



LESSONS LEARNT FROM SPANISH EXPERIENCE Final Report

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infoart



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WOMEN IN - Telework for life-work reconciliation in EU: promoting women participation and mobility, ref. 2011-1-ES1-LEO05-36491.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Although the latest EUROSTAT data point at the increased female participation in the labour market¹, at the same time, we find that nearly one woman in five aged 25-64 is outside the labour market, half of them due to family reasons². Among the latest employment trends, we can observe an increase in the proportion of part-time employment, for men and women alike. The prevalence of part-time employment among women is linked to the unequal distribution of the caring responsibilities between men and women. As far as motivation to opt for part-time employment is concerned, considering “looking after children” and “other family and personal reasons” together, the share for men amounted to 13.9%, while for women it was 61.1%³. Indeed, flexible working arrangements, when implemented effectively can provide tangible benefits to both employers and employees, and in particular, it can help to increase the labour market participation of women. Within the framework of the described trends, as well as, referring to the Medium-term forecast up to 2010 „Skills supply and demand in Europe“⁴, calling to secure an increase in labour market participation, in particular women, and adapt the potential of the inactive (in particular, women, whose qualifications are surpassing those of men), by making a more effective use of existing skills and encouraging skills development, the proposed project aims at encouraging women participation in labour market by promoting the teleworking option, providing with the essential transversal skills and key competences on teleworking, at the same time,

¹ Eurostat: statistics in focus, 57/2010

² Eurostat newsrelease: 185/2010-07/12/2010

³ Reconciliation between work, private and family life in the EU, Eurostat: 2009

⁴ Cedefod:2010

aiming at promoting the teleworking option at institutional level, as workplace flexibility programme and its potential benefits to the company.

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As the final outcome, the results of the previous “Telework for the life-work reconciliation of Spanish women” (El teletrabajo en la conciliación de la vida familiar y laboral de las mujeres españolas, ref. TSI-040100-2008-10) project will be transferred and extended at EU level, converting the Virtual Environment – Resources Center (developed in the previous project), into an authentic training repository , permitting regular updates through web 2.0 resources and enriched with EU perspective and a great range of instruments and resources, collected from the different national experiences.

INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

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METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The present report aims at identifying the main lessons learnt from the previous project, as well as main elements for transfer at EU level.

Analysis object:

- ✓ Final Report on the European and Spanish policies about Information Society, Telework and Gender promotion
- ✓ Report on Qualitative Research
- ✓ Report on Quantitative Research
- ✓ Report on Desk Research
- ✓ Virtual Environment: centre of resources about reconciliation and telework:
<http://avanza.ugteuskadi.net/>

Criteria for analysis:

- ✓ Transferability (transfer of knowledge)
- ✓ Relevance
- ✓ Missing topics
- ✓ Recommendations and ideas

As a result, the report will present the extracted core elements and insights on the topic. The following subjects will be discussed consequently:

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- ✓ Women access to the new technologies (usage and tendencies)
- ✓ Women in teleworking: profile, motivation and work-life reconciliation
- ✓ Spanish and European policies for the promotion of Information Society
- ✓ Spanish regional policies for the promotion of Information Society, in relation of gender and teleworking
- ✓ Teleworking and company
- ✓ Teleworking: means, tools, perceptions and training needs
- ✓ Good practices detected (actual relevance and transfer)
- ✓ Virtual Environment (functionality and transfer)

MAIN FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION TO “TELEWORK FOR THE LIFE-WORK RECONCILIATION OF SPANISH WOMEN” PROJECT

Telework for the life-work reconciliation of Spanish women” (El teletrabajo en la conciliación de la vida familiar y laboral de las mujeres españolas, ref. TSI-040100-2008-10) has been financed by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce, within the framework of "Plan Avanza", sub-programme "Digital citizenship" and European Social Fund.

Implemented during 2008-2010, the project has been one of the first and an extraordinary efforts within Spanish context, aimed at developing an investigation addressed to study, within the comparative perspective, the degree of the new technologies promotion and teleworking, by the Spanish and European public policies and the way those policies are orientated at favouring and promoting equal opportunities from a gender perspective, the employability and work – life reconciliation.

The project reached to investigate the following fundamental conceptual areas: measures in favour of work – life reconciliation on the one hand and an access to the telework, on the other: legislation, public programmes, collective agreements etc. Self-diagnosis tool (an online questionnaire) has been designed in order to assist the women to discover their qualification needs and training itineraries to be taken.

During the life time of the project, an extensive investigation has been carried out (a combination of: desk research, telephone survey with 1067 sample, 10 focus

group, 40 semi-structured interviews, 25 expert in-depth interviews, Delphi method and 20 good practices) and a number of reports elaborated, such as Final report on the European and Spanish policies about Information Society, Telework and Gender promotion; Report on Qualitative Research; Report on Quantitative Research; Report on Desk Research.

Women access to the new technologies (usage and tendencies)

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In general, as revealed by the Quantitative Survey, we can observe an increasing necessity and usage of the new technologies (ICTs) at the work place. 52.86% of women workers stated they need a PC to carry out their professional activities. 44.42% use email and 40.6% use Internet. Furthermore, 87.68% of female workers use Internet at the household once a week, 48.5% of them – every day. Thus, according to the results outlined, the ICTs have been adapted and settled in the Spanish labour market.

On the other hand, it is important to analyse the training needs of women concerning the particular new technologies, such as mobile phone, electronic agenda, Internet and email. As a result, we can learn that the majority of women feel quite comfortable working with the above indicated technologies and training in ITCs is not considered as a priority.

To put in a nutshell, within the framework of WOMEN-IN project, we have to take in to account that no special training on ITCs is needed what concerns the training needs of women: the target group seem to have the necessary skills to carry out professional activities through ITCs means. Thus, women workers, every day more and more, are integrated in the Knowledge Society; we can observe a growing tendency of PC and Internet usage.

Women in teleworking: profile, motivation and work-life reconciliation

The Quantitative Study provides as interesting typology of Spanish female workers towards the teleworking. The factorial analysis on perceptions revealed 4 groups of workers: *receptive, sceptic, against and preventive*.

Receptive:

Receptive group can be defined by their positive attitude towards the telework: they believe that telework helps to increase work motivation and reduce stress, as well as that teleworks allows matching better work – life balance. On the other hand, it has to be highlighted that in this group we find the women workers you are teleworking or are interested in teleworking.

Sceptic:

In the group of “sceptic”, we can find the following perceptions: the teleworker receives less information about how to carry the job tasks and feels less integrated in the company, as well as teleworking might reduce the work quality. As a consequence, in this group we basically find workers who are not interested in teleworking or never had teleworked.

Against:

In this group we find women who express negative perceptions about teleworking. This group can be characterized by its relatively young age.

Preventive:

In this group we find workers who indicate a double requisite for the telework implementation: teleworker needs a permanent control on behalf of bosses and teleworker would need a specific training about the usage of the new technologies.

The details on perceptions and typology are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Typology of teleworkers

Variable	Group of teleworkers			
	Receptive	Skeptic	Against	Preventive
Telework would increase the motivation	0,70	-0,15	0,00	0,11
Teleworker would need permanent control by top management	0,02	0,08	0,18	0,70
Teleworker would need a specific training about the new technologies	0,18	0,05	-0,03	0,79
Telework would reduce stress levels	0,69	-0,02	0,19	0,09
Teleworkers would tend to work less hours	0,04	0,18	0,80	0,08
Telework would become an alternative for work-life reconciliation	0,53	-0,18	-0,05	0,39
Telework would allow to carry out the work in less time	0,57	0,08	0,45	0,02

Teleworker would feel less integrated in the company	-0,09	0,75	0,00	0,17
Teleworker would receive less information about the job responsibilities and position	-0,07	0,76	0,12	0,03
Telework would reduce quality of life	-0,11	0,53	0,27	0,11

Trying to define the profile of teleworker women – is an easy exercise indeed. There doesn't exist any precise typology, taking into account the fact that for the implementation of teleworking option, a very precise analysis is needed on what kind of tasks can be carried out while teleworking.

A Qualitative Study achieved to define a preliminary profile matrix of female teleworker. For details, please consult Figure 2.

Figure 2. Profile (preliminary) of female teleworker

Female teleworker profile	
Socio-demographic	Between 36 and 46 years old Married University degree
Dependants	Husband/couple and children
Economic	Wage earner Technician Services
Average persons per household	3,15 persons
Working day	7,75 hours

Time dedicated to telework	76% - 99%
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Works in the household and counts on a space to work
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Analysing the motivation to opt for teleworking option, we can learn from Qualitative Survey, that in most of the cases, women opt for telework option due to family reason and work – life reconciliation. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe that 82.5% of interviewed women acknowledge that the company has helped and supported to telework and the same percentage (82.5%) of women said the company provided the technological means to carry out the corresponding professional activities.

Spanish and European policies for the promotion of Information Society

The following outlines that will be discussed respectfully have been extracted from the Final Report on the European and Spanish policies about Information Society, Telework and Gender promotion. The mentioned report analyses the policies of Information Society promotion in relation to the development of life – work reconciliation programmes etc.

Due to social and economic importance of the ITCs in the actual system, different programmes have been launched in Spain, as well as on EU level, that have favoured the transition of the Information Society.

It has to be noted that telework is being developed thanks to the latest developments of the ITCs that make it possible the implementation of this working modality. Telework now stands as an instrument of enormous potential with a great capacity to adapt to the new reality we live, while it allows to avoid displacements and travelling expenses, which in large cities can become a big problem. Telework is sustainable, as it does not require transportation; it improves the quality of life and helps to reduce the stress levels among other advantages.

Two major political aspects of EU strategy in the area of Information Society started to develop in the mid – eighties. The first investigation activities and development of ICTs were made in 1984 within the framework of ESPRIT2 programme, followed by specialized telematics applications – programmes launched in 1986 and the programme RACE (advanced telecommunication technologies).

The policy of telecommunications was defined in 1987 as GREEN BOOK about the liberalization of the sector. Three main objectives have been established and followed:

1. Liberalize the market segments that are under the monopoly,
2. Harmonizing the European telecommunications industry through the standards and common rules.
3. Apply strict rules of competition to the liberalized market segments in order to prevent the agreements etc.

In the 90s, in 1994 a first coherent and comprehensive policy on Information Society, driven by the White Paper, published by the Commission in the 1993 on “Growth, Competitiveness and Employment” (White Paper of Delors) was initiated. The importance of the Information Society for growth and economic competitiveness, job creating, improved quality of live for all Europeans – are the main highlights of the report. As a part of monitoring action of the White Paper, a special report titled “Europe and the global Information Society” has been developed. This report makes recommendations on how the EU could contribute to the establishment of a regulatory framework, technological and social environment of the Information Society. These documents provided the basis for the application of the first action plan of the EU on the Information Society, announced in 1994, “Europe’s way to the Information Society”. Accelerating full liberalization of telecommunications infrastructure and services, consolidating and reorienting research programmes and incorporating the new dimension of the Information Society into all relevant EU policies - were the main identified objectives.

At the end of the decade, in 1999, it became clear that the policy of EU in the area of Information Society needed a new impetus and approaches to adapt to the new context. At that time, the Information Society, was no longer that just an idea, but was becoming an increasingly apparent reality, as evidenced by the rise of Internet and emergence of information economy. To respond to the emergent challenges, the following objective has been set in the Lisbon strategy: to convert the EU into the knowledge based society and most competitive one in 2010 and as a consequence the “eEurope” initiative has been launched. Figure 3 provides a summary of the developed programmes.

“eEurope” marked a way for the forthcoming programmes and initiatives. It has to be highlighted that in the new programmes a gender perspective has been

included as well as the perceptive of equal opportunities, digital gap and e-inclusion etc.

Figure 3. Chronology of promotion policies of knowledge society (EU)	
1984	ESPRIT programme (information technologies)
1986	RACE programme (programme on advanced information technologies)
1987	Green book on telecommunications sect
1994	First action plan about information society
1996	Revised version
1999	Lisbon summit
2000	eEurope 2002
2002	eEurope 2005
2005	i2010: A European Information Society for growth and employment
2006	Riga declaration: European i2010 initiative for digital inclusion

To put in nutshell, a first very important step has been made EU level, drawing the main guidelines to be integrated in national and local policies. Within the Spanish context, different strategies and programmes have been designed, following the example of EU: examples of the developed programmes can be consulted in the Figure 4.

Figure 4. Chronology of policies of promotion of information society in Spain

2000	Development of Red.es – a public company addressed to analysis and improvement of information society
2001	INFO XXI – Society of information for all
2003	España.es – Programme of actions for the development of information society
2005	Plan Avanza Plan Consolider Plan Cenit

Spanish regional policies for the promotion of Information Society, in relation of gender and teleworking

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The importance of Information Society has been also taken into account the local governments and included in different strategies and action plans. The report provides an extensive list of the developed programmes and examples. Nevertheless, a significant number of developed programmes and specific actions developed, promoting women participation in information society we can find that expect Galicia region – gender perspective is not introduced into the strategic plans.

Telework is considered as one of the advantages, among others, offered by the Information Society. In Spain, telework is not included neither reflected in any strategic plan. The mentions that we can find tend to be superficial, almost always directed towards SMEs or treated as s instrument that can facilitate work life reconciliation. Nevertheless, no strategic plan includes telework; there are several programmes that are worth mentioning. In fact, the only area where we can find a commitment to telework as a tool for work – life reconciliation is a public administration (Concilia plan), on autonomous level: Catalonia, Valencia, La Rioja and Basque country regions). These institutions have developed different pilot plans in order to assess the impact that telework can have within the organization, such as generate a more flexible working conditions and better quality for the workers.

Teleworking and company

Quantitative Survey pointed at changing business environment which urges the companies to adapt and to respond to the workers needs that require certain flexibility options in order to be able to match the work – life responsibilities. Telework is one of the options that could facilitate mutual benefits – to the company and to the worker.

However, when we turn to analyse the implementation tendencies, we find out that there are still many obstacles on the way, the majority of them – stereotypes and “presential” business culture related. The implementation of telework implies a range of changes in certain procedures of the company, such as new forms in carrying out the tasks etc. As a result, telework seem to raise two main problems: losing control over the worker, as well as we have data security issue. Nevertheless, we can observe and follow implemented certain telework initiative by the big or multinational companies – SMEs seem to resist implementing this flexibility option.

As highlighted by the interviewed experts, within the framework of Qualitative Survey, telework stands for an effective and innovative modality that should be carefully implemented, however without fear. There is no necessity to embrace all the tasks; test periods are recommendable, as well as to observe the results and to launch telework actions in the organization. Telework should be considered as a tool which needs to be adapted to the necessities of each company with its all particularities. There is no one model or one way to follow and suitable for all the companies.

Teleworking: means, tools, perceptions and training needs

In the Quantitative Study, the women workers have been asked about teleworking and related perceptions. Interestingly enough, we find that 30.27% women from the sample recognized that they are not familiar with teleworking concept.

Spanish female workers indicated that the obstacles on company level are in fact the major obstacles for telework implementation, while 68.89% think their companies wouldn't facilitate this option. Moreover, 66% admitted that the existing business culture in the company halts the development of telework.

We can state that the female workers, who participated in the research, agreed that telework doesn't reduce neither the quality nor efficiency of work, however it is believed that telework implies losing control of workers by their supervisors.

Summarizing the prevailing perceptions:

- ✓ Female workers consider that telework doesn't reduce neither quality nor efficiency of work (82.66%)
- ✓ Isolation and psycho-social risks – an important aspect to consider. 26.12% would wish to telework full time, while about 30% of workers would wish to telework 51-75% of working time.
- ✓ Women consider the telework as an ideal instrument for work – life reconciliation. 66% believe that telework would help to balance both realities.

On the other hand, when asked about the perceptions whether their companies could facilitate the teleworking options – 56.89% of women workers answered negatively that points at the reluctance on company level to facilitate the flexibility options.

Focusing on the telework promotion, the majority of the female workers agreed that business associations should take a more active role in the promotions, together with trade unions and public administrations.

Women teleworkers, who participated in the telephone survey (Qualitative Survey), when talking about advantages and disadvantages of telework, seem to agree that flexibility is the major advantage and on the contrary – additional costs stands for the major disadvantage. See Figure 5 for details.

Figure 5. Work-life reconciliation - perceptions

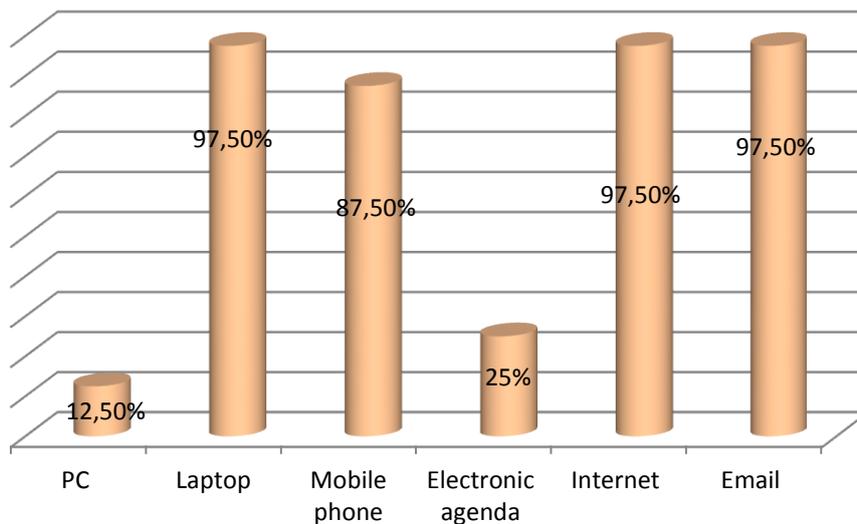
Advantages	Disadvantages
Flexibility (90.0%)	Additional costs (heating, electricity, etc.) (50.0%)
Saving time (87.5%)	Reduced image and personal impact (35.0%)
More autonomy (70.0%)	Extra hours not remunerated (32.5%)
Mayor motivation towards work (62.5%)	Promotions difficulties (30.0%)
Less stress (57.5%)	Isolation (27.5%)
Economic savings (transport, health etc.) (55.0%)	
Improved work quality (50.0%)	

Means and tools to telework:

To carry out our professional activities, we have to manage certain tool, according to the corresponding tasks. Those tools are especially relevant when we carry out the tasks outside the premises of the company. The new technologies allow workers mobility above all.

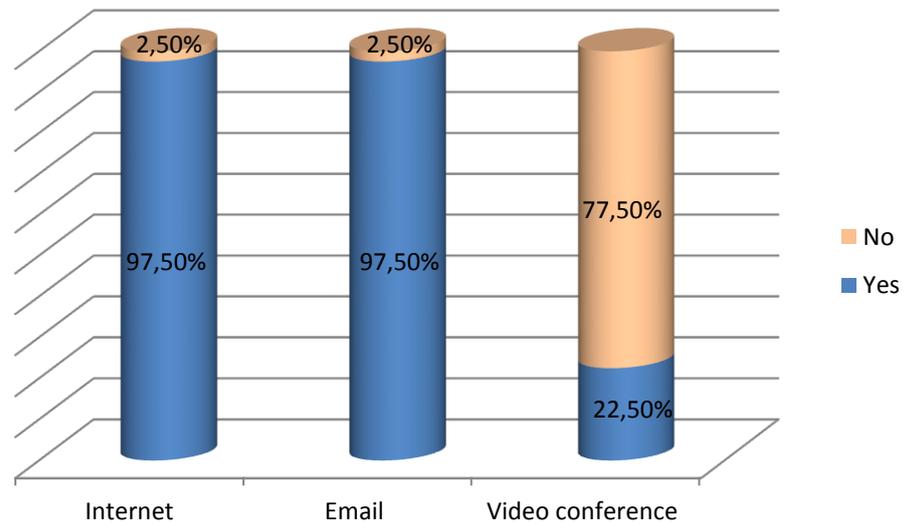
Interviewed teleworkers have indicated the following tools: laptop and mobile phone are most commonly used (more than 80%). Figure 6 provides the details on the tools usage.

Figure 5. Usage of ITCs means while teleworking



The following Figure 7 provides some insights on applications usage.

Figure 7. Usage of ICTs applications while teleworking



Training needs:

Last but not the least, the Qualitative Survey, pointed out (that corresponds with the main findings revealed in the Quantitative Survey) that telework doesn't require any specific training on usage of the new technologies – that in most of the cases are the same as in the work place. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the team managers might need a special training on how to manage and work with diverse teams: “presential” workers and teleworkers.

Good practices detected (actual relevance and transfer)

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Company, family and society are inseparable worlds; work, family and personal life are dimensions that are closely related and cannot be renounced. All these aspects made it necessary the incorporation of the new guidelines in the company, as well as society. The reconciliation of various social – personal, family and professional life dimensions is still one of the main objectives to be achieved on behalf of different institutions and organizations, as it is a global responsibility.

The reconciliation of family and professional life is a medium which allows society to move towards a model of more productive and efficient work. Being able to settle the inconvenience of these so disparate dimensions, the individuals feel more involved and connected with the organization and hence more identified with the corporate image.

It is true, that more and more organizations are incorporating conciliation as a fundamental pillar, however yet there are still many aspects to be modified. One of the highlights - the lifestyle of Spanish society, opening and closing times of many companies, long lunch times etc. – that makes the worker the most of its day to dedicate to work issues, leaving in the second plan, the personal ones. Thanks to the measures implemented in organizations, such as flexible schedules – are the channels facilitating the reconciliation.

Telework has emerged as one of the methods which aims to promote the unity between the worlds of work and personal life. New technology developments have allowed the companies to offer this type of modality favouring stability of the employees who must reconcile family and work obligations.

As extracted from the collection of GOOD PRACTICES, we can identify various reasons that encourage the companies to offer telework; most prominent are:

- ✓ Avoiding workers rotation
- ✓ Ecological reasons: traffic, pollution etc.

- ✓ Office expenses
- ✓ Improved productivity
- ✓ Facilitating the balance between family and professional life

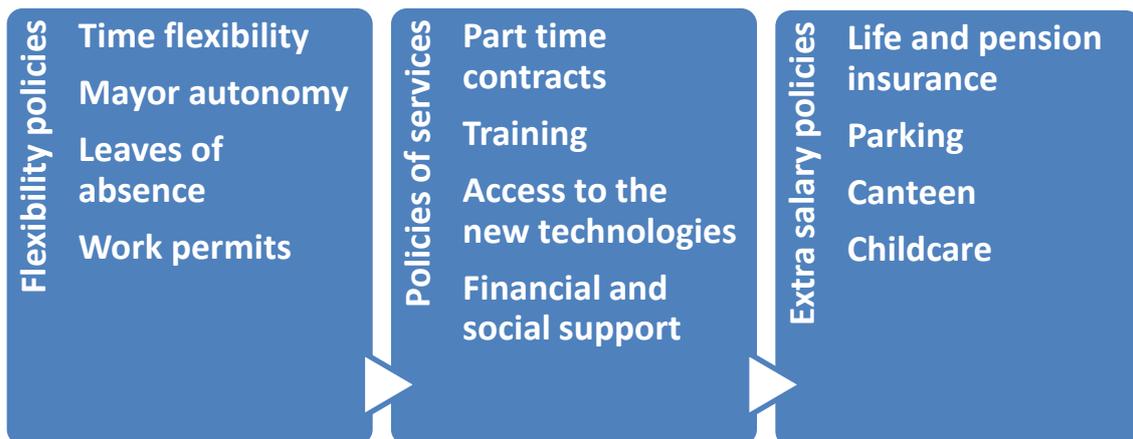
Page | 25 On the other hand, the workers motivation to opt for telework option, most usually is based on:

- ✓ Flexible working hours
- ✓ Reduced transport costs
- ✓ Self – organization of time and space

The GOOD PRACTICES report has identified a number of companies that decided to integrate the new corporate culture in order to provide stability to their employees and therefore substantially improve both, working environment and productivity.

It should be noted that the companies included in the report, operate at national and Europe levels.

Analysing the selected good practices, we can identify the following policies and modalities of work:



Within the framework of WOMEN IN project, the GOOD PRACTICES report can provide interesting insights on flexibility programmes implemented as well as serve as a list of reference. Due to the fact the report has been compiled in 2009, it is recommendable nevertheless to re-check the data, in case of any reference or publishing.

Virtual Environment (functionality and transfer)

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Within the framework of the pilot Avanza project, apart of an extensive research on telework, a virtual environment has been development. The virtual environment provides a wide variety of documents and information of telework, legislation, training courses, blog, forum, news and events etc. Another characteristic to highlight – a self – diagnostic tool addressed to the teleworking women: <http://avanza.ugteuskadi.net/cuestdiagnostico.php>

Figure 8. Virtual environment, developed in pilot Avanza project

Within the framework of WOMEN IN project, the above mentioned elements shall be transferred and as a result, an interactive training platform based on web 2.0 shall be designed (beyond the initial idea of the platform as a resource centre. Taking into account the latest developments of ITCs and social media applications, the virtual environment probably lacks interactivity elements that should be

added, taking in to account that the platform of WOMEN IN project should stand as a meeting point and resource centre for managers and human resources directors, as well as for teleworking women. Thus, in terms of transference, it is expected that the platform will allow a direct and active dialogue and communication among the target groups.

CONCLUSION REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TRANSFERENCE

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Taking into account all the discussed elements in the previous sections, the following conclusion remarks can be drawn – that should be considered as recommendations for the transference and further development of WOMEN IN project:

- ✓ First of all, it has to be highlighted that the culture barrier seems to stand as main obstacles for the telework promotion and implementation. Raising awareness campaigns, sharing experiences and real examples/good practices – are necessary and fundamental steps to be taken in order to assure a long term impact of the project.
- ✓ A gender perspective shouldn't be dismissed; however, it shouldn't be stereotyped. This element should be considered during the development of the training itinerary (WP4).
- ✓ Promotion of different models and modalities of telework – raising awareness on different options. Each company shall find own model and adapt to the necessities of employees and companies. Within the framework of WOMEN IN project, this element should be considered when drawing the guidelines for telework implementation (WP5).
- ✓ In terms of training needs of teleworking women, no special training on ICTs seems necessary, however a special training is recommendable to the managers of “mixed” teams (how to deal and manage the team that is composed by teleworkers and workers who carry out main tasks at the company). Within the framework of WOMEN IN project, this element should be considered when drawing the guidelines for telework implementation (WP5).
- ✓ Time management competences have been detected as main necessary skills for teleworking (apart of professional competences, necessary to

carry out the job). Thus, it is recommendable to include the topic in the Training Itinerary (WP4).

- ✓ As we could learn from the Final Report on the European and Spanish policies about Information Society, Telework and Gender promotion, the latest developments of Knowledge Society, made it possible the implementation of telework. Telework facilitates the life – work reconciliation and has a huge potential to improve the quality of life, there are still many stereotypes to combat. What we could learn from the above discussed findings - female workers who never teleworked – tend to have negative perceptions about telework. Nevertheless, the negative perceptions by female workers, the biggest obstacles we find on company level, as acknowledged by teleworkers themselves. Consequently, within the framework of WOMEN IN project, both target groups – female teleworkers and companies shall be actively involved and approached.