

Memo	Women in management in COWI	COWI A/S
Title	Approach to improving the representation of women in management	Parallelvej 2 DK-2800 Kongens Lyngby Denmark
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1 Background

On 26 March 2008 COWI committed to the Charter for "More women in management" launched by the Danish Minister for Gender Equality. Part of the commitment is to set targets for COWI's activities to fulfil the intentions of the Charter no later than 26 June 2008.

COWI committed to the Charter because we trust in the dynamics and innovation potential that stems from having a diverse work force as well as diversity in the management. Diversity supports us in developing the business and delivering better solutions to our clients because it ensures that more and different voices are heard and involved in problem identification and analysis and in providing the solutions.

Diversity also makes COWI a more attractive workplace because working in diverse teams is perceived as more enriching by most employees and managers. In terms of career opportunities it is important for COWI always to recruit and promote the best people and by providing equal opportunities for all we ensure the best access to a varied talent pool.

One important aspect of ensuring diversity is to ensure gender equality. The present situation is characterised by very few women in line management positions with bottom line and people management responsibility. Most female managers have project management responsibilities. The situation is described in the table underneath.

	New Employees			Appointed			Number of managers in COWI, 31.12.07		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Vice Presidents and directors	1	1	2	0	9	9	3	25	28
Chief Project Mgr., R&D Mgr., Heads of Dept., Service Function Mgr	1	3	4	2	18	20	13	113	126
Other Managers	2	17	19	17	35	52	42	227	269
Total	4	21	25	19	62	81	58	365	423

2 Overall vision for more women in management

COWI want to take advantage of the dynamics and innovation potential that follows from having a high degree of diversity in the workforce and in management. Diversity in project teams will be to the benefit of our customers because it ensures a multifaceted approach to both problem identification and solution.

Therefore, it is the vision for diversity in COWI that the composition of management teams at all levels of the company should reflect both the nature of our business and the composition of work force for which the management team is responsible.

As one aspect of fulfilling this vision it is necessary to recruit more women into management positions at all levels in COWI. We know that there are general cultural and societal barriers for increasing the number of women in management; however we will apply a deliberate and systematic approach to support and encourage more women to take up a management position.

We have started identifying our barriers to get "more women" in management and it is important continuously gain more knowledge about the factors that constitute the "glass ceiling" and the "sticky floor" in COWI and among women in COWI.

It is too early for COWI to set a timeframe for achieving the overall target because we lack information about our barriers and the effect of corrective actions that we now plan to take.

Initially we will focus on building the pipeline of female talents and track the success of this each year in relation to succession and talent management. First step in this is to develop and implement a talent management process which makes it possible to systematically identify female managerial talents; to track the actual performance; and to continuously improve our approach.

2.1 How to get there - overall approach and targets

2008: Develop and launch a succession and talent management process which aims at a composition of managerial talents at all levels of the company that reflects the composition of the work force in that particular area.

2009: Establish baseline for female managerial talents by implementing the succession and talent management process in all COWI regions and extract needs for further refinement and upgrade of the process.

2010: Continue implementation and documentation in all COWI regions including process upgrades.

The target for 2010 is that the gender composition of successors to all management positions reflects the workforce for which the manager is responsible.

2.2 Detailed initiatives

In addition to develop the gender perspective in the succession and talent management process a number of other specific initiatives will be taken. They relate to:

- **Data:** Continue to collect and develop data on gender aspects of the organisation
- **Communication:** raising awareness and utilising the potential of role models
- **Transparency:** clarity of career paths in COWI and access to vacant positions
- **Recruitment:** gender requirements to head hunters
- **Development:** women in management training

Data

We will continue to collect data on gender aspects of the organisation and gradually improve the quality and completeness of the data. Focus areas will be on actual number of women in various management positions and on promotion patterns. We will also focus on tracking the number of women participating in internal management training.

Another focus area will be to improve and share our knowledge about the barriers for getting more women in management. One example could be to analyse the gender aspects of the relation between tenure with the company and promotion.

Communication

As part of launching the succession and talent management process a communication plan will be prepared. The plan will also include communication about the need for special focus on identifying and developing female managerial talent.

A plan for communicating about women in management in COWI to increase general awareness will be prepared in the autumn of 2008. The plan will include repeated communication about the vision for more women in management, data about the actual situation and stories about women's careers in COWI.

We will establish a site on the COWI portal with data, background information, COWI's targets and approach as well as inspiration for the further work.

Transparency

There is a need to make the career tracks and related competency requirements clearer and more transparent. A project about this is planned as part of the people strategy and will be initialised in 2008.

Management positions should to the highest possible extent be openly advertised in order to give all qualified candidates equal opportunities to apply for the vacant position. The target in this area is to follow up on current practice and improve the openness related to open positions.

Recruitment

When utilising search companies (head hunters) in the recruitment process, COWI will explicitly ask the search company to include female candidates in the search.

Research shows that the wording of job ads and competency profiles has an impact on women's propensity to judge themselves qualified for the position. We will begin to investigate this effect in COWI and adjust practice accordingly.

Development

As part of the succession and talent management process the quality of the personal development plans will be evaluated to assess to what extent they aim at qualifying the female talents for management positions. The need for further targeted development activities will be evaluated based on the evaluation of development plans and the data obtained about female participation in internal management training.