it; the type of the job and the job position offered influence the phases of evaluation and selection, also influenced by the sex of the HR/rater. For the project's purpose it has been analyzed what and how happens in the recruitment process, however sex discrimination is something that occurs also once a job is obtained.

2.3   THE EFFECTS OF GENDER BIAS IN SMEs

2.3.1 How does gender bias affect the hiring process?

Before starting to talk about gender bias, we need to know what bias is. Differently from the word "stereotype", that indicates a preconceived idea that attributes certain general characteristics to all members of a class, set or group of persons, the word "bias" indicates a personal preference, in terms of sympathy or dislike, especially when the tendency interferes with the ability to be impartial, objective or unprejudiced. Going deeper in the term, biases are defined as "cognitive" because they represent a limitation in objective thinking caused by the tendency for the human brain to perceive and filter information through personal experience and preferences.[16] The filtering process is called "heuristics" (also called "mental shortcuts") and it is a coping mechanism that allows the human brain to prioritize and process the vast amount of inputs it receives each second of each day. Usually, heuristics is considered a positive thing for human beings, something that helps humans solve problems and learn new concepts, making our thinking and decision-making faster and more efficient. However, while the mechanism is very effective, its limitations can cause errors and problems.[17]

Given that cognitive biases are mostly unconscious, people are usually not aware of this automatic filtering process. It may not be totally possible to eliminate the brain's predisposition to take shortcuts but understanding that bias exists can be useful when making decisions in order to keep the bias in check. About that, it is important to understand that "cognitive bias" is an umbrella term which includes many types of biases that influence individuals differently, but with a common characteristic: the fact that they lead to judgements and decisions that deviate from rationality and objectivity. Given what was said until now, stereotypes can also be considered a kind of bias.[18]

In this regard, there are two macro-categories of biases, biases related to others and biases related to contexts.

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16 HTTPS://SEARCHENTERPRISEAI.TECHTARGET.COM/DEFINITION/COGNITIVE-BIAS

17 HTTPS://WWW.THOUGHTCO.COM/HEURISTICS-PSYCHOLOGY-4171769

18 HTTPS://WWW.INTERACTION-DESIGN.ORG/LITERATURE/TOPICS/COGNITIVE-BIASES

Among the most recurrent biases, the main ones are:

- *Affinity bias*, the tendency to like people who are similar to us;
- *Confirmation bias*, the tendency to search for information that confirms our preconceptions;
- *Attribution substitution*, using a simple attribute to make a complex judgement;
- *Out-group homogeneity*, the perception that everyone outside of your group is similar;
- *Social desirability bias,* giving a socially desirable response to questions rather than an actual opinion.

Therefore, biases are something that occur in our daily life, most of the time in an unconscious way, influencing our daily decisions and opinions about people and things. Cognitive biases are thus more likely to creep into the recruitment process during the evaluations of candidates, because it's a moment in which HR have to make decisions based on opinions they are developing about the candidate; in particular, the biases that occur in the recruitment and selection process are mainly those related to gender.

Gender biases are preferences or prejudices toward one gender over the other. They can be subtle or overt and may result in small or large consequences. The main phase in which gender biases occur is the interview step that, as we have seen before, is the main tool used by SMEs to recruit and select people. Gender biases are more likely to be detrimental to women, and not only by men but also by women themselves; in fact, a study on this issue, in which respondents, both women and men, were asked either direct or indirect questions has revealed that in Europe, when asked direct questions, 10% of women and 36% of men have prejudices against women and, when indirect questions were asked, this number increased to 28% for women and to 45% for men.[19]

The most common gender biases that occur in interviews are:
- Biases about parental responsibilities or plans; even when men also have families, women have to face (negative) considerations about their ability to accomplish work-related tasks if they are mothers and thus have parental responsibilities. Some common assumptions are that women could get pregnant and thus need maternity leave; that they have to take care of their child and could need to extend maternity leave or need to leave the workplace earlier. Although nowadays fathers also have paternity leaves and share parental responsibilities with women, they rarely encounter this kind of problems in job interviews.

19 HOFFMANN, A. & MUSCH, J. (2018). PREJUDICE AGAINST WOMEN LEADERS: INSIGHTS FROM AN INDIRECT QUESTIONING APPROACH, SEX ROLES

- Biases about assertiveness and leadership abilities; it's a common preconception that men are natural leaders and women are not just because they are considered as too shy or unassertive. This assumption prevents women from being considered for leadership and management positions making them underrepresented in executive levels. Obviously, also in this case, leadership abilities and skills differ from person to person, regardless of their gender. Also, these kinds of skills can be personal, natural skills, or can be acquired throughout academic and work experience.

- Biases about emotional control; women also have to face assumptions about their ability to manage emotions in the workplace. There is the perception that assertive men are strong leaders, but assertive women are "bossy" or "mean". Moreover, some men can't deal with taking directions and duties from female leaders in executive-level roles. This is incorrect because every person has a different level of emotional intelligence, regardless of their gender.

- Biases about role fit; there are certain jobs some people consider as better suited only for either men or women. Women are more likely to encounter this stigma for a larger variety of professions, in particular in those that historically are dominated by men. This bias doesn't consider the ability to do a task as a personal ability, a person's skills, work experience and education, but something related to gender. Women are thus tested against a higher threshold and are requested to present more evidence than men to be seen as qualified: they experience tougher scrutiny of their accomplishments. Judgments of competence and likability are negatively correlated for women.[20]

Gender biases affect women in different ways. It can create a vicious circle in which performance can be undermined when a person fears confirming a negative stereotype about their identity group when that identity is salient, this negative performance reinforces the gender-related stereotype and so on. The consciousness of gender stigma can also trigger feelings of anxiety and activate coping mechanisms such as self-silencing, disengagement, isolation, and can prevent women from applying for some type of jobs or positions.

2.3.2 Benefits of addressing gender bias in enterprises

Gender biases are a key issue for the European Union; even if a lot of work has been done during the past decades, women still face barriers in the recruitment process. Nevertheless, a lot of researches prove that gender diversity brings benefits in different ways. For instance, an organization with a diverse workforce, especially those with gender

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20 HTTPS://RECRUITERBOX.COM/BLOG/COMMON-GENDER-BIASES-THAT-OCCUR-IN-JOB-INTERVIEWS

diversity in executive teams, is not only likely to outperform those which are less diverse but are also more able to attract talented people.[21]

There are many benefits of adopting a gender diversity attitude at work. Benefits are not limited to the enterprise, but there would be benefits also for the team and for the market. In 2006, the term "womenomics" was coined, defining the economic theory according to which women's work is today the most important engine of world's development. The first interesting discovery is the strong link between female work and economic growth. It is estimated that the most important impulse to growth in the near future will come from women's work. The new formula of economic growth is "women, work, economy, fertility". The theory of womenomics is in fact the first one to link the issues of the so-called equal opportunities to the economic growth indicators of a country. The basic idea is that without a greater contribution to production by women the world economy does not grow sufficiently. In countries where this participation is high, demographic problems are also minor. [22]

According to other studies, gender diversity in the workplace increases positive perception of three work-related areas: self-promotion, equal pay and career opportunities. Both men and women are more likely to feel they can self-promote and communicate their ambitions in the workplace, regardless of gender.[23] This will not only make workers feel they can progress, but it will also increase career motivation and satisfaction, fostering positive attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. Gender diversity in the workplace also increases engagement and performance, namely, inclusive workforces breed higher satisfaction levels which in turn increase employee engagement thus resulting in increased performance for everyone. Moreover, women currently influence over 85% of retail decisions so aligning direct representation within the workforce is almost imperative in order to capitalize this aspect. One of the reasons is that diversity brings together varied perspectives, produces a more holistic analysis of the issues a company faces and stimulates greater effort, leading to improved decision-making.

Among the benefits, one of the main ones is a decrease in turnover. In fact, employee turnover is one of the key, and most costly, challenges businesses face on a daily basis. Inclusive workplaces are reported to have 22% lower turnover rates due to increased morale, opportunity and equality, delivering long term benefits for the enterprise and for the staff itself. This reduces the costs by limiting advertising costs, time spent on interviews and administrative tasks, termination pay, onboarding costs for the new employee and so on.

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[21] HTTPS://WWW.MCKINSEY.COM/~/MEDIA/MCKINSEY/BUSINESS%20FUNCTIONS/ORGANIZATION/OUR%20INSIGHTS/DELIVERING%20THROUGH%20DIVERSITY/DELIVERING-THROUGH-DIVERSITY_FULL-REPORT.ASHX

[22] HTTP://WOMENOMICS.IT/

[23] HTTPS://WWW.HAYS.BE/EN/CAREER-ACADEMY/DIVERSITY/5-BENEFITS-OF-IMPLEMENTING-A-GENDER-DIVERSITY-POLICY-IN-THE-WORKPLACE-1978766

Another benefit is the improvement on the enterprise's reputation; how the enterprise is represented to its audience, its employees, its investors and its future talent pool is a key definer of its overall success. [24] The productivity and growth gains from adding women to the labor force are large. It is estimated that ending the gender gap could increase the GDP by an average of 35%, mainly due to the gender diversity effect on productivity. Moreover, this bring benefits also for men because, given the higher enterprise's productivity, men's wages will increase as a result of a greater inclusion of women in the labor force.[25]

Diversity management helps in talent recruitment and better talent translates into better financial performance for the enterprise. Besides, diversity in leadership can help a company secure access to more sources of talent, gain a competitive recruitment advantage, and improve its global relevance. In fact, diversity management is one important means of addressing talent shortages, that's because, when there are no barriers for women in the recruitment process, the enterprise has a wider range of people from which it can choose, increasing the probability of having a talented person among the candidates. Gender diversity also brings improved customer orientation; by committing to diversity, companies align their own organization more closely with an increasingly heterogeneous and more differentiated set of customers. This generates other benefits, such as the fact that enterprise's leaders with a customer perspective are able to respond to market developments more quickly and creatively than other enterprises.

Finally, managers working on arduous problems often assemble diverse teams of thinkers to challenge one another and improve the quality of their answers. This happens because, a diversity of informed views enables alternatives to be explored more efficiently and broadens the set of solutions, that at the same time will emerge more readily and will be adopted with greater confidence. The presence of women in leadership teams provides different experiences and perspectives and consequently enhances problem solving tools, broadening points of view and ameliorating solutions. Moreover, from a study published in "Innovation: Management, Policy & Practice", it has emerged that enterprises that promote gender diversity inside the company itself bring more radical innovation into the market; another study says that increased cultural diversity is an advantage to innovativeness. All of this enhances the enterprise's image.[26] Last but not least, creating a more diverse workplace will help to keep team members' biases in check and make them question their assumptions, creating a virtuous circle.

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24 HTTPS://WWW.ADVOCATE-GROUP.CO.UK/5-REAL-BENEFITS-OF-GENDER-DIVERSITY-IN-THE-WORKPLACE/

25 HTTPS://WWW.WEFORUM.ORG/AGENDA/2018/12/ECONOMIC-GAINS-FROM-GENDER-INCLUSION-EVEN-GREATER-THAN-YOU-THOUGHT/

26 V. HUNT, D. LAYTON, S. PRINCE, DIVERSITY MATTERS, 2015

3. EFFECTIVE USE OF GENEUS TOOLS IN SMEs

When looking for a candidate to fill a vacant position, employers need to make sure that they will be able to select the best candidate, who will have the qualifications and competencies required for the job, and who will be a good fit within the organisation. In order to find the best available candidate, it is fundamental that the recruiters' judgement is not altered by unconscious biases of any kind (see some examples in point 2.3 of this document).

The first step for finding the candidate who possesses all the right qualities, is identifying clearly what those qualities are: what kind of qualifications and knowledge are required? What transversal and specific competencies? What level of responsibility does the position entail, if any? These questions can be effectively answered through a *Job Analysis*: for more detail on the job analysis and a job analysis template, please consult point 1.2 of the present document or *IO2 – Set of Gender-neutral Selection Tools and Test*.

3.1 HOW TO EMPLOY GENEUS' TOOLS EFFECTIVELY

Once the desired specific and transversal competencies to be sought in candidates for a specific position have been identified, GeNeus' gender-neutral tools and test for selection processes can be effectively employed in order to identify, recognize and assess candidates' competencies without bias.

3.1.1 Job Analysis Template

The job analysis is a fundamental first step in a gender-neutral, effective and fair staff selection process. The GeNeus Job Analysis Template is a precious pre-selection instrument designed to encourage a reflection on the precise role to be filled, on its position within the company and level of responsibility, and on the necessary characteristics to be looked for in candidates. Conducting a job analysis is fundamental not

only for the sake of the recruitment process, but also as an important exercise for the health of the company.

It is recommended that the job analysis be conducted by more than one person, including Human Resources managers/consultants – if present – directors and the coordinator of the department the specific vacancy in exam is placed in, or just someone with a managerial position who is in charge of the open vacancy.

3.1.2 General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire

The General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire is composed of 20 questions which aim at assessing mainly three transversal competencies - **Initiative/proactivity, Organisation, and Social competence** – which are fundamental competencies for employment, including in all different levels of hierarchical responsibility.

How to administer the questionnaire

In order to fill the test, applicants should be put in a situation of comfort and concentration, so that they can reflect on the statements and feel free to give honest answers. In alternative, the questionnaire can be administered online through a Google Form such as this one: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxc8Xc3QyrgeFo_LAthPfyL4U5g6esqJy7iR4Cl9sEi4OwZA/viewform. The applicant is presented with a five points scale of agreement (from 1 to 5) regarding the statements presented. N.B. The values of the scale might need to be quoted in reverse, but only in the cases quoted in point 1.2 (for a more detailed explanation on the statistical criteria, see the appendices of *IO2 – Set of Gender-neutral Selection Tools and Test*).

How to interpret and evaluate the answers

The final quotation of the test must be interpreted according to the coloured system, available in each National General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire (*Appendix 3.1 to 3.5 of the document IO2 - Set of Gender-Neutral Selection Tools and Test, Table IV of the section "Statistical Information"*). This coloured system will provide the results regarding the Level of Performance/Competence of the candidate. Specifically:

- Very below average
- Below average
- On average
- Above average
- Well above average

The colours green, blue and purple indicate positive results, indicating that the applicant has a suitable level of professional competence for the job position.

This final version of the questionnaire underwent a standardization process, with pilot phases involving the target groups of the project. As such, and due to the differences of each national context, this test can only be applied and interpreted as presented in the five countries of the partnership - Austria, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy and Portugal. Moreover, contextual, cultural and even language differences among these countries have highlighted different statistical results for different specific questions, indicating that gender differences arise in different parts of the test in different countries. Therefore, although applicants in all countries should be presented with and answer all of the 20 questions, recruiters should only evaluate the questions indicated in point 1.3 of this document or in IO2, in order to ensure the gender-neutrality of the tool.

3.1.3 Analysis Exercises – Problem Solving

The analysis exercises are aimed at identifying, recognizing and evaluating several transversal competencies related to problem-solving, such as the ability to identify a problem, interpersonal skills, lateral thinking and the ability to learn from experience. Three exercises have been developed, presenting 3 different situations of distress: Exercise 1 – Office party; Exercise 2 – Store situation; Exercise 3 – Office situation. These three exercises are independent of one another, therefore they can be used together or separately (see point 1.2.3 of this document to read the text of the exercises and the questions).

How to administer the exercises

Just like the questionnaire, if a recruiter is willing to test a candidate's competencies in the area of problem-solving, they should allow the participants to give their answers to the exercises in a comfortable and relaxed environment, which will allow them to give honest and well-thought answers which will effectively show their personality.

How to interpret and evaluate the answers

In order to interpret and evaluate the answers the candidates will give to the problem-solving exercises, the GeNeus partnership has developed a set of evaluation/orientation criteria for classification based on the level of skills (from inexistent to high level) in all the areas covered by the exercises: Problem identification, Collection of information, Generation of ideas and evaluation of ideas, Implementation planning and Evaluation of solution. Following, you can find the evaluation/orientation criteria and an evaluation example (based on Exercise 1 – Office party situation).

Evaluation/Orientation for classification:

	1. Problem identification	2. Collection of information	3. Generation of ideas and evaluation of ideas	4. Implementation planning	5. Evaluation of solution
1.INEXISTENT	Does not identify the problem at all.	Does not refer to gather more information or the information is not pertinent.	No ideas or not adequate	Does not present an answer; or presents something different from what was presented previously; or presents something that is not logical considering the whole context.	No clear idea, or very confusing way to present it.
2. LOW LEVEL	The emphasis is on the non-relevant issues, acknowledges the problem but as a detail, not the central issue.	Gather an incomplete set of information including non-relevant issues, and/or does not specify the sources.	Presentation only one alternative with no pros or cons.	a) does not select the alternative that seems the most obvious/simple, considering the pros and cons presented; and/or b) does not explain the activities to perform.	The emphasis is on the non-relevant issues, acknowledges the problem but as a detail, not the central issue.
3. INTERMEDIATE	Identifies the problem but included other non-relevant details.	Gathers an incomplete set of information and/or does not specify the sources.	One idea with pros and cons (or two ideas with no pros or cons).	a) Selects the alternative that, within the alternatives presented, and considering the pros and cons identified in the previous question is the most appropriate; b) briefly explains the activities to perform, with not much details.	to present a basic, sometime the initial idea (with no flexibility). To identify partially the lessons to be taken, in a general way.

4. HIGH LEVEL	Cleary identifies the problem.	Refers to gathering enough relevant information also indicating the sources.	Two ideas with pros and cons.	a) Selects the alternative that, within the alternatives presented, and considering the pros and cons identified in the previous question is the most appropriate; b) explains in detail the activities to be performed to fulfil the selected option and presents alternatives of situations that might not go so well as the best predictions.	to have the perspective of the client, not necessarily the perspective of the firm. To identify the most important lessons.

For an example of evaluation of the answers of the problem-solving exercises, please see Appendix 2.

3.1.4 Job Interview Template

Interviews are by far the most common type of selection tool employed in SMEs. They are preferred by recruiters and business managers because it gives them the perception that they can get an all-round impression of the candidates and better assess elements such as person-job fit and/or person-organisation fit. However, and much for the same reasons, interviews are also the type of selection tool that can leave the most space to gender bias and discrimination as even the most well-intentioned recruiter is exposed to cognitive biases (both gender-related and not). The interview template can, therefore, serve as a guide for recruiters to avoid losing track of the interview focus points and evaluate specific elements of the candidates' answers.

How to employ the template

The job interview template can be employed in the framework of a semi-structured interview. For a successful interview, it is important that the candidate feels at ease and can reduce the level of stress that inevitably plays a role in a job interview setting, in order to allow them to reveal their real personality, competencies, strengths and weaknesses.

How to assess an interview conducted following the template

During an interview, it is advised for the recruiter to take notes and mark roughly certain competence levels as the interview itself is unfolding, as it will help them not being influenced by bias while evaluating and remember all the things that were said.

The following is a more detailed version of the Interview template, including guidelines and tips on topics and conversation strategies to bring up during the interview, specific competencies to look for and how to evaluate them.

3.1.5 Template of Evaluation Checklist of the Applicant

The template of evaluation checklist of the applicant is designed to support recruiters in putting together evaluations obtained from different phases of the selection process and through different methods. The template is useful in order to summarize different types of evaluations in terms of qualifications and specific competencies. Ideally, the evaluation checklist would have to be filled by a third party, someone – an HR manager, a manager, the supervisor of the job position in object – who didn't actively take part in the selection process, and is able to apprehend the results of several evaluations and draw a general picture of a candidate's profile and worth free of any bias. You can find the evaluation checklist template at point 1.2.5 of this document or in IO2 – Gender-neutral Tools and Test for Selection Processes.

3.2 HOW TO EMPLOY GENEUS' TOOLS EFFECTIVELY TO LOOK FOR SPECIFIC STAFF CATEGORIES AND COMPETENCIES/SKILLS

Different staff profiles require different specific competencies. A rough distinction across types of SMEs and specific roles can be made based on the level of responsibility in an enterprise/organization's internal decision-making process: high responsibility profiles, medium responsibility profiles, low responsibility profiles. Different levels of responsibilities require different sets of transversal skills and competencies, and GeNeus' gender-neutral tools and test for selection processes can be a valuable instrument to detect, identify and effectively assess these skills. When looking for any level of responsibility of staff, it is recommended that employers perform a thorough and critical job analysis by employing GeNeus' Job Anaysis Template before initiating the selection process. For insights on how to conduct the job analysis, consult point 3.1.1 of this document.

3.2.1 High responsibility profiles

High responsibility staff constitute the bulk of an enterprise's or organization's decision making and include managerial staff: CEO, director, president, head of departments/units, depending on the internal hierarchical structure and the size of the SME. When looking to fill a managerial position, it is fundamental for the recruiter to find the perfect candidate, as these positions entail delicate dynamics and require very specific competencies and skills, which should be identified clearly before initiating the recruitment process through a Job

Analysis and an internal consultation. These can include planning, communication, decision-making, delegation, problem-solving skills. GeNeus' tools can be employed effectively in order to detect and assess such competencies.

General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire

The General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire is aimed at allowing recruiters to detect and assess 3 main types of competencies: initiative-taking/proactivity, organization skills and social competencies. These competencies are considered among the top 10 skills required for workers by the World Economic Forum (Gray, 2016) and in the Proposal European Reference Framework of Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning (Council of the European Union, 2018).

When looking for high responsibility profiles, it is important that the recruiters select candidates who obtain "*well above average*" scores – as indicated by the evaluation/assessment guidelines found in point 3.1.1 of this document or in IO2.

Analysis Exercises

The analysis exercises are designed to measure a candidate's problem-solving competencies, including lateral thinking, working under pressure, interpersonal competencies. In particular, exercises 1 and 3 highlight organizational competencies and under pressure decision-making, and exercise 2 allows for recruiters to specifically assess interpersonal competencies and lateral thinking. When looking for a high responsibility profile for one's enterprise, recruiters can choose to focus mainly on exercises 1 and 3, which emphasize competencies fundamental in leadership positions. In order to add a further level of observation and difficulty to the task, the recruiter and/or the person conducting the selection process can choose to add a time constraint for the exercise.

In order to ponder whether the candidate is fit to cover a managerial position, recruiters should look for candidates who obtain "*high level*" scores in the problem-solving exercises, as problem-solving and related competencies (such as organization, initiative-taking and social competencies) are fundamental for successfully covering responsibility positions.

Job Interview template

The job interview template is the tool that leaves the most space for maneuver to recruiters, as they can couple it with a diligent job analysis and use it to investigate specific competencies, attitudes, experiences, etc. In fact, a recruiter can employ the job interview template by including the questions they need for the specific profiles they are looking for. In the case of managerial positions, recruiters may want to ask candidates about their management-related skills and competencies, specific knowledge and/or know-how, and assess their performance as the interview unfolds, therefore ensuring that relevant details

are not forgotten and overshadowed by general impressions which can be dictated by bias (either positive or negative) which can lead to poor hiring choices and/or discriminatory behavior.

3.2.2 Medium responsibility profiles

Medium responsibility staff represents an important part of an SME's employees, especially since in many SME contexts managerial staff is limited. Medium responsibility profiles can include very different job positions and, especially given the diversity of SME types (see point 2 of this document). Medium responsibility positions can include:

- Human resources

- Project / Product manager

- Financial / accountant

- Consultant / Analyst

- Sales manager

- Marketing manager

- ICT expert / Social media manager

What these roles – and many analogous others which were not listed – have in common, is their role in the decision-making dynamics of an enterprise: they generally hold many responsibilities and actively contribute to the enterprise's functioning and well-being but have little weight in internal and external decision-making.

General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire

The General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire is aimed at allowing recruiters to detect and assess 3 main types of competencies: initiative-taking/proactivity, organization skills and social competencies. These competencies are considered among the top 10 skills required for workers by the World Economic Forum (Gray, 2016) and in the Proposal European Reference Framework of Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning (Council of the European Union, 2018).

Although not involved in decision-making in the enterprise's dynamics, medium responsibility profiles still involve a considerable level of responsibility management, delegation and time-management. These competencies depend – among other elements – on high levels of initiative-taking, organization skills and social competencies, which can be assessed effectively through the questionnaire. It is therefore suggested that recruiters take into consideration candidates who obtain "*above average*" or "*well above average*" scores (according to the evaluation criteria illustrated in point 3.1.2 of this document).

Analysis Exercises

The analysis exercises can be an effective means to assess candidates' problem-solving competencies, which are fundamental at any level of employment. In fact, even at medium level positions, employees are faced with significant responsibilities in their day-to-day work and considerable time-pressure, therefore making the ability to overcome obstacles and creatively solve problems extremely important to possess in order to have a certain degree of autonomy from managers and direct superiors and effectively carry out one's job. Therefore, also in case of medium level responsibility positions it is recommended to prefer candidates who obtain "intermediate level" to "high level" scores, especially in exercises 1 and 2, which illustrate scenarios more consistent with medium level responsibility positions.

Job Interview template

As stated before, the job interview template – as a form of guiding structure for semi-structured interviews – is the GeNeus tool that leaves the most discretion in deciding what to look for in a candidate and what competencies to evaluate. During job interviews for a medium level responsibility position, it is advisable to enquire about candidates' experience and specific position-related knowledge and qualifications, but also about their motivation and growth perspectives within the enterprise, their team-work attitudes and learning prospects.

3.2.3 Low responsibility profiles

Low responsibility staff profiles are the ones that require the least qualifications and know-how, and are often intended to include a perspective of growth within the enterprise/organization (especially in the case of entry-level positions and apprenticeships/traineeships). Such positions entail a minimum level of on-the-job responsibility-taking and generally no participation in internal decision-making. Such positions can include (among others):

- Low-level administrative staff

- Customer support

- Apprentices/trainees/interns

General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire

The general competencies for employment questionnaire can be a very useful tool when seeking low responsibility profiles. In fact, as low levels of qualifications and know-how are required, it is interesting for recruiters to assess candidates' transversal

competencies such as the ones concerned by the questionnaire (*i.e.* initiative-taking/proactivity, organization skills and social competencies). Although ideally all shortlisted candidates should achieve high scores on the test, in the case of low responsibility level positions, recruiters can take into consideration "*on average*" to "*well above average*" scoring candidates (according to the evaluation criteria illustrated in point 3.1.2 of this document).

Analysis Exercises

In the case of low responsibility positions, the analysis exercises can be useful to assess candidates' transversal competencies – such as problem-solving abilities, interpersonal skills and lateral thinking – but recruiters may consider it to be too high a level for low responsibility positions, as they picture situations staff in such positions would probably never be in a position to face.

Job Interview template

Job interviews are a precious tool in order to assess a candidate's motivation, attitude to teamwork, eagerness and ability to learn and previous academic and/or professional experience. It is advised to take notes and write down on the spot short assessments for each investigated aspect of the candidate's profile on the previously adapted job interview template, so as to avoid having to rely on memory and thus being exposed to higher levels of bias as it is easy to forget the details and focus on impressions and feelings.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 ROOT OUT OR MINIMIZE BIAS

Before going deep and focusing on every hiring step, there are some general recommendations to be considered to root out or minimize gender biases in the workplace. First, it is highly recommended to provide training for HR and manager who carry out the hiring process. Staff who recruit, select, evaluate and supervise should follow specialized training on breaking gender stereotypes and biases and applying gender equality in practice. Training for staff on enterprise and country policy for gender equality can be an important tool for ensuring that everyone knows what it means. The training, whether delivered by internal staff, HR professionals or external trainers, should guide participants focusing on 4 main points:

- Gender equality legislation and what it means in practice;

- The roles and responsibilities of staff in making the work plan;
- Relations with fellow-workers and dealing with harassment and bullying;
- The opportunity for all staff to express their views on the matter, as well as their needs and concerns;

Diversity training in the workplace is aimed at addressing all of the unique things about employees - color, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, gender, socio-economic status, age, and physical and mental ability and so on– and the manner in which everyone should work together. This goes beyond being "politically correct" and moves toward learning how to embrace differences among employees, also including the valuable inputs and perspectives all employees bring to the enterprise. Anyway, successful diversity training should lay out an enterprise culture that is inclusive and not divisive; they also should respect and embrace different approaches that are the result of diverse employees; they should go beyond a simple list of do's and don'ts and try to build true understanding among employees; finally, diversity training should not just ask to tolerate differences.[27]

Another type of training is the Unconscious bias training. These kinds of training are based on the idea that if individuals are taught how stereotypes lead to gender biases, well-intentioned people who do not wish to be biased will be more thoughtful in their own decision-making and be less affected by stereotypes. There is some evidence that these training can reduce bias, at least in the short run. Yet, even when it is done right, recent researches say that sometimes this kind of training could be perceived as threatening to members of dominant groups, such as white men, increasing the biases and making them defensive. Researchers say that, to avoid defensive attitudes, unconscious bias training should be longer than other types of training and should underline the fact that both men and women are prone to these biases or showing studies' results on the field. Essentially, the attention should be focused on individual action rather than on the prevalence of biases in some groups. [28]

These two kinds of training are useful to create an environment free from biases, or with minimized bias; but, obviously, are also important for the hiring process. In this last case, training could be the first step toward a de-biased selection and evaluation process.

4.2 DE-BIAS THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS IN SMEs

A valid selection process means less bias in hiring; moreover, how the information is obtained can be as important as the information itself. In other words, there is the need to

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27 HTTPS://WWW.EDGEPOINTLEARNING.COM/BLOG/TYPES-OF-DIVERSITY-TRAINING/

28 HTTPS://JOURNALS.SAGEPUB.COM/EPRINT/3UWVJH8BKMR3NA75HJ36/FULL

use valid and reliable selection methods, which measures the applicant's qualifications, abilities, skills they are supposed to have, to select the candidate that best fits the job position, regardless of gender. There is not a method to be followed, but there are some tips and advice that, if considered during every single step of the hiring process, can help HR, manager and recruiter to de-bias the selection process.

As we said above, the first step is to choose an HR who attended a diversity training, or as an alternative, to train the HR on gender diversity; this depends on whether the HR is chosen from inside the enterprise itself or if is hired from outside.

Once HR has been chosen, the focus should be placed on the creation of Job advertisement. During the creation of the advertisement, the specific requirements of the job must be carefully considered so that all the potential applicants can clearly understand the skills and duties requested. Clearer is the job description more easily the specific information needed from the job applicant is identified. This helps to avoid seeking for unnecessary and potentially discriminatory information when selection criteria and interview questions are developed. In this phase is also really important to not use gendered and discriminatory language. This could be done by avoiding references to personal characteristics such as age, race and sex, unless are requirements for the job position. To be sure that in the job advertisement it is not used a gendered language, a useful website is http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/[29] that was created to make you aware of possible masculine/feminine-coded language. The language of job advertisement should be clear, comprehensive and easy to read, outlining duties and skills required and differentiating the essential and desirable selection criteria. It should not be used discriminatory or restricting language which suggests that is been considering only male or female applicants or that can discourage some people from applying for the job position and requested skills should be selected in an objective way, ensuring they are suitable for people of both sexes. In other words, the job advertisement should encourage as many suitable people as possible to apply, also because more suitable and talented people apply, higher is the probability to find the "perfect" candidate for the enterprise.

Shortlisting applicants is the subsequent step. HR managers and recruitment professionals should focus only on the skills and abilities requested on the job advertisement. They should not allow personal stereotypes and biases to influence their decision. When shortlisting applicants, recruiters should:

- evaluate applicants using selection criteria, matching skills and abilities according to the job requirements;
- be consistent with their decision making;

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29 PLEASE NOTE THAT INSTRUMENTS OF THIS SORT ARE ONLY AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH.

- document their reasons for making those decisions to provide feedback to applicants later and to be sure they are avoiding biases.[30]

Other tips are the usage of blind CVs evaluations, namely without looking for gender, or directly blind CVs that does not include anything that gives information about gender thus eliminating any information that has not to do with working related abilities and skills; also using an online platform or an AI that, using specific algorithms, can shortlist applicants according to the match between requested skills and possessed ones, is a good way to avoid biases. [31]

Once pre-selected potential suitable candidates, it is now the moment to <u>interview</u> them. As we already said, this tool is the one in which biases and stereotypes occur with a higher probability. Given that, the first step HR managers and professional recruiters should undertake is to prepare standardized questions for all the applicants, always remembering to not use discriminatory or gendered language and focusing on work-related personal and professional skills. Moreover, when conducting the interview, HR managers should not make assumptions based on the candidate's behavior or body language that may be the result of their gender or background. If there is the need to seek for further information the interviewer should not use potential discriminatory questions or language; so, for instance, if the job position requires some travelling, never ask about potential pregnancy, parental status, family responsibilities or childcare arrangements, but ask if they are able to perform job requirements, including travels. In other words, interviewers should focus on the applicant's ability to perform the job they are applying for, without making assumptions about the possible gender-related reasons they could not be able to do it. This last statement should be considered in every single step of the hiring process.

Finally, is the moment to <u>select the candidate</u>. To be sure that the selection is fair and nondiscriminatory some things should be taken into account, such as focus on the selection criteria matched by the applicant, be sure not to be influenced by stereotypes and biases, use all the information available not focusing on some rather than others and record the decision made and the reasons why the decision has been made. A good tip is to hire by committee, because team decisions can be less biased than individual decisions. Also, in this final phase, all the tips and advice given for the previous phases should be used.[32]

Summing up, some general recommendations to reduce bias and improve the hiring process are:

30 HTTPS://WWW.HUMANRIGHTS.GOV.AU/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/GPGB_RECRUITMENT_GUIDE.PDF

31 HTTPS://FACTORIALHR.COM/BLOG/GENDER-BIAS-RECRUITMENT/

32 HTTPS://WWW.HUMANRIGHTS.GOV.AU/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/GPGB_RECRUITMENT_GUIDE.PDF

- pay attention to the quality of job description and advertisement using a clear, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and not gendered language;
- use standardized selection tools and procedures, structuring interviews and using the same set of question for everyone;
- hire HR managers formed on gender diversity and use committee to select candidates;
- manage and control personal feelings about the applicant focusing on work-related personal and professional skills;
- don't ask questions based on personal assumption related to the gender;
- record the decisions and offer feedback;
- interview fairly and effectively.[33]

4.3   EMPLOYING GENEUS' GENDER-NEUTRAL TOOLS AND TEST

Employing GeNeus' gender-neutral tools and test for selection processes is not only a means to ensure that the recruitment and selection process is free of bias and does not favor one gender over another, but also to ensure that the recruitment process is smooth and effective, and that SMEs can employ the best possible candidates. In fact, gender, racial, age and other bias effectively limit the talent pool of candidates, introducing irrational (either positive or negative) criteria in an otherwise rational process, generating discriminatory attitudes and poor hiring decisions.

GeNeus' tools are designed to support employers and recruiters in making their hiring process fairer and more effective, allowing them to identify and define the competencies and professional profiles an enterprise needs for a specific job position (Job Analysis template); to assess candidates transversal competencies, such as initiative-taking, interpersonal skills, organization (General Competencies for Employment questionnaire) and problem solving (Analysis Exercises); to effectively investigate candidates specific knowledge, experience and attitudes and to conduct fair semi-structured interviews (Job interview template); and to put together assessments obtained through different tools and methods and draw a general conclusion, free of bias (Template of Evaluation Checklist of the Applicant).

All the competencies investigated by the GeNeus' tools, fundamental for employment in any position, can become more or less relevant depending on the level of responsibility involved in the position to be filled. It is advisable to critically employ the tools, taking into account the requirements of the job position recruiters are looking to fill, and the level of the candidates' competencies development.

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33 HTTPS://WWW.HIGHSPEEDTRAINING.CO.UK/HUB/HOW-TO-AVOID-DISCRIMINATION-IN-RECRUITMENT/

5. FEEDBACK FROM SME PROFESSIONALS

The present output has been analyzed by a total of 25 professionals from Small and Medium Enterprises in Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Spain. These were Human Resources experts or people who are in charge of selection of personnel, without having received a specific HR training. Here is a summary of their reactions:

CRITERIA	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Observations

#	Statement					Comments
1.	The content of the Set facilitates the improvement of the selection processes.			8 (32%)	17 (68%)	"This Manual gives employers the opportunity to concentrate on finding the best candidate with the best competences for that job without taking into account the gender of the candidate."
2.	The Set is practical for use and addresses the end-users effectively.		1 (4%)	11 (44%)	13 (52%)	"The case study helps a lot on understanding how effectively the tools can be used." "Particularly the case study, once it allows us to understand, in a practical way, how we can use effectively the tools."
3.	The Set covers thoroughly all the important topics concerning the effective implementation of the GeNeus gender-neutral tools and test.			12 (48%)	13 (52%)	"Is interesting to have an initial part in which, besides describing the tools, are introduced the main results of the testing in Portugal and other countries. It shows that there was a concern on adapting the tools to the context of the countries, increasing its feasibility."
4.	The length of the Set is suitable.	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	17 (68%)	6 (24%)	"Depends on the audience. A motivated expert in the field of selection would read it, but not other people who are not working in this field – for example a department manager that needs to participate in the process."
5.	The content of the Set is well organized.			9 (36%)	16 (64%)	"I suggest that Recommendations (chapter 5) appear before the Case Study (chapter 4), since they're also important to take into consideration before conducting the case study"

1. Which are the parts did you like the most and which the least? Do you consider that there is something missing to the Set? If yes, please specify.

- Most of all I like the practical side of the document. It is also very good that the tests are so prepared and adapted, that there are no legal restrictions who can use them.
- Most of all I liked 3.2 How to employ GeNeus' tools effectively to look for specific staff profiles and competencies – it is clearly written and very practical. The document resembles a mixture of academic work and practical handbook. If it is used as the second, the elements of the first should be removed.
- Test and exercises developed in the project; Guidelines for how to put the tools into practice for selection processes for different levels of jobs.
- Probably the part that I thought was less interesting was the 2.1, although it can be important for some people who don't have this knowledge, to get the global framework.

- I like the most the guidelines on how to use the tools according to the staff profiles and competencies (section 3.2).
- Even though well organized, I think that the document is a little bit long for SMEs and it can discourage its reading.
- Section 2.2 is particularly interesting to SME, allowing to understand the reality of the SME's selection process in other European countries, for one hand, and the relevance of the gender-neutral strategies in the SME's selection process, for another hand.
- I appreciate the idea of the document providing guidelines on how to use the tools according to the staff profiles and competencies (section 3.2).
- It could be useful to have a kind of chart or scheme in section 3.1 "showing" the process of using the tools (even considering that companies can use only part of the instruments).
- I liked that the instruments and the guide are very practical and the description accompanies the recruiter throughout the process.

2. Do you believe the content of this Set may have an efficient and positive impact on the way you/your organisation conduct the staff selection process? If not, please explain why not.

- This document can have positive influence on the process of selection in our as well as in any other organization because everything is logically structured and with the right length/volume. It is very suitable for non-professionals – the direct managers that take part in the selection process, especially in the field of describing the job, as well as the „hot" topic of gender neutrality in the selection process.
- Yes, we do not have qualified selection specialists because we are a small company and the manager and the owners of the company make the selection. As non-specialists, this guide will be very useful for us to objectify the selection and reduce the risk of hiring inappropriate people.
- Although I don't think the recruitment and selection process in my organisation has any type of discriminatory behaviour, I do believe this set would have an efficient and positive impact, not only here, but in any organisation regardless of its structure or dimension.
- I believe it will have a positive impact in SME's recruitment processes and in the culture of organisations by promoting a more inclusive workplace.
- Yes, I am convinced of its positive impact

3. Do you have any other comments regarding the improvement of the Set?

- The document is thoroughly developed, goal-oriented, provides sufficient and practical guidance regarding the gender neutral selection process in SMEs.

CONCLUSIONS

The feedback collected during the interviews conducted with SME stakeholders in all partner countries has highlighted a general appreciation of the output, and a lot have expressed the intention of employing the selection tools in their companies' selection processes. The interviewed professionals have received very well both the tools of selection themselves and the present set of application (IO4).

The most appreciated parts which are specific to the Set have been the case study and the practical tips for the effective use of the instruments according to the level of responsibility of the profile sought. Some concerns were raised by more than one respondent concerning the length of the output, and one particular interviewee pointed out that swapping the "case study" section with the recommendation would improve the reading experience as it would allow the reader to examine the case study after having read the recommendations. The output has therefore been amended by turning the "case study" section into an annex, so that it can be consulted freely without making the body of text too long, and so that it comes after the recommendations. The partnership firmly believes that this modification will improve user experience and makes the document's structure more intuitive.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 - CASE STUDY

1. PRE-SELECTION PHASE

In order to clearly demonstrate how to employ GeNeus' tools in a supposed selection process within an SME, we are going to take into consideration a small consultancy firm based in Italy, which works mainly with European-funded projects in Europe and internationally. The firm is looking for a new project manager who will support the international team in the implementation of three rather complex projects in Latin America, involving relations with local public and private stakeholders and with donors.

Before even starting the recruitment and selection process, Mr. Smith, the director of the company, Ms. Rossi, the vice-director and HR manager and Ms. Gonzalez, the head of the international department, meet in order to discuss what the firm needs and is looking for in a potential candidate to fill the position of "International Project Manager".

With the support of GeNeus' job analysis template, the three are able to take into account all elements at stake:

JOB NAME
International Project Manager

HIERARCHICAL POSITION
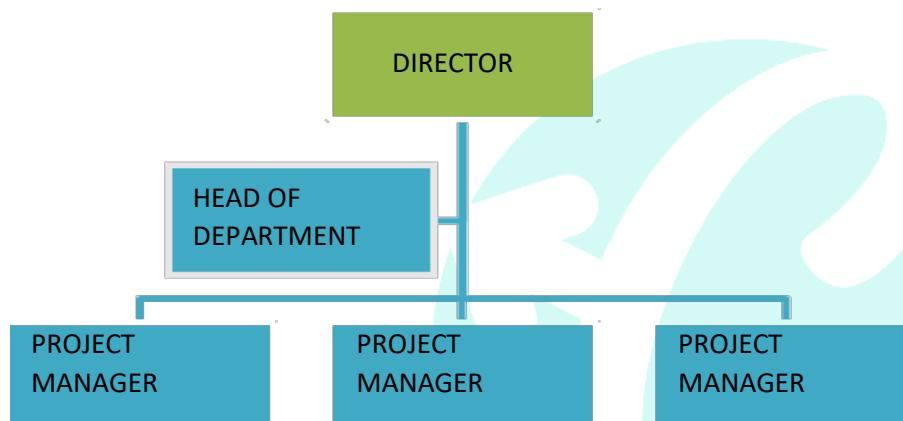
MAIN RESPONSABILITIES
- Overview of financial aspects of implementation of three projects in Latin America; - Liaising with local management team and stakeholders; - Perform continuous Monitoring and Evaluation on the project development; - Providing support to other Project Managers in the International department - Contributing to fundraising and entertaining donors and partners relationships;

- May include other responsibilities.

KNOWLEDGE, QUALIFICATIONS, AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

School level

Master's degree in International Development Economics or equivalent

Foreign languages knowledge

Essential:
- English (C1 or C2 both written and oral)
- Spanish (C1 or C2 both written and oral)

Preferred:
- Knowledge of French

Computer usage competencies

Knowledge of MS Office

Professional knowledge, professional qualifications and certifications

- Strong data analysis and financial reporting abilities;
- Knowledge of project cycle management;
- Demonstrable knowledge of Monitoring and Evaluation and Results-Oriented Monitoring;
- Knowledge of the Latin American context.

Professional experience

- At least three years of international project management experience;
- Previous experience in Latin America;
- Experience in fundraising;

COMPETENCIES PROFILE, ABILITIES AND APTITUDES

Transversal Competencies

- Flexible and adaptable attitude;
- Strong problem solving abilities and ability to multitask;
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to work in a multicultural environment;
- Strong organization and risk management skills.

Specific Competencies

- Cultural understanding of the local context of the project implementation area (Latin America);
- Ability to network and convince donors;
- Ability to interface with a team of highly skilled field practitioners.

VALIDATION

Supervisor

Mr. Smith	*Signature

Validation date

1/07/ 2019

The job analysis will serve as a blueprint for the recruiters to write a job description to be published and mainstreamed. Before publishing the job description, the text has been analyzed on http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/[35], in order to check the language and make sure it does not contained gendered words that could potentially discourage one or another gender from applying. The job description will require potential candidates to send a CV and cover letter.

2. SELECTION PHASE

In order to conduct an effective and fair selection process, Mr. Smith, Ms. Rossi and Ms. Gonzalez decide to divide the selection process in different steps and to share the evaluation of the results of the candidates. This will not only ensure the impartiality of the evaluation, but also improve the process, as a considerable number of applicants is foreseen. Ms. Rossi, as vice director and HR manager, will evaluate the Questionnaires and Problem-Solving exercises, while Ms. Gonzalez, as head of the international department, will conduct and evaluate the interviews.

2.1 General Competencies for Employment Questionnaire

The first step of the selection process is the questionnaire. Ms. Rossi and Ms. Gonzalez have analyzed the 15 CVs and cover letters received and assigned to each a reference number, thus obscuring the name and the picture of the applicant. All the candidates who will fit the requirements for the position and show convincing motivation, will be sent a link in order to answer the General Competences for Employment questionnaire.

Ms. Rossi will analyze the received answers according to the evaluation criteria described in point 1.3 of this document for Italy, and will select the candidates who will score between "Above average" - 18 to 19 points and "Well above average" - 20 to 25 points. These points will be calculated based on the evaluation of 5 questions:

1. I take the initiative, trying new ways to do my tasks
2. I like new challenges, which force me to think of new ways to develop my tasks / my work
6. I like routines and avoid making changes to my day-to-day life.
13. During the performance of my projects, I identify deviations which lead me to adjust the plan to achieve the objectives.
17. When I fail, I moan about it and blame myself.[36]

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[35] Please note that instruments of this sort are only available in English.
[36] To be quoted in reverse.

These are in fact the questions that, following the standardization of the test in Italy, have guaranteed gender neutrality.

2.2 Problem Solving exercise

The second step of the selection process is the Problem-Solving exercise. Ms. Rossi administers the exercise to the 6 candidates who have obtained the most satisfactory scores in the questionnaire will be asked to answer problem-solving exercises 1 and 2, which guarantee gender-neutrality in Italy. The exercises are sent by e-mail and the candidates (who will have been previously alerted), will have to send back their answers within 24 hours.

Ms. Rossi will evaluate the answers to the exercises according to the criteria illustrated in point 3.1.3 of this document and select the best three performing candidates, who will be invited to an interview. For more detail on the evaluation of the exercises' answers, see Appendix 2.

2.3 Interview

The final step of the selection phase will be an interview. The last shortlisted three candidates will undergo an interview conducted and evaluated by Ms. Gonzalez, who, as the head of the international department has the most knowledge about the necessary competencies and experience required by the position, and is in the best position to assess the candidates. However, since she is aware of the risks of being influenced by irrational factors and biases during an interview, she will rely on the structure provided by the GeNeus interview template.

The 4 most important competencies that she identifies as the ones that she intends to assess are: Interpersonal Communication, Rigor and Organization, Managing Risk and Subject matter knowledge. Relying on a template and assessing the identified competencies as the interview unfolds, in order to avoid being influenced by bias. Ms. Gonzalez will ask some of the questions in English and in Spanish, in order to test the oral language ability of the candidates.

Here is the interview structure that she relies on:

PHASE 1: Introduction by the interviewer (1 minute up to 10 minutes)

- Welcome, small talk, introduction
- Creating a positive atmosphere

PHASE 2: Get to know the applicant / Assess Competencies (15 minutes up to 1 hour)

➢ Background analysis (Based on the CV)

- What exactly did you do on that job? (the job most similar to the job vacancy)
- Why did you leave your previous job?
- What attracted you in the job that you are now?

(during this phase behavioural issues based on experience)

➤ Personal/professional characteristics/competencies

- *Competence 1*

Communication Effectiveness / Interpersonal Communication

Demonstrates skills for active and participatory listening with debtors to detect any problems. Evidence oriented behaviours for clear and accurate clear transmission of all ideas, messages and information obtained by ensuring that the recipient understands them. Concerns with the planning and participation in monitoring and evaluation of communication experiences with individuals and groups gained in life/professional situations, in person or using technological devices.

What do you prefer when you establish a contact? How did you deal with the conflict situation? Description of the situation and result.

Have you ever had to deal professionally with people from other countries? In what situation? What were the main difficulties encountered? How did you deal with them? What was the result?

Have you ever had a professional situation in which the use of electronic messages (email, chat, …) caused an interpersonal embarrassment or problem? Please describe the situation. How did you deal with it? What was the result?

Competency evaluation

1	2	3	4	5

Very low level   Standard level   Very high level

- *Competence 2*

Rigor and organization

Demonstrated behaviours for the rigorous accomplishment of the tasks reaching the defined objectives. Ability to determine an effective methodology and organization for good time management, always keeping in mind the fulfilment of priorities.

Have you ever faced a professional stress situation? After describing the situation, state what was your behaviour and the result.

Please describe a situation in which you can show you are organised regarding complex task fulfilment and time management. What were the main difficulties encountered? How did you deal with them? What was the result?

Competency evaluation

1	2	3	4	5

Very low level   Standard level   Very high level

- *Competence 3*

Managing Risk

Concerns an individual's ability to identify, calculate and respond to risks in a variety of settings. It is mostly concerned with risk-taking and assessment.

The performance expectations are:

- an ability to identify risks in everyday behaviour. This can include the risks associated with finances, advertising, unhealthy eating, anti-social behaviour, etc.
- an ability to assess the consequences of risks identified.
- an ability to identify risks in a professional capacity. This can be related to financial management, business expansion, hiring staff, etc.
- an ability to identify the difference between a calculated risk and an unnecessary one.
- an ability to capitalise on a calculated risk, and to implement a plan to manage the consequences of the risk taken.

Have you ever had manage a risk situation professionally? In what situation? Please describe? What were the main difficulties encountered? How did you dealt with them? What was the result?

Competency evaluation

1	2	3	4	5

Very low level   Standard level   Very high level

- *Competence 4*

Subject matter knowledge

of the specific projects domain and the Latin American context (for what concerns international development issues), of donors relations and fundraising and of stakeholders involvement.

Competency evaluation

1	2	3	4	5

Very low level   Standard level   Very high level

PHASE 3: Career and Job Vacancy (5 min up to 15 min)

➢ CAREER

- What would you like to be doing 5 years from now?
- What would you like your career path to be?
- Why did you bid for this company / vacancy?

➢ JOB DESCRIPTION

- "Sell" the job
- Give measured information about the position and the enterprise
- *What do you think? Why?*

➢ BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES / PRACTICAL TESTS

If pertinent, some behavioural questions can still be made here for completing the information

➢ ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANTIAL ASPECTS OF THE POSITION

- Availability for starting the job
- Type of contract
- Salary discussion

PHASE 4: Conclusion (5 min up to 10 min)

- Next steps of the selection process
- Still asking the applicant if he/she wants to give further information or ask another question

2.4 Online tests

The candidates who will undergo the interviews will be asked to answer two online language tests on the spot for the required languages: English and Spanish. These online free tests provide a fast and reliable tool to assess the candidates' written language levels:

Spanish test: https://www.cervantes.to/es/test_inicial.html

English test: https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/test-your-english/

3. CONCLUSION PHASE

In the conclusion phase of the selection process, Ms. Rossi and Ms. Gonzalez will fill out 3 evaluation checklists for the shortlisted applicants, including the scores obtained in each step of the selection phase, and will analyze them with Mr. Smith in order to obtain an overview of all the scores obtained by the candidates, discuss opinions and impressions, and reach a hiring decision.

APPENDIX 2 - SET ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION

The GeNeus Set of Application of Gender-neutral Selection Tools and Tests for Selection Processes in SMEs (IO4) seeks to facilitate SME to recruit and select their personnel effectively and fairly through the implementation of gender-neutral tools and tests – thus

mitigating the possibility of gender bias during these processes. It can be used as a supportive tool by employers, HR managers and trainers/consultants in their daily work.

GeNeus consortium, composed of six partners from five different countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy and Portugal) kindly ask you to please answer the following questions. At this moment, we are in the phase of assessing the end-users' opinion regarding the Set and its relevance, hence your contribution is so important for us. Please provide us as much information as possible, since all feedback and inputs will be collected and analysed in order to improve and optimize this Set.

Please choose the appropriate answer for your evaluation.

CRITERIA	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Observations
The content of the Set facilitates the improvement of the selection processes.					
The Set is practical for use and addresses the end-users effectively.					
The Set covers thoroughly all the important topics concerning the effective implementation of the GeNeus gender-neutral tools and test.					
The length of the Set is suitable.					
The content of the Set is well organized.					

1. Which are the parts did you like the most and which the least? Do you consider that there is something missing to the Set? If yes, please specify.

……

……

2. Do you believe the content of this Set may have an efficient and positive impact on the way you/your organisation conduct the staff selection process? If not, please explain why not.

……

……

……

……

3. Do you have any other comments regarding the improvement of the Set?

……

……

……

……

APPENDIX 3 - EXAMPLE OF PROBLEM-SOLVING EXERCISE EVALUATION

1. Problem identification

Q1. Please identify which problem(s) you are experiencing.

1.Inexistent: Does not identify the problem at all

Examples:
The problem is to question the credibility and the organisation image since there were published photos of an event that cannot occur if it rains. Associated with this situation, there are also problems regarding the lack of confidence of clients and the possibility of losing their interest in this firm.

2.Low level: The emphasis is on the non-relevant issues, acknowledges the problem but as a detail, not the central issue. (don't mentioned the central problem clearly and objectively)

Examples:
The problem is the facilities change, demanding the need for an annual meeting to be performed in an open air garden, which is subject to the weather conditions and may inhibit the meeting occurrence.
The firm's location change might lead to problems with the location. The 2nd problem is that they associated that the fact that the meeting was going to happen in July automatically would be good weather.

3.Intermediate level: Identifies the problem but included other non-relevant details (is not clear)

Examples:
The instability of the weather and the fact that the meeting was already announced in the garden.

4.High level: Clearly identifies the problem (is objective and clear)

Examples:
The weather instability.
*The weather instability and not having planned an alternative.*

2. Collection of information

Q2. Please indicate whether you would need to collect additional information and, if so, what would you do.

1.Inexistent: Does not refer to gather more information or the information is not pertinent.

Examples:
Would report the situation to the General Manager of the firm, so that he/she could take the necessary measures to solve the situation.
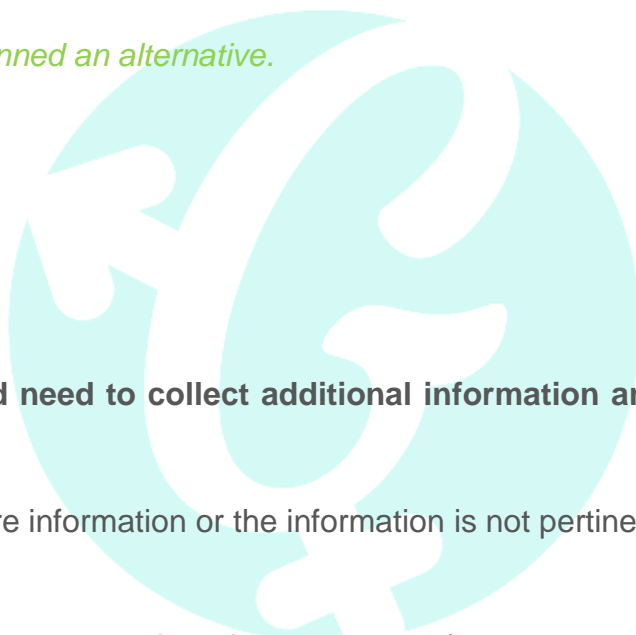
2.Low level: Gather an incomplete set of information including non-relevant issues, and/or does not specify the sources.

Examples:
Debate with the people in charge of the meeting to find other alternatives.
Talk to the firm's employees and with the rest of my team to know exactly what is going on and their ideas.

3.Intermediate level: Gathers an incomplete set of information and/or does not specify the sources.

One example of the level 4.
I would need information on other appropriate locations where the meeting could take place since the weather was not stable.
Would need to have additional data as exact location, number of guests and the way the innovation was going to take place.

4.High level: Refers to gathering enough relevant information also indicating the sources

Examples:
Initially would try to understand how the weather conditions could affect the meeting, visiting the place, talking to the people who are organising each part of the event (meeting + cocktail). Would check for the weather report on a credible website. In a meeting with all involved would try to come up with several alternatives, even if it meant to change the location and some other initial plans for the event, in order to keep the guests comfortable.

3. Generation of ideas and evaluation of ideas

Q3. Please provide possible alternatives to solving the problem and point out its pros and cons.

Examples of adequate ideas:
Changing the location to inside the office building. Pros: presenting the new office building, the weather conditions are not important, bigger comfort. Cons: the participants were counting on the garden, may cause some, disappointment
To buy/ rent a garden tent (or some kind of covering garment). Pros: stick to the initial plan, more room, and fresh air. Cons: it is harder to organise, more costly, and there is no information if there are tents available.
Change the date of the event. Pros: to perform the event as planed; Cons: unavailability of the guests; no guaranty of good weather
To make the event as the other ones before, that is without the employees. Pros: the rest of the guest would fit inside the office building. Cons: the inability of both partners/clients and staff to participate in the same meeting, after they were already invited

1.Inexistent: No ideas or not adequate
2.Low level: Presentation only one alternative with no pros or cons
3.Intermediate level: One idea with pros and cons (or two ideas with no pros or cons)
4.High level: Two ideas with pros and cons.

4. Implementation planning

Q4. From the alternatives identified in Q3, select the one that you consider most appropriate, indicating what actions you would take to implement your idea.

1.Inexistent: Does not present an answer; or presents something different from what was presented previously; or presents something that is not logical considering the whole context.

2.Low level: a) does not select the alternative that seems the most obvious/simple, considering the pros and cons presented; and/or b) does not explain the activities to perform.

Examples:
The cons of buying a tent or garment to protect from the rain was that it might not be enough depending on the intensity of the rain. This was the selected option. The activities were buying the tent /garment and assemble it on site, because it was the easiest way.

3.Intermediate level: a) Selects the alternative that, within the alternatives presented, and considering the pros and cons identified in the previous question is the most appropriate; b) briefly explains the activities to perform, with not much details
Example
The cons of changing the location of the event within the facilities' is not fulfilling the guests' expectations. The activities proposed are: to change the evet to an indoors room; to find a big and comfortable room; to talk to person in charge and let the person know about that change.

4.High level: a) Selects the alternative that, within the alternatives presented, and considering the pros and cons identified in the previous question is the most appropriate; b) explains in detail the activities to be performed to fulfil the selected option and presents alternatives of situations that might not go so well as the best predictions.

Example:
The cons of selecting the tent for the garden was the additional cost. The activities proposed were: to check for budget proposals to rent the tent; to show them to the person in charge of the event (both from the presentation and the cocktail); to select the supplier and to arrange and supervise the assembly of the tent in the facilities, together with the all the person in charge of the event (both from the presentation and the cocktail) in order to have everything according to their requisites.

5. Evaluation of the solution

Q5. Considering the situation, what would you consider a good result? What lessons learned from this situation?

1. Inexistent: No clear idea, or very confusing way to present it.

Example:
A good result would be the success of this meeting and that the message could go through in a clear way. The lesson learnt is that when we need to ask for help, we should be as clear as possible, and we cannot plan something outdoor without thinking of a plan B.
A good result would be that in the day of the meeting would be a day with good weather, so that everybody could enjoy the meeting and the cocktail.

2- Low level: to present a basic, sometime the initial idea (with no flexibility). Is not able to make a generalisation of the lessons learnt, can only apply to that specific situation.

Example:
A good result would be the satisfaction of the guests with the event and that the event would go as planned, with no problems. This situation is important to see how people deal with stress and the quality of the decisions they make.

3- Intermediate level: to present a basic, sometime the initial idea (with no flexibility). To identify partially the lessons to be taken, in a general way.

Example:
A good result would be the participation of the guests that were expected, the meeting going as expected. The lesson to be taken is always have a plan B.

4- High level: to have the perspective of the client, not necessarily the perspective of the firm. To identify the most important lessons.

Example:
A good result would be the satisfaction of the guests that came to the meeting and that they would get a good impression of the firm. With this situation one should learn that should always have an alternative plan, and that should not advertise something that is out of our control.

PARTNERS

Coordinator

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Instituto Politécnico do Porto – Portugal
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Generic Report on Gender Neutral Testing

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