

SoilCare Gender Equality Second Report (P3)

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6	Research Institute for Knowledge Systems	RIKS	Netherlands
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8	Joint Research Centre	JRC	Italy
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15	Teagasc	TEAGASC	Ireland
16	Soil Cares Research	SCR	Netherlands
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SoilCare 2nd gender equality report 2020

Soil Care for profitable and sustainable crop production in Europe

Summary

The gender equality aim of SoilCare is to: analyse the gender aspects regarding the organizational structure of the project as well as project contextual issues, in relation to soil-improving cropping systems, and the adoption of these systems. In this 3rd reporting period (RP) (March 2019-March 2020) the emphasis for gender equality in SoilCare, was put on the decision making and implementation of the SICS, which information was gathered in WP4 and the gender disaggregated results are analysed in this gender report. It shows that a majority of men take the decisions on SICS, there are however differences in the percentages from decision making and implementation of the SICS. And there are differences in the percentages given by land users and by researchers and, among the researchers between the men and women researchers. The latter give the most balanced numbers on SICS decision making (57%men - 43%women), the biggest difference is mentioned by the land users on SICS implementation (94% men - 6% women).

The SoilCare staff in the 3rd RP (data gathered in March this year), changed a little since the 1st RP, there were 182 people working for SoilCare in the 3rd RP, 44% women and 56% men. Due to the Corona crisis there was no full response, the numbers will be adapted in the next project period. The communication is partly done by sharing the gender equality reports on the website, joining the carousel for study sites at the plenary meeting in Almería, and partly through an interview and by participation in a discussion in a FAO forum on gender mainstreaming for sustainable soil management.

The conclusion in this 3rd reporting period is that stakeholder land users, more than advisors, mention that women have hardly a voice in the decision making on the soil improving cropping systems and are even less involved in the implementation of the SICS.

Although it may not directly have an impact on the roles of the farmer women, it is important for advisors to realize that involving and informing the women, would help to get a less outbalanced situation on the farm, which is often a shared company. The economic outbalance in gender terms, did, in former examples, show up with divorces, where women take their financial loss for granted. Although these days the type of farms are changing towards more partnerships instead of family business, the gender balance would help to get a more societal relevant perspective in agriculture.

In the final project period, the gender equality perspective can be further elaborated with more gender disaggregated data. One more questionnaire will be sent with extra questions to the study sites about their Stakeholder workshops and demonstration meetings in cooperation with WP3. And two more interviews with study site participants from SoilCare, will be planned to gather advice for the policy makers. If there is another SoilCare plenary meeting, the progress will be presented. A final report with the new data will be written and shared on the SoilCare website, together with this report and the 1st SoilCare gender equality report.

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1. Introduction

The overall aim of SoilCare is to assess the potential of soil-improving Cropping Systems (CS) and to identify and test site-specific soil-improving CS that have positive impacts on profitability and sustainability in Europe. In putting together the SoilCare consortium, a gender-sensitive approach was followed. Among the WPs, 3 out of 8 are led by female researchers, and the teams of several other participating institutes are also led by female scientists. The gender equality aim of SoilCare is to: analyse the gender aspects regarding the organizational structure of the envisioned project as well as project contextual issues, e.g. in relation to soil-improving cropping systems, and the adoption of these. In the Description of Work (DoW) three steps are mentioned to work towards this aim, which are about data gathering on the SoilCare Staff and stakeholder gender balance and their roles (step 1), about deploying gender activities and tools (step 2) and: “measuring the influence of female land users compared with male in selecting and prioritizing soil-improving cropping systems and agronomic techniques and how and why views and perceptions might differ between male and female land users.” (step 3). And an important question behind the SoilCare gender equality approach is whether we do increase discrimination of women in their position/role/status with the newly implemented farm management Soil Improving Cropping Systems (SICS) compared to men or not.

In this 3rd reporting period (RP) (March 2019-March2020) the emphasis for gender equality in SoilCare, was put on the decision making and implementation of the SICS, which was gathered in WP4 and the gender-disaggregated results are analysed and presented in this report. (Section 2).

To gather information about the gender equality among the SoilCare staff in the 3rd RP, in numbers and roles, a questionnaire was sent to the partners (March '20). Due to the Corona crisis, not all the teams were able to respond to this, but around one third of the changes were registered. (Section 3)

The communication about gender equality for the 3rd reporting period, was approached partly as planned: At the study site carousels in the SoilCare plenary in Almería, where each project study site meets each work package leader to exchange their progress, from the communication point of view (WP8) some appointments were made to have interviews about gender at the study sites and, where applicable, make phrases about gender on the study site pages of the SoilCare website. However, in the 3rd RP, more effort was put in analysing the new data gathered in WP 4, than on the prior idea to prepare gender phrases for the study site web pages. Therefore more recent gender disaggregated information from the stakeholder workshops from the study sites would be necessary, but has not been gathered, and the priority was given to the information that was gathered, which were the results of the questionnaires from WP4, a SoilCare staff questionnaire, an interview, and a global FAO forum. (Section 4).

These four paragraphs will be wrapped up by the conclusions (section 5) and follow up (section 6).

2. Stakeholder research gender data

After the first inventory of the number of men and women working as staff or involved in the project as stakeholder, the question rose, how to approach the stakeholders on the SoilCare subject of the Soil Improving Cropping Systems (SICS), to know if women have a role here and to what extent. The following idea was discussed in the plenary meeting in Almería: -An option is to say that where e.g. acceptability of novel agronomic techniques/cropping systems is in question, that not only the farmer but also his/her partner will be interviewed, irrespective whether this partner is active or not in the farm. Then gender can be left neutral and the partner of the farmer can be male or female, but anyhow a partner can have a significant effect on decisions taken by the farmer-.

This idea was taken up and became part of the WP4 questionnaire among SoilCare study site stakeholders. In the 3rd project reporting period there was a monitoring by WP 4 about the stakeholders opinions and actions, concerning the chosen implementation of the SICS at the study sites. The term 'cropping system' refers to crop type, crop rotation, and the agronomic management techniques used on a particular field over a period of years. (SoilCare 2017a, Nafzinger, 2012; definition used in the SoilCare project). The questionnaire was prepared with the study sites and disseminated in the WP4 "SoilCare Guideline for SICS monitoring: social dimension" (Bachman, 2019). The questions that is referred to, are shown in [Annex 1](#).

The question on the decision making about which SICS to try, and about who worked on the implementation, it was asked to estimate to which percentage was done by men and which percentage by women. The respondents were divided in land users and researchers/advisors. The results are given in the next paragraphs.

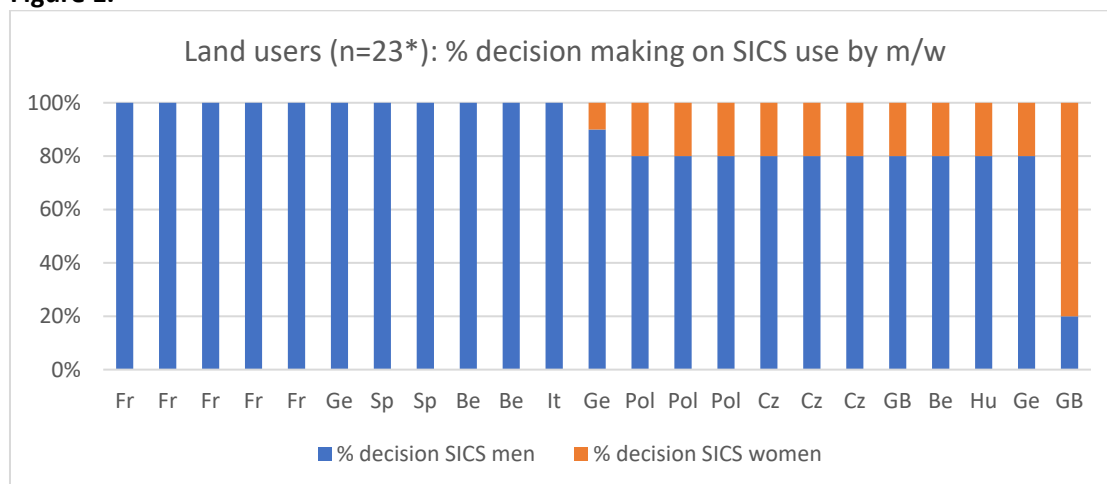
2.1. Gendered data SICS decision making

The question was asked about the tested SICS, to which degree (percentage) would men and women (male and female members of a farming unit) usually been involved on the decision making and on the implementation of the SICS? The answers were like: 80% men, 20% women, 100%-0% etc.

The question was asked to men and women land users and researchers.

Responses from land users were received from 9 study sites: from Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Great-Britain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Spain. (9 study sites, 23 responses (n=23) from 17 men and 6 couples of men and women with one common response). See figure 1.

Figure 1.

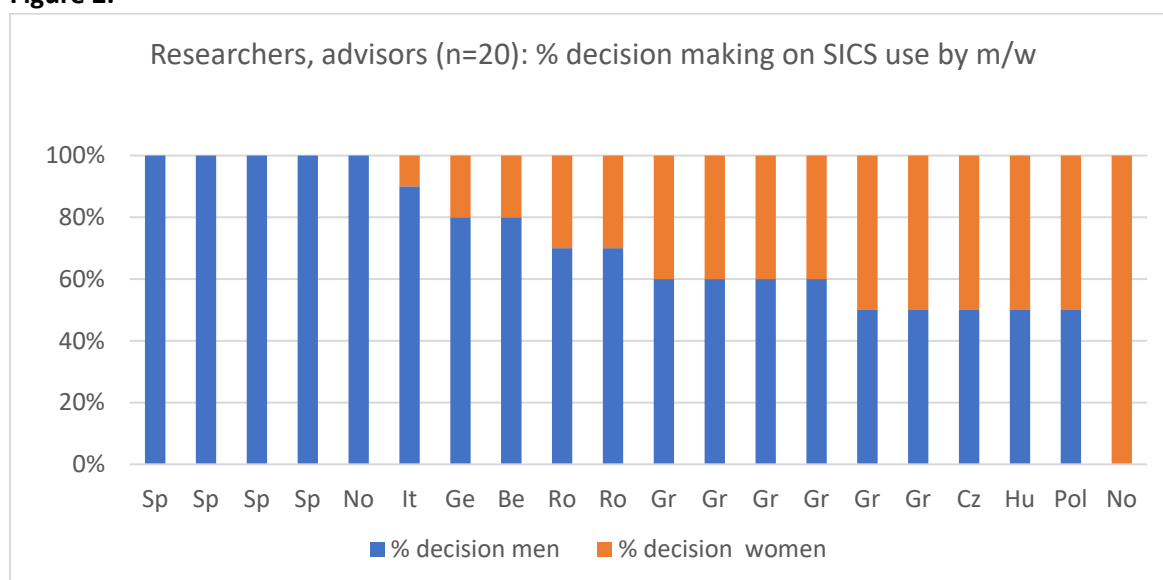


*n=23; 17 men and 6 couples with one respond

Generally, according to the land users, half of them say the women are consulted for decision making. In one study site, in Great-Britain, the decisions are mayorly made by the researchers, who were all women. When we take the average of all responses, according to the land users 87% of the SICS decisions are taken by the men and 13 % by the women. Although the countries from the study sites are being mentioned, no conclusions about the performance from the countries or regions will be drawn from these figures.

From the interviews with researchers results came from 10 study sites; Belgium, Czech, Germany, Italy, Romania, Greece, Hungary, Norway, Poland, and Spain (Total 10 study sites, 20 respondents from whom 13 men and 7 women, from Greece, Hungary, Norway, Poland and Spain). See figure 2.

Figure 2.



* n=20, 13 men and 7 women respondents

Although less in number, researchers see the decision making on SICS more positively balanced between man and women than the land users. We come here to an average of 69 % percent of the men that take the decisions on the SICS use, according to the 20 researchers and advisors. If we split these results in women researchers and men researchers, as indicated in figure 3 and 4, one can see,

Figure 3.

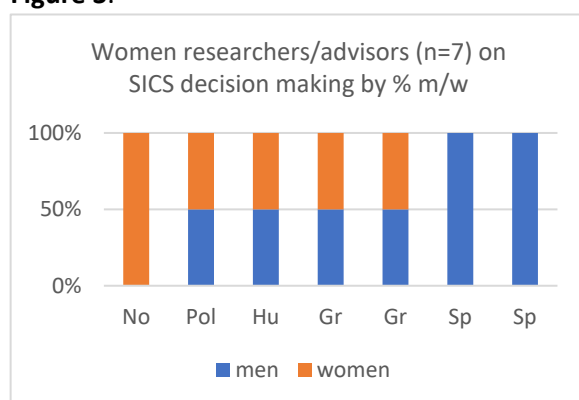
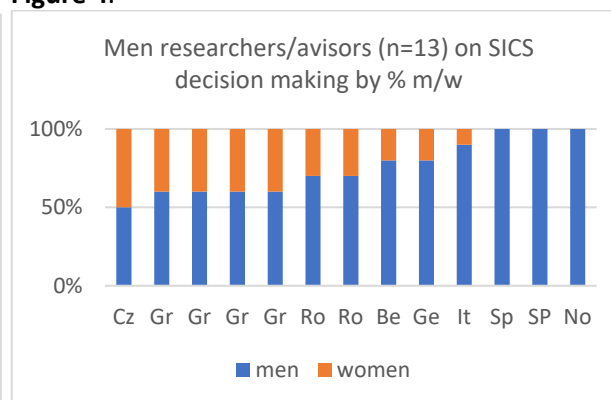


Figure 4.



that women researchers are even more explicit in the balance on decision making on SICS than men. Women researchers say four times that 50% of the decision making on SICS is influenced by women, 1x 100% (a study site in Norway with women researchers who were deciding) and 2x 0% (only men

involved). The men say 1x 50 %, 4x 40% 2x30%, 2x20%, 1x10% and 3x0% influence on the decision by women. The averages here show that the men researchers say that 75% of the SICS decision making is done by men and 25% by women, where the women researchers say that 57% decision making on SICS application is made by men and 43% by women.

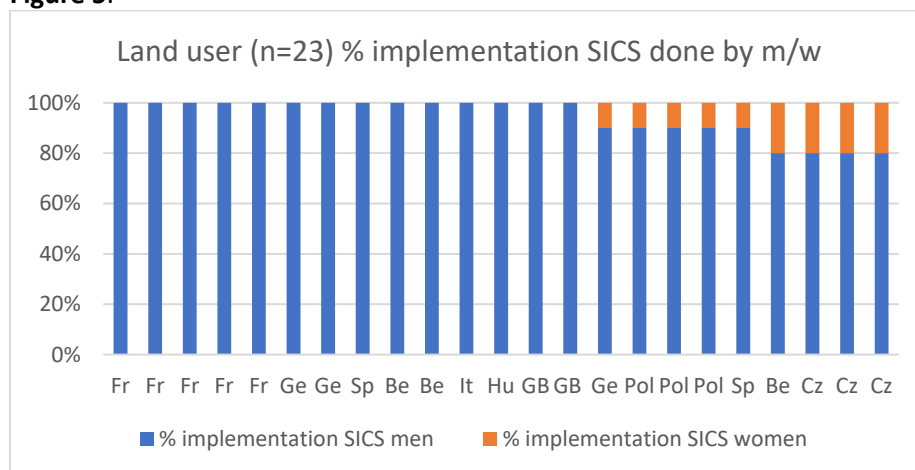
So, the women researchers estimate that women have more influence on the decision making of SICS than men. Or that men estimate that men have more influence on the decision to apply SICS on the land than women. Because this is about small numbers, it is impossible to draw conclusions. It shows however some gender nuances. Do women see more evidence in the role of women, or the influences by women, compared with how men see the role of women? Is it the narratives or the culture of overwork (HBR 2020) on women perspectives, that women ignore stereotypical roles in their perception, by downplaying -not being limited by- gender (HBR 2018) more than men? This is about gender research, offering many perspectives for possible further research, but too much in the framework of this report.

One woman respondent did not mention percentages, but said that most farmers are men and that they are most likely to take the decisions and the implementation of the SICS, and that however women farmers are being interested in cover crops, even though it may bring more costs because of the price of the seeds and the additional workload.

2.2. Gender data SICS implementation

When the land users and researchers were asked about the implementation of the SICS, i.e. which percentage is done by men and which percentage is done by women, among the land users, (figure 5). as well as among the researchers and advisors, (figure 6), the men and the women all mention that this contribution by women is very small.

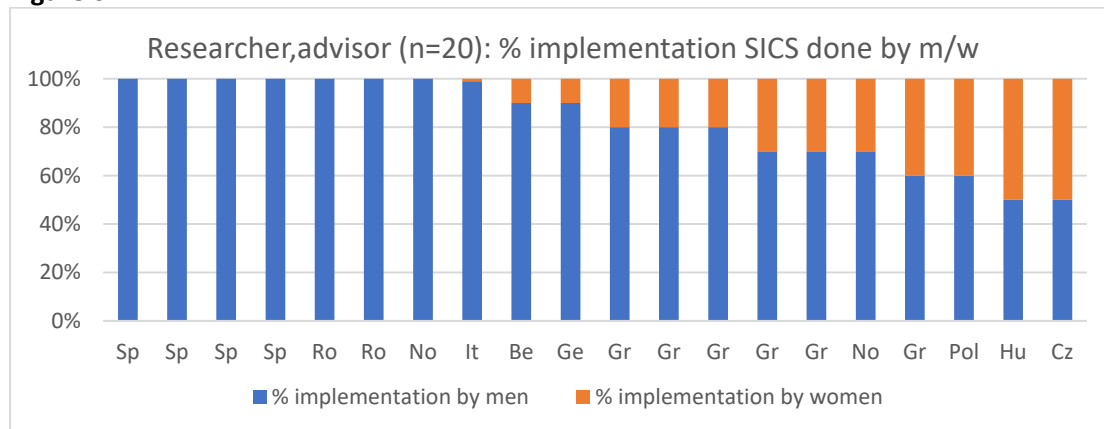
Figure 5.



*n=23; 17 men and 6 couples with one respond

As we can see, the outcome is very outbalanced, from the point of view of land users, there are hardly women involved in the implementation of the SICS. In average percentage the number of men doing the implementation of the SICS it is 94% men and 6% women according to the land users (figure 5).

Figure 6.



* n=20, 13 men and 7 women respondents

The same question on implementation of the SICS to the researcher/advisors of the SoilCare study sites, show a little more women in the implementation of the SICS, in average percentages it is 82% men and 18% women (figure 6). There is no big difference when we split the answers of men and women, as can be seen in the graphs below. The average here is that the men researchers say 87% implementation of the SICS is done by men and 13% by women (figure 8), where the average of the women responds (figure 7), is 74% implementation by men and 26% by women, a minority, but more than the 6% mentioned by the land users.

Figure 7.

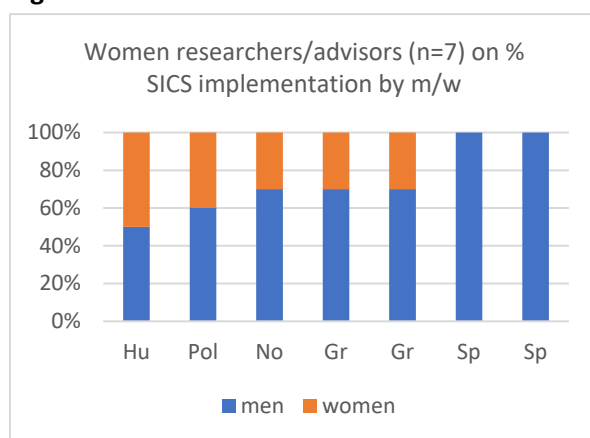
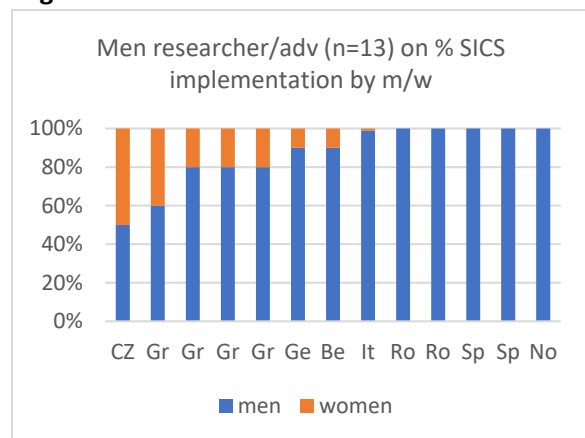


Figure 8.



2.3. Conclusion

For the question on gendered **decision making** about Soil Improving Cropping Systems (SICS), 43 respondents, **23 land users** responded from 9 different European countries from the study sites involved in SoilCare. Seven were men only and 6 were couples. The same question about decision making concerning SICS was asked to the **researchers and advisors**, of whom 20 responds came from 10 European countries from the SoilCare study sites, 13 men and 9 women (7 countable, because two didn't mention percentages).

Generally, according to the land users, half of them say the women are consulted for decision making, therefore they have a minor influence on the decision making. The decision making is mostly done by men (80-100%). In one study site (Great-Britain), according to the land user, the decisions are mayorly

(80%) made by the researchers, who were women. In another study site (Norway) only women were involved in the cover crop experiment (100 % women decisions) their estimate is in general that 90% men that decide on the SICS and 10 % women, because most farmers are men.

If we count the averages, the land users say that 87% of the decision making for SICS is done by men and 13% by women. Although less in number, and although the situations are not always comparable, researchers apparently estimate the decision making on SICS more positively balanced between men and women than the land users. We come here to an average of 69% percent of the men and 31% of the decisions on the SICS use taken by women, according to the 20 researchers and advisors, looking at the responses from women researchers and advisors, 57% decision making on SICS application is made by men and 43% by women. It would require another research to find out the reasons behind this, if it is because of different interpretations, expectations, perceptions of roles of men and women from the perspective of the role (being a land user or an advisor) of the perspective of gender (being a man or a woman) looking at this role. In this report the focus is on the outcomes and the follow up for the SICS research.

When we look at the responses of the researchers about the implementation of the SICS, which percentage is done by men and which percentage is done by women, there are hardly women involved in the implementation of the SICS. This is in line with the conclusions that agriculture is a male dominated area. (EU 2016). According to the land users in average, 94 % of the SICS is implemented by men and 6 % by women. The same question to the researcher/advisors of the SoilCare study sites, show a little more women in the implementation of the SICS, in average percentages it is 82% men and 18% women. Women only say, on average, that the percentage of implementation of SICS by women is 26%, again a little more optimistic about the role of women here.

In summary the average percentages:

land user	%m	%w
decision SICS	87	13
implementation SICS	94	6
researchers/advisors	%m	%w
decision SICS	69	31
implementation SICS	82	18
men res/adv	%m	%w
decision SICS	75	25
implementation SICS	87	13
women res/adv	%m	%w
decision SICS	57	43
implementation SICS	74	26

The given data are not big in numbers or in outcome, it shows however that gender disaggregated data are more specific and can show us some differences that would be good to act upon. What we see in the results below there is a big gender disbalance in the decision making and even more in the

implementation of the SICS. Agriculture is a very male dominated branch (EU 2016), so to gather a balanced proportion of stakeholders in the subject is a challenge.

It is important for researchers and advisors to inform also farmer women in their advice, they might have influence on the decision making or the implementation, although the chance is small. They however might have to, or want to make decisions, or might become the farmer when their husband is not at the farm. Because it is not up to the researcher or advisor to decide if women will or can take the decisions, therefore the invitations always at least have to be to the man and woman farmer, for the workshops, in the information and for the demonstration meetings.

3. Research teams and gender roles

For this 3rd project reporting period another questionnaire was sent to the SoilCare participants in March 2020, about the numbers and tasks of the involved staff, compared to the 1st reporting period. It was stated that if there was no response, the figure has not changed. 11 partners from 28 responded of whom 4 responses were about the inability to respond to their mail due to the Corona crises, and 7 mailed with changes in their team. More changes will be reported in the final project period.

3.1. Numbers

See table below, according to the numbers given by the project partners. (2018-2019)

SoilCare '18-'19						
position number*	1	2	3	4	5	Total
total women	19	10	38	9	4	80
total men	18	5	56	11	12	102
total per position	37	15	94	20	16	182
% men	49	33	60	55	75	56
% women	51	66	40	45	25	44

*Type of position: **1**= other staff; **2**= early researcher, < 4 years or PhD student; **3**= experienced researcher, 4 years>PhD holder; **4**= scientific team leader or WP leader; **5**= scientific manager

In the Description of Action in the contract with the EU, the target is that 3 from 8 WP leaders are women.

In practice one can see it in position 4 in the table below, 9 from 20 team leaders and/or WP leaders are women.

With the given numbers we can conclude that the gender balance in the SoilCare staff is relatively good. From the total staff of 182 there are 102 (56%) men and 80 (44%) women. There are nine teams with as many men as women. The position of Scientific manager(5) is headed for 25% by women(4 from 16), there is still a gap to bridge. The early researchers(2) in the project are represented by more women (10) than men (5).

If we look at the academic positions 2-5 (excluding position 1, "Other staff"), in percentage we see more women than men among the early researchers (2) and that the gender gap is relatively bigger in the highest position, scientific manager (5), 4 from 12 managers are women.

3.2. Changes in the staff

It is often assumed that gender balance is a self-organizing process, if women want to, they will participate or that it is a matter of time to get the PHD students in higher positions. However, the numbers of the past ten years show different that there is still a persistent gender gap in the positions where the decisions are made.

After the first gender equality inventory in the SoilCare research teams, there were 42% women, close to a real balance. The challenge was to keep the balance (with extra effort towards keeping the

women) in the project, of course while also keeping the excellent quality of the project team, which they managed together with the actual 44% women in total.

Since then some changes were registered in the SoilCare staff teams. In total there are 6 more women, (+8 and -2 women) and 2 men less (+5 and -7 men) making the total gender gap smaller.

Numbers from the first reporting period were:

SoilCare '16-'17						
position number	1	2	3	4	5	Tot
total women	16	8	37	9	4	74
total men	15	5	56	11	15	102
total per position	31	13	93	20	19	176
% men	48	38	60	56	79	58
% women	52	62	40	44	21	42

There were some changes in the academic as well as in the other functions. Three men less among the scientific managers (15 to 12), of whom one was from SCR, that left SoilCare. In the other staff three more women (16 to 19) and three more men (15 to 18). Several other shifts that can be seen in a more elaborate overview from the SoilCare personnel divided in academic and non-academic staff per participating team in numbers in [Annex 2](#).

The changes could be traced and checked on the gender impact, but since the balance looks quite well and there are no big changes noticed, it doesn't seem necessary to put a lot of extra effort to find out where the gender differences come from. Only the type of position is an indicator and shows that the management positions are majorly practiced by men (this RP 12 out of 16 and in the first RP 15 out of 19). In some teams it is also the institutes that have a goal to improve the opportunities for academic careers of women, which is an important structural progress for EU. An example are the Athena Swan awards in Great Britain as presented in Newcastle University. (Athena Swan Newcastle University, 2020).

3.3. The impact on stakeholder roles

About the stakeholder roles, the question is: what role do the stakeholders have in the SoilCare project research and, whether the agricultural measures/SICS will change the role of the men and/or women stakeholders?

As mentioned in section 2, agriculture itself is mainly a men-dominated field. In the first project reporting period, the possible impact of the change in management through adoption of SICS, on the role of men and women farmers was asked to the SoilCare participants. (See references: SoilCare 2017 a). Some respondents said that there will be no impact on the roles of men or women through the potential solutions or changes through the project, whereas several possibilities for impacts were mentioned by others. About the impact on roles, in this first SoilCare gender equality reporting two quotes from stakeholders were:

"At this point of the project, I don't see what could be the impact of SoilCare on roles and gender. The fact is that farmers are mostly men, and this is related to several factors broader than the SoilCare issues. But experts, facilitators, researchers are frequently women, so may be an impact can be to impulse constructive exchanges between them and farmers?" "Males get used to the fact that there are women in important positions and take advice."

As we can see from paragraph 2, in the study sites where the researchers in charge of a SICS experiment were women, they were the ones that decided on the implementation. The men accepted the decisions, this was not an issue for the men/farmer. Still in the study sites of the SoilCare project, according to the gender research, the men are in the majority in this topic. This majority is even bigger when it comes to implementation of the SICS.

In the first RP, about labour time and the implementation of the SICS a SoilCare stakeholder says:

"The adoption of Soil Improving Cropping Systems (SICS) is expected to minimize labour effort in maintaining good soil quality in farms. This will offer an incentive to women to participate equally in farming processes."

In paragraph 2 in this report, we can see that the estimations are not so high about this equal participation of women in farming, most of the land users and also the researchers say that it is mostly men that perform the implementation of the SICS, and one of the stakeholders mentioned that implementation of the SICS requires higher labour input, than with the regular crops, because: *"One must buy cover crop seeds and an additional sowing operation is needed."* And: *"The choice of cover crop species decides the amount of extra workload. Additional workload is for example less if the crop dies during winter. If the crop survives the winter, additional pesticide application or tillage operation is required."* On top of that, the same stakeholder mentioned that: *"additional work falls to periods when the workload is already very high. Additional labour poses also an economic risk."* Still, she says, that the female farmers in their study site (Norway) are interested in cover crops. Another respondent said that: *"the workload depends on the experience."*

In the first RP the role of women in knowledge and teaching in the domain of agriculture was also mentioned:

"A better understanding of issues related to soil improving cropping systems is useful for women stakeholders. The potential solutions from SoilCare may be further developed in the research areas and also included by local teachers in their lessons for students as theoretical knowledge applied in practise."

This is a very important remark. As in a previous theoretical point of view on women and agricultural education, saying that: *"The social construction of agricultural knowledge reflects a certain understanding of the work and role of women on farms"* (Shortall 1999), it affirms that agriculture still is a challenging branch for women to be involved, also in another source saying: *"Our findings also suggest that women desire education on a variety of agriculturally-related topics. Programs targeted to women that focus on the traditionally gendered farm tasks of bookkeeping, domestic work or farm family safety overlook how women's identities are multiply constructed through work, relationships and personal history."* (Trauger, 2008).

From the project it would be helpful to invite and involve the women like the men are being invited and involved, even though the women are not the farm owner or decision maker (yet). The education, also ongoing adult education, should fit more to their (potential) role, interest, identity. The role that women have as an agronomist or a researcher or professor, as shown amongst the SoilCare study site stakeholders in the first RP, is about these identities and the exchange of knowledge and understanding of the important sustainable influence of the SICS on the quality of the soils, for both men and women farmers. These women agronomists, researchers and even policy makers, are examples for the farmer women and in their role they can be helpful in understanding and performing to their needs and identities.

4. Communication

The communication about gender equality for the 3rd reporting period, was approached partly as planned: At the study site carousels in the SoilCare plenary in Almería, where each project study site meets each work package leader to exchange their progress, from the communication point of view (WP8) some appointments were made to have interviews about gender at the study sites and, where applicable, to make phrases about gender on the study site pages of the SoilCare website. However, in the 3rd RP, more effort was put in analysing the new data gathered in WP 4, than on the prior idea to prepare gender phrases for the study site web pages. Therefore more recent gender disaggregated information from the stakeholder workshops from the study sites would be necessary, but has not been gathered (yet), also in step 2 of the DoW, gender tools are being mentioned, which are not part of SoilCare since more data for needs are necessary. To give an insight, there are several examples of gender tools being developed, which can be viewed in the [References and links](#) (by CARE 2016; CCAF, CGIAR 2016; EIGE, EU 2020; FAO, CEDAW 2013). However, priority in RP3 was given to the information that was gathered, the results of the questionnaires from WP4, a SoilCare staff questionnaire, an interview, and a global FAO forum.

4.1. Interview

There was one short interview with a Belgium SoilCare agronomist about gender issues. Apart from the interview, she referred to some internet pages, where there are several ways how women farmers are being supported, not only as the partner of a farmer, but also when they become a farm holder themselves. Sometimes because they start a farm, but also because they inherit it and suddenly become the manager, without being educated for this role before.

The response to the question on “What role do women often have in agriculture in Belgium?” was:

“Men are more often in agriculture, the farmer (is meant here as the farm holder). The women support the work, and they do more often the administration, the organisation, and take decisions together with the farmer. A lot of these mentioned tasks are not formally or structurally done by women, but “behind the screens”. In the small farms, with also animals, in the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), women are often more involved as stakeholder. The women are often more concerned with sustainable development. Women stakeholders are often in biologic farming, also in research and policy making. The SoilCare workshops were more visited by men agriculturalists, although they are also not always available.”

The question about whether the gender disbalance in agriculture will change is responded affirmative; from her personal experience the interviewee has been noticed, that the education for agriculture has changed in the past 20 years. Women used to be about ten percent of the students, and these days it is about fifty percent.

4.2. Gender website information

There are some websites on consequences of gender imbalance, which appoint the possible implications, and support the farmer women especially.

Informing women farmers - Interesting to mention here is the Belgium websites for women farmers and their stakes. Belgium has several websites for support to women in agriculture in Flemish. The

“National information point for women – “Landelijk Infopunt voor vrouwen” - and “Agravrouwen”(Agravrouwen 2019). They give advice and support, arrange activities and facilitate networking, to make women farmers and farmer women aware of their interests and stake. The financial position of women that cooperate in the farm is not always well arranged, and for new generations it is important that the roles for men and women are clear and attractive. These websites are very helpful therefore, unfortunately not in English.

If we look closer at the website information about a financial outbalance of women farmers, it becomes visible with divorces in a family company, as stated by a Dutch notary, (see references p.18, website link Hulleman), when the women have put their work and savings in the farm, but the company is on the name of the farmer. Demanding her share could mean bankruptcy of the farm and the inheritance of the children. Often they divorce with a mutual agreement, the women taking their financial loss for granted. It is not solved with a marriage made on premarital agreement, unless there is a yearly payment arrangement, the company may even become an increasing juridical and financial problem.

Since 30 years more farms are being de-familiarized and turned into cooperatives or changing to partnerships (LEI 2014), their target is not any more to have the company inherited within the family. A Dutch study on women at farms (195 respondents) says, that these days, compared to 30 years ago, more women are (also partly) working outside the farm, and that the women that are working more on the farm, are more involved in decision making. And the study mentions, that women who work outside the farm and who are involved in the decision making, even though less involved, they bring their knowledge from outside the farm in the decision making. Most challenging for them is the administration and financial perspectives with all the rules and regulations (LEI 2014, SCP 2011, Bucx 2011).

SoilCare website - On the SoilCare website the gender equality report can be viewed, by typing “gender” in the “Search” button, on the SoilCare website home page.

Another gender related communication subject concerning the SoilCare webpage, is the gender disaggregated information about the of the SoilCare website visitors. The numbers show the registered website users from February 2019 - March 2020, in a graph. It tells us that it is around 50% men/women use, from 1962 visitors (34 % from 5752), 1005 is woman and 980 is man. The numbers of registered users are almost doubled compared to the numbers from June 2018 to March 2019 show also 50% men and women from 1535 SoilCare website visitors (43% from total of 3539), the only conclusion in relation to gender is that the website use, as far as registered, is well balanced between genders. We do not know more about the users their background or country, only that the access is free and when one has access to the internet one can visit this SoilCare website, so apparently as much women as men are interested in the content. See figure and numbers in [Annex 3](#)

4.3. Gender mainstreaming: FAO forum

A communication activity about gender equality concerning SoilCare was an article In the FAO's Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition, in a discussion on mainstreaming gender for sustainable soil management, in the text was referred to the SoilCare project because the examples give us insight in the minority of women stakeholders in agricultural projects and agricultural practice in general, but also in the positive willingness of women to participate in the stakeholder workshops when they are being invited (FAO forum 2019), as follows, see also [Annex 4](#).

FAO question posed in the Forum was: To help with the discussion on mainstreaming gender for sustainable soil management, participants were invited to share their experience, views and feedback by replying to a few questions, among which the following question:

1. In your view, what is the relation between sustainable soil use, management and conservation (including soil fertility and health) and gender equality?

The response from Corepage, with reference to different projects, among which the SoilCare project, was: *"The relation between sustainable soil use, soil management and soil conservation (including soil fertility and soil health) and gender equality is that more men are involved, when sustainable soil management practices (and agricultural management practices) are being introduced (in project workshops or demonstration meetings for European farmers). Despite of trying to involve women as well as men, the fact is that women farmers are a minority in Europe, therefore they are also often a minority in project study site communities, which may make them, being a minority, less convenient to participate, but in missing these introductions, also their views, ideas and perspectives will not always be represented adequately and the women are less informed and less involved than men. The invited women however, seem to be interested in the sustainable management subject, as it was shown in the (SoilCare EU) project, although lower in number, in percentage the participation level of women was higher than compared to the percentage of invited men."* (SoilCare b 2017)." See the entire response also in [Annex 4](#)

This inspiration came from the 1st gender equality report, where it was concluded that there is a good balance for men (59%) and women (41%) stakeholders in the SoilCare project. In numbers in the study site stakeholder workshops in the first reporting period, more men participated (135 from total 227 participants), but in percentage compared with the invitations the women (92 from 115 invitations) had a higher turnout than men (respectively 80% and 61%). It is interesting to see that the women reacted upon the invitations positively by appearing in respectively high numbers.

Concerning the global FAO forum, there are diverse reactions from all over the world. Although they differ from experiences and policies, they are almost all convinced that gender has to be taken into account for a solid sustainable soil management approach. FAO is gathering this input to provide inputs to the "Guide on gender and sustainable soil management", which will be used in several meetings (Regional Soil Partnerships, intergovernmental technical panel on soils) and policy making institutions of FAO.

5. Conclusions

Working towards gender equality is an essential part of European research and innovation policy. In the 3rd reporting period of SoilCare we looked at the gender balance and gender roles in the project (step 1 in the DoW) and at the decision making on Soil Improving Cropping Systems by men and women as valued by land users/farmers and researchers/advisors, following the 3rd step of the DoW. Except from the percentages, it is interesting to see, how the responses are different between roles (land users and researchers/advisors) and gender (men and women).

Results SICS decision making by men/women:

- In all responses (43 total) the majority who decides on the SICS are men. But there are differences: Land users (most men) say that either they take the decisions or they consult their partner (wife in these cases) for 10-20% of the decisions, or for 100% when the project is led by women researchers who take the decisions. If we count the averages, the land users say that 87% of the decision making for SICS is done by men and 13% by women. Researchers indicate that an average of 69% percent of the decisions on the application of SICS are taken by men and 31% by women. Looking at the responses from only women researchers and advisors, 57% of the decision making on SICS application is made by men and 43% by women. Researchers see the decision making on SICS more balanced between men and women than the land users. And women researchers even more.

Results SICS implementation by men/women

- From the point of view of land users, there are hardly women involved in the implementation of the SICS. In average percentage the number of men doing the implementation of the SICS is 94% men and 6% women. The men researchers say 87% implementation of the SICS is done by men and 13% by women, where the average of the women researchers say 74% implementation by men and 26% by women, a minority, but more than the 6% mentioned by the land users.

Do SICS have an effect on the labour participation of women?

- Some comments from the stakeholders in the questionnaires refer to the labor effort to SICS implementation. In the 1st RP a SoilCare stakeholder says that SICS are expected to minimize labor effort in maintaining good soil quality in farms and thus offering an incentive to women to participate equally in farming processes. In section 2 in this report, we can see that the estimations are not so high about this equal participation of women in farming, most of the land users and also the researchers say that it is mostly men that perform the implementation of the SICS, and it is even mentioned that implementation of the SICS requires higher labor input. Because the SICS also require time to invest, buy, saw, etc. The workload also is said to depend on the experience of the farmer.

Results SoilCare gender balance

- There is a reasonable balance in the number of men and women that are involved in the project staff, the total staff has 182 people of whom 102 (56%) are men and 80 (44%) are women. If we look at the academic positions 2-5 (excluding position 1, "Other staff"), in percentage we see some more women than men among the early researchers and that the gender gap is relatively bigger in the highest position, scientific manager.

Influence SoilCare on gender roles

- Many SoilCare stakeholders, perform roles in agriculture, these are mostly done by men, other stakeholders are from advisory services and women especially work on communication and

policy making, men also in retailing. Agriculture still is a challenging branch for women to become involved. From the project it would be helpful to invite and involve the women like the men are being invited and involved, even though the women are not the farm owner or decision maker (yet). The education, also ongoing adult education, should fit more to their (potential) role, interest, identity. The role that women have as an agronomist or a researcher or professor, as shown amongst the SoilCare study site stakeholders in the first RP, is about these identities and the exchange of knowledge and understanding of the important sustainable influence of the SICS on the quality of the soils, for both men and women farmers. These women agronomists, researchers and even policy makers, are examples for the farmer women and in their role they can be helpful in understanding and performing to their needs and identities.

6. Recommendations and follow up

To keep the agricultural branch with future perspectives, it is good to be aware of the gender (social) balance. That is also a reason to keep the SoilCare stakeholders, among them the farmer women, well informed and make them inform the project about their experiences and needs to get the best performance from the SICS. It is advised to the study site teams, to find (keep) (gender) diversity among the stakeholders to be involved, they can help to broaden insight in the researched area, the focus will be also on the (gender disaggregated) data that we will ask from the involved stakeholders in adjustment with WP3. This is about gathering information from men and women stakeholders about ownership, views and perceptions of land use among stakeholders, in their selection and prioritizing of soil-improving cropping systems and agronomic techniques.

From the communication with our Belgium partner in SoilCare we got an interesting link to a Belgium website for farmer women to remain involved. In the last project period, it will be checked in the other countries from the SoilCare study sites, to see if there is specific information for women farmers on the internet.

For gender equality in this project we look for data from men and women stakeholders, sometimes in the interviews there is also a young person involved. It is good, also in an early stage to be aware of equal gender opportunities. Therefore a general recommendation for developing sustainable and healthy soils, is to focus also on the young, future men and women farmers, who can be supported with subsidies and suggestions about the promising soil improving technologies to be developed in the project and beyond and to be mentioned to (men and women) policy makers.

In the final project period, the gender equality perspective will be further elaborated with:

- more gender disaggregated data;
- one more questionnaire will be sent with extra questions to the study sites about their stakeholder workshops and demonstration meetings in cooperation with WP3;
- two more interviews with study site participants from SoilCare, will be planned;
- if there is another SoilCare plenary meeting, the progress on gender equality will be presented;
- there will be a final staff numbers check, and;
- a final reporting with advice for the policy makers on gender equality.

This can all be done in the 4th and final Phase of the SoilCare project. Otherwise, when for example due to circumstances, intended data collection at a demonstration meeting is not possible, ideas can be given follow up in proposals for the next generation of Gender equality strategies for EU in the 2021 - 2027 programming.

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Gender assessment tools

References; Gender assessment tools examples:

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Annex 1 The WP4 questionnaire

Questionnaire A is for the land users and B for the researchers (and advisors).

Questionnaire A: Benefits and drawbacks of SICS as perceived by implementing land users

Study site:		Year:			
Tested SICS (combination of measures):		SICS implementation started in (mm/yy):			
Tested on:	<input type="checkbox"/> farmer's land				
Name of interviewer:		Date of interview:			
Role in SoilCare:					
Respondent(s) name:	Sex (m/f)	Position			
		Farm manager	Wife/husband of farm manager	Employee	Other (specify)
1)					
2)					
3)					
Comments:					

1. GENDER

1.1 Division of labour within land user family

Comment: Q 1.1 aims to understand how female and male members of a land user family share decision-making and labour regarding SICS. Example: If a male farmer manager takes all the decisions alone or maybe together with his son, and his wife is not involved in farm work on the fields at all, it is 100% men for decision-making and labour input. If the male farm manager takes a final decision after consultation with his wife, the woman might be involved at 20% in decision-making. If they decide on equal terms, it's 50%-50%.

Concerning the tested/implemented SICS, to which degree (%) have men and women (male and female members of the farming unit) been involved?

Who decides on SICS, and who implements the SICS?	Involvement in %	
	Men	Women
Decision-making on SICS		
Labour input for SICS implementation		
Comments:		

Questionnaire B: Benefits and drawbacks of SICS as perceived by researchers

Study site:		Year:	
Tested SICS (combination of measures):		SICS implementation started in (mm/yy):	
Tested on:	<input type="checkbox"/> research station		
	<input type="checkbox"/> other (please explain):		
Name of interviewer:		Date of interview:	
Role in SoilCare:			
Respondent(s) name:	Sex (m/f)	Position	
		SoilCare researcher	Other (specify)
1)			
2)			
3)			
Comments:			

1. GENDER

1.1 Division of labour

Comment: Q 1.1 aims to understand how women and men share decision-making and how the division of labour is between women and men. Example: If a male farmer manager takes all the decisions alone or maybe together with his son, and his wife is not involved in farm work on the fields at all, it is 100% men for decision-making and labour input. If the male farm manager takes a final decision after consultation with his wife, the woman might be involved at 20% in decision-making. If they decide on equal terms, it's 50%-50%.

Who decides on SICS (or farming related issues), and who implements the SICS (or farming practices)?

Concerning the tested SICS, to which degree (%) would men and women (male and female members of a farming unit) usually been involved?

	Involvement in %	
	Men	Women
Decision-making on SICS		
Labour input for SICS implementation		
Comments:		

Annex 2: Numbers of SoilCare staff ('18-'19)

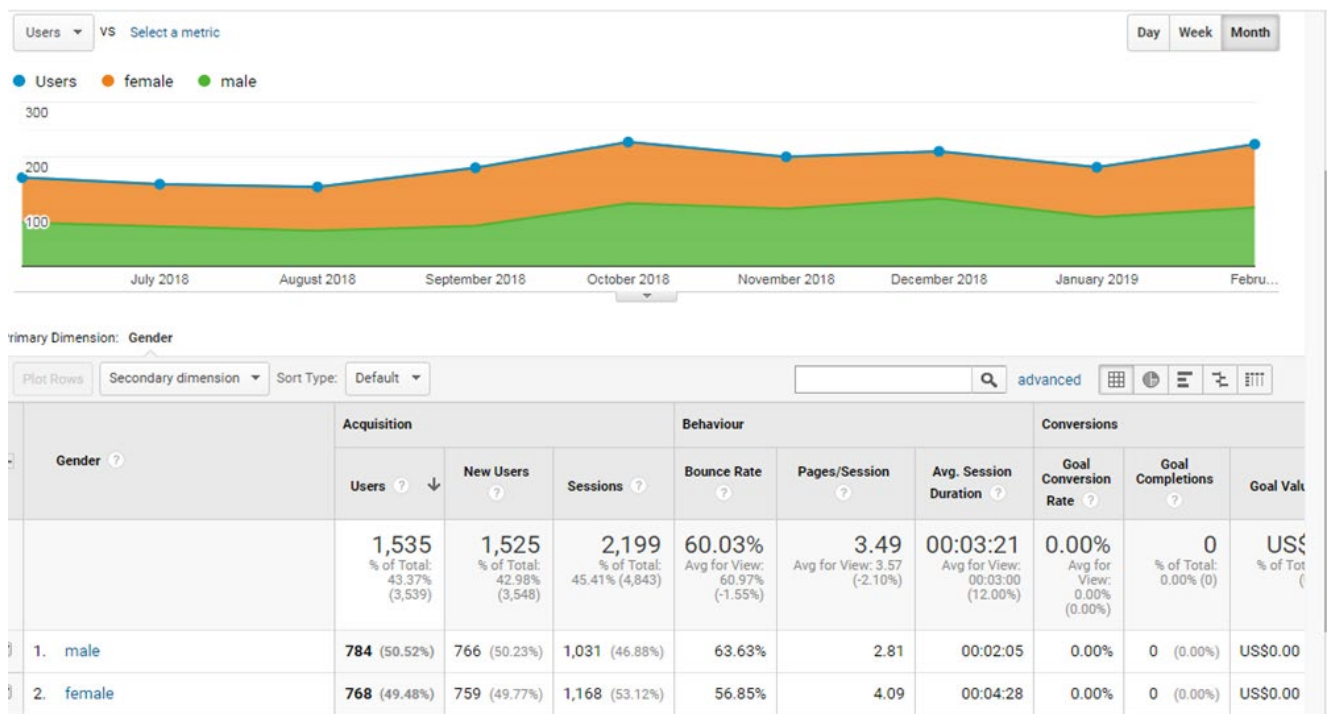
SoilCare '18-'19	Total Women academic	Total men academic	Total academic	(w) Other staff	(m) Other staff	Total Other	Total Women	Total '19	
1. WER	2	10	12		2	2	2	14	
2. UNEW	1	1	2				1	2	
3. KUL	2	3	5	2	1	3	4	8	
4. UoG	3		3				3	3	w +1, M-1
5. UH	2	1	3	1	1	2	3	5	
6. RIKS	1	1	2				1	2	
7. TUC	2	8	10		1	1	2	11	
8. JRC		4	4					4	
9. UNIBE	3	4	7				3	7	w+1, m+2
10. Milieu LTD	4		4	1		1	5	5	w+1, m-3
11. NIBIO(Biof	3	4	7	1		1	4	8	
12. BDB	4	2	6		3	3	4	9	
13. AU	3	4	7	1	1	2	4	9	
14. GWCT	2	2	4				2	4	w+1, m+1
15. Teagasc	1	1	2				1	2	
16. SCR									w -2, m-3
17. ESAC	1	1	2				1	2	
18. ICPA	15	10	25	5	1	6	20	31	
19. UNIPD	1	2	3		2	2	1	5	
20. IAPAN	2	3	5	1		1	3	6	
21. WU	1	2	3				1	3	
22. UP	2	3	5	5	3	8	7	13	w +4, m+2
23. SLU		4	4					4	
24. AIA	1	3	4	2		2	3	6	
25. VURV	2	4	6				2	6	
26. UAL	2	5	7				2	7	
27. FRAB	1	2	3		1	1	1	4	
28. Science View					2	2		2	
Total			145			37		182	
Tot men		84			18			102	
Tot women	61			19			80		
% women	42			51			44		
%men		58			49			56	

Annex 3: Website visits

Website (registered) user graph from February 2019 - March 2020,
From 1962 users (34 % from 5752), 1005 is woman and 980 is man, it is around 50 % m/w use

	Gender ?	Acquisition			Behaviour			Conversions	
		Users ? ↓	New Users ?	Sessions ?	Bounce Rate ?	Pages/Session ?	Avg. Session Duration ?	Goal Conversion Rate ?	Goal Completions ?
		1,962 % of Total: 34.11% (5,752)	1,893 % of Total: 33.37% (5,673)	2,890 % of Total: 36.06% (8,014)	59.27% Avg for View: 62.00% (-4.40%)	3.25 Avg for View: 3.15 (3.21%)	00:03:19 Avg for View: 00:02:50 (17.00%)	0.00% Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	0 % of Total: 0.00% (0)
☑	1. female	1,005 (50.63%)	955 (50.45%)	1,570 (54.33%)	57.26%	3.51	00:03:45	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
☑	2. male	980 (49.37%)	938 (49.55%)	1,320 (45.67%)	61.67%	2.95	00:02:49	0.00%	0 (0.00%)

From June 2018 to March 2019 also 50% men and women from 1535 SoilCare website users (43% from total of 3539)



Annex 4: FAO global forum


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DISCUSSION • 23.09.2019 - 25.10.2019 contributions: 38

Mainstreaming gender for sustainable soil management

Soils are an essential and non-renewable natural resource that provide goods and services vital to ecosystems and human life. They are fundamental for producing crops, feed, fibre and fuel, for filtering water and cycling nutrients.

Unsustainable land uses, natural hazards and worsening climatic effects are increasingly degrading soil resources and placing the livelihoods of vulnerable populations in jeopardy. Already, 33% of world's soils are degraded and more than 2.9 billion people are affected by land degradation leading to food shortages, hunger and malnutrition, conflicts over natural resources or distressed migration, with differentiated impacts on men and women.

As specified in the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM), sustainable soil management is a measure to combat soil degradation processes, which simultaneously ensures the long-term productive potential of soils and the maintenance of their environmental functions. The successful use of the guidelines will depend on the collective action of multiple stakeholders in an inclusive, gender sensitive, and sustainable manner.

Closing the gender gap in access to productive resources and services is crucial for the achievement of a Zero Hunger world. Women comprise about 43 percent of the agricultural labour force globally and half or more in many African and Asian countries. They also constitute the majority of farmers in many of the regions most severely affected by desertification, land degradation and drought.

The labour burden of rural women exceeds that of men and includes a higher proportion of unpaid household responsibilities. Despite their crucial role in agriculture and food production, women often have limited rights to the land they farm, preventing them from efficiently controlling soil degradation and enhancing soil fertility. Women also often cannot influence natural resource governance decisions and practices in their communities, and have less access to information, extension services and education than men.

This online discussion aims at collecting the views from a wide range of stakeholders about the relations between gender equality, sustainable soil management and food security. The feedback gathered from this consultation will inform and provide inputs to draft the 'Guide on gender and sustainable soil management', to be prepared by the Regional Soil Partnerships, the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) together with the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division of FAO, with inputs from gender and soil management specialists.

The objectives of this guide are to promote the adoption of a gender-responsive approach to support sustainable soil management. The target audience is composed of various stakeholders such as governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations engaged in gender, land and rural development issues, soil scientists/experts, land and soil professionals, women's and farmers' organizations, researchers and policy-makers.

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The objectives of this guide are to promote the adoption of a gender-responsive approach to support sustainable soil management. The target audience is composed of various stakeholders such as governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations engaged in gender, land and rural development issues, soil scientists/experts, land and soil professionals, women's and farmers' organizations, researchers and policy-makers.

To help with this inclusive process, we invite you to share your experience, views and feedback by replying to the following questions:

1. In your view, what is the relation between sustainable soil use, management and conservation (including soil fertility and health) and gender equality?
2. What are the distinct roles for women, men, boys and girls in sustainable soil management?
3. What are the main gender-based constraints, including unequal gender relations and discriminatory norms that hinder sustainable soil management and contribute to soil degradation? What practical solutions and approaches could help overcoming such barriers?
4. How can the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment contribute to sustainable soil management and conservation? Which interventions at policy and project/field level are of utmost priority? What are some potential entry points for success?

We greatly appreciate your contributions and ideas related to the topic of global importance 'Sustainable Soil Management and Gender equality'.

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Director of Land and Water Division, FAO

Antonio Correa Do Prado
Director of Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division, FAO

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Ronald Vargas, Global Soil Partnership Secretariat, FAO

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Activity 161

Facilitated by



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 CorePage
 Netherlands

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1) In your view, what is the relation between sustainable soil use, management and conservation (including soil fertility and health) and gender equality?

The relation between sustainable soil use, soil management and soil conservation (including soil fertility and soil health) and gender equality is that more men are involved, when sustainable soil management practices (and agricultural management practices) are being introduced (in project workshops or demonstration meetings for European farmers[1]). Despite of trying to involve women as well as men, the fact is that women farmers are a minority in Europe, therefore they are also often a minority in project study site communities, which may make them, being a minority, less convenient to participate, but in missing these introductions, also their views, ideas and perspectives will not always be represented adequately and the women are less informed and less involved than men. The invited women however, seem to be interested in the sustainable management subject, as it was shown in the (SoilCare EU) project, although lower in number, in percentage the participation level of women was higher than compared to the percentage of invited men.[2]

2) What are the distinct roles for women, men, boys and girls in sustainable soil management?

In sustainable soil management the roles for women in the European case studies are -more or less- the same as for men, except that more men than women are into farming and forestry. Related to the non-sustainable soil management stakeholders, women are involved and especially interested in sustainable soil (and land) management, considering aspects as the health of the soil and the crops that are being produced now and in the future. In the EU project RECARE[3], a lot of interviews with stakeholders on the subject were held, and some interesting results were, that the women stakeholders tended to respect the soil for its possibilities, where the men tended to look how well the exploitation possibilities of the soil were; Women reminded us about the health of future generations with sustainable soil management, where men specifically mentioned terminology like efficiency related to crop production. These remarks are not significant in numbers, but several women from the case study sites were pointing more to the future health of the soil and considering the threats of their soils, where several men were more focussed on the economic possibilities and the way they could use the soil. There are of course also men with the conservation perspective and women with the production perspective, showing that these approaches are not necessarily gender based, but more gender related, because the men (and women) influence each other in their approach.

3) What are the main gender-based constraints, including unequal gender relations and discriminatory norms that hinder sustainable soil management and contribute to soil degradation?

A gender based constraint in soil management is juridical and/or cultural, when there are laws that discriminate on gender with regard to access to land ownership or inheritance or rules that discriminate on access to (agrarian) schools, jobs, loans, funds, buildings, or on salaries. Often the European laws and public rules are not (any more) discriminating on gender, but the practice still is, as often mentioned the "normal" situation, such as women have to do the household without payment, or women are thought not able or willing to run a farm. It contributes to soil degradation in the way that soil management misses the gender balance or better: the gender diversity, for a sustainable land management approach, but is a male dominated (more focus on the land use and its profits, despite of the soil threats), where a more future based, female minded approach (for healthy soils, its conservation and the importance of soil biodiversity, and preventing soil threats) could bring a better balance.

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What practical solutions and approaches could help overcoming such barriers?

To have a balance of women and men in sustainable soil management, women should be more attracted to this field and some gender related issues should become societal issues solved by juridical, institutional and practical flexible appointments (or rules). Which also shows that gender inequality is a bigger problem, but about sustainable soil, one can for example build a generous (digital) floor to exchange knowledge from the different gendered perspectives (economic growth and quality -biological, chemical and physical healthy soils-). And support for more women to become empowered for positions in sustainable farm management.

To maintain soil quality and soil biodiversity, and for reasons of human health and reproductivity, we should focus on more sustainable, biological solutions, solutions that could make the organic farming increase, instead of producing chemical fertilizers, insecticides and plastics, for temporary higher yields, losing soil quality in the meantime. For soil quality and human health, more strict norms are needed for amounts, type, and mixtures of chemicals for yield improvement, as well as for example, frequency of use.

4) How can the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment contribute to sustainable soil management and conservation? Which interventions at policy and project/field level are of utmost priority? What are some potential entry points for success?

Sustainable soil management and conservation courses on the internet, and through soil information exchange mobile phone applications[4] for everyone, where the future is designed with subjects that may attract women as well as men, (biodiversity in agriculture, natural fertilizer, combinations with new energy), both men and women are needed to make sustainable- or "organic" farming bigger. To gather more women in soil management and conservation, they should be attracted with issues of their interest, supplied with funds that help them to work on their ideas and offered support from women advisors that might be sensitive to their questions. Not to separate the world, but to make it more equal, since women are a minority in soil and agricultural management, they could use extra incentives, for example: Require involvement of women from applicants when distributing extra loans or subsidies to start a sustainable soil management or conservation practice, or an organic farm.

[1] i.e. https://esdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu/public_path/u890/Other/CASCADE_Newsletter4.pdf

[2] <https://www.soilcare-project.eu/downloads/soilcare-reports-and-deliverables/99-report-08-soilcare-p1-gender-equality-report-heleen-claringbould-full/file>

[3] <https://www.recare-project.eu/downloads-by-category/public-documents/recare-reports/gender-equality-reports/430-report-50-gender-equality-report-p4-heleen-claringbould-full/file> (p.16)

[4] For example SQAPP, for soil quality assessment and monitoring, see: <http://www.isqaper-is.eu/new-standards>