IN THE MAKING: THE BRUSSELS BINDER
Sharing the Experiences of Making Women Visible
The Brussels Binder Beyond
MORE WOMEN’S VOICES IN EUROPEAN DEBATES

Supported by the European Commission, Brussels Binder Beyond (BBBeyond) built upon The Brussels Binder initiative with the idea to bring the efforts of The Brussels Binder “Beyond” Brussels and across Europe.

BBBeyond aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1) build and cultivate a pan-European network of women expert databases, think tanks, and like-minded organisations to raise awareness of the issue of underrepresentation of women and create synergies to promote women’s visibility;

2) build and maintain an online repository of women expert databases; and

3) co-create practical tools for diverse and innovative convening.

By fostering an inclusive and solution-focused environment for knowledge transfer and best practice exchange, BBBeyond has facilitated community-building activities that focus on co-creation and peer-learning for the development of quality control tools and recommendations for diverse and innovative convening. This manual is part of these efforts as it outlines the experiences of The Brussels Binder members in the creation of the database initiative to not only inspire others who would wish to do the same but also provide practical advice on how to do it.

www.brusselsbinder.org

AUTHORED BY:

CONSORTIUM:

DISCLAIMER: The content of this deliverable represents the views of the author(s) only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of their organisations.

GRAPHIC DESIGN:
Klär.graphics

This project was funded by the European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020).
The story of The Brussels Binder began in 2015 when several women from Brussels think tanks met informally. The main objectives were to get to know each other, share experiences as professional women in Brussels policy bubbles. The group continued meeting and grew; new women from different fields and expertise began to join. Despite there being many women experts, a point of frustration was the overrepresentation of male speakers at Brussels policy events and in the media commenting on EU affairs. The group discussed this gender imbalance and brainstormed on what could be done to change it. This is how the idea of a database of women policy experts came about.

The database aimed to provide a practical tool that our organisations could also use, to ensure greater participation of women in policy-shaping and debating. The initial idea was followed by a crowdfunding campaign; the building of working groups to focus on developing the technical side of the database; finding partners to endorse and support the initiative such as donors, think tanks, and individuals; building a communication campaign and organising a fun(d) raiser; and much more. The Brussels Binder was as much a project as well as a campaign, a social entrepreneurship experience, a learning, and a network-building exercise.

Captured in this manual is a snapshot of our story, how we built The Brussels Binder, and how it is still in the making. Not only do we share insights on how to set up an online database but we also share the experience of setting up a non-profit volunteer initiative. By sharing our story along with practical tips, advice, and lessons learned, we hope this document serves the purpose of supporting those who aspire to follow a similar journey as The Brussels Binder.

“Building The Brussels Binder has been an impressive and rewarding journey. The initiative is as much about building a database as it is about creating influential networks, skills-building and harnessing as well as having policy impact.”

CORINNA HöRST
2.1. Identity and Branding

2.1.1. THE NAME
After hosting an internal vote on several name options for the newly sprung initiative, “The Brussels Binder” came out on top as the most favoured name. The term “binder” is a playful nod to an internet controversy caused by US Presidential candidate Mitt Romney during the second U.S. presidential debate in 2012. He used the phrase “binders full of women” in response to a question about pay equity, referring to binders with résumés of female job applicants. These were submitted to him by women’s groups as the Governor of Massachusetts when he was recruiting cabinet members. The phrase was depicted by his opponents as demeaning and insensitive toward women and was widely mocked.

“Brussels” was central to the name, referring to the initial mission of the campaign and the database: highlighting and increasing the presence of women experts in policy debates taking place or originating in Brussels, the seat of the European Union and conference capital of Europe (with over 3,000 physical events organised every year).

2.1.2. THE LOGO
Developing the logo of The Brussels Binder was an iterative process where key discussions focused on placement, size, character font, and legibility, what it would look like when reduced and scaled up, along with various formats (e.g., negative black and white, greyscale, etc.). We also wanted the icon of the logo to visualise the story behind the name (as described above) and to be unapologetic on how the database was exclusively for women experts.

---

Top Tip for Branding

Initiatives will evolve but your branding should stay consistent to ensure your organisation is easily identifiable. However, with foresight, you can also ensure your branding is still relevant as your organisation changes in direction and/or scope.
2.1.3. COLOUR STORY

The consensus amongst the team was that we wanted our colour story to be neutral and outside the norm of traditional colours associated with gender equality and feminism to attract a broader audience. It was also equally important that we went beyond the dark colours that can often be found in branding in Brussels institutions. The spirit behind The Brussels Binder was energetic, dynamic, and bold and it was essential to choose something that conveyed this tone. We settled on “tangerine orange” because psychologically, it draws people to pay attention. Navy blue and white were also chosen as accent colours to professionalize the branding.

2.2. SEED FUNDING

The initial (seed) capital to build the website and database was raised through a crowdfunding campaign on the Brussels-based crowdfunding platform Growfunding, as part of a broader fundraising strategy. The goal of the crowdfunding campaign was threefold:

1. to raise money (we budgeted for €7,500);
2. to promote our initiative and recruit an initial number of experts as a basis for the database; and
3. to raise awareness of the broader issue we were aiming to address. An important objective of the project was to build a community from the bottom up to amplify our message and use the leverage of this supporter base to pitch to private and public funders in the near future.

The crowdfunding model we chose was participatory: depending on the amount donated, the donor would get a reward linked to the mission of The Brussels Binder, and an invitation to the launch event. Big sponsors (>1000€) would get a tailor-made package.

2.2.1. ONLINE CAMPAIGN

The first part of developing the crowdfunding campaign strategy was to get it online. We first established our social media presence on Twitter and Facebook which was linked to the crowdfunding page. The key objective here was to generate and mobilise an online community, by encouraging them not only to donate to the fundraising page but to also share it with their own networks. We initially relied on our volunteers’ direct contacts and their related think tanks network e.g. colleagues, family, friends, and work contacts. Then the focus shifted to both local and international media to get our message out to a broader public.

Several social media campaigns were executed during this time in addition to promoting the fundraising page. One of the most important was the campaign to highlight the profiles of the newly recruited Brussels Binder Ambassadors. They acted as amplifiers in spreading the mission of the project and showcasing their support also sparked wider media interest. Another social media campaign was the actual promotion of the fundraising event where a “countdown” was used to create anticipation.

Lastly, a video campaign was also developed where members of The Brussels Binder passed around a slate. Individual shots showcasing members were also taken and compiled as social media banners. In addition to raising awareness of the crowdfunding campaign, it was also crucial to highlight that The Brussels Binder was an open and inclusive space where women from diverse backgrounds could get involved as volunteers and/or sign-up to the database.

Top Tip for ONLINE CAMPAIGNS

Having different funnels for content as posting the same type of content will make people lose interest. Social media is also about giving — so be a cross-promoter and in exchange ask others to promote your campaign.

“The creation of a community of supporters from different sectors and a network of ambassadors prior to the crowdfunding campaign, was one of the crucial elements to achieve popularity for the BB project.”
PAOLA MANIGA
2.2.2 FUNDRAISING EVENT

In the final stretch of the crowdfunding campaign, we managed to secure an in-kind sponsorship with Google who hosted our fundraising event, and provided catering, in March 2017. To generate a "buzz", we connected with people who were well-recognised in Brussels policy circles and many of them became Brussels Binder Ambassadors who then promoted the event within their networks. It was also important to make sure that the event was as attractive as possible by not only creating a stimulating programme that highlighted and advocated for our mission but also allowed for space to have fun. To help incentivise people to sign-up and donate their money, a prize raffle was also organised. Before the event, extensive efforts were made to gather a range of prizes that would be attractive to people.

A key part of making this a success was to capitalise on volunteers’ personal networks and acquaintances in Brussels-based small businesses, by asking for contributions and in-kind donations such as vouchers for restaurants, chocolates, dance lessons, etc. Another aspect of this was to reach out to like-minded organisations and companies such as women-led businesses who were sympathetic to our mission. Over 60 prizes were donated for the raffles, e.g. books, bottles of wine, electronic equipment (kindles, tablets).

Invitations were extended to the wider Brussels community and EU institutions; however, it was of paramount importance to ensure that representatives from think tanks attended the event since they were the main focus of our advocacy efforts. The fundraising event was very successful and helped us (over-)achieve our objectives. Over 600 people registered for the event and only half were able to attend due to venue restrictions. Having maximum attendance helped boost our fundraising goals by adding a further €3,000 on top of the online crowdfunding. Lastly, it also helped spread word of the project which generated further opportunities and benefits for The Brussels Binder down the line.

Top Tip for A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

→ Find a partner to co-host with who can also act as a “hook”!
→ Think outside of the box for the event format to get people to come!
→ Showcase big profiles and personalities at your event to generate interest!
→ Keep building relations with attendees also after the event!

Balloon drop, Fundraising Event, 2017 © Sarah Halls

“I think what worked best in the very beginning was to speak to everyone. This is how we got volunteers, created partnerships, made a buzz, and generally got the word out there about the BB.”

JULIANE SCHMIDT

Notes from CHARLOTTE BRANDSMA

Ultimately the crowdfunding campaign raised €11,765 from 176 donors, 156% of its initial target. It also laid the basis for — among others — a partnership with Google, that would support The Brussels Binder in kind and financially in its following years.

The factors that contributed to the success of the campaign:

→ A professional and big campaign team, and therefore a big existing network of potential funders (“the crowd”);
→ Timing: we timed the campaign around International Women’s Day, which helped attract a lot of high-level press (Politico, Euronews…);
→ Initial training by the crowdfunding platform on how to build a crowdfunding campaign and mentorship throughout the process;
→ The success of the fundraising event in partnership with Google Brussels.

Charlotte Brandsma
Managing director at Growfunding and co-founder of The Brussels Binder
3.1. Brainstorming & ideation

The first phase of developing the website and database involved a series of brainstorming and ideation sessions within the BB team (volunteers). We discussed what features the website and database would have, as well as functionality. Three main target groups had to be considered:

1) the experts creating their profiles;
2) event organisers and others searching for experts; and
3) BB volunteers who would have to manage the back-end of the website.

One of the most important discussions was determining what the expert profiles should look like. For example, what information should they contain (title, name, organisation, short biography, publications, speaking appearances, etc.), and which aspects should be compulsory/optional. Consideration for these aspects was important as they enabled the overall quality control of profiles without the need for a vetting system. We indeed decided early on that we did not want to populate the profiles ourselves, and that experts should be the ones filling them out so they can also update their profile information independently. Many prototypes using sketches of the database and profiles were drawn, taking inspiration from other databases, online clothing stores, etc.

This type of website not only inspired the layout of the BB database but it was decided that search and filtering functions would be central in how it is used.

Another key discussion within the BB team concerning the database was inclusion, accessibility, and the balancing of expert profiles. It was agreed that the database would be free for both experts registering their profiles, and users looking for experts. It was decided that the BB definition of “expert” would not be dependent on seniority of position but rather encourage women to step forward and self-describe as experts.

Notes from VIRGINIA MARANTIDOU

Although the process of brainstorming, feedback, and reporting can be very tiresome, in a volunteer-led organisation these aspects are very important to ensure transparency and collective buy-in. It is also worth recognising that for many initiatives similar to the BB (and from our own experience), they are often developing their database tools in parallel with their organisational structures and mandates.

Virginia Marantidou
Independent consultant
EU-Asia relations
3.2. Getting Technical

After consolidating the core elements of the website and database, a technical brief was developed (see annex III), which outlined the objectives as well as the vision for the site. Some of these included the “find an expert” and “register as an expert” as the two main button functions, along with a space to list think tanks supporting the BB as well as partner organisations. Additionally, sections also included media mentions, blogs, and updates, contact information as well as newsletter sign-up integration.

This brief (see annex III) was provided to web developers as part of the bidding process, where we invited web developers to make offers. After ensuring due diligence, we conducted several interviews and offered the work to the web developer who matched our needs and understood our organisation and values the most.

Once work started on the database, further decisions had to be made on the website design, layout, colours as well as solidifying key functionalities, such as search and access to the database (e.g. whether a login would be required), keeping in mind users’ needs. Wireframes were developed to help visualise the database, which went through an iterative process until it became the final product that we had envisaged.

Lesson learned on TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

It requires research and effort to understand how a database works technically, as well as to supervise the work of the web developers adequately. This will help create a clear vision and understanding of the objectives and needs of the target groups, which should be discussed in advance with the web developers.

You should only work with a web developer with prior experience in building online databases (or at least similar websites). Also, go with a web developer who will advise and not just execute. As a volunteer-led group, there was little technical competency within the team, and our members were often learning while doing. We would advise making the internal lead of your database team a paid position (even if part-time) requiring them to have technical knowledge. Failing to do all of this earlier on has been a hard and costly lesson for the BB.

Steps on Creating a User-Friendly Database

DOMAIN NAME
- Make sure to secure (buy) your domain name in advance;
- The most common for non-profit organisations include dot org (.org);
- It is worth creating an email address early on to connect it to the website.

CHOOSING A WEB DEVELOPER
- Prepare a website brief with all information about your future database (see annex III);
- Check their skillset and see whether they’ve worked on websites that include databases and search functions.

DEVELOPMENT PHASE
- Use mockups to help you visualise the database and decide what functions it will have;
- Pay attention to database fields, search functions, and filters;
- Have a dedicated person with technical knowledge who leads the database development and coordinates with the web developers;
- Decide whether experts will register and create their profiles on their own, or have this done by your organisation;
- Don’t forget to put processes in place to make sure you comply with personal data protection and privacy rules (including cookies policy);
- Consider graphic design early on as it can impact the performance of the database.

POST-SALE SUPPORT & MAINTENANCE
- Check the costs for monthly/yearly support;
- Be mindful of future upgrades and additional developments that might become necessary.

MONITORING & EVALUATIONS
- Integrate monitoring and evaluation features into the database early on;
- Determine what indicators you would like to track (see section 7.1. for further information).

Top Tip for DATABASE PRIVACY POLICY

To avoid spamming and issues with “bots”, make sure the email addresses on expert profiles are not visible and that there is a human verification system for those signing up for new expert profiles.

DATABASE TEAMS

As with all volunteer-led organisations, team members often come and go. So make sure to retain institutional memory by creating processes and manuals, as well as store key pieces of information (usernames and passwords) in a safe but accessible space.
4.1. Expanding Online Reach

Following the fundraising event and the success of the launch event, we wanted to keep up the momentum that had been generated by reaching new audiences online. Twitter has been our most successful platform (with nearly 6,000 followers in June 2021) in cultivating community engagement, while Facebook is more useful for promoting events.

The BB also expanded its social media presence by creating accounts on LinkedIn and Instagram. LinkedIn by its inherent nature of being a social media platform dedicated to professional networking provided great potential for the BB to promote women experts as well as gain new registrations to the database. Meanwhile, Instagram is useful for attracting a younger audience to support the project in the future, to showcase the activities of volunteers, and to reach new audiences and partners in wider advocacy for gender equality and diversity.

Top Tip for COMMUNICATION TEAMS

- Engage with your network by tagging experts and ambassadors;
- Highlight events (and tag organisers) that showcase diverse and inclusive events;
- Promote tools and resources that promote diverse and inclusive convening;
- Stay in touch with your audience regularly with a newsletter giving useful information.

Notes from PAOLA MANIGA

Build synergies with like-minded initiatives where you can cross-promote each other’s content on social media. For instance, EU Panel Watch was a key partner to us in raising awareness of the issue of all-male panels.

Paola Maniga
Consultant cultural manager at Accapiu and co-founder of The Brussels Binder
EXERCISE:
Figure out your social media content “mix” by assessing what your content is and what it isn’t.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MY CONTENT IS...</th>
<th>MY CONTENT ISN’T...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Below are the content funnels that The Brussels Binder uses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATE</th>
<th>SHARE STORIES</th>
<th>INSPIRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Truths/experiences</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demystifying/ Explainers</td>
<td>New thinking</td>
<td>Quotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain theories</td>
<td>Challenge industry</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share insights</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATE ACTION</th>
<th>SHOW HOW IT WORKS</th>
<th>ENTERTAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change behaviour</td>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide tasks</td>
<td>Testimonials</td>
<td>Common mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set challenges</td>
<td>Evidence of impact</td>
<td>Cliches/insider jokes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Community events

The BB hosts a range of events to remain engaged with the local Brussels community as well as using webinar platforms to engage audiences beyond Brussels, which became especially important during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a volunteer-led organisation, we often partnered with other organisations and institutions on events where they can provide support e.g. logistics, dissemination, etc. while the BB supported in speaker outreach and developing key messages around gender equality in EU policy shaping and making. This also allowed us to expand our network of partners.

4.2.1. NETWORKING EVENTS
We try to regularly organise informal networking drinks in pubs/bars opened to everyone (promoted on social media). The audience we attract is usually junior women professionals; however, it is our ambition to create a community where women from different levels of seniority can come together for mentoring in the same space. These events provide opportunities for our experts to network, and for us to get new registrations.
4.2.2. INFO SESSIONS
Within the think tanks network:
The BB is regularly invited to present the project to the internal staff of think tanks.

Outside network:
The BB has started organising more formal info sessions, being invited by partners or prospective partners from different sectors (permanent missions, media, EU institutions, private sector — all of the event’s organisers) with the idea to:
1) further spread the word among new targets;
2) suggest how to use the Brussels Binder;
3) receive input on how to improve website’s functionalities; and
4) provide tips on how to avoid all-male panels and improve diversity at events.

4.2.3. TRAINING FOR WOMEN
The BB also launched a series of training events in partnership with coaches and trainers on topics relevant to women’s professional development: public speaking, personal branding, fundraising, networking, inclusive leadership, etc. We were able to do this by using previously raised funds or running grants’ funds, by offering to give visibility to trainers, and we sometimes asked participants in for a small fee. We used online webinar training sessions during the Covid-19 pandemic as a way to maintain engagement with the BB community.

4.3. Press
So far the BB has received several dozen mentions in different media outlets. Among them, it is worth mentioning the articles in the Financial Times, Il Sole 24 Ore, Washington Post, Corriere Della Sera, and being ranked by Politico Europe among the Women who Shape Brussels 2017. We keep track of these mentions in an internal file and also list them on our website, in a dedicated “Press Corner”. Displaying media mentions helps give credibility to the project and highlights that the underrepresentation of women is a topical issue.

4.4. Public Relations & External Representation
Speaking invitations and holding booths/stands at major conferences have been instrumental in spreading awareness about the work of the BB and helping us forge new partnerships. At the BB we believe that every team member can represent our initiative. Therefore, when we are invited to speak at an event or to come present the BB, we circulate the invitation to all volunteers, not just our management and board. By doing so, we combat the policy debate culture where titles and seniority matters most, we motivate volunteers, train newcomers and allow them to develop their public-speaking skills. Having an internal culture that empowers all volunteers to represent the project, has enabled us to increase our reach to new audiences.

We also see networking events as an opportunity to spread the word about the BB. All volunteers are equipped with branded business cards and we have elaborated written guidelines on how to represent the BB to different stakeholders (think tanks, EU institutions, other organisations as well as personal contacts).

Notes from SCARLETT VARGA
How to get mentioned in the media:
1) Proactively present your project to journalists discussing gender-related issues;
2) Have at hand a list of previous articles featuring the BB as well as the list of key ambassadors supporting the project;
3) Present evidence to show the impact of your project;
4) Write opinion pieces;
5) Have staff/volunteers ready to speak to journalists and comment on news-worthy subject matters with a gender lens.

Top Tip on MEDIA

- Establish personal relationships with journalists. When the BB first launched, we managed to secure a prominent journalist as an ambassador who amplified our initiative on many occasions.
- Showcase your articles and media mentions when engaging potential new funders and partners.

Scarlett Varga
Head of Development at Bruegel
Notes from EMMA RAINNEY

Elevator pitches are a powerful marketing tool that quickly tells your story. As the BBBeyond Project Coordinator, I had to develop a way to convey the mission and objectives of the project concisely.

Here is the framework I used to develop a 30-second elevator pitch to tell the story of BBBeyond:

1) Explain what your project does. For example, what problem does it solve, and how does it engage with the different stakeholders related to the issue?

2) Outline the USP (unique selling point) of your project. For example, does your project take a different approach to problem-solving and how does it do it?

3) Engage with a question. For example, prepare with an open-ended question to stimulate further discussion.

Here is an example of what mine would look like:

“BBBeyond is a two-year EU-funded project that is managed by a consortium of partners including The Brussels Binder. The project aims to improve the visibility of women in public debates and it does this through its pan-European network of think tanks, like-minded organisations, and women expert databases, who come together to co-create practical tools and solutions to promote women’s voices.

Does your organisation have gender-positive policies to promote women?”

Notes from PAULINE CHETAIL

How to get even more visibility at events:

1) Bring promotional material to events such as leaflets, toolkits, reports as well as branded merchandise to give away (e.g. we made tailored tote bags, notebooks, water bottles, umbrellas, etc.).

2) Plug in your social media handles and hashtags whenever possible (e.g. @ bxlbinder and #BBBeyond) and invite the event participants to follow you and use them.

3) Make every external event you participate in an opportunity to showcase your organisation, especially on social media — organisers will happily share your posts, helping you attract new audiences.

CHECKLIST FOR KEEPING TRACK OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ENGAGEMENTS:

- Create a shared file where everyone representing the organisation can record details
- Categorise the types of events e.g. stand/booth, panel, roundtable, etc.
- Track which volunteers attended
- Create a space to note key contacts made at the event
- Track to see whether any follow-ups were taken
- For events with booths/stands, make sure to note how many new profiles were registered for the database
- Note down if any social media actions were taken

Pauline Chetail
Development Consultant at Bruegel and co-founder of The Brussels Binder

Emma Rainey
BBBeyond Project Coordinator at The Brussels Binder
5.1. Governance

As a volunteer-led organisation, the BB strives to have a non-hierarchical structure where the feeling of co-ownership is embedded throughout. However, working within the confines of what is legally required of non-profits in Belgium (ASBL) meant that at the very least a board of directors had to be put in place.

The BB board not only has a strategic role in terms of defining the organisation’s long-term objectives but members of the board are also hands-on operationally in the activities of the BB. This helps provide insight into the needs of the wider organisation and different teams which helps with decision-making. The BB board meets every quarter.

The BB functions in a very “decentralised” manner, with thematic working groups carrying out their activities independently. Each working group is led by 2 co-chairs, so responsibilities can be split and no one ends up feeling overwhelmed (we are a volunteer-run organisation after all!). Co-chairs are responsible for convening their teams at least monthly, for circulating important information to them, and for overseeing that activities are carried out.
The BB’s management committee is where we take the “big” decisions for the organisation. It is made up of the co-chairs of all of our working groups, as well as the board. The management committee meets on a bi-monthly basis to hear updates from all the working groups as well as to discuss wider organisational matters. On a needs basis, we also organise task forces, such as the diversity, equity & inclusion (DE&I) task force which we launched in Spring 2021 to reflect on our DE&I practices.

Lesson learned on GOVERNANCE

Very often in loosely-based structures, transparency around decision-making can be an issue and it can cause disconnect among different parts of the organisation. To improve on this, the BB asked its volunteers to provide ideas in a survey where several converging insights were gathered. Some ideas included doing an internal newsletter, having a guest seat on the board, opening bi-annual meetings to a wider group, etc. Many of these actions will be carried out on a short to long-term basis.

5.2.
Recruitment & Volunteer Management

Having an organisation that entirely relies on volunteers to function means that we need solid recruitment and (people) management. The BB has a dedicated person (volunteer manager) whose role is to communicate with interested people, induct them into the organisation as well as place them in a particular working group, depending on capacity needs and the newcomers’ own interests. The bulk of our volunteers’ group originally came from Brussels think tanks who founded the BB back in 2017. Beyond think tanks, for the most part, volunteers come to the BB organically by requesting to get involved in the project. However, the BB has issued public calls for new volunteers on our communication channels before when we were looking for specific skill sets or needed more hands on deck (e.g. when we organise a large event).

The volunteer manager keeps a contact list of potential newcomers and regularly asks the co-chairs of the working groups about their recruitment needs.

Top Tip for INDUCTING NEW MEMBERS

- Have a dedicated person to manage the process;
- Create a welcome manual for new volunteers;
- Organise gatherings for exchange between old and new volunteers;
- Understand the incentives of volunteers and ensure the organisation’s ‘offer’ matches them.

Lesson learned on VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

1) Relying on organic recruitment can lead to challenges in ensuring that organisations are truly diverse. As part of the upcoming DE&I strategy for the BB, we will take several actions to actively seek out new volunteers from more diverse and marginalised backgrounds.

2) Co-chairs of the working groups are tasked with keeping their teams informed about the discussions within the management committee team. Transparency of communication and decision-making is key to keeping volunteers motivated.
5.3. Legal Requirements

The BB is a registered ASBL (non-profit association) under the Belgian framework, which means that the BB has to adhere to several rules and regulations. We registered as such to be able to receive money (grants, donations, partnership agreements) as well as to have a legal framework under which to open a bank account and work with suppliers (such as web developers).

Registering as a non-profit organisation varies per country but it usually entails submitting legal and administrative information to a governmental office, along with the personal identification of all board members and the organisational statutes. In the experience of the BB, to make the process run as smoothly as possible, it was important to gather all this information before the registration process.

5.4. Financial Management

Setting up an easy-to-use and sustainable accounting system and financial framework was important to not only keep track of our finances but to also ensure total transparency, which is crucial in a volunteer-led organisation that is receiving funding from corporations and institutional backers.

By creating a system that is not too complex, it allowed for the transfer of the management of finances to a new volunteer for that role.

It was also important to incorporate traceable processes to approve payments as well as have a system for keeping records (bills, invoices, bank statements, etc.) to ensure accountability. Financial accounts and reports are regularly shared with the management committee and the board.

Lesson learned on FINANCIAL PLANNING

Financial planning is a challenge in any organisation but especially in volunteer-led ones. Therefore, it can be difficult to estimate upcoming expenses as it depends on the efforts of volunteers to convey them. This means that medium-term financial planning can be complex. However, it is worth bearing in mind that mid/long-term financial planning does not need to be prioritised right away. Once your organisation is up and running, you can then give it the focus that it needs. It may also be worth considering bringing in someone external (with an accounting or financial background) to support these efforts.

Notes from LOUISE LANGEBY

Appoint someone within your organisation who has a good understanding of the administrative and legal system to take the lead on the registration process. Doing this without previous experience or fluency in the language of that country can be very difficult and time-consuming.

Top Tip for REGISTERING A NON-PROFIT

Seek the services of a pro-bono lawyer to help draft the statutes, especially if you’re active in a country where you’re not familiar with the legal structures.

Top Tip for OPENING BANK ACCOUNTS

Depending on your country and local context, opening a bank account for an organisation is relatively easy once you are officially registered as an organisation. Make sure to have your legal statutes are in place and designate a treasurer to manage the bank account.

“I leveraged my experience with another not-for-profit, using templates I had developed there, making limited adjustments e.g. for financial reporting for different funding grants.”
PAULINE MASSART-WÉIT
As the BB was growing, it became apparent that we needed to become more focused and strategic. In our engagement, we needed to overcome the following challenges: matching financial needs with funding, managing different partners, sourcing no-strings-attached funding, not overpromising to partners, etc.

Developing a 3-year holistic and cross-cutting strategy that targets every part of the organisation not only helped improve these issues but also led to the creation of other tools such as the BB “Corporate Package” and our Partnership Principles.

A key aspect was to ensure that the strategy was regularly communicated to the entire team - sharing documents, presented in meetings - so volunteers “buy in” and use the strategy when representing, speaking about the BB. To help foster this, the BB strategy was developed under a co-creational process where several gatherings took place including a full-day event aimed at aligning the whole team on the overall strategy, objectives in the short and long term.

### Strategy Process

#### ASSESSING STATE OF PLAY

**Reflection Exercise**

Asking key team questions: “What do we love about the BB?”, “Why am I involved in the BB?” — and keeping a positive approach to the exercise.

**Group SWOT Analysis**

Brainstorming unique selling point, weakness, opportunities and threats to the BB.

#### DEFINING OUR PURPOSE

**Mission, Visions and Values Building**

Brainstorming in small groups by discussing “who we are?”, “what we trying to achieve?”, “how we do this through our activities?”, and principles of engagement.

**Convergence**

Come together as a full group to share and refine converging answers. Remember, no idea is a bad idea!

#### CHARTING OUR PATH

**Develop Theory of Change**

3-year Outline of Objectives & Activities

Include all members from different parts of the organisation to define objectives, sub-objectives and activities. Once initial ideas are on the table, revisit them in separate brainstorming sessions with mixed groups involving people owning different objectives to “test” the objectives and the associated activities.
6.1. Vision, Mission & Values Building

The BB was always more than a database; rather a set of shared ideals and a vision of diversity and women's empowerment in policymaking. But putting pen to paper on a shared vision and mission is always harder than it seems!

At the BB, we couldn’t assume that we all had the same understanding of our mission and what we were trying to achieve and so we had to sit in a room and thrash out our ideas together until we reached an agreement on the statements which described our work.

It took more than one session to go through the process of defining our vision and mission. We wanted to find consensus and common understanding across all the members of the BB team and it underpinned our organisational strategy as our vision and mission describe ‘who’ we are, and ‘what we’re about’. The vision provides a “change” destination for the organisation in the future while the mission is what the organisation does to achieve the vision. We also discussed and agreed on a set of core values underpinning our work.

**OUR BB VISION:**
“The Brussels Binder seeks a change of culture in debates so that equal gender representation becomes the norm and greater diversity improves the quality of European policies”.

**OUR BB MISSION:**
“The Brussels Binder strives to become the number one resource for improving gender diversity in European debates. We provide a database of women policy experts to ensure that women are better represented in European policy debates and that those debates are more diverse and innovative”.

**OUR BB VALUES:**
Our activities are guided by our core values which are: **equality, innovation, diversity, and empowerment.**

---

**Top Tip for WRITING AN ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY AND AGREEING ON A SHARED VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES:**

- Take time and break down the process into stages, involving as many people as possible to ensure the strategic vision is shared and owned by the collective group – and that people are not overwhelmed.

- Listen! A strategy leader or facilitator should not impose a vision, but take in views where possible to enlarge perspectives. Feminist listening circles (where everyone can speak and share their views) is a great approach.

- Constantly recap on the process, and what has been previously agreed to keep people with you – powerpoints will do the trick rather than long documents or minutes.

- Make it fun! Design activities and icebreakers in sessions to maximize creative inputs. The strategy needn’t be boring.

- Have clear objectives, responsibilities, and timelines: Ensure the strategy does not stay on paper by designating parts of the organisation to carry it forward and that each working group is clear on its responsibilities and a timeline to achieve the objectives.
6.2. Partnerships & Funding

Partnerships and funding go hand-in-hand in the BB which feeds into the overall strategy for the organisation which is defined as “deepening and diversifying our partnerships in Brussels and beyond with institutional funders, corporate sponsors, supporters, and like-minded organisations in line with our core values.”

Using this as a guide, we set it to build a strong and diverse community of partners to achieve financial stability by focusing on two key areas:

- Defining who we are, what we do, why we are doing it, and how. The latter is the lengthiest part, while the “why” forms the basis of all our actions and it’s therefore very important to get it right.

- Identifying the real financial needs (liaising with our Administration & Finance working group) to help plan activities and to ensure balanced spending.

The next step was to map different types of partnerships by what they could bring the BB:

- **Ambassadors:** Advocate for the BB and contribute to its credibility and visibility;
- **Think Tanks:** Amplify our voice and are connected to our mission as institutions that organise many (and large) events. They also provide volunteers;
- **Like-minded organisations/individuals:** Initiatives with mutual interests where there is an opportunity for support and our expanding network;
- **Sponsors:** Help us to meet our financial needs (philanthropies, public sources, private companies, or other organisations).

They were then categorised into three groups to help guide our approach:

1. We divided tasks within the team (as different kinds of partners need different degrees of attention, and tailor-made approaches are work-intensive but yield more effective results);

2. We identified priorities for each quarter based on the financial needs and need to sequence (e.g. if we have enough money for 12-months, what else can we do to serve our broader partnership objective and to set up for future fundraising);

3. We realised that “partnership” to us had a normative meaning, not only financial. Therefore, we elaborated a set of principles of partnership which serve as a guide to whether we should partner with an organisation, i.e. whether they fit our values and share our vision, and what the added value would be (should be the basis of any interaction with third parties, protect us from mission creep, keep aligned with mission integrity, etc).
To help us achieve our objectives, we work with 4 categories of partners:

**Ambassadors** are high-level individuals and influencers who support the BB with their voice. They provide us with a quote or video that we can use for publicity purposes, and spread the word about the BB in their respective networks. Women Ambassadors should also register on the database as an expert in order to attract other women and make the BB “the place to be” for women experts. As of September 2019, we have 34 Ambassadors from various sectors and backgrounds.

**Like-minded projects/organisations** are those within the epistemic community whose missions align with ours. The BB aims to create synergies through activities such as linking up with databases across Europe and beyond. This helps us reach even more women experts, as well as connect with women’s rights groups (and particularly those focused on women’s empowerment and leadership). The goal is to add value to the different projects and the BB by enhancing each other’s visibility.

**Think Tanks** are our natural partners mainly due to where we focus our advocacy efforts. As think tanks organise many large events, they play a key role in platforming who gets heard in policy discussions. By endorsing the BB, think tanks not only commit to being agents for change in transforming policy debate to be more inclusive but they also donate staff time, venues for meetings/events and contribute small amounts of fundings (€500-1500€/year). By promoting the BB through their networks it not only provides visibility for us but also boosts their reputation. Every Think tank appoints a point of contact for the BB and has the right to send representatives to the working groups. We currently have 20 Think tanks supporting us.

**Sponsors** are partners that contribute to the BB in financial and non-financial terms. They can be private companies, public institutions, foundations or media partners that provide funding, pro-bono support, or in-kind gifts. This includes legal advice and media presence. Sponsors want to get involved in the BB because they support our mission and want to be associated with supporting it as well as access the BB community. We additionally want to include them in our endeavours to change cultural practices around gender inclusivity.

---

**Notes from JULIANE SCHMIDT**

Best practices from the BB experiences on partnerships:

- Good coordination within the team is key so that everyone is aware of who is doing what and managing which partners;
- Liaise with other working groups to double efforts and share skills/expertise/content;
- Make use of personal relationships to find potential partners;
- Develop partnership “principles” or guidelines to know what you are looking for in partners, and where your limits are in terms of your willingness to partner;
- Know your value proposition and have your “ask” prepared. By doing this you not only know what your value is to others, what you can offer but also what you want from them (important to tailor and be prepared for meetings);
- People love to get goodies (even high-level people), so try to bring some for meetings with potential partners (will also help you to keep your organisation in the back of their minds);
- Ensure there are training/professional development opportunities for your team (e.g. pitching, proposal writing, strategic communication techniques, etc.) – as they are the core resource;
- Bring in motivated volunteers even if they don’t have much experience and pair them up with more senior team members so that you can build them up to take on more important tasks on their own.

---

Juliane Schmidt
Advisor on Foreign Affairs
Company for the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament
Measuring the impact of the BB was of paramount importance not only to communicate about the outcomes of our work to our community but also for partnership-building. Therefore, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team and plan were established (with a paid consultant taking the lead) to launch an ongoing process to not only track the “big picture” of gender diversity in policy events but also get an insight into how the BB tools were being used, particularly the database of women experts.

“I have been part of The Brussels Binder from its very first days and feel that its mission to give women a greater voice in policy debates is very important. I wanted to help the BB to make a concrete contribution to this goal and to move ahead based on proven working methods and tools.”

BIANCA BAUMLER

What the BB learned from M&E is that it is mainly about exploring what works, what does not and then ask the question “why”? As the goal shifted to not only gain insights from M&E but to also learn and improve, we added “L” to the acronym to make it ME&L - Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning.

7.1. Evaluating the Database

The first task of the ME&L team was to focus on the impact of the database. They did this through interviews and surveying database users and potential users. To capture facts and figures, the team delved into the analytics of the database: how many people were actually using it to find women expert speakers — and for what purpose. This relied on working with the web developers of the BB website to extract the basic data of how many women were contacted along with manually identifying types and reasons for contacting experts.

Notes from THOMAS DELRIVE

Enabling every team member to take on a clear role that they enjoy is paramount, especially as a volunteer-led organisation. Rather than tasks, they should be considered responsibilities for concrete results. For example, the team member who created the survey was not just “tasked” to set up questions, but also in charge of making recommendations after showing the survey results.
Additionally, they also analysed the expert profiles quantitatively to assess their diversity as well as how to make the database more useful and user-friendly. To attract event organisers and journalists and really become a “go-to resource for improving gender diversity in policy debates”, the BB website and database need improvements to be a better tool. An analysis of the findings and recommendations were submitted to the management committee where the implementation of some of the recommendations is ongoing.

7.2. Monitoring Events

The second task of the ME&L team was to give a sense of what was happening at events regarding gender diversity and inclusivity. The BB formed a partnership with like-minded organisations to pool together data they collected on panels and conferences across Europe. A part of ME&L is also relying on secondary data as well as conducting your own research.

We took on board several key learnings for data collection methodologies in that sometimes the most effective is to use basic manual counting in excel using gender indicators by either reviewing event agendas as well as attending events (when possible). We also learned that having an extensive network that can cover a wide geographical area and types of events was very important.

Lesson learned on DATA COLLECTION

Although surveys are the most common monitoring tool to collect and extract information, they have been less useful in the experience of the BB. This was mainly because response rates were low and answers to questions were not always clear. Rather than investing in surveys we recommend the following:

1) **Interviews and focus groups:** They provide the opportunity to gain deeper insights, advice, to create new connections and they can also be fun!

2) **Integrated data analytics:** This is the most objective form of monitoring and by installing an automatic data collection system of key characteristics of expert profiles, it makes the process more efficient and streamlined. It is best to integrate this feature into a database early on.

Notes from BIANCA BAUMLER

Launching a survey must happen in close collaboration with a communications team that can plan and deliver a campaign to get the right people – and a lot of them – to complete the survey. Moreover, setting a target of how many respondents you would like will make it easier to plan and continuously adapt and/or extend the communications campaign.

Notes from AUDREY NGOMSIK

A future proposition is to develop a mobile app where users can register the panel composition and diversity at events and conferences. This could help consolidate data collection for monitoring purposes but it also has the added benefit of empowering engaged stakeholders to crowdsource such information. Furthermore, a mobile app would also allow us to cover more events and to reach a wider geographic scope.

Top Tip for INTERNAL ME&L

Gaining internal insights can be very useful as there is a lot to learn from the experiences of volunteers and it also raises awareness and support for ME&L work.
8.1. Open Society Foundation Grant

The BB was actually fortunate enough to have been approached by a funder, OSF, and encouraged to apply to their funding priority scheme on “European voices”, which had signaled to us that the BB was on the right track as an organisation to receive an invitation from a large foundation.

The purpose of the OSF grant was to support the BB in its start-up phase to build sustainable institutional structures and capacity which would enable us to carry out activities in consolidating the organisation through:

– Deepening partnerships with like-minded organisations;
– Explore and support coalition-building with existing databases across Europe;
– Develop and execute communication and outreach strategies to improve impact;
– Increase expert profiles and usage - including conducting user profiling and feedback experiences;
– Raise awareness of the issues surrounding the underrepresentation of women in policy and media discussion.
– Building an administrative and governance structure that would enable the organisation to become sustainable.
8.2. Brussels Binder Beyond

Aside from regular support through foundations and the private sector, the BB decided to pair up with two think tanks in Brussels (Bruegel and the German-Marshall Fund of the United States) to apply for European Commission funding. BBBeyond was a two-year EU-funded project that ran between April 2019 and June 2021. The grant was awarded under the European Commission DG-JUST “European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)” which allowed the BB to hire its first full-time employee as Project Coordinator for the BBBeyond.

The key objective of the project was to build a pan-European network of like-minded organisations, think tanks, and women expert databases. The BBBeyond network aimed to promote women’s visibility in policy discussions and media by fostering a solution-focused environment for the co-creation of practical tools for innovative and inclusive convening.

Throughout the lifespan of the project, a number of key outputs were delivered including several workshops and training sessions ranging from community building, personal branding, confidence in meetings, inclusive leadership, strategic networking, and much more. Furthermore, the project also hosted a number of policy discussions on topical issues impacting gender equality e.g. online violence, women in research, the gendered economic impact of Covid-19 as well as hosting a discussion on diversity.

Tangible outputs include the co-creation of the BBBeyond Toolbox which is a series of six toolkits that provide practical tips and frameworks for different stakeholders who play a role in promoting women’s and diverse voices in public debates. Furthermore, the BBBeyond Online Repository of women (and diversity) expert databases was also developed which currently hosts over 55 databases from across the globe. It is estimated that nearly 60,000 women are represented within the repository databases and they range from a variety of sectors including media, STEM, architecture, foreign policy, gender equality, etc.

A series of reports and manuals (including this document) was also created under the BBBeyond framework. In an effort to see behavioural change in think tank convening and gender diversity, the project worked with over 30 think tanks across Europe in a series of research projects. The first internal report assessed whether think tanks were tracking gender in their events while the second report endeavoured to assess how they were doing in events, media engagements, and publications. The third report (upcoming publication) assesses whether the Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on women’s representation in think tank events by comparing March-May 2019 and 2020. The final report (upcoming publication) reviewed women’s representation in think tank publications during 2020.
8.3. Awards & Recognition

Thanks to building a strong relationship with Politico Europe, the BB was selected as part of the “2017 Politico Women Who Shape Brussels” cohort. Two years later and after submitting an application, the BB was chosen from among 170 other European social initiatives for the EESC Civil Society Prize for fifth place which came with a monetary prize. The aim of the prize is to reward and encourage tangible initiatives that are making a significant contribution to European identity and integration. Lastly, the BB was nominated and selected as part of Apolitical “100 Most Influential People & Organisations in Gender Policy” for International Women’s Day 2021.

8.4. Strategic Partnerships

In addition to our grant partnerships with the European Commission and the Open Society Foundations, the BB has had formal partnerships with the following:

- Google
- FTI Consulting
- Diageo
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Dutch Permanent Representation to the EU
- 30+ small local business
- 200+ individual donors

In total, over €500,000 in funding has been raised since the launch of the BB.
Five years later, The Brussels Binder is a vibrant organisation. The 60+ volunteers have their own individual motivations that made them join the BB community, yet, what unites all of us is the wish to contribute to a Europe that is more inclusive and recognises the expertise that women can bring.

While we enjoy the growth of the BB database, our successes in terms of visibility, creating practical tools, and gaining new supporters, much of this has been organic and often done through learning by doing approaches. As we continue to build momentum, learn how to keep an organisation running and volunteers motivated, in some ways we hope that in 10 years’ time, the BB is no longer needed. This day will come when women are automatically included in policy debates and are asked for analysis and quotes in the media. Until then, we keep on growing the database and striving to be an ever-more inclusive organisation.
The Business Model Canvas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Partners</th>
<th>Key Activities</th>
<th>Value Propositions</th>
<th>Stakeholder Relationships</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Resources</th>
<th>Channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Structure</th>
<th>Revenue Streams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annex I - The Business Model Canvas

[Image of the Business Model Canvas]
## M&E Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>TARGET</th>
<th>DATA SOURCE</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>REPORTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How is it calculated?</td>
<td>What is the current value?</td>
<td>What is the target value?</td>
<td>How will it be measured?</td>
<td>How often will it be measured?</td>
<td>Who will measure it?</td>
<td>Where will it be reported?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Input

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Activities

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Outputs

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Outcomes

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Objective

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
Annex III - Website Brief

The Brussels Binder

THE BRUSSELS BINDER

1 INTRODUCTION OF THE BRUSSELS BINDER INITATIVE

1.1 Objective

1.2 Background

1.3 Deliverable

1.4 Value added

1.5 Requirements for the new website

1.5.1 Budget

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Existing Website/email account

2.2 Design Program

2.2.1 Standard colours

2.2.2 Logo

3 GENERAL CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

3.1 The purpose of the website

3.2 Detailed Website Requirements

3.2.1 CMS

3.2.2 Home Page

3.2.3 Database

3.2.4 About The Binder

3.2.5 Sponsors/Partners

3.2.6 Media and external publication/events (tbc)

3.2.7 Contact details

4 INTEGRATION WITH OTHER INTERNET PLATFORMS

4.1 Social media integration

4.2 Newsletter and mailing software

5 REQUEST TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

ANNEX 1

ANNEX 2

ANNEX 3
1 Introduction of the Brussels Binder Initiative

1.1 Objective
Promote and facilitate gender equality in EU policy debates by raising the profile of female policy experts in Brussels through an online platform: [www.brusselsbinder.org](http://www.brusselsbinder.org).

1.2 Background
As Europe moves through tough times and big decisions, stakeholders in Brussels are all paying attention to the legislative changes that are on the table. Policy is debated at conferences that draw attention from across the EU and further afield, while setting the agenda for Europe’s future. As the center of the EU, experts come to the city to inform and engage with politicians, journalists, activists, consultants, and bureaucrats. The topics debated vary, but unfortunately the people debating them are not. Often, they are mostly males, and sometimes there is not a single woman in the debate.

A study by [EU Panel Watch](http://www.eu-panelwatch.com) found that only 34% of speakers at Brussels events were female. In two thirds of debates, the majority of speakers were males and the were twice as many all-male panels as equal panels. The unwillingness or inability to look beyond the ‘usual’ suspects to speak should not be the norm. Europe needs intellectual diversity, including female experts that could contribute towards new, innovative ideas to tackle policy challenges. In its 2016 communication on gender equality on corporate boards, the European Commission states that “not taking advantage of the skills of highly qualified women constitutes a waste of talent and a loss of economic growth potential.” This is equally valid for discussions that develop EU policy. This is not a supply problem but a demand problem.

1.3 Deliverable
The project seeks to achieve gender equality in EU policy debates by changing the thinking and behavior of conference organizers and media and encourage them to include more female experts in their activities (including conferences, interviews, comments, etc.). To support this, we will build an open, publicly accessible, multinational and cross-sectorial database of female policy experts “The Brussels Binder”: [www.brusselsbinder.org](http://www.brusselsbinder.org).

1.4 Value added
The Brussels Binder will be the first open and free cross-sectorial, multinational database of female policy experts in Brussels. As it will become the go-to resource for conference organizers, it will be the starting point for better, more diverse policy debates that reflect society, empower and inspire the next generation of leaders.

1.5 Requirements for the new website

We are looking for a company/partners to create the website and an integrated database that will serve the Binder’s objectives.

From the administrator perspective the website & database need to:
- be easy to manage by one person or a group of people on part-time basis remotely
- have the content management system (CMS) accessible and easy to be used also by a person not trained in IT and programming
- in the further steps of this tender we will also require the company to prepare the templates, design and structure for the new website (we can help with the general mockups for the wireframes)
- the website needs to be integrated with the mailing delivery software in order to send profile updates notification directly from Mailchimp or other mass email software but also we need to able to collect newsletter sign ups via the website

For the experts in the database:
- be easy for the potential expert to sign up, create and update the profile
- have a review system before the profiles appear on the website
- the review system should be able to send notifications to the website admin every time a new profile is created

For the users:
- the navigation on the website needs to be clear and easy for person who visits it for the first time
- the design needs to be clean but modern
- compatible with all operating software and all common devices (tables, smartphones etc)

1.5.1 Budget

The budget proposal should include:
- Development of the database and a dynamic website according to our specification
- Maintenance and troubleshooting cost for another 18 months
- Mailchimp or other email software cost for up to 5000 active subscribers for the next 18 months
- Email hosted on G-suite (or other agreed platform) for up to 15 users for another 18 months

2 Background Information

2.1 Existing Website/email account

There is no pre-existing website. We have only created a landing page to secure the domain ([www.brusselsbinder.org](http://www.brusselsbinder.org)) and collect all main information in one place.

The email account should be move to the G-Suite from Google. Currently we host the email account at Webmail but the interface is not friendly enough and it doesn’t have any storage space for online collaboration like, for example, Google drive.

2.2 Design Program

The design details will be discussed once the proposal is accepted and a further brief would be presented to the selected partner.

2.2.1 Standard colours

To be determined later but should be compatible with the current colours on the logo.

2.2.2 Logo

The logo should be kept.
3 General Content Requirements

The website will be focused on both text and graphic (photographs) content. It needs to be simple yet at the same time not too plain, so that the information attracts the attention of the user. The detailed design, including font, color palate will be explained and discussed once the best offer is selected.

The content of the websites includes but is not limited to about page, sign up form, media, partners and other resources (databases) as well as the database of the experts (see the example of http://www.znaneekspertki.pl/lista-skopertek/Agnieszka-Kozierska). The detailed profile page with all required content is attached in Annex 1.

On our website, we provide links to quotation in media as well as external publications and videos of our experts. We need a system that automatically is able to verify if the used link is damaged or not working.

3.1 The purpose of the website

Our website will serve Brussels community of female policy experts to promote their work and increase their visibility as conference panelists or moderators. It should be available for free to all professionals in charge of organizing events and journalists looking for a source for their stories (quotes, recordings, interviews).

3.2 Detailed Website Requirements

3.2.1 CMS

Content management system should be easy to learn for persons not trained in IT. The admin should have access to all pages. No HTML coding should be necessary unless to add a new sub-page or an ‘active’ element. The CMS needs to be compatible both with PC and Mac environment. Considering a substantial amount of the text-based information there should be no problem experienced with copying/pasting text from different sources i.e. Pages, Word, iMail, Outlook, websites etc.

We also want to have a special interface with strictly limited access (accessible via login and website link) for our experts to be able to update their profiles online. A more detailed for to create a profile page will be defined at a later stage when we reevaluate all the information that need to be on personal profile page.

Interface for the single author should allow access to change only the following information. However the main administration of the website should be also privileged to change and monitor this information.

In general, the website is organized in three levels:

- Top level: The starting page (menu to the lower levels, dynamic updates )
- Second level: About/Contact/Partners/ Media-Events/Database/SignUp/ProfilePage
- Third level: Each "leaf" from the two nodes above: pages including general information about the Binder (about, partners, contact) and pages in direct relation to the database (sign up form, profile page)

We assume that the number of templates needed are approximately 7-10.

3.2.2 Home Page

The final design of the Home Page will be determined one the best offer is selected.

The navigation of each sub-page should be the same. However it does not necessarily need to reflect the navigation on the Home Page.

3.2.3 Database

We need description about the database.

3.2.3.1 Search engine

Categories which should be use to search experts are included in Annex 2.

3.2.3.2 Profile Page

The publications are divided into 6 categories and 25 research areas. It needs to by simplify to make it easier to search for. The page should be able to include dynamic content.

3.2.3.3 Sign up form

Please see Annex 3 for the field required in the sign up for to create a profile in the database.

3.2.4 About The Binder

3.2.4.1 Mission/Vision

The content of this sub-page should be word-based. The page does not need to include dynamic content, however should be updatable.

3.2.4.2 Who we are

We need to think what kind of information we will publish there and to what extent they need to be very detailed.

3.2.5 Sponsors/Partners

What should be on this page: logo+ description

3.2.6 Media and external publication/events (tbc)

Do we want a page like this or we might need it in the future.

3.2.7 Contact details

The information that are currently on the lading page should be kept. We might consider to have a contact linked to contact@brusselsbinder.org form rather than just an email address.
4 Integration with other Internet Platforms

4.1 Social media integration

All the latest Tweets from @bxlbinder account should be displayed on the home page. Each page on the website should have Share buttons for Twitter, Facebook, Google+, RSS as well as E-Mail and Print option.

4.2 Newsletter and mailing software

The website needs to be integrated with the newsletter and e-mail marketing tools.

Visitors should be able to sign their email address to the major mailing lists (i.e. Newsletter). However, it would be good to be able to send email to all experts in case their profile requires an update.

5 Request to submit proposals

We are seeking a company that is ready to prepare the offer concerning:

- Choosing and configuration of both CMS and email marketing system and their integration
- Constructing and designing the CMS, database, email marketing system: Both front-end and back-end design
- Implementation of the new website and migration of the old data
- Maintenance (not updates) of the new website

In the coming weeks, we would like to discuss with the interested party on:

- One or two CMS and databases you recommend for the platform for our website
- Non-binding cost estimation (including licensing costs) based on each of your solution.
- A portfolio with the examples of the previous works.

Annex 1

Profile page content

Annex 2

Categories for the search engine

Annex 3

The fill-in form for personal profile:
Resources & Further Reading

RESOURCES BY THE BB:

Database
BBBeyond Online Repository of Women & Diversity Expert Databases

Blog
“Gender Bias in Funding? Let’s Crowdfund!”

Research Reports
– Walk The Talk: Women in Words: Gender Representation in Think Tank Publications (2021)

Toolkits
https://toolbox.brusselsbinder.org/

OTHER RESOURCES AND READINGS:
– Building Movement Project: Tools To Engage: Resources For Nonprofits
– European Activism Incubator: How to Set up a Nonprofit in Belgium
– European Activism Incubator: Grant Guide for Women Empowerment Initiatives
– European Activism Incubator: How to Raise Funds? An Introductory Guide
– European Activism Incubator: The Ultimate Training Catalogue for Nonprofits
– Forbes: Monitoring And Evaluation: The Key To Making Strategic Nonprofit Decisions
– Global Giving: A Social Media Toolkit Template For Nonprofits
– Grants Plus: Nonprofit Grant Writing: How to Secure Grants for Your Cause
– ILGA Europe & PIRC: How to Test Your Communications (2017)
– INSEAD Business School: Building Effective Networks
– Mind Tools: Mission and Vision Statements
– Personify - Wild Apricot: How to Build a Volunteer Strategy that actually Works
– PSI: 10 Essential Steps to Create a Winning Sponsorship Proposal
– Research to Action: How To Plan, Write and Communicate an Effective Policy Brief | Three Steps to Success
– Tools4Dev: How to Write a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework
– Volunteer Hub: 7 Tips for Building a Volunteer Strategy
– Volunteer Hub: 4 Ways Nonprofits can Create Corporate Partnerships