

# **Gender Mainstreaming for the Political Decision makers**

*A manual on gender mainstreaming and promotion of gender equality*

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**Twinning**

Twinning is an instrument launched by European Commission in the year of 1998. It is envisaged as an administrative cooperation related to provision of assistance to beneficiary countries in the process of strengthening administrative and judiciary capacities for the purpose of implementation of the Acquis of the European Union. The primary objective of Twinning projects is providing assistance to beneficiary countries in the establishment of modern and efficient administration by focusing on structure, human resources and management skills required for harmonization of national legislation with the Acquis of the European Union.

**General Statement of the EU**

The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

**Transition Facility**

Transition Facility is a temporary instrument foreseen for new member states in their first years of membership as assistance in financing of development measures and strengthening of national administrative and judicial capacities for implementation and enforcement of EU legislation. Transition Facility is focused on continuation of support to the Republic of Croatia in its efforts to further develop and strengthen national administrative and judicial capacity for implementation and enforcement of EU law, as well as promoting the exchange of best practices through activities that can not be financed from the Structural Funds. Furthermore, the program aims to continue to provide assistance in the development of the judiciary, fundamental rights and internal affairs as well as public administration reform.

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## Preface

Women and men are – directly or indirectly – the subjects of all measures taken by the state administration. Therefore, it is important that the consequences of the measures are analysed from gender perspective. Analyzing the work we do from the perspectives of different population groups can ensure that the decisions we make benefit us all. Thus, we are also promoting equality between women and men.

The purpose of this information booklet is to give the political decision makers information on gender equality work. The booklet especially focuses on the externally oriented work of the public administration and the gender impact of this work. The booklet does not focus on internal staff policy.

Integrating a gender perspective is about developing administrative routines and improving the standard of preparatory work. This will result in better decisions and measures from the perspective of both women and men. At both ministerial and local level, incorporating a gender perspective entails active development work over several years, after which there must be continuous upholding and monitoring. All public administration has reasons to set about this work, since all aspects of society present issues that require a gender perspective.

Political decision makers are of very high importance to this work. There has to be a political will for this and also a demand for the gender mainstreaming work from the politicians.

The handbook was drawn up in 2016 as part of the EU Twinning project „Support to Gender Equality“. The overall objective of the project is to develop institutional capacities for coordinated implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national and international gender equality principles and increase public awareness and trust in capacities of the Republic of Croatia to protect the citizens from gender-based discrimination.

The right to equality is the foundation of the European policies; it is essential for further development of the society and must be equally applied to all aspects of life. Good strategic change was done in the Croatian Governmental program for 2016-2020 since some references and priorities related to gender equality have been highlighted. In the chapter related to gender equality, the program emphasizes reducing inequalities in the labor market, protection of the victims of domestic violence, supporting women in politics, economy and other life areas, and reconciling family and working life of workers of both sexes. The Office for Gender Equality will offer full support to the Government's efforts to promote gender equality in all policies.

We believe that gender equality is important for every society and future generations and we should do as much as we can to achieve it.

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## Summary

Women and men are – directly or indirectly – the objects of all measures taken by the public administration. A gender perspective entails considering how an issue, regardless of its nature, concerns women and men. Gender is a factor that affects people's lives, much as age, class, ethnicity, or level of education. It is therefore to be considered as an aspect in preparatory work and in decision making.

Based on the Article 3 in the Gender Equality Act all public bodies have the responsibility, in all stages of planning, adopting and implementing legal acts, decisions and actions, to assess and evaluate the impact of such actions on the position of women, or men, with a view to achieving genuine equality between women and men. There is also a responsibility of these actors to implement training programs on gender equality for their staff.

Also, based on the Article 11 in the Gender Equality Act public administration bodies are obliged to adopt action plans for the promotion and establishment of gender equality. The action plans are adopted on the basis of an analysis of the status of women and men every four years and they shall establish reasons for the introduction of specific measures, goals to be achieved, implementation and implementation control methods. The plan for implementing the National Policy for Gender Equality shall be an integral part of the action plans. Before their adoption, the action plans must first be approved by the Governmental Office for Gender Equality.

Croatian institutional mechanisms for gender equality consist of the Governmental Office for Gender Equality, Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality, Gender Equality Ombudsman, coordinators for gender equality in state administration bodies, commissions for gender equality in the counties and the City of Zagreb and commissions for gender equality in towns and municipalities.

Political will is a key factor for effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. Gender equality should be confirmed as one of the main objectives of the state and made visible in all of its commitments and strategies. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming needs to be a political issue, the results of which are demanded by the political management. If the gender mainstreaming commitments are meant to be taken seriously, there must be a follow-up from the highest level and a request for gender mainstreamed documents and results. It is also important that the decision-makers allocate sufficient levels of resources to the work with gender mainstreaming. Correspondingly, a lack of political commitment, an insufficient provision of resources, and low levels of gender equality awareness by the decision-makers are obstacles to effective gender mainstreaming and can prevent it from reaching its goals.

For example, when different proposals or policies are being presented a political decision-maker might ask the following questions:

- What is the impact of this proposal from the perspective of women and men, respectively?
- What do we know about the situation of women and men in this field? Are further investigations needed?
- Will this proposal promote gender equality? Are additional measures required?

## What is gender mainstreaming?

Women and men are – directly or indirectly – the objects of all measures taken by the public administration. Too seldom, however, is the impact of these measures analysed from a gender perspective. By investigating the work we do from the perspectives of different population groups, we can ensure that the decisions we make benefit us all. Thus, we are also promoting equality between women and men.

Based on the definition of the Council of Europe (1998) gender mainstreaming is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

Gender mainstreaming is then a strategy to include a gender perspective and the objective of promoting gender equality in all preparatory work and decision making by authorities. It doesn't eliminate the need for specific gender equality measures, but complements them.

Gender mainstreaming has been adapted internationally as a strategy towards realizing gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programs and projects, by those who create them with a view to promoting gender equality, and combating discrimination. The objectives of gender mainstreaming are inscribed in the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the EU treaties.

## Why do we need gender perspective?

A gender perspective entails considering how an issue, regardless of its nature, concerns women and men. Gender is a factor that affects people's lives, much as age, class, ethnicity, or level of education. It is therefore to be considered as an aspect in preparatory work and in decision making. There are of course people who do not identify with the labels 'male' or 'female'. However, social and cultural gender roles affect also their lives. The reasons for using gender perspective are for example:

- **Gender matters.** Gender and the assumptions and expectations linked to women and men influence all of our actions, living situations and needs. If you have children, for instance, it might mean a different impact on the lives of the mother and the father. In the labour market, women and men are often employed in completely different occupations and sectors, and also are treated differently. If a gender perspective is not considered in preparatory work, related to for example labour market or family policies, important information might be lost. What appears neutral may in fact serve the interests of one gender more than the other, or even completely neglect the needs of one of the genders.
- **Better administration, better decisions.** Integrating a gender perspective is about developing administrative routines and improving the standard of the preparatory work of public servants. This will result in better decisions and measures from the perspective of both women and men. Using a gender perspective means active and continuous work that should be done in all public organizations, since all aspects of society present issues that require a gender perspective.

- **Promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination.** Taking into consideration a gender perspective in preparatory work and decision making promotes gender equality and reduces gender-based discrimination in society. The Croatian Gender Equality Act prohibits both direct and indirect gender-based discrimination. Indirect discrimination means that a provision, justification, or practice that appears to be gender neutral may actually place women or men in a less favourable position on the basis of gender. By integrating a gender perspective, one can try to identify also these indirect consequences. One example of this is for instance when social workers automatically think that after the divorce the children should live with their mothers.

**EXAMPLE:**

*A good example of the importance of a gender perspective in preparatory work was the reform of the legislation on occupational safety and health in Finland at the beginning of the 21st century. In Finland, situation analysis and statistical data show that the labour market is strongly segregated by sex, and the work and working conditions differ for men and women. The committee on occupational safety and health legislation took this into consideration in its work and discovered that the planned amendments regarding the legislation inevitably had differential consequences for men and women.*

*While preparing the proposition, the committee changed course from an approach that focused only on accidents in the workplace (issue important mostly to male-dominated fields) towards one that focused more broadly on investigating different hazards in the workplace. In this way, the Act better responded to the typical risks found in female-dominated sectors (for example harassment, workload, and fatigue). As a result of the work, the concept of occupational safety was broadened and the Act now better serves the occupational safety needs of both women and men.*

## The responsibilities of public authorities

Based on the Article 3 in the Gender Equality Act all public bodies have the responsibility, in all stages of planning, adopting and implementing legal acts, decisions and actions, assess and evaluate the impact of such actions on the position of women, or men, with a view to achieving genuine equality between women and men. There is also a responsibility of these actors to implement training programs on gender equality for their staff.

Also, based on the Article 11 in the Gender Equality Act public administration bodies are obliged to adopt action plans for gender equality. The action plans are adopted on the basis of an analysis of the status of women and men every four years and they shall establish reasons for the introduction of specific measures, goals to be achieved, implementation and implementation control methods. The plan for implementing the National Policy for Gender Equality shall be an integral part of the action plans. Before their adoption the action plans must first be approved by the Governmental Office for Gender Equality.

There are also obligations to use gender sensitive language as stipulated in the Article 13, 14 and 43 of the Gender Equality Act. This means gender sensitive job titles and diploma certificates as well as elimination of sexism from language.

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The Croatian institutional mechanisms for gender equality consist of the Governmental Office for Gender Equality, Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality, Gender Equality Ombudsman, coordinators for gender equality in state administration bodies, commissions for gender equality in the counties and the city of Zagreb and commissions for gender equality in towns and municipalities.

This information booklet is one of the four gender mainstreaming manuals aiming to support the work of different gender equality actors at different levels. Complementing manuals have been prepared for these four groups:

<b>1) POLITICIANS – DECISION-MAKERS</b> <i>Politicians and decision-makers leading the work</i>		
<b>2) GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE FOR GENDER EQUALITY</b> <i>The Office for Gender Equality providing support</i>	<b>3) COORDINATORS</b> <i>Coordinators for gender equality as change-agents in the state administration bodies</i>	<b>4) COUNTY, MUNICIPAL AND TOWN COMMISSIONS</b> <i>County, municipal and town commissions for gender equality setting the agenda at the regional and local level</i>



Political will is a key factor for effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. Gender equality should be confirmed as one of the main objectives of the state and made visible in all of its commitments and strategies.

If the gender mainstreaming commitments are meant to be taken seriously there must be a follow-up from highest level and a request for gender mainstreamed documents and results. It is also important that the decision-makers allocate sufficient levels of resources to the work with gender mainstreaming. Correspondingly, a lack of political commitment, an insufficient provision of resources, and low levels of gender equality awareness by the decision-makers are obstacles to effective gender mainstreaming and can prevent it from reaching its goals.

Also the operative management within the organization has a key role. Explicit and clearly communicated support and backing from the top of the organisation provides legitimacy to the gender equality work. It is vital that management partakes in planning and implementing the mainstreaming of a gender perspective. It is also important that it sends out the message to the organization that it expects results. Above all, management needs to ensure that such work is being carried out and that there are sufficient resources allocated to it. Planning and organizing gender mainstreaming requires allocating work hours for such activities.

Politicians, decision-makers and managers should also consider how they themselves might support gender equality and gender mainstreaming in their daily work. By attending gender equality meetings and events the decision-makers make it clear that they find the issues important. In recruitment policies, the organization should also pay attention to gender equality competence. Also the decision makers can create demand for gender perspective by asking questions and demanding results.

*For example, when different proposals or policies are being presented one might ask the following questions:*

- *What is the impact of this proposal from the perspective of women and men, respectively?*
- *What do we know about the situation of women and men in this field? Are further investigations needed?*
- *Will this proposal promote gender equality? Are additional measures required?*

## **Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality**

The Committee was established in 2001, and it is one of the most important gender equality institutions in Croatia. Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality is a parliamentary working body that monitors, debates and assumes positions on legislation and other issues related to gender equality. It monitors implementation of EU legislation and international conventions in the field, participates in the drafting and monitoring the implementation of the National Policy for Gender Equality, proposes packages of measures to eliminate gender-based discrimination, prepares draft opinions on draft legislation and other regulations related to gender equality and undertakes efforts to introduce the principles of gender equality to a number of policies and to the decision making processes.

## The Governmental Office for Gender Equality providing support

Governmental Office for Gender Equality of the Republic of Croatia was established in 2004 by the provisions of the Gender Equality Act. Its scope of work is defined by the Article 18 of the Act. The Office, for example

- coordinates all activities aimed at ensuring gender equality
- develops the National Policy for Gender Equality and monitors its implementation
- approves action plans of the public bodies
- promotes information on, and awareness of, gender equality
- coordinates the activity of county, municipal and town commissions for gender equality.

One important task of the Office based on the law is to develop an integrated system of protection and promotion of gender equality and monitoring its efficiency. This can be done by developing gender mainstreaming strategies and raising awareness of their importance within the administration.

Strategies for gender mainstreaming have to be tailored to suit a specific organisation and be adapted to the needs and possibilities of given political priorities. However, there are some common elements that are further described in this manual.

### Preconditions for gender mainstreaming

Effective implementation of gender mainstreaming requires the fulfilment of certain preconditions. The most important preconditions that every government should take into consideration are the following:

- 1. Strengthen the political commitment.** Gender mainstreaming has to be made a constant recurrent political issue. It is crucial that all governments issue a declaration, stating its intentions to integrate a gender equality perspective into all policies and programmes.
- 2. Adopt visible and measurable goals.** Effective mainstreaming requires visible and measurable goals and also action plans to reach the goals. It is also important to set up a plan for the implementation of gender mainstreaming, how to broaden the group of actors, how to reach a higher level of gender knowledge in the organisation, how to monitor and evaluate the implementation.
- 3. Elaborate training programmes for all public officials.** In order to ensure a minimum level of gender equality knowledge in the administrations training must be provided for all employees, including managers. It is desirable that this training is integrated in the normal in-service structures and offered to all new employees. Mandatory training for all public servants could be provided. The training should explain why it is important to implement a gender perspective in all the actions and provide methods for every-day work. Gender equality concepts should be introduced in training in order to produce a common understanding and a gender equality culture.
- 4. Strengthen the gender equality units.** Another important prerequisite for gender mainstreaming is a strong Governmental Office for Gender Equality that can act as a think-tank to detect new issues, to develop new strategies, to gather knowledge and expertise and to act as a catalyst for the work of gender mainstreaming. The mandates of the Governmental Of-

Office for Gender Equality and of the coordinators for gender equality at ministries and state bodies should therefore be very clearly stated.

5. **Create a system for coordination and support in the public offices.** Important and helpful method is to conduct a gender mainstreaming plan or strategy involving all public bodies, and to create a system for coordination and support. To create a cross-sectoral network for coordination and support in the implementation process could be stimulating in the gender mainstreaming work. Each public body may also create internal structures in charge of mainstreaming gender equality in the organization and guarantee stable resources for coordinators, teams or working groups for gender equality assuming those functions. The Governmental Office for Gender Equality will have to create a structure aimed at coordinating and supporting each public body in the process of mainstreaming gender equality.
6. **Develop a plan for implementing gender mainstreaming in all policy areas.** Each public body and policy area should be responsible for the implementation of a gender equality analysis in their area. Commitment and accountability at the highest level must be ensured by fully involving the decision-makers of each policy area in the process of mainstreaming gender equality and by making them accountable for progress achieved or lack of progress. Therefore regularly evaluations must be conducted. The Governmental Office for Gender Equality has an important role in supporting the public bodies with expertise whenever laws or policies are being prepared, followed up or monitored in order to verify if they duly take into account the gender equality dimension.

#### Obstacles to gender mainstreaming process

Obstacles to the set-up, roll-out, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming are many and frequent. Some obstacles may be related to the lack of impact drivers. Other obstacles may be more pervasive forms of resistance or institutional and administrative barriers that need to be tackled in a range of ways. It is important to state that work on gender equality is usually not rapid: it may appear slow with concrete results and achievements not fully realised for many years. The following are common obstacles in relation to gender equality work. Suggestions on how to overcome these challenges are also provided.

- **Resistance.** Resistance can be situated at the level of the individual or of the institution, and can take many forms (both explicit and implicit) and manifestations. Overcoming resistance can be challenging. All levels of staff need to be enabled to realise the value of gender equality work. Commitment from the highest levels of management is required to overcome resistance and to ensure progress in relation to gender equality.
- **Lack of understanding of gender equality.** There can be a fundamental lack of understanding of the need for and importance of gender equality within some organisations. This can lead to lack of engagement and involvement of key actors, minimising the importance of the work and considering gender equality a 'women's issue'. To counteract this it is important to clearly reiterate that gender equality is not a minority or marginal issue but it concerns all people.
- **Perception that gender equality work is not required.** In some settings there may be a perception that there is no need for gender equality measures. You may also find a 'job done' attitude. However, in this case, it is important to clarify that work on gender equality needs to be continued and maintained and is not a 'one-off' activity.

- **Lack of sufficient resources.** An absence of dedicated, adequate and sustained resources, both human and financial, for gender equality work and for developing, implementing and monitoring gender mainstreaming is a common obstacle. An absence of funding can lead to chronic under-resourcing of the work, which may lead to only 'cost-neutral' actions and policies being resorted to. This is despite, in most cases, investment and committed finances being required to accelerate change, support initiatives and actions. The staff time required to develop and implement gender mainstreaming needs to be acknowledged and resourced. Adding to the workload of already overburdened staff, offloading this task to inexperienced or junior staff and not financially supporting the actions of the plan give a strong impression that gender equality is not valued at an institutional level.
- **Lack of institutional or organisational authority.** The staff involved in developing and implementing gender mainstreaming may not hold the authority or decision-making powers to promote and drive change in an organisation. This can lead to frustration, limited progress and blockages in terms of goal or output achievement of the plan. This obstacle can generally only be resolved by early involvement, commitment and ongoing support from top management in an organisation. This support needs to be visible, perceptible and genuine to all those within an organisation and to those who fund the work of the organisation in order to develop a reputation for deeming gender equality work important.

### **Coordinators for gender equality as change-agents –recommendations based on good practices**

Nomination of coordinators for gender equality in state administration bodies (ministries, state administration organizations, state offices, and offices of state administration in the counties) is regulated by the Gender Equality Act (Article 27). Coordinators ought to be highly positioned public servants, nominated for this specific task by the head of the body. They are responsible for the coordination of the enforcement of the Act and the National Policy for Gender Equality.

The coordinators' role is very important. Since the activities are diverse and the coordinator has to be aware of all the work done in the administrative body, it is important that the person is at the center of the organization. The coordinator is responsible for planning, not for implementation. Hence, the coordinator should not analyze, but rather function as a consultant, reminder and coach. A clear mandate has to be defined for the work of the coordinator. Work hours must be allocated for this task.

Because gender and experience of sex and gender are intrinsic to every human being, there exist many personal beliefs, assumptions and opinions connected to questions of gender equality. In the administration, the approach has typically been gender neutral (gender blind). Due to this, highlighting gender is still somewhat new and strange, and some might even find it unprofessional. There may also be active or passive resistance within an organization in relation to promoting gender equality.

Ministries and state offices are to implement a gender perspective in all their work. It is an important perspective, for instance, in the drafting of legislation and budget proposals, as well as in the implementation of programmes and projects. Mainstreaming a gender perspective entails developing the core activities and changing practices in ministries and state offices.

The public bodies could set up teams or working groups on gender equality to plan and support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in their organization. The gender equality team or a working group could act as an expert group that can make recommendations and proposals to the civil serv-

ants responsible for the core activities of the organization and to its management group. The group may also monitor the implementation of the commonly agreed objectives.

#### Possible tasks of the working group

- Examines the responsibilities of the ministry or the state office from a gender perspective and monitors the work of the ministry or state office, for instance projects that are being initiated.
- Plans and monitors gender mainstreaming in the key areas of the public body (legislation, budgets, projects, strategies, etc.)
- Acts as an expert on gender equality within the administrative branch.
- Reports and makes suggestions to the management of a ministry or state office.
- May also work on gender equality issues connected to staff policy and promoting non-discrimination, if no other groups are specified for that purpose.

The working group on gender equality needs leadership and coordination in order for it to function properly. It is the responsibility of the management to ensure that the groups hold meetings and that they have the adequate operational preconditions in place. It is considered good practice that the group is chaired by a member of the senior management and that the group can consult the coordinator. It is recommended that those who are responsible for the core activities of the public body (drafting legislation and budget proposals, etc.) are members of the group or are, at the very least, at the group's disposal. It is also important that the different areas of responsibility of the public body are represented in the group.

A gender perspective should be a part of all key processes at all stages, from preparation to decision making and monitoring. The main responsibility for implementing a gender perspective and for assessing gender impact lies with management and with those officials entrusted with preparatory work. A gender equality working group may discuss the issue at suitable intervals by, for instance, inviting the officials in charge of preparatory work to be heard at meetings. In order to strengthen a gender perspective, the working group may give recommendations to the persons responsible or to the management group.

*Example: The gender equality working group at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland*

*The gender equality working group at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (MSAH) was established in 2005. In 2008, the composition of the group was re-formed and its mandate specified. The objective of the group is to outline, promote, monitor, and coordinate the gender equality work at the MSAH. The members of the group are from different departments and independent units and the group also includes experts on key processes. Cooperation between experts on content and experts on processes has been observed to be fruitful for everyone.*

*Among other things, the group has developed mechanisms to identify those government bills that require gender impact assessment. It has also developed and monitored the gender perspective in the budget proposal and has developed the performance guidance of the ministry, its staff policy, as well as training and the production of statistics. The group has also discussed the different areas of responsibilities of the ministry through, for instance, projects and programmes. There have been positive developments in all sectors, but were it not for the gender equality group, the gender perspective might still be forgotten. In the near future, the aim is to create systematic procedures for different sectors and for handling processes. The group is also working on developing a model for the annually recurring activities.*

## County, municipal and town commissions setting the agenda at the regional level

As the spheres of governance closest to the people, local and regional authorities represent the levels best placed to combat the persistence and the reproduction of inequalities, and to promote a truly equal society. They can, through their competences, and through co-operation with the whole range of local actors, undertake concrete actions in favour of equality of women and men.

Whilst local and regional governments have a diverse range of responsibilities, all of them can and must play a positive role in promoting equality in practical ways that impact on the daily lives of their population. At the local and regional level, there are many policies and programmes that affect the most concrete aspects of daily life, such as housing, security, public transport, the world of work, or health. Moreover, the full involvement of women in the development and implementation of local and regional policies allows their life experiences, know-how and creativity to be taken into account.

In Croatia county commissions for gender equality are established in each of 20 counties and the City of Zagreb as working advisory bodies to county assemblies. The commissions usually consist of 7 to 11 persons, mostly members of the county assembly, few independent experts mostly CSO representatives, and a coordinator for gender equality from the office of state administration in a county. They are bodies appointed by county assembly, and their role is to ensure the protection and promotion of gender equality at the regional level.

The work of county commissions is regulated by the Article 28 of the Gender Equality Act. They shall establish and provide the conditions and funds for the activity to promote gender equality at a local level and enforcing this Act and the National Policy for Gender Equality. They are consultative bodies of county assemblies and the Assembly of the City of Zagreb.

The commissions are advisory bodies to county assemblies. So one important task for the commissions is to go through the assemblies' agenda with a gender perspective and try to influence its decision-making. County commissions for gender equality should also encourage the establishment of town and municipal commissions for gender equality in their respective counties. Based on the National Policy for Gender Equality county assemblies are obliged to adopt action plans for the implementation of the measures of the National policy for Gender Equality at the level of counties.

A good material for developing the work to promote gender equality at a county, municipal and town level is the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. By signing the Charter the local and regional governments commit themselves to use their powers and partnerships to achieve greater equality for their people. The Charter was undertaken by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions together with many partners.

- The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life is addressed to the local and regional governments of Europe, who are invited to sign it, to make a formal public commitment to the principle of equality of women and men, and to implement, within their territory, the commitments set out within the Charter.
- To assist in the implementation of these commitments, each signatory authority undertakes to draw up an Action Plan for Gender Equality, which sets out its priorities, actions and resources to this end.
- In addition, each signatory authority undertakes to engage with all of the institutions and organisations in its territory, in order to promote the achievement of real equality in practice.

# Tools for gender mainstreaming

## TOOL 1: Gender impact assessment

Gender impact assessment is a method intended for planning and preparatory work. It entails assessing the impact of a measure or proposal from the perspective of women, men, and gender equality, respectively. Gender impact is always assessed when activities are deemed to have an impact on different groups of people. The assessment is done as part of officials' everyday work.

It is advisable to assess gender impact at all stages of preparatory work (continuous assessment). Moreover, a more in-depth analysis of the direct and indirect gender impact of the project or legislation in question is conducted when needed. A gender perspective should be one of the perspectives incorporated throughout the preparatory work.

### Examining the need for assessment

It is worthwhile to examine the need for gender impact assessment at the very beginning of the preparatory work. This need is assessed by answering questions that test gender relevance and by reviewing existing background information and statistics.

Testing gender relevance:

1. Are people's lives and everyday activities affected?
2. Are there significant differences between women and men in this sphere of activities?

NO: If the answer is no, there appears to be no gender impact. Hence, there is no need to further investigate the consequences. State this in the working documents.

YES: If the answer is yes, it is likely that the measure has a gender impact. In that case, a more thorough analysis of the gender impact is required. The gender impact needs to be assessed also when the issue being prepared focuses mainly on one sex.

If you are unsure about the answer, carry out a gender impact assessment.

By reviewing existing information and statistics, one can determine whether conclusions about the possible gender impact may be drawn on the basis of that information. It is also advisable to inquire into the gender expertise of the working party. A suitable next step is to draw up a plan for obtaining missing information and ensuring expertise. For all practical purposes, at the very beginning of preparatory work, one needs to clarify:

- how the issue at hand affects women and men, girls and boys, respectively
- what is already known about the circumstances and needs of women and men
- what additional information is needed.

## Assessment criteria

Gender impact assessment can be realised in a number of ways. It is best done as a part of the preparatory work, that is, at all those points when there are issues being prepared that are significant from a gender perspective. Gender impact should be analysed also as a part of other impact assessment (for instance, when determining the economic impact of the proposal from the perspectives of women and men, separately). The results of the gender impact analysis are taken into account when the final proposal or measure is being drawn up.

In practice, gender impact assessment is carried out

- by analysing statistics (how do the circumstances of women and men differ?)
- by further investigations (how do the differences in the circumstances of women and men affect the issue in question?)
- by hearing experts and stakeholders (what gender impact do they consider the issue to have?).

Gender impact assessment may also be carried out with the help of the questions below. While assessing the gender impact, keep in mind that a gender perspective includes both men and women. The assessment should therefore take into account also men's needs and circumstances.

<b>General questions</b>
Does the proposal promote equality between women and men? Are women and men de facto treated equally in the proposal? Have the special needs and circumstances of women and men been adequately identified? Are special measures directed at either sex needed? Does the proposal affect the realisation of gender equality in a longer-term perspective?
<b>Economic status</b>
Does the proposal have different effects for the economic status of women and men, respectively? What are the consequences, for example, in relation to pay, taxation, or earnings-related benefits? Do positive or negative economics affect either sex in particular?
<b>Decision making</b>
Does the proposal have differing consequences for women's and men's opportunities to participate and influence? Does it strengthen the opportunities of both sexes to participate equally in the decision making in all areas?
<b>Professional life</b>
Does the proposal affect women's and men's position on the labour market differently? Does it have different consequences for employment, conditions of employment, pay, or working conditions in female-dominated and male-dominated sectors, respectively? Are special solutions needed in order to ensure the labour market status of women or men, or in order to, for instance, further recruitment and career advancement in the field? Is sex segregation in different fields and professions weakened or strengthened by the proposal? Does the proposal facilitate the reconciling of work and family life for employees?
<b>Business and industry</b>
Does the proposal have a different effect on businesses in female- and male-dominated fields or on businesses of different sizes? Does the proposal weaken entrepreneurship opportunities for either sex? Are special measures needed to support women's entrepreneurship?
<b>Education</b>
Does the proposal support the educational opportunities and professional development of both sexes independently of the professional or the educational sector? Are special solutions needed to support the educational opportunities for either sex? Are special solutions needed to alleviate sex



segregation in education?
<b>Parenthood</b>
Does the proposal support both women and men in parenting and starting a family? Do the consequences of the proposal differ for custodial and non-custodial parents? Does the proposal encourage a more equal distribution of family leaves and of sharing caring responsibilities between women and men? Are any special measures needed to strengthen paternity?
<b>Public services</b>
Are the consequences different for men and women regarding the services and assistance they need? Are special arrangements called for to ensure that women and men both get such assistance and services?
<b>Well-being and health</b>
Does the impact of the proposal differ between the sexes regarding mental or physical health, well-being, or its distribution? Are differences in risk factors for the health and well-being of women and men accounted for? Does the proposal reduce health discrepancies between women and men or within the respective group? Does the proposal strengthen the social participation and well-being of both sexes?
<b>Safety</b>
Does the proposal have different effects on safety as experienced by women and men, respectively? Are the different security risks for women and men at home, at work, and in recreation considered in the proposal? Are special measures needed to reduce violence against women?
<b>Surroundings and living conditions</b>
Does the proposal impact differently the living conditions or everyday life for women and men? Has the proposal taken into account the needs of both sexes concerning, for instance, community structure, transport planning, or accessibility?
<b>Leisure time</b>
Does the proposal promote both women's and men's opportunities for leisure and hobbies? Are cultural and sports services used by women and men respectively equitably supported?

## 12 Advice points for gender impact assessment

1. Schedule the planning and launching of a gender impact assessment to take place at the very beginning of the preparatory phase. Only then can it make a difference to the end result.
2. A simple rule of thumb is that whenever there is talk about people (citizens, children, employees, etc.) one ought to remember that the discussion de facto concerns women and men, girls and boys.
3. Gender impact assessment is seldom in vain. There is no way of knowing beforehand which measures will have a significant impact from the perspective of women or men.
4. Gender impact assessment is carried out by the official/s doing the preparatory work on the issue in question. The assessment is done as a part of normal procedures, utilizing stakeholders, information based on research and statistics, expert hearings, and reports.
5. Gender impact assessment is a part of thorough preparatory work. Assessing factors that have an impact on the status of women and men is no more difficult than other impact assessments. It is often a question of acknowledging the existence of gender and utilizing existing statistical data.

6. As the preparatory work progresses, a proper gender impact assessment does not require much additional work. It is worthwhile to dimension it to correspond to the objectives, extent, and anticipated significance of the impact of the preparatory work.
7. Impact assessments always form an entity. Consider a gender perspective in all impact assessments: what are the financial implications from the perspective of women and men, respectively, for instance?
8. List the most important factors to be considered. Also, note that which may seem obvious. Keep this list in sight during the entire preparatory process and check it at regular intervals.
9. Ask all contributors and experts to assess the gender impact of the proposal from their respective perspective. This gives valuable additional material for the assessment.
10. When needed, carry out separate studies on gender impact. It is, however, the duty of the official in charge of preparatory work to assess the most important results of the analysis and their relevance to the issue at hand. A report done by an external person may otherwise remain disconnected from the rest of the work.
11. The worst way of implementing a gender impact assessment is that an external person reviews an otherwise completed proposal and, as it were, afterwards "adds" gender to it. That will no longer have any impact on the content.
12. If gender impact assessment is not carried out, the working documents should present the reasons for why it has not been done.

### **Gender impact assessment as a key to improve legislation**

Gender impact assessment of legislation means that the consequences that the legislation has for women and men are analysed in advance, thus preventing it from directly or indirectly discriminating against either sex.

The quality of legislative drafting improves by incorporating a gender perspective. Different points of view produce distinct information on the scope, implementation, and effects of legislation, thereby producing a law better suited to the *de facto* life circumstances and needs of people. At the same time, one may also ensure in advance that legislation does not have adverse effects on either sex. As a result of a gender perspective, the predictability and impact of the legislation improve.

The need for gender impact assessment is investigated early on in legislative drafting. In practice, it entails investigating in the preparatory phase how the issues concern women and men, girls and boys, and what is already known about the circumstances and needs of women and men. If there is a need for thorough gender impact assessment, it is advisable to plan for its implementation and the resources needed for it already at this stage. Additionally, it is important to monitor afterwards the impacts of the legislation and whether they correspond to the defined objectives.

To make the process of gender impact assessment in legislation systematic, it is recommendable that the coordinator with other relevant actors:

- Yearly review which legislative proposals, whether already initiated or ongoing, require a gender impact assessment.
- Support and monitor those proposals by hearing the official in charge of the drafting at a meeting and by giving recommendations.
- If needed, the selected legislative proposals are also discussed in the organization's management group.
- Monitor the implementation of the impact assessments and the results they have helped to achieve, on a yearly basis.

## TOOL 2: Sex-disaggregated statistics and data

Sex-disaggregated statistics and data are an absolute prerequisite in order to evaluate decisions and measures from a gender perspective. They provide information on the *de facto* circumstances of women and men, giving information on what lies behind the averages and assumptions.

Ordinary citizens and average persons in statistics are actually (and usually) women and men. For instance, employees, students, immigrants, children, youth, unemployed, patients, clients and beneficiaries are women and men, girls and boys. When gender is made visible, we can determine the conditions, workings, and needs of both women and men. Thus, we can obtain more information about the target groups and, hence, better direct measures and how resources are allocated. This contributes to a significant improvement in the quality of preparatory work and decision making, while also improving the efficiency of measures and services.

Information on the entire population may not always tell the whole truth. Time series analysis, for instance, and the resulting averages, may hide the different directions in which women's and men's circumstances develop. The principal rule is that all information and statistics that concerns people is disaggregated and analysed by sex. Sex is one factor that divides individuals, as is age, domicile, or education, and it should be considered in the preparatory work. It is important to investigate both statistical differences and statistical similarities.

Useful statistics to support preparatory work are:

- **Any data on individuals broken down by sex.** Gender statistics rely on these sex-disaggregated data and reflect the realities of the lives of women and men and policy issues relating to gender.
- **Data collected and tabulated separately for women and men.** They allow for the measurement of differences between women and men on various social and economic dimensions and are one of the requirements in obtaining gender statistics. However, gender statistics are more than data disaggregated by sex. Having data by sex does not guarantee, for example, that concepts, definitions and methods used in data production are conceived to reflect gender roles, relations and inequalities in society.

Six advise for collecting sex-disaggregated data:

1. **Define:** The need for statistical data is largely determined by the issue being prepared and how it is defined and limited. Think through what statistics are needed in order to consider a gender perspective and where they can be obtained.

2. **Request:** Always request information and statistics disaggregated and analysed by sex.
3. **Execute:** When preparing statistics, always investigate and describe the circumstances for women and men separately. Do this even though the theme does not appear to have any gender implications.
4. **Analyse:** It is important to highlight the differences and similarities between the sexes. It is also imperative to contemplate the reasons for such differences and what implications they may have for the issue being prepared.
5. **Use it:** Consider key observations and conclusions in all preparatory work.
6. **Report:** In reports and publications, present the most important results consistently disaggregated by sex. Monitoring information is also best presented disaggregated by sex, even if this was not specifically requested.

### TOOL 3: Gender analysis

Gender analysis is defined in different ways in different contexts. At its most basic level, it means analysis of a situation or policy that pays specific attention to existing and potential differences between men and women.

Some gender-related differences are clear and they only need to be reminded about. Some gender-related differences are not always obvious. We need particular sensitivity in order to make these real and potential differences visible. In gender analysis we often need to be very gender-sensitive. Although gender differences often exist, traditional research and analysis does not always make us aware of these differences. We require a specific gender perspective in order to create this awareness.

Gender analysis is specifically informed by theories about gender roles, relations and equality. In other words, gender analysis draws on demonstrated sociological research findings about the roots of inequalities between men and women and how these differences might be overcome. Gender analysis can take these notions as its starting point:

- Gender is largely a cultural and social construct, gender roles and relations can and do change over time.
- The gendered division of labour is the starting point for many gender imbalances and inequalities in society.
- Access to resources is distinct from control over resources, and control over resources in virtually all societies is unevenly distributed between men and women.
- Resources include material resources, but also time, knowledge and information.
- De jure gender equality does not necessarily translate into de facto gender equality.
- Culture, attitudes and stereotypes profoundly influence access to and control over resources, and thus the realization of de facto gender equality.

A specific type of gender analysis is called **gender impact analysis** (Tool 1 in this manual). This has all the components of any gender analysis, but focuses on how existing or intended projects or policies will or do impact men and women differently. It is therefore one specific type of public policy research. Other types of gender analyses are for example the following:

### **3R or 4R method**

- Representation: how are different sexes represented in various parts and processes in the organisation?
- Resources: how are resources distributed between sexes?
- Realia: to what extent are representation and resource distribution affected by gender norms in the organisation?
- (Realization: what new goals and measures should be formulated to achieve them?)

### **What? Why? Who? How?**

- What the difference between women and men is?
- Why the difference exists?
- Who is involved and who are affected?
- How can we promote gender equality?

### **How to conduct gender analysis**

When setting up a policy or project, an essential first step for ensuring that it meets gender equality requirements is to conduct a gender analysis. Gender analysis helps gain an understanding of the different patterns of participation, involvement, behaviour and activities that women and men in their diversity have in economic, social and legal structures and the implications of these differences.

Gender analysis provides the answer to how the gender perspective should be addressed throughout the project, particularly in terms of setting relevant gender equality objectives and indicators, planning concrete actions to reach the objectives, and conducting monitoring and evaluation.

When carrying out the project's problem analysis, the gender perspective must be integrated. This can be achieved by:

- Ensuring that all data used in the project is broken down by sex (sex-disaggregated data, see also tool 2). Where differences between women and men are found, they must be analysed, in order to establish both their causes, and effects.
- Making sure that relevant gender issues, gaps and inequalities in the area of intervention are included and integrated into the full problem analysis.

It is also important to explore the dimension of the representation of women and men in different policy sectors on different levels - as their beneficiaries, representatives of the labour force and decision makers. More specifically:

- Define in which way your policy is person-related.
- Describe how your policy will affect the everyday lives of men and women or specific groups of men and women (e.g. disabled, minorities, low-income, LGBT, and so on).

- Define the differences between women and men in the policy sector (with regard to rights, participation/representation, access to and use of resources, values and norms that affect gender-specific behaviour).
- Identify gender gaps among professionals and in the decision-makers in the main institutions in the sector.

Gender analysis can be, depending on the project, a brainstorm that you do at your desk when planning a project, or it can be an in-depth research project that you contract out to professionals – or something in between. The analysis can also benefit from the input of gender specialists. If gender specialists are involved, it is important that their findings are discussed with the project team, in order for the results to be shared and fully understood by all key project stakeholders.

Gender analysis in different stages of a project or policy can include following elements (see also Tool 4 in this manual):

### **Planning**

It is advisable that anyone preparing a project or programme investigates at the very start the relevance of gender to its target area. The investigation may be done in order to find answers to questions related to, for instance, the target group, the objectives, and the estimated impact. It should include all parties involved in the preparatory work. Stakeholders and experts can also be included. If gender equality is relevant to the project, the gender equality objective of objectives should be defined in the mandate for the project as well as in the establishing documents of project.

- Will the project or policy contribute to existing inequalities between men and women?
- Does it break down or challenge existing inequalities between men and women?
- What options should be considered to strengthen a gender perspective?

### **Implementing**

In the preparatory phase, investigate the impact of the project on women, men and gender equality and ensure that the consequences benefit both sexes. A gender perspective should be considered also in communications, as well as at events, and in possible subproject activities. Incorporating a gender perspective from an early stage until the end of the project helps address major issues should they arise. In the implementation, it is advisable to use gender expertise when needed.

- Are both men and women equally involved in the process of implementation?
- Is progress towards gender equality objectives clearly stated in the project design?
- Have any gender issues arisen, that were not identified at the project/policy design stage? How can they be addressed?

### **Evaluating**

Gender impact is assessed and reported as a part of intermediate and final reports. In the reporting, it is important to explain how a gender perspective has been included in the implementation of the project and what significance it has had. At the same time, assess the impact of objectives and measures on women, men, and gender equality. In the monitoring, all follow-up indicators that relate to people have to be disaggregated by sex.

- To what extent have the gender equality objectives met?
- Have there been any unexpected or unintentional gendered effects of the project?

## TOOL 4: Checklist for projects and programmes

Many of the projects and programmes of the public administration have direct effects on the lives of citizens. The projects and programmes may also have considerable gender impact. A gender perspective is important especially in the early stages of preparatory work, when defining the objectives and choosing the methods for their attainment.

With the help of the checklist below, officials or other parties implementing projects can evaluate the project at an early stage and note the points where a more thorough application of a gender perspective is needed. The checklist lends itself well to the preparation of different projects and programmes (for example research and development, communication, reports, regulatory projects, plans for action), as well as generally in the preparation of different aggregates of measures.

A PROJECT'S GENDER IMPACT	YES	NO	INVESTIGATE
<p><b>Does the project have any gender impact?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project affect people's lives?</li> <li>• Are there significant differences between women and men in the area of operation?</li> </ul>			
FOCUS	YES	NO	INVESTIGATE
<p><b>Does the project have a target group?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project affect women and men in the same way?</li> <li>• Is the objective for the project the same for both sexes?</li> <li>• In the project, are different measures required for women and men?</li> </ul>			
INFORMATION AND STATISTICS	YES	NO	INVESTIGATE
<p><b>Has the background information been broken down and analysed also by sex?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should resources be allocated for further analysis from a gender perspective?</li> </ul> <p><b>Does monitoring include indicators on the different circumstances for the sexes and on gender equality?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have all follow-up indicators pertaining to people been disaggregated by sex?</li> </ul>			

OBJECTIVES	YES	NO	INVESTIGATE
<p><b>Do the stated objectives of the project include a gender perspective?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project have specific objectives relating to gender equality?</li> <li>• Should a gender perspective be defined in the establishing documents?</li> </ul>			
ACTORS	YES	NO	INVESTIGATE
<p><b>Are women and men equally represented among the project actors?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are women and men a part of the management or steering group as well as of working groups?</li> <li>• Are women and men equally represented among those giving their opinions as well as in the organizations and stakeholders they represent?</li> </ul> <p><b>Is gender expertise included in the preparation of the project?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is external gender expertise used?</li> <li>• Have the key actors taken part in an introduction on what mainstreaming a gender perspective may entail in the implementation of the project?</li> </ul>			
MANAGEMENT	YES	NO	INVESTIGATE
<p><b>Has a gender perspective been considered in the project management?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have there been discussions with the political leadership about how to practically mainstream a gender perspective in the implementation of the project?</li> <li>• Has it been ensured that a gender perspective will be included also in potential subprojects?</li> <li>• Is a gender perspective included in the potential criteria or application process of the project?</li> </ul>			

It is advisable that public bodies analyse their own practices related to project planning and financing from a gender perspective and see whether, for instance, the consideration of a gender perspective could be one of the defined project criteria for project funding in general. Gender may well be a significant factor in the project (for instance in municipal services).

It is recommended that a public body:



- Yearly reviews already initiated or ongoing projects in need of gender impact assessment.
- Supports and monitors projects by hearing the official in charge of preparation and by giving recommendations.
- Monitors the implementation of the impact assessments and the results they have helped to achieve, on a yearly basis
- A gender perspective is included in the project funding criteria and in application procedures (in forms and instructions, for example).

## TOOL 5: Gender budgeting

The strategic plans and the budget proposal are the main steering instruments for public finances and operations. When the significance of gender and the objective of promoting gender equality are included in the strategic plans, they become a natural part of all activities within the organization. Also the budget has a key role. How public funding is used has a direct effect on the lives of women and men. Implementing gender perspective into the budgetary process is called gender budgeting.

According to the Council of Europe, gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. So it is not only allocating special funds to promote gender specific goals but also going through the whole budget with a gender perspective. Gender budgeting is conducted in three elements:

- Analysing the budget from a gender perspective.
- Restructuring the budget based on gender analysis.
- Mainstreaming gender as a category of analysis in the budgetary processes.

The first level of analysis is to produce a sex-disaggregated report of end users or recipients of budget programmes. Probing deeper from a gender perspective, the analysis can go on to demonstrate the degree to which the budget has satisfied the needs of the recipients and how the budget needs to take account of the differing needs and roles of women and men in the society.

Where analysis reveals that budget resources have not been distributed in a gender equitable way, a response from the budget is required to redress the inequity. Where the distribution of budget resources does not match the government's gender equality policies, realignment is required. Once the differential impact of the budget on women and on men is revealed, there is an obligation to incorporate gender as a category of analysis within the budgetary processes.

It is important to notice that the unequal distribution of resources between women and men for a particular appropriation does not automatically signify direct or indirect gender-based discrimination. Expenditure does not always distribute equally when the gender distribution of the target group, beneficiaries, or end-users of a service is inequitable. It is nonetheless always important to carefully investigate these instances and reflect on why one gender is overrepresented in the target group. Sometimes it may be a gender equality issue that needs to be addressed.

Gender budgeting is not just about the content of budgets; it is also about the process. This is the work of mainstreaming gender budgeting. It requires an ongoing commitment to understanding gender, which includes analysis and consultation, and ongoing budget readjustments to take account of the changing needs of women and men, boys and girls.

*EXAMPLE: Regulation by the Finnish Ministry of Finance on drawing up proposals for operating and financial plans as well as spending limit and budget proposals.*

*The budget proposals of the Finnish ministries are to include a summary of those activities within each administrative branch that have significant gender impact. A prerequisite for writing the summary is that the ministry's operations are reviewed from a gender perspective. This work is best done in the responsible departments and an in-depth gender impact assessment may be needed to support this work. Civil servants in charge of the budget are responsible for ensuring that both this work and the main observations of the departments are included in the budget proposal. When a gender perspective is integrated into all ministerial activities, namely in the implementation of projects as well as in drafting legislation and measures, highlighting the gender perspective in the budget becomes easier.*

*EXAMPLE: Analysis of direct gender impact of the budget*

*In 2005, the Government Institute for Economic Research (VATT) in Finland wrote a report on the direct gender impact of the budget for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (MSAH). The report included, for instance, an analysis of income transfers from the government to the citizens and the allocation of the funding for such transfers.*

*The report made it evident that, although the proportion of women as beneficiaries of income transfers is often greater than the proportion of men, women's share of expenditure is often only half or even less. The level of earnings-related benefits is affected by, for example, the gender pay gap and temporary absences of women and men from the labour market. So although women were the recipients of the benefits more often than men, the sums of money that they received were less than those of men.*

*According to the analysis, in addition to examining the direct gender impact, one should also assess what kind of behaviour the different benefits encourage in women and men. Gender impact assessment must then continue and go deeper, especially with regard to the indirect and long-term consequences.*

*In addition to the allocation of appropriations, government funding, for instance allocation of taxes and the impact of taxation, needs to be examined from a gender perspective.*

## **Glossary**

### **Discrimination based on gender or sex**

Gender-based discrimination entails placing women and men in adverse circumstances due to their gender. Discrimination also includes sexual harassment and molesting, as well as placing persons in a less favourable position due to pregnancy, childbirth, parenthood, family care responsibilities, or other gender-based grounds. Indirect discrimination entails that some neutral measure(s), for instance, legislation, regulations, policies or practices have a negative effect on one or the other sex. The gender equality legislation prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination based on gender.

### **Equality**

Equality and gender equality are fundamental rights. They entail ensuring that everyone has the right not to be discriminated against and to have equal opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, language, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, religious beliefs, or other personal characteristics.

### **Gender and sex**

Gender, refers to the social differences between men and women. It identifies the socially, culturally, politically and economically determined relationships between women and men. Gender relationships vary from place to place and over time; they change in response to altering circumstances. There are many deeply set cultural conceptions and assumptions about gender. Gender may entail gender roles, social and cultural signifiers on femininity and masculinity, gendered behaviour, or the gender identity of an individual. Sex, by contrast, refers to the biological difference between women and men.

### **Gender-based harassment**

Gender-based harassment denotes such unwanted behaviour that is related to gender, but is not sexual in nature, and which intentionally or de facto infringes on said person's mental or physical integrity creating a threatening, hostile, derogatory, humiliating, or oppressive atmosphere.

### **Gender equality**

Gender equality means that women and men have equal opportunities to express themselves and to participate in society. Gender equality also includes the right to non-discriminatory treatment in all areas of societal life. In order to achieve, uphold and develop gender equality, one must take action both on an everyday grass-roots level, in administrative practices, and in political decision making.

### **Gender impact assessment (GIA)**

Gender impact assessment entails assessing the consequences that a measure has from the perspective of both women and men. The purpose is to promote gender equality and to prevent effects that are unwanted from a gender perspective. The

assessment may, for instance, examine how measures affect the societal circumstances and resources of women and men. Based on the assessment, amending proposals can be made in order to reduce discrimination and unwanted effects, and to eliminate obstacles to gender equality. Gender impact assessment should be done at an early stage in legislative drafting.

### **Gender mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy by which a gender perspective and the objective of promoting gender equality is included in all preparatory work and decision making by authorities. The objective of gender mainstreaming is to breach the gender-neutral, sometimes gender-blind, procedures and organizational culture.

For the Council of Europe, gender mainstreaming is “the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making”.<sup>1</sup>

### **Gender blind**

Ignoring/failing to address the gender dimension (as opposed to gender-sensitive or gender neutral).<sup>2</sup>

### **Gender neutral**

Having no differential positive or negative impact for gender relations or equality between women and men.<sup>3</sup> Policy decisions that appear gender neutral may have a differential impact on women and men, even when such an effect was neither intended nor envisaged. Gender impact assessment is carried out to avoid unintended negative consequences and improve the quality and efficiency of policies.

### **Gender sensitive**

Addressing and taking into account the gender dimension.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Gender Mainstreaming. Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices. Final Report of Activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming (EG-S-MS). Council of Europe. Strasbourg 1998.

2. European Commission, 1998. 100 words for equality. A glossary of terms on equality between women and men.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

## **Gender perspective**

A gender perspective entails investigating how a question concerns women and men. Sex is a biological factor according to which people are grouped, much as age, domicile, or level of education. Sex and gender should therefore be considered as an aspect in preparatory work and decision making.

## **Gender stereotypes**

Gender stereotypes or gender roles are simplified or formulaic expectations and assumptions about how men and women "usually" are, or how women and men should behave in order to be the "right kind of" men and women. Characteristic of gender stereotypical thinking are claims such that men are more logical and better leaders than women, and that women are more emotional and by nature tender and caring. Gender stereotypes are mostly unconscious, "self-evident" beliefs deeply ingrained in culture. Stereotypes may also include negative presuppositions that may be used in order to uphold current unjust circumstances.

## **Gender studies**

Gender studies (or women's studies) is an academic and multidisciplinary approach to, for instance, gender relationships in society and analysing the gender dimensions of other disciplines. Gender studies investigate the gender system as well as women's historical, cultural and societal status. Gender studies are a source of information for gender equality work.

## **Multiple discrimination (intersectional discrimination)**

Multiple discrimination describes discrimination that takes place on the basis of several grounds operating separately. Intersectional discrimination refers to a situation where several grounds operate and interact with each other at the same time in such a way that they are inseparable.<sup>5</sup> One factor alone may not explain why discrimination occurs. To eliminate discrimination, one needs to, in addition to gender, also investigate other personal circumstances.

## **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment denotes such verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature, which intentionally or de facto infringes on a person's mental or physical integrity, especially by creating a threatening, hostile, derogatory, humiliating, or oppressive atmosphere.

## **Sex-disaggregated statistics**

Statistics and research data are of great importance in promoting gender equality. A principal rule is that all statistics pertaining to people are to be broken down and

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5. European Commission (2007). Tackling Multiple Discrimination. Practices, Policies and Laws.

analysed by sex. Statistics can be used to identify the circumstances or status of each sex and to detect possible injustices or flaws. It is as important to highlight and investigate the differences between men and women as it is to investigate similarities.

### **Transgender and intersex persons**

Transgender persons include persons who have a gender identity different to the sex assigned to them at birth and those people who wish to portray their gender identity in a different way to their assigned sex. Intersex people are persons who are born with a number of chromosomes, hormonal levels or genital characteristics that do not correspond to the given standard for categorisation as male or female regarding sexual or reproductive anatomy. Intersexuality may take different forms and cover a wide range of conditions and there are, hence, no concrete parameters to the definition of intersex.<sup>6</sup>

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6. Adapted from the World Health Organization, Genomic resource centre. Gender and Genetics: Genetic components of Sex and Gender. <http://www.who.int/genomics/gender/en/index1.html>.

# Gender equality stakeholders and sources of information

## Gender Equality Authorities

- Office for Gender Equality <https://ravnopravnost.gov.hr/>
- Committee for Gender Equality <http://www.sabor.hr/odbor-za-ravnopravnost-spolova>
- Ombudswoman for Gender Equality <http://www.prs.hr/>
- Coordinators in state administration bodies <https://ravnopravnost.gov.hr/institucionalni-mehanizmi-1639/koordinatori-ce-u-tijelima-drzavne-uprave-2024/2024>
- Coordinators in state administration offices <https://ravnopravnost.gov.hr/institucionalni-mehanizmi-1639/koordinatori-ce-u-uredima-drzavne-uprave-2025/2025>
- County, municipal and town commissions for gender equality <https://ravnopravnost.gov.hr/institucionalni-mehanizmi-1639/zupanijska-lokalna-povjerenstva-za-ravnopravnost-spolova/2028>

## Other gender equality actors

- B.a.B.e. <http://www.babe.hr/>
- Center for Education, Counseling and Research <http://www.cesi.hr/>
- Croatian Association of Roma Women - Better Future <http://www.uzrh-bb.hr/index.php?jezik=hr>
- Croatian Association of Women in the Legal Profession <http://www.huzupp.com/>
- Domine <http://www.domine.hr/>
- VOX Feminae <http://www.voxfeminae.net/>
- Women's Network <http://www.zenska-mreza.hr/>
- Ženska udruga IZVOR <http://www.zenska-udruga-izvor.hr/>

## Information on gender equality

- Women and Men in Croatia, 2016  
[http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv\\_Eng/menandwomen/men\\_and\\_women\\_2016.pdf](http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/menandwomen/men_and_women_2016.pdf)
- Gender Mainstreaming Tools and Methods  
<http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-and-methods/competence-development-gender-equality-training>

- Gender Mainstreaming – Good Practices  
<http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Good-Practices-in-Gender-Mainstreaming.pdf>
- Gender Statistics  
<http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/gender-equality-index/2012/country/HR>

#### **Gender studies**

- Centre for Women's Studies <http://www.zenstud.hr/>
- Centre for Women's Studies, University of Rijeka <http://czs.uniri.hr/>



# Annex 1: Five steps to organize gender mainstreaming

## STEP 1: Gender matters

When gender mainstreaming work begins, it is a good practice that the entire organization, from management on down, gets acquainted with gender perspective. The whole organization should get basic information about gender equality as well as learn about the important role of public bodies in promoting it in their activities. If there is a possibility to provide training for the personnel and the management, this is a good way to start.

Some of the questions that could be discussed are:

- What are the organization's obligations stated by the law?
- What are the benefits of gender-equal activities and gender mainstreaming?
- What is the role of a gender equality coordinator and other actors?
- What could be done next in our organization?

If gender perspective is new, it is important to start with the basics. The issue should be presented with arguments that highlight, concretely and precisely, why gender matters. In other words, one must illustrate what problems gender equality contributes to solving, and what specific benefits a gender perspective will bring to the organization, individuals and the society as a whole. Well-defined arguments will increase the chances of receiving support:

- **Justice and equality.** Democratic principles and basic human rights demand gender equality. There are also many international agreements which establish gender equality as a fundamental principle, for example the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the global conference documents from Beijing, Copenhagen and Cairo. States are obliged to fulfil these commitments. Gender equality is a goal also in the Croatian own legislation as well as EU legislation.
- **Credibility and accountability.** Because women and men each make up half of the population, any data, policy or recommendation that does not recognize and address both genders equally will be ultimately flawed, and will thus have no credibility. Gender mainstreaming can also offer concrete mechanisms for introducing a greater degree of accountability into governance. These arguments are useful for justifying gender impact assessments (studies that examine how men and women are, will be or have been differently affected by actions or situational factors), or calling for more gender balance in decision-making processes. It should also be stressed that gender mainstreaming is not only about women; it is about women and men and society in general.
- **Efficiency and sustainability.** These arguments make clear an undisputable fact: equal inclusion of men and women in all aspects of development and society pays off for the country as a whole. Nations cannot afford to ignore the contributions and economic and social capacities of both men and women in all spheres. The development of any country that does will ultimately suffer in the medium and long term. This is an argument that addresses "macro" aspects of development – i.e. the welfare and prosperity of a nation as a whole. These arguments are particularly effective because they address the bottom line: money. They prove that investment in gender equality will pay off for the country as a whole in the future.

- **Quality of life.** Increased attention to gender equality issues will improve the lives of individual men and women. In a democratic society based on principles of social justice, each individual member has the right to the best quality of life possible. Furthermore, if individuals are happier and healthier, they will also be more productive, thus contributing to a more efficient and prosperous society. These arguments address “micro” aspects of development and gender, i.e. the ways in which individuals within a development context are affected. Gender mainstreaming initiatives seek to further this objective.
- **Alliance.** Alliance arguments highlight gender equality as a prerequisite for establishing formal alliances or partnerships with other nations. For example all EU countries are mandated to implement various instruments for the promotion of gender equality, including the adoption of gender mainstreaming practices.
- **Chain Reaction.** Gender equality can produce a “chain reaction” of benefits, just as the effects of gender inequality can be passed on from individuals to families and communities. The investment in gender equality will bring not only short-term, localized benefits, but medium and long-term benefits that will ripple through society strengthening the nation as a whole. At the same time, mainstreaming should also remain aware of “chain reactions” that might produce negative gender equality effects if not anticipated and dealt with in an integrated and strategic manner. For example, a “top down” mandate for family-friendly workplaces might bring backlash and even greater exposure to harassment against women in their place of work.

## STEP 2: Plan and organize

The next step is to plan and organize the gender mainstreaming work. It is important to agree on how the work is led and carried out. The organization can develop measures for gender mainstreaming as part of their normal process of formulating the gender equality action plan. Based on the legislation these plans should be made every four years.

The Governmental Office for Gender Equality has given more specific guidelines on how to conduct these plans and they also approve and monitor their content. Based on the guidelines the plans have to be adopted by the head of public administration body. The action plans must include:

- An analysis of the situation of men and women
- Reasons for the introduction of special measures
- Objectives to be achieved
- Implementation method
- Monitoring method
- Implementation plan for measures from the National Policy for Gender Equality
- Gender equality training program plan for the staff
- Rights, obligations and practices of coordinators.

The action plan can entail both specific measures to promote gender equality as well as measures to promote gender mainstreaming methods and tools in the organization. Monitoring and resources should be taken into account while the plan is being drawn up.

## STEP 3: Examine and set targets

The next step is to make an inventory of the policy making context, the information available and the actors involved in the process. If you have absolutely no data on a given subject, a further analysis may be required. However, analyses do not provide concrete policy options or recommendations.

This step also includes setting the target for the work as well as agreeing upon the policies and measures to reach them. This phase can be used in both examining and setting targets for the whole organization as well as its specific actions. The questions that should be answered here are (see also tools 1-5):

### **What activities do we undertake?**

- Are needs of both men and women met in our area of work?
- What gender patterns are present in our area of work?
- What consequences do the actions have for women and men respectively?
- How are resources distributed by gender?

### **Who are the stakeholders?**

- Which are the target groups for our operations?
- What is their gender profile?
- Is there gender balance in all institutions and bodies involved?
- Are the gender equality NGOs or other stakeholders involved with a gender perspective?
- Is there gender expertise available?

### **What information we have?**

- What do we know and what we don't know?
- What do we need to know and how we are going to get this information?
- What policy interventions have already happened?
- What interventions are currently happening or planned?

### **What do we want to achieve?**

- How can our activities help meet gender equality policy objectives? Where do we start?
- What do we want to change?
- How do we want things to be? How do we get there?
- How can we determine if the work is having any effect?

## STEP 4: Implement

The organization implements the measures required to achieve gender equality in its activities.

## STEP 5: Monitor and communicate

Monitoring is a central tool to manage interventions, improve policy and ensure accountability. Monitoring is an indivisible aspect of gender mainstreaming. There are two different levels of monitoring:

- Monitoring progress towards fulfilling the targets
- Monitoring the implementation process

Doing this way, indicators must be developed – quantitative (administrative data, labour force surveys, population – based sociological surveys), qualitative (public hearings, focus groups, attitude surveys and interviews).

Targets and indicators must be developed that track the outcomes as well as the extent to which the process itself is gender-sensitive. Using this approach it will allow you to identify hindrances and gaps that can be redressed; to improve the design of future initiatives and document obstacles to mainstreaming that can be later addressed in a wider institutional context. It is very essential that all indicators are disaggregated by sex wherever possible.

Monitoring needs to be followed by an evaluation and gender sensitive communication. Key questions to consider include:

- How do we assess the quality of what we did? Who determines the evaluation criteria? Are the stakeholders also involved in the evaluation process?
- How do we make positive changes last?
- How do we disseminate the outcomes? How do we improve the knowledge about gender equality and gender mainstreaming?
- What lessons have we learned? What is the next step?

One of the barriers to effective gender mainstreaming is a lack of gender sensitive information on various levels, including:

- about the situation at hand, from a gender perspective, do the circumstances of women and men differ?
- about government goals or organizational mandates for gender equality
- about policies and programs targeting gender equality
- about stakeholders and efforts of other actors in promoting gender equality.

Gender sensitive communication is of high importance and must be taken into account in all phases of policy cycle. In every case you communicate, the way in which you communicate will influence the success of your policy. Informational measures are important for gender stereotypes and their mitigation. It is also very important to communicate about positive aspects and success in practicing gender mainstreaming.