

The principle of **Gender Equality** in the new ESF programmes (2007-2013)

A framework for programming



*Report by an ad hoc working group of Member States
on Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming*

**EQUAL Managing Authorities of
Austria, Belgium (Fr), Belgium (NI), Estonia, Finland and Spain**

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Foreword

The ad hoc **Working Group** of Member States representatives on gender equality and gender mainstreaming has been set up in order to share experiences and develop options to address effective ways of integrating the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming into Operational Programmes for 2007-2013.

The Working Group was made up of Member State representatives from Austria, Finland, Spain, Belgium (Flemish and Walloon Regions) and Estonia. The main responsibility to develop and manage Structural Funds programmes and thus to integrate gender equality issues into the design, implementation structures and procedures, and into the monitoring and evaluation system of ESF Operational Programmes lies with the Member States. But member States can learn from one another. The Working Group assumed the task of organising a platform to share the lessons learnt in the current period as well as ideas and plans on effective gender mainstreaming with the support of the ESF. It therefore

- acted as a steering group for a **workshop** on integrating gender equality and gender mainstreaming into the new ESF programmes, which brought together more than 100 representatives of member states involved in the planning of the new ESF programmes; and
- drafted this **reflection note** which considers the relevance of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the advantage to be gained from the integration, identifies implementation options at Operational Programme level, and highlights the implementing provisions critical for success.

Status and purpose of this report

The framework has been elaborated by a working group of Member States and reflects the opinion of this working group. It seeks to define a full set of consistent good practices in the area of gender equality and gender mainstreaming and to provide practical guidance in order to meet the legal and regulatory obligations as well as the requirements of sound management. The working group considered the application of these good practices as necessary in order to ensure effective integration of gender equality into new ESF programmes.

Whilst the first part of the document focusing on the legal, political and economic relevance of gender mainstreaming may be of particular interest to the decision-makers responsible in the Member States for the design and implementation of the European Structural Funds and their consistency with the reformed Lisbon process and the priorities of the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion, the second part and the Annex seek to address the needs of those whose task it is to draw up the programming documents and then to ensure good governance of the programmes in terms of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

We thank the Commission for its support to our work.

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1. THE RELEVANCE OF GENDER EQUALITY

Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the Community and, according to **Article 2** of the Treaty, it is one of the tasks **to be actively promoted by the Community**. **Article 3** lays down the principle of gender mainstreaming by stating that in all its activities the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote the equality of women and men. Furthermore, **Article 13** provides for pro-active measures to combat **discrimination based on sex**, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Finally, **Articles 137 and 141** refer to gender equality in the relation to the labour market and stipulate equal opportunities and equal treatment at work and that each Member State shall ensure that the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value is applied.

The Community has adopted a two-pronged approach to promote gender equality, combining positive actions in support of the under-represented sex with gender mainstreaming of all policy fields. European Employment Strategy Gender mainstreaming is a tool to better uncover and understand the causes of inequalities between women and men in our societies and come up with appropriate strategies to tackle them. It is the integration of the gender perspective into every step of the policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - with a view of promoting equality between women and men. Applied systematically, this tool allows to highlight the differences between women and men in relation to a given policy in terms of rights, access to resources or representation in decision making instances, for example.

The European Employment Strategy (EES) reflects this dual approach by combining women specific objectives (e.g. employment rate of 60%, reduction of gender gaps in employment, unemployment and pay) with the need to integrate a gender perspective in all action taken. In the frame of the reformed EES and its integration into the new Community Lisbon Programme, , the Integrated Guidelines for growth and jobs (2005-2008)¹, as well as the Communication from the Commission on Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013² highlight that equal opportunities, combating discrimination and promoting gender mainstreaming are essential for making progress towards achieving full employment, and reducing unemployment and inactivity.

Despite this comprehensive framework inequalities persist and are blocking an equal participation of women and men in all aspects of society, which symbolises a society's level of political maturity. This ambitious goal, however, is far from being a reality. The labour market still favours men over women and reflects and reinforces men's and women's perceived roles at home, polarising existing divisions although there is clear evidence that the lifestyle of the majority of women and also of many men no longer fits into these tight compartments.³ Clearly, gender gaps in education, training and on the labour market and the lack of support services that enable a better reconciliation of work and family life are preventing or at least slowing down progress in relation to the EES and Lisbon targets.

Some facts and figures to illustrate the situation⁴:

Employment and Pay

- There is an employment gender gap of 15 % in the EU, the gender pay gap is 15 %.
- Women's employment rates have increased more than men's, but not all Member States appear to be likely to reach the target of 60% for women's labour market participation by 2010. Without boosting female employment rates the 70% target for overall employment as set out by EU leaders as part of the Union's wider economic and social objectives in the framework of the Lisbon process cannot be achieved.

1 COM(2005)141

2 COM(2005)299

3 Report on equality between women and men, 2006, European Commission , COM (2006) 71 final

4 See annex to Report on equality between women and men, 2006, and EQUAL Guide on Gender Mainstreaming

Some facts and figures to illustrate the situation⁵:

Employment and Pay (continued)

- Occupational and sectoral gender segregation is high and tends to increase in the EU. (Sectoral: 25.4 %; Occupational: 18.1%)⁶. Significantly fewer women than men have jobs with supervisory responsibilities. Within enterprises, women account for only 32% of managers. Furthermore women are largely under-represented in positions of authority and responsibility: only 10% of board members and 3% of CEOs of the larger EU companies are women.

Unemployment

- In many, but not all Member States the unemployment rate remains higher for women than for men. The unemployment gender gap stands at 2.1 p.p.

Part-time work

- Women are over-represented in part-time work (32.4 % as compared to 7 % for men) and - have a price to pay: Part-timers have fewer opportunities for training and career progression, lower salary levels and reduced access to supplementary payments and social protection benefits.

Work, family and private life

- Women still carry the bulk of all care responsibilities and (unpaid) work at home. Time use surveys⁷ comparing the number of hours spent by women and men on activities related to work, family duties and leisure reveal that on average, if the total time of gainful employment and domestic tasks is considered, women's work days are longer than men's⁸. Gender gaps in the use of time are widening when young children are in the household. This has an impact on women's work patterns and limits their opportunities to take occupations that are comparable to the average occupations of men. Mothers spent on average 11 hours less per week in gainful employment than fathers. The same mothers devote daily between 5½ and 7½ hours to parental and domestic tasks.

Education

- Women are today better educated than men, they represent the majority of graduates in the EU. Although there is a trend that women are increasingly breaking into male domains, such as mathematics, science and civil engineering, on average, female study choices still show traditional gender stereotyped patterns, and are often neglecting the chances of more future-oriented studies in science or ICT.

Entrepreneurship

- Only 30% of the entrepreneurs in the EU are women.

In the face of these persisting inequalities the Commission has adopted a "Roadmap for equality between women and men"⁹, which highlights the priority areas for EU action on gender equality for the period 2006-2010. The roadmap aims, inter alia, to tackle a number of inequalities such as the differences in economic dependence for women and men, and notably the gender pay gap, the persisting tensions in reconciling work and private life or the equal representation of women and men in decision making.

Furthermore, the European Council of Heads of State and Government agreed on a European Pact for Gender Equality¹⁰ which represent the commitment of the Member States to close gender gaps and combat stereotypes in the labour market, to promote a better work-life balance for all and to reinforce gender mainstreaming in all policies. In addition, the Commission proposed on 8 March 2005 the setting up of a European Institute for

⁵ See annex to Report on equality between women and men, 2006, and EQUAL Guide on Gender Mainstreaming

⁶ Based on a national share of employment for men and women an average is calculated. This average rate represents the number of men or women that would work in a given occupation or sector if employment was evenly spread. By adding up the results across the economy the total proportion of people who are employed beyond the balance emerges, i.e. a total amount of gender imbalance. This imbalance presented as a proportion of total employment is an indicator for segregation.

⁷ Eurostat: Statistics in Focus: How women and men spend their time, Results from 13 European countries, 2004

⁸ With the exception of Denmark, Finland Sweden and the UK where it is almost equivalent.

⁹ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: [A roadmap for equality between women and men – 2006-1010](#) (Com (2006) 92 final).

¹⁰ Council of the European Union (23/24 April 2006)7775/06: [Presidency conclusions](#)

Gender Equality¹¹, which is intended to become an important tool for the dissemination of information, the exchange of good practices and the development of technical tools for the promotion of gender mainstreaming.

Pact and road map are fully in line with both the Commission's [2006 Annual Progress Report on the Lisbon Strategy](#) and the [Report on Equality of women and men 2006](#), which emphasise that strengthening the position of women on the labour market in terms of closing the gender gaps and enabling a better balance of working and private life remain crucial to achieve the Lisbon targets of diversifying and improving the skills of the European workforce and thus to contribute to making Europe more dynamic and competitive, in a sustainable way and while enhancing social inclusion.

In fact, at micro economic level there is a growing body of evidence how personnel policies, which integrate a gender equality dimension, are benefiting both employees **and** employers. Clearly, flexible, family-friendly work organisation and work-life-balance packages that, besides needs-tailored working time arrangements, offer care and other family support services, contribute to reducing absenteeism and to increasing productivity and competitiveness of companies, local areas or regions.

At a macro economic level, maximising the economic contribution of women is a must to mitigate the consequences of demographic changes that are causing the lack of labour supply and skills gaps in many occupations and economic sectors. Supporting women to develop their full potential, particularly in sectors where they are under-represented, widens and strengthens the pool of talents and skills, which is a crucial asset for Europe's competitiveness on global markets.

2. VALUE ADDED - THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CURRENT PROGRAMMING PERIOD

2.1. Design and delivery

Experience from the ESF, and particularly from EQUAL¹² has demonstrated the added value that a gender mainstreaming approach brings to the design and delivery of inclusive labour market policies and to addressing the above challenges. In particular, gender mainstreaming:

- helps to ensure that **women as well as men are economically active**, which leads to using a larger part of the productive labour force and thus contributes to the reduction of poverty and to boosting economic growth;
- contributes to bringing about **structural change in society**, by not restricting its efforts to specific measures to help women, but by pursuing equality¹³ by taking into account the impact on the respective situation of men and women;
- **fills gaps in existing policy frameworks** by supporting the development of new policy that links gender equality to other policy areas such as economic development, support to business creation and entrepreneurship; life-long-learning; etc;
- **tackles inequalities**, which can and do discriminate against either sex;
- represents a further reaching step in the endeavour for equal opportunities and involves as such a willingness to establish a **balanced distribution of responsibilities** between women and men **in both family and working life**;

¹¹ COM(2005)81final of 8.3.2005

¹² The Gender mainstreaming Group set up within the context of EQUAL produced in 2004 based on its experience under EQUAL a guide on Gender mainstreaming, which although primarily targeting those involved in EQUAL is also useful in a wider context

¹³ See: **Two approaches under the microscope** (Source: Gender Analysis and Gender Planning Training Module for UNDP staff. <http://www.undp.org/gender/tools.htm>) A **woman focused** approach views women's exclusion and lack of participation as the problem. The goal is a more effective and efficient development, the solution is to integrate women into existing structures and the strategy is to set women specific actions; A **gender-focused** approach is people-centred. The focus is the (unequal) relation between women and men. The goal is equitable development with women and men sharing decision-making and power, opportunities and resources. The solution is to transform unequal relations and structures and the strategy is to identify and address practical and strategic needs determined by women and men to improve their conditions.

- enhances strategies that give a **fair chance to immigrants and other vulnerable groups** of women and men for effective integration;
- supports **balanced recruitment and career advancement** in a perspective of dismantling horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market and of making the maximum of the productive advantages of gender diversity;
- furthers the **gender balance in decision-making processes** which creates better conditions for equality of women and men;
- leads to **improvements in existing policy** and practice since through a gender impact assessment strategies and measures can be better tailored to the needs of different female and male target groups;
- offers – through transnational cooperation - an **alternative perspective** on relevant issues in each Member State and thereby stimulates new ideas and solutions through widening horizons; and
- helps to make **laws and regulations a reality** through bringing about change in peoples' daily life.

2.2. Links with other Structural Funds and EQUAL principles

Combining gender mainstreaming with other principles such as partnership, innovation, transnationality, empowerment and mainstreaming creates a mutually reinforcing effect. **Transnational co-operation**, for example, stimulates exchange of experience, empowerment, contributes to common benchmarking, and leads to synergies in mainstreaming. There is a wealth of examples of good practice that show how exchange and transfer can **boost the gender equality performance of organisations and also trigger dissemination and mainstreaming** of results that were either achieved elsewhere in Europe or jointly developed by the transnational partnerships¹⁴.

Partnership¹⁵ is important in addressing gender imbalances. Both at programme and project level it will often be advisable to include the expertise of public and private bodies dealing with gender issues. When it comes to gender imbalances at workplaces it is crucial to involve both employers associations and trade unions, which are key players of labour market policy. Gender inequalities are often a result of the structures of society and these cannot be changed by a single institution but only by all relevant actors in co-operation. (NGOs, the forthcoming Gender Institute, Territorial Pacts, etc.) This is also important to show that gender mainstreaming is not a bureaucratic tool but a real consultative instrument.

Principles of **empowerment**¹⁶ and gender mainstreaming are closely interlinked. Both at programme and project level it means that the principle of empowerment is not limited only to incorporating target groups into the planning and decision-making processes, but also that both genders of target groups are empowered. In practise this fact is too often ignored. This is an important aspect as inequalities exist and there are different needs of men and women in the target groups as well.

For the same reason, **innovation**¹⁷ - and maybe in particular the so-called context oriented innovation - is important when it comes to addressing gender inequalities. It is crucial to understand that gender mainstreaming is, in itself, process oriented innovation that can enable substantial change.

¹⁴ Examples: Portuguese DP "[Agir para a Igualdade](#)" which has inspired partners in Italy and Hungary to produce guides to support enterprises in introducing equality plans. Ukgb: [JIVE DP](#) "exported" concept of National Resource Centre on Women in Science, Engineering and Technology to Finland.

¹⁵ See example on successful equal pay partnership in [Scotland](#).

¹⁶ Innovative example from the [Netherlands](#): Empowerment for both men and women to share the unpaid care and family work at home.

¹⁷ Innovation was triggered by a French DP that launched a change process based on gender equality oriented time policies.

3. **GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC REFERENCE FRAMEWORKS AND THE RESULTING OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

For the new programming period 2007 – 2013 the links between the Structural Funds and the policy framework – the European Employment Strategy – are being reinforced so that the Structural Funds can contribute more effectively to the employment objectives and **targets** of the "**Lisbon Strategy** for Growth and Jobs". Particular importance is being placed on the strategy's three main objectives of **full employment, quality and productivity at work, social cohesion and social inclusion**. To reach these objectives gender equality policies are essential: Full employment requires to boost the participation of women and older workers in the labour market; policies and practices improving the work-life-balance of women and men are a key component in the endeavour of enhancing quality and productivity at work; and without taking account of the different life situation and needs of women and men social cohesion and inclusion strategies cannot be successful.

Article 16 of the proposed General Regulation laying down general provisions for the [Structural Funds \(2007-2013\)](#)¹⁸ states that the Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women, non discrimination and the **integration of the gender perspective** are promoted during the various stages of, implementing the Funds.

This is further specified in various provisions of the proposed [ESF Regulation](#). **Article 2** refers to the promotion of gender equality. **Article 3** mentions specific action to enable progress for women in employment and the reduction of gender-based segregation in the labour market, including addressing the roots of the gender pay gap, to reconcile work and private life, including access to care for children and other dependants. **Article 6** requests Member States to promote, in their Operational Programmes, gender equality and equal opportunities and to include a description on how this is organised throughout the policy cycle, i.e. in preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the proposed **Article 10** contains an obligation for Member States to report on the implementation of gender mainstreaming and of any gender specific action.

The **gender equality commitment of the Treaty** and the clear provisions in the proposed ESF Regulation are **obligations**, which ask for a material and not for a symbolic response in the ESF Programming documents and should also not be seen as an "optional extra".

3.1. **Challenges and implementation options**

A growing body of research points out that there is **no such thing as gender neutral reality**. Referring to the current ESF funding period (2000-2006) the Commission¹⁹ emphasised that political decisions, which appear to be gender neutral (...) may have a different impact on women and men, even if these differences are not intended. Labelling priorities as **gender neutral** would therefore clearly ignore current policy orientation if included in National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF) or Operational Programmes (OP). Besides anchoring gender equality as one of the horizontal objectives in the programming documents, gender mainstreaming needs to be applied to ensure that the gender dimension is integrated in all priority axes. Depending on the relevance, scale and scope of gender inequality as reported in the national reform programme or identified through the ex-ante evaluation, Member States will have room for manoeuvre in applying the principle of gender mainstreaming at the level of projects or beneficiaries.

Since gender mainstreaming is binding and requires integrating the gender perspective into every step of policy processes, it has to be applied as a cross-cutting, horizontal principle.

¹⁸ COM (2004)492final

¹⁹ European Commission: New Programming Period 2000 –2006: Technical Paper 3: Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Structural Fund Programmes and Projects, 2000

- Past experience shows that a separate specific priority is perceived as the usual “women’s corner” where all gender equality requirements are taken care of. This solution tends to take the pressure to apply gender mainstreaming off all the other priorities and bears the risk that mainly positive action oriented activities are developed and the intended structural approach to gender equality does not emerge.
- However, making gender equality exclusively a cross-cutting principle may bear the risk of overlooking the need for positive actions. Taking gender mainstreaming seriously suggests therefore to **adopt a combination of both**. To ensure that the different life situations, needs and interests of women and men are taken into account throughout the programmes, it is necessary to carry out a gender impact assessment in order to identify the possible impact of the intended priorities and measures on women as compared to men. The results of the assessment may reveal huge gender gaps whose bridging is – as outlined earlier - being urged by the proposed ESF Regulation, the EES and the reformed Lisbon Process. It is therefore paramount and logical to also establish a framework for positive actions targeted at women and in some cases also at men.

Clearly, such a dual approach has a higher mainstreaming potential as can be demonstrated by EQUAL good practices at both programme and project level. (See Annex: Dossier of Good Practice Fiches). The lessons learned are pointing to the fact that a number of requirements must be met to yield lasting change. These rules include:

- A top-down approach;
- The availability of knowledge and expertise;
- The formulation of viable gender equality objectives;
- Strategies to bring on board people on all levels of the organisational hierarchy (bottom-up);
- Monitoring and evaluation;
- The integration of gender mainstreaming as an integral part into the management and controlling systems of the organisations or institutions which are undertaking to implement the approach.
- Drawing up and disseminating business cases that can prove the success of gender mainstreaming not only as a tool to make gender equality a reality, but also to boost Europe’s economy.

It seems to be good practice – as proposed by the ESF authorities of Belgium (Flanders) to elaborate a **clear Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan** that entail a corresponding **obligation** for all implementing bodies. Specification of performance indicators etc. is a good tool to manage those requirements and to ascertain transparency. It is advisable, during programming, to identify possible gender specific problems related to each separate priority rather and to ensure that the budget contains the necessary amount of funding than inserting a standard clause and leave it to the implementation phase. If successfully applied, the ESF could thus serve as a catalyst for integrating the gender perspective into all national policies and actions.

4. APPLYING GENDER MAINSTREAMING TO THE ESF POLICY CYCLE

At the recent ESF Seminar in Brussels a number of obstacles were identified that appear to be making the integration of gender equality into the future ESF programmes difficult and very demanding. Lack of political will and lack of knowledge and expertise are on top of that list of problems, but the complexity of gender mainstreaming as a tool and the persisting gender stereotypes are also being blamed for the slow uptake of the principle.

To overcome those barriers it is crucial to envisage the whole process of programming and implementation and to consider for each stage of this process a range of possible steps that have the capacity of ensuring the integration of the gender dimension. One could describe the stages or components as follows:

- **Programming**
Consists of three major elements that represent the corner stones of the programming documents: socio-economic analyses, setting objectives and planning their implementation.
- **Implementation**

Involves the translation of programming documents towards real action. This implies a process, which will shape the previously set objectives and strategies into activities to be funded under the chosen priorities and measures. Obviously, the procedure of assessing and approving projects is part of this segment of the exercise.

- **Steering and managing ESF programmes with an inbuilt gender dimension**

Is not a stage that follows the two described above, but must be part of all stages. Yet, integrating a gender dimension into the steering and monitoring functions is of crucial importance not only when programme managers are assigned and Monitoring Committees established, but also throughout the lifespan of the programmes.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Ideally capture the quantitative and qualitative results at different levels of action. Evaluation should be designed in a way that applies gender mainstreaming to all areas and at all levels of action and not as an additive element that can easily be marginalized.

Project Cycle Management (PCM) is an instrument that can help to deal effectively with the four above stages. In the framework of EQUAL two PCM-based tools were developed which can be used at both programme and project level: a step-by-step guide which is part the EQUAL Guide on Gender Mainstreaming²⁰ and a toolkit that incorporates a planning, monitoring and evaluation guide²¹.

4.1. Programming

4.1.1. *The socio-economic analysis*

In the framework of a programming document such as the NSRF the socio-economic analysis compiles data, statistics and relevant results of research in order to make valid statements about the economic and labour market problems to be addressed and also about the situation of departure. In past programmes, the situation of women and the state-of-the-art in terms of gender equality performance used to be an extra chapter of the analysis. In a new programme with a clear gender mainstreaming perspective, the gender dimension would be included in each chapter and reveal the differences between women and men in terms of being affected by the problems the ESF aims to tackle and also in terms of the different realities of their lives.

This requires that:

- Only **gender disaggregated data** is being used; particularly illustrating activity and inactivity rates, unemployment and long-term unemployment, vertical and horizontal segregation of the labour market and enterprise creation and growth.
- The **situation** in terms of equality between women and men in labour market programmes and in vocational training and qualifications is described, as well as current levels of service provision relevant to equal opportunities (care services for children and the elderly, transport, etc.).
- Target groups of the ESF programmes are always broken down by gender. Listing target groups as “young people, older workers, immigrants and women” is not acceptable. **Neither women nor men should be categorised as a target group.** In each target group women and men are –quantitatively – represented in a different way. Neglecting those differences will reproduce the gender specific discrepancies on the labour market.

²⁰ European Commission: [EQUAL Guide on Gender Mainstreaming](#), Briefing Note 10, p. 24;

²¹ European Commission: [EQUAL Partnership Development Toolkit](#),

- **Gender differences that may (no longer) be relevant or respond to the needs of women and men are not being perpetuated.** An example: It should not be generally assumed that part-time training and part-time employment are adequate for women whereas full-time training and full-time employment is suitable for men.
- Gender differences are not only identified, but also their **underlying roots** and the causes of discrimination and inequalities are uncovered, which is a pre-condition to bring about change.

In order to make the analysis an accurate and fruitful base to programming, it has to be ensured that

- The “designers” of the programming documents either have gender expertise themselves or involve gender experts; or
- In case the analyses are contracted out to research institutions, these institutions commissioned possess the necessary gender competencies.

4.2. Setting gender equality objectives

Based on the outcomes of the analysis, the overall strategic objectives of the new ESF programmes will be formulated, which – according to the gender mainstreaming approach – would each contain a gender dimension. Thus

The National Strategic Reference Frameworks would demonstrate a credible gender mainstreaming approach if they contain **clear objectives** and preferably also **targets** (numerical and qualitative) in relation to gender equality.

A **clear understanding** of how ESF interventions can contribute to gender equality in the respective policy fields will be needed.

- The **main challenges related to gender equality have to be mirrored by the objectives** and targets, for instance: the under-representation of women (and to a lesser degree men) in certain economic sectors and occupations; the lack of support measures to reconciliation of working and private life; the under-representation of men in unpaid care and family tasks; etc.
- Inevitably there will be conflicting objectives emerging from other policy fields and prioritising them will be the responsibility of the political decision-makers. At this point the political will to effectively develop a gender mainstreaming strategy will be put to the test, i.e. **key actors must devote sufficient attention** to the question of equality and equal opportunities and commit themselves to it.
- The importance accorded to gender equality in the final assembly of objectives needs to be ascertained through binding statements, pre-conditions and control mechanisms that allow to **monitor** progress and eventual deviations from the set objectives and targets.

4.3. Making objectives operational

Once the objectives are set, the next step in the process is to **plan and operationalise** them in terms of **budgeting and allocating resources**. Also, responsibilities and tasks of the steering and monitoring bodies are formulated as are the indicators for future assessment and monitoring of the programme.

For the implementation of gender mainstreaming this is probably the most crucial period in the programming process, since at this point the NSRF and the following OPs will visibly indicate that the gender fair analyses and objectives elaborated before are now safely anchored, binding the relevant administrations, managing bodies and future project promoters, but also addressing the needs of ultimate beneficiaries. To that end:

- Any ESF OP shall include a description of how the promotion and mainstreaming of **gender equality and equal opportunities** will be ensured (Art.6, ESF Regulation). The most effective way to do this is to include a **concrete** strategy to improve the gender equality performance in the relevant policy fields;
- The assessment of the results of the current programming period, particular of the EQUAL Initiative, will easily lend itself to establish conceptual frameworks and foundations for the implementation of gender mainstreaming (studies, tools tailored to specific policy areas etc.);
- The creation and further development of the assessment criteria and **sets of indicators** needs to be included as an on-going activity in the programming documents;
- An **adequate financial provision** for gender equality related policy development and implementation has to be provided.

Spain is a good example showing how a concrete strategy to improve the country's gender equality performance is being translated into the relevant financial commitments. Given the huge gender gaps in unemployment, i.e. despite of constantly increasing educational attainments women's unemployment rates were twice as high than those of men, the ESF Managing Authority set a clear goal of enhancing female participation in the labour market and endorsed a combination of measures to tackle the segregation of labour market and the reconciliation of work and private life. These objectives were mirrored in a budget allocation of over 30 % of the EQUAL funding in round 1 and 2.

Good practice developed in the current period highlights a number of **success factors** that are crucial for gender mainstreaming and therefore have to be considered, in particular:

- Specific structures within the ESF administration that are in charge of monitoring gender mainstreaming and assessing results;
- Monitoring Committees displaying a gender balance amongst their members and be led to acquire gender competencies;
- Women's organisations and other NGOs that have committed themselves to gender equality are pro-actively involved in Monitoring Committees;
- Both Managing Authority and Monitoring Committee are guided and supported by formalised equal opportunities working groups or committees. Relevant bodies and individuals to involve may be government equality bodies at national or regional levels; civil society women's organisations at national or regional levels; women's or equality committees in relevant social partner organisations (trade unions, business and professional associations); networks or associations of women representing special interests (for example, rural women, entrepreneurs or migrant and ethnic minority women); research institutes and universities specialising in gender issues; experts in equality statistics.
- The discourse on gender equality and the implementation of gender mainstreaming is a "standing topic" on the agenda of Monitoring Committees.

In the current programming period **Portugal** has established a Thematic Working Group on equal opportunities for women and men whose remit was to find and promote concrete ways of including gender equality (GE) as transversal objective into all Structural Funds programmes. A whole range of proposals and recommendations have emerged from the work of that group. The main components include:

- Action plans that integrate the GE dimension in all phases of the management cycle;
- Inclusion of an item relating to GE in the application forms;
- Inclusion, in managers' technical support structures, of specific expertise in the area of GE;
- Inclusion in the ESF co-financing contract of a clause on the obligation to promote of GE.

Under EQUAL [Finland](#) has established a specific mechanism to apply gender mainstreaming at programme level, thus ensuring that this tool is at the same time implemented throughout the life cycle of all EQUAL projects. This Finnish approach involves “buying in gender expertise” through contracting experts for the lifespan of the programme. Their task is to assess the relevant parts of the project applications in terms of gender mainstreaming, i.e. to check whether the approach was taken into consideration in the intended actions of an EQUAL project. Simultaneously training was organised for the staff of the NSS, whose task it was to assess all applications. At this stage gender mainstreaming was not an excluding criterion. A gender mainstreaming plan was a precondition for to be confirmed for Action 2 or 3. Later on the Managing Authority used this same experts to provide training for all selected EQUAL projects.

The best solution to secure integration of gender equality into the whole policy cycle of the Structural Funds and lasting impact at both programme and project level is most probably the creation of an infrastructure.

This can be an independent institution or special unit in the relevant ministry that has the task of supporting all the relevant players in making the gender dimension an integral part of programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Co-financed by the ESF objective 3 programme, Austria has created such an infrastructure, the Coordination Unit for Gender Mainstreaming within the ESF, in the now ending programming period. Other gender institutes provide their expertise to Structural Funds Programmes, but are at the same time also gathering, analysing and disseminating gender equality relevant reliable and comparable research data and information needed by policy-makers in various fields of action. Comparable to the European Gender Institute such national or regional centres can stimulate research, organise exchanges of experience between policy-makers, experts and stakeholders and raise the general awareness of gender equality policies. An example for this wider approach is the Gender and Equality Unit within the [Regional Government of Andalusia in Spain](#) which is developing tools for supporting the integration of gender equality into all regional policies.

These are practical examples of making the amended Council Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions²² a reality. In fact, the new Article 8a calls on Member States to “designate and make the necessary arrangements for a body or bodies for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on the grounds of sex (...)”.

4.4. Implementation

4.4.1. Preparing the ground for concrete action

The beginning of this stage is marked by the finalisation of the programming documents, the launch of a series of concrete activities. Supported by the Monitoring Committee, the ESF administration will now turn the operational commitments to apply gender mainstreaming into reality. This includes:

- To establish organisational conditions within the administration and to allocate human resources so that the commitments laid down in the programming documents can be honoured;
- To take account of the gender dimension when developing (or adapting) the controlling mechanisms and monitoring system;

²² Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC

- To actually set up the specific working groups and/or consultative committees focusing on gender equality as laid down in the programming documents;
- To organise training targeted at those in charge of assessment and approval of projects and also at project promoters; public relation activities and campaigns;
- To include an obligation to apply gender mainstreaming in the task descriptions of the Technical Assistance and the Evaluation and to make gender competencies a criterion for the selection of both.

At this point in time:

- Procedures for assessment, classification and approval of project proposals are completed; these apply gender mainstreaming and checklists or other tools available to facilitate this process;
- Decision-makers responsible for the ESF decide and then clearly state what the consequences are if project proposals do not integrate a gender dimension;

Once the above conditions and mechanisms are in place, the next step involves the call for presentation and then the assessment and eventual approval of projects. According to the gender mainstreaming approach projects must contribute to the gender equality objectives set up by the Member State for the new ESF programmes. Identifying such contributions to the process of dismantling gender discrepancies and the creation of meaningful sets of indicators²³ is a highly complex task which requires not only in depth competencies of both education, training and employment systems and EU structural policies, but at the same time a high degree of knowledge and skills concerning the various forms of gender discrimination on the labour market and their roots. Therefore:

- Capacity building as on-going process for those who are carrying out that task is paramount. Only if the administration and management structures of the ESF develop and reinforce this kind of knowledge and skills can they generate a long-term and sustainable approach that has the potential for further improvement.
- A range of interlinked activities should be launched that include support and counselling for project promoters to apply gender mainstreaming, guidelines and tools and an on-going public debate on the experiences gained through gender mainstreaming.

Forward looking strategies are needed to prepare both the players at programme and at project level to face that challenge.

Taking account of the fact that such processes of change take time, the [Flemish ESF Agency](#) organised two thematic working groups which are developing gender mainstreaming methods and tools during this current programming period, expecting to harvest the fruit of their efforts in the new period.

When selecting projects the responsible evaluation committees assessing applications have to consider two different aspects:

- Project promoters in their capacity as institutions that run ESF projects will be required to make gender mainstreaming a part of their organisational development. In the context of project selection this means that a number of indicators would be screened such as for instance the representation of women and men

²³ The EU Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment (EGGSIE) produced a number of tools that can both be useful or serve as models to develop indicators. Jill Rubery, et al. (eds.): [Indicators on gender equality; 2002](#); Janneke Plantenga et al.: [Towards an EU gender equality index](#) – Feasibility study commissioned by and presented to the European Commission, 2003.

at the different levels of the organisational hierarchy; gender equality track record of personnel policies and quality management; etc.

- The contribution of the proposed project to the objective of enhancing equal treatment of women and men on the labour market. Checklists are useful for this exercise which help to measure the potential contribution²⁴ of the project to the gender equality objectives set out in the programming documents and to check issues such as the use of gender des-aggregated data, presentation of the situation of departure with a clear gender dimension, gender impact assessment of proposed action, expected impact of proposed activities on women and men; detailed plan to apply gender mainstreaming during project lifespan.

The already mentioned Thematic Working Group in Portugal had produced a whole range of very concrete steps that are worth being mainstreamed as they help to improve the gender equality performance in ESF projects, such as:

- In the process of selecting funding applications, in addition to the minimum score below which an applicant is not selected, a minimum score has been set for the gender equality component in those applications in which this dimension is particularly significant;
- Enterprises in projects promoted by women are given priority access to investment;
- The costs of any financed publications and technical and pedagogical resources that contain sexist images or discriminatory content have not been considered as eligible;
- Dissemination and promotion among operators of information regarding the eligibility of expenses arising from transport and care of dependents, so that they are more widely used;
- Promotion of the recruitment of experts to facilitate and invigorate all aspects of the gender equality dimension in project actions.

4.4.2. Steering and managing ESF programmes with inbuilt gender dimension

Steering and managing ESF programmes is a two-pronged task: on the one hand it comprises management functions proper in which - according to the requirements of partnership – Management Authorities and Monitoring Committees are involved. On the other hand, although monitoring is part of the responsibilities of these key players, it is being carried out by an (independent) institution contracted for this specific purpose. The Technical Assistance is another player when it comes to programme management and monitoring.

Implanting gender mainstreaming into the steering and management process means therefore to ensure its application in the different structures and bodies (as explained above) in which key players with different interests are represented, whilst at the same time incorporating it in the monitoring tools (data collection, databases etc.) that are being used.

Possible strategies to watch and eventually guide/redirect the performance of Managing Authorities, Monitoring Committees, Technical Assistance and even evaluation could involve:

- Involving the already mentioned gender equality working groups or committees at regular intervals;
- Establishing procedures so that input from recent research on gender and gender mainstreaming can be channelled into those groups, but also into the Monitoring Committee;
- Contracting scientists, researchers or gender competence centres for strengthening programme management and monitoring in terms of gender equality;
- Creating a position with the responsibility for gender mainstreaming to avoid the common picture of “everybody being responsible, but nobody acts”.

²⁴ See: European Commission: New Programming Period 2000 –2006: Technical Paper 3: Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Structural Fund Programmes and Projects, 2000

4.5. Monitoring and Evaluation

4.5.1. Gender equality indicators

For both monitoring and evaluation (**for all stages of the evaluation**) indicators are of key importance. Equality indicators have strategic importance since they concern a specific priority area of EU policies. They also have operational importance, since the monitoring of progress against gender equality targets is a requirement of the Structural Fund Regulations and may be one of the elements to be included in the list of indicators applied to assess its performance and to allocate the performance reserve. Both quantitative and qualitative information will be required, bare figures on the participation of women and men in training, business creation support schemes or segregated areas of the labour market are not enough. Also, the indicators should be related to outputs, results and impacts.

4.5.2. Monitoring and reporting systems

Monitoring and reporting systems need to contain information and data concerning the development and progress of the programmes, on which assessments (for instance Annual Monitoring Reports) can be based. Besides evaluation reports, these assessments are of crucial importance to the decision-makers (represented in the Managing Authority and Monitoring Committee) in case they wish/need to re-adjust the programmes.

In terms of gender equality key questions related to monitoring are for instance:

- The capacity of the monitoring system to catch and illustrate the relevant information concerning the implementation and emerging effects of gender mainstreaming;
- Detailed information that allows to assess the existence or non-existence of the gender dimension in the different priorities and measures;
- The necessity of developing specific tools and/or carrying out specific explorations and studies in order to enable the demonstration of gender imbalances and to measure progress or backlashes.

A good example on how to monitor and benchmark progress is the so-called [Gender Radar](#) that was developed by an [Austrian DP](#). It is not only a valuable tool to present the levels of gender equality achieved in crucial areas such as education and training, employment, unemployment and political decision-making, but also a push-factor for mainstreaming gender equality. The system enables comparisons to be made between all of the districts of a region and all of the different policy areas. By comparing the indicators over several years, it is possible to identify and demonstrate progress in specific policy areas, as well as in general performance within geographical areas.

4.5.3. Evaluation

For the preparation of plans and programming documents an ex-ante evaluation must be undertaken, which shall take into account equality between men and women. This will include a reflection of the national, regional, local gender equality objectives and those contained in the proposed Regulation, namely: the labour market opportunities and treatment at work, including the specific constraints on each group. Moreover, the ex-ante evaluation must include an estimate of the expected impact of the strategy and assistance provided by ESF programmes, on the integration of women and men into the labour market, on education and vocational training, on the establishment of women in business, the reduction of horizontal and vertical segregation and on the reconciliation of family and working life.

In a gender mainstreaming logic, the evaluation would integrate the gender dimension at all stages and into each of its key components (appraisal of the socio-economic analysis and the relevance of the strategy to the needs identified; evaluation of the rationale of the strategy and its consistency; appraisal of the coherence of the strategy with regional and national policies and the Community Strategic Guidelines; evaluation of Expected Results and Impacts; appraisal of the proposed implementation systems) instead of producing an extra chapter on gender equality, as was common in the past.

5. ANNEX 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLISTS

The following checklists have been developed to assess how well gender mainstreaming – both as regards legal requirements and good practice - has been integrated into the new ESF. Following the programming procedure and the requirement to establish coherent programming documents, two checklists are provided: the first for the National Strategic Reference Framework, and the second for Operational Programmes.

For both self-assessment checklists, the points in **bold and italics** are considered by the ad hoc working group as minimum requirements and the other points as recommendable. In any case, the checklists should not be considered as exhaustive. The analysis of every specific situation may lead to the integration of further points.

The checklists have been elaborated by a working group of Member States and reflect the opinion of this working group. Where they go beyond regulatory obligations, the working group took account of standards of good practice and therefore considered their application necessary to ensure effective integration of gender equality into new ESF programmes.

Two points that should be considered in all stages (drafting of NSRF, programming, implementation) is the demand for:

- **A gender balanced representation in the Committees**
- **Involving gender equality bodies and/or gender equality experts to assist in programming and implementation**

Check-list on Gender Mainstreaming in the National Strategic Reference Framework

According to Art. 27 of the general provisions Regulation of Structural Funds, the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) constitutes a reference instrument for preparing the Programming of Structural Funds.

The check-list below refers to different articles on the NSRF in the general provisions Regulation of Structural Funds,

Key issues	Gender Mainstreaming and Equal Opportunities
Coherence (Art. 27)	<p>Coherence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With the Commission’s Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 ▪ With the Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013 ▪ With the EES and the Employment Guidelines 2005-2008 ▪ With National and Regional priorities ▪ With national gender equality plans or similar gender equality documents <p>1. <i>Is there a reference to the Roadmap, to the Strategic Guidelines, the EES and employment Guidelines, as well as the national/regional priorities for equality 2006-2010?</i></p> <p>2. Are the six priority areas for EU action on gender equality established in the Roadmap taken into account in the NSRF?</p> <p>3. <i>Are there gender indicators used for analysing the state of the art</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>in the use and need of services and infrastructures (under the convergence objective), and</i> – <i>in research, innovation, accessibility and job creation (under the regional competitiveness and employment objective)?</i> <p>4. <i>Are there national employment rates set for women coherent with the Lisbon targets and is there proposed action towards reducing inactivity rates?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there proposed action towards reducing the gender pay gap? ▪ Are there targets set for the provision of childcare services and other services related to care for dependents coherent with the Lisbon strategy? ▪ Is there proposed action towards facilitating family-friendly ways of organising work? ▪ Is there proposed action towards strengthening labour market institutions by introducing gender mainstreaming in their organisations? ▪ Is there proposed action towards reducing undeclared work, particularly in female segregated sectors? ▪ Is there proposed action towards the recognition of informal skills, particularly those acquired outside the labour market?
Strategy and implementation (Art. 27)	<p>5. <i>Is there a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan included in the NSRF?</i></p> <p>6. Is there a reference to the capacity building with regards to gender issues to the actors involved in the ESF policy cycle?</p> <p>7. <i>Is it envisaged to demand gender expertise as a requirement for developing projects with Structural Funds?</i></p>

Strategic section(Art. 27)	<p>8. Is the gender perspective used in the analysis of development disparities, weaknesses and potentialities and is there a gender impact analysis of the thematic and territorial priorities?</p> <p>9. Are the thematic and territorial priorities consistent with the gender inequalities detected in the analysis?</p> <p>10. Do the priorities have impact indicators that take into account the effects of the activities proposed on men and women?</p> <p>11. Is training on gender and gender mainstreaming part of the actions taken to reinforce administrative efficiency?</p> <p>12. Does the evaluation plan described include the analysis of the degree of implementation of the principle of equal opportunities?</p> <p>13. Does the evaluation plan include the effects on women and men of the activities developed and does the evaluation plan include evaluating the activities' contribution to diminish gender inequalities detected in the analysis?</p>
Content (Art. 27)	<p>14. Is there a mechanism, or an institutional responsibility set for coordinating the implementation of the principle of gender equality in the operational programmes?</p> <p>15. Is the coordination of the implementation of the principle of gender equality in hands of gender equality experts?</p>

Check-list on Gender Mainstreaming in the Programming (ex-ante evaluation and Operational Programmes)

Art. 2.2 and 6 of the new ESF regulation states that the ESF has the task of promoting equality between women and men and non-discrimination and specifies that Operational Programmes shall include a description on how gender equality and equal opportunities are promoted in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Art. 6 also stresses the promotion of a balanced participation of women and men in the management and realisation of OPs. Art. 10.a states that annual and final reports shall refer to the implementation of gender mainstreaming as well as any gender specific action.

The check-list bellow refers to different articles in Titles III (Programming) and IV (Efficiency) of the general provisions Regulation of Structural Funds,.

Key issues	Gender equality and gender mainstreaming
Ex-ante evaluation: socio-economic analysis (Art. 48.2)	<p>1. Is there a specific analysis (quantitative and qualitative) of gender discrimination, gender-disaggregated data and inequalities and are the causes of the gender inequalities detected described?</p> <p>2. Does the analysis specify the main areas where the strongest gender inequalities persist (in order to set the objectives of the intervention)?</p> <p>3. Has the situation of the target groups been described and analysed from a gender perspective? Note: "women" per se are not a target group.</p> <p>4. Are the outcomes in terms of gender equality of the 2000-2006 programmes (EQUAL and mainstream ESF) and the lessons learnt taken into account?</p> <p>5. Is the analysis using gender sensitive secondary sources?</p>
Operational Programmes: setting objectives (Art. 37.1.a, b, c and Art. 37.3)	<p>6. Are there clear objectives related to the areas where the strongest gender inequalities have been detected?</p> <p>7. Are there numerical and qualitative targets in relation to gender equality?</p> <p>8. Are there specific priorities for the gender equality objectives and targets described?</p>

	<p>9. Do priorities include the expected impact on men and women?</p> <p>10. Do priorities include how they will contribute to gender equality?</p> <p>11. Are there indicators related to the gender equality targets set?</p> <p>12. Are the objectives and priorities chosen coherent with Lisbon targets of women's employment rate and care services provision?</p>
<p>Operational Programmes: making objectives operational (Art. 37.1.e and g)</p>	<p>13. Are there references on how the principle of gender equality was implemented in the 2000-2006 programming period, its strengths and weaknesses?</p> <p>14. <i>Is there a gender mainstreaming action plan to implement the principle of gender equality throughout the Operational Programme?</i></p> <p>15. Is it possible to distinguish the financial provisions related to the gender equality objectives set?</p> <p>16. Is the financial provision allocated to the gender equality objectives adequate?</p> <p>17. Is there financial provision for the gender mainstreaming strategy or the implementation of the principle of gender equality throughout the Operational Programme? (e.g. through technical assistance)</p> <p>18. Are there specific structures (within ESF management, or outside) in charge of monitoring and assessing gender mainstreaming?</p> <p>19. Is there action envisaged towards developing capacity building of ESF administrative structures to implement gender equality throughout the OP?</p> <p>20. Is there a specific infrastructure envisaged for helping promoters implement gender equality in the projects financed by Structural Funds, for validating, disseminating and exchanging good practice, and for transferring the results into other policy fields and arenas?</p>

6. ANNEX 2: EQUAL EXPERIENCE AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

An important part of the good practices related to gender mainstreaming developed under EQUAL has been validated and documented in a [Guide on Gender Mainstreaming](#). This guide contains a step-by-step support system which can help to integrate and strengthen the gender equality performance at both programme and project level. A whole range of individual examples demonstrate how EQUAL projects have successfully worked with the tool of gender mainstreaming.

6.1. At programme level

6.1.1. How Finland ensures gender mainstreaming in all EQUAL DPs

ENGENDERING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH A TOP- DOWN APPROACH

INTEGRATING THE GENDER DIMENSION AT PROGRAMME AND PROJECT LEVEL

In **Finland**, the EQUAL Managing Authority made gender equality a cross-cutting priority and ensured gender mainstreaming throughout the life cycle of Development Partnerships (DPs). Gender equality and a gender mainstreaming approach were a selection criterion. The Ministry used an external evaluators of DPs to assess the relevant parts of the project applications in terms of gender mainstreaming, i.e. to check whether the approach was taken into consideration in the intended actions of the DP. Simultaneously training was organised for the staff of the NSS, whose task it was to assess all applications. At this stage gender mainstreaming was not an excluding criterion. However, the Ministry requested, as part of the first project milestone in Action 1, a gender mainstreaming plan from all selected Partnerships. An accepted gender mainstreaming plan was a precondition for DPs to be confirmed for Action 2 or 3.

Later on the Managing authority used this same expert to provide training for all selected DPs. The check-list which was used in the selection phase was also distributed to all DPs.

During the second round of EQUAL, the external expert is given an even more active role: she/he will provide guidance and tutoring during the whole life span of the DPs as well as training for DP's staff and steering groups. This is seen as essential by the Ministry in order to ascertain that gender mainstreaming approach really becomes part of all DP activities, not just dead letters on paper. Project promoters and steering group members are thus being led to understand that the gender approach is really an important part of the project work, which brings added value – and not a burden, which causes extra complexity for implementation and monitoring of DPs' actions.

To ensure that this horizontal principle of the EQUAL Community Initiative is incorporated in the implementation of the projects, the Ministry requires them to monitor progress on a regular basis. The project promoters have to assess the impact of their activities on both women and men. The Ministry has also developed a gender mainstreaming checklist, which projects can use to measure and evaluate how mainstreaming issues have been tackled by their DP.

In addition, gender issues are a key element of both the evaluations at programme and at project level. The evaluation provides sound reflection, which enables the Managing Authority to ensure that the gender mainstreaming principle is implemented correctly. Moreover, it gives valuable information about the implementation of EQUAL principles and thus possibilities to intervene into the implementation of the programme in cases where the principles have been implemented weakly.

WHO WAS INVOLVED AND HOW

As outlined above the close cooperation between the gender equality expert and the staff members of the NSS was crucial to developing and delivering guidance and training to the DPs. The Equality Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was involved in the selection process of the DPs as well as the chair person of the equality working group of the Ministry of Labour.

A member of the National Parliament representing the political women's organisations, is a deputy member of the EQUAL Monitoring Committee.

For the second round it is intended to involve gender equality expertise in all National Thematic Groups (NTNs). The Equality Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is interested to contribute. The expert chosen to organise training and individual guidance for the second round DPs will also have the task to organise training on gender equality issues for the thematic groups

MAIN SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS

According to the Finnish NSS, it appears that the needs-tailored guidance and support provided to individual projects through the joint efforts of the expert and the NSS were the decisive factors for integrating a gender dimension into the EQUAL DPs.

RESULTS

It is too early to speak of actual results that emerged from these efforts. But it seems that, in general, for the first round the integration of gender mainstreaming leaves much to be desired. However, more and better "stepping stones" and on-going support have been established for the second round. This time, many more DPs have taken account of gender equality as an objective and gender mainstreaming as a tool to reach it. Thus it is expected that during the lifespan of round 2 more gender equality achievements will result from EQUAL in Finland, that are not only related to the themes of reconciliation and desegregation, but based on gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting principle that is firmly anchored in all the other themes.

6.1.2. Gender Mainstreaming in the ESF-Agency Flanders

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE ESF AGENCY IN FLANDERS

PREPARING THE GROUND FOR THE NEXT PROGRAMMING PERIOD

When working on equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, both culture and structure have to be considered. It is impossible to change a situation if the culture (the way people look at things) of an organisation or enterprise does not incorporate openness and willingness to change (even if the structure of that organisation can provide equal opportunities). And the opposite is also true; if there is the will to bring about change, but there is no structure to embed it in, nothing will change either.

This has to be taken into account, when applying gender mainstreaming. To convince the key people of the relevance and value of gender mainstreaming in the future ESF programmes and projects it is important to offer them guidance that is targeting both the level of culture but also that of structures.

To that end, the Flemish ESF-Agency has launched two thematic working groups:

- One group is focusing on mainstreaming some of the instruments and tools developed by promoters of equal opportunities projects. Together with a team of experts the ESF-Agency will screen all the products and instruments and then develop a toolbox containing the best instruments, particularly those that focus on HR development. After discussion, the working group decided to rewrite the instruments, thus making them more useful for a broader public. The reason for this decision was the persistent “negative” connotation of gender in enterprises and in certain organisations. In fact, they see all concepts related to gender as instruments for women and therefore not interesting and relevant. The working group is convinced that presenting these products as HR tools may lead many enterprises to appreciate and to start using them.
- A second thematic working group will concentrate on gender stereotypes. Here, the idea is to develop strategies that can help the promoters to sensitise their target groups and to contemplate which instruments have proven successful to dismantle gender stereotypes in schools, enterprises, etc.

WHO IS INVOLVED AND HOW

Besides the team members of the ESF-Agency and the experts this initiative involves different categories of key players such as political decision-makers, social partners, project promoters, women’s organisations, experts,... In parallel to the two working groups, the ESF-agency will organise lunch meetings where the floor will be given to other promoters who have developed interesting products and tools. Together with the policy makers, who will host those meetings, interested organisations, members of parliament, etc. will be invited.

MAIN SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS

Thematic working groups with the aim of developing a number of tools jointly with the promoters (based on the products developed by the promoters) require careful preparation. The aspects mentioned below can be considered as important success factors for the intended thematic groups:

- Promoters need guidance before they realise what kind of tools and products they need to develop. For that reason the ESF-Agency gives a lot of coaching to project promoters, not only before they submit a project proposal but also during the lifetime of a project.
- The ESF-Agency has already experimented with offering Project Cycle Management to promoters who really need it. This method helps them to get their goals straight and to work on a useful gender tool. This way of working functioned so well, that it was decided to provide Project Cycle Management on a regular base in the future.
- During the monitoring visits the promoters receive guidance from the ESF-Agency and the development of their tool and the implementation gender mainstreaming in their project is being monitored.
- The experience of the team that, within the ESF-Agency, is dealing with gender equality is a very important factor and having good relations with a network of women’s organisations and policymakers is crucial.
- The fact that the ESF-Agency is well experienced in developing European projects concerning gender issues has been a great asset. The transnational exchange of good practices has given the opportunity to develop new ideas in Flanders.

However, the launching and running of thematic working groups means a huge workload for the team dealing with gender mainstreaming. Another challenge of this working method is to keep on motivating the project promoters to cooperate, because their help and ideas are crucial to thematic work.

EXPECTED RESULTS

It is expected that by 2007 the ESF-Agency will have a whole range of tools to be spread, which can help to sensitise promoters to take gender into account (also during the new program).

The results will also be presented at a conference and the tools will be widely disseminated (and not be restricted to ESF promoters).

6.1.3. Gender mainstreaming in the Spanish region of Andalucía

GENDER GOES MAINSTREAM IN ANDALUCIA

THE GENDER AND EQUALITY UNIT OR INTEGRATING THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ANDALUCIA, SPAIN

The Gender and Equality Unit is a technical assistance project for testing the strategy of Gender Mainstreaming within the Regional Government of Andalucía. It is co-financed by this Regional Government and the Structural Funds and co-administered by the Directorate General of European Funds (within the Regional Ministry of Economy and Finances) and the Andalusian Woman's Institute (of the Regional Ministry of Equality and Social Welfare).

The Unit started working in 2002 and, since then, it offers the Regional Administration a stable support structure of counselling and technical assistance to start and consolidate the process of anchoring Gender Mainstreaming in the Regional Government and in the administration of all its public policies.

The activities of the Unit consist of applying, in a practical way, a model of public intervention that favours gender equality. The Unit has the following objectives since its beginning:

- Identifying the needs and potentialities of the different General Directorates of the Regional Public Administration as regards equal opportunities between men and women.
- Offering specialised assistance on gender and gender equality to these administrative bodies.
- Fostering the necessary training on equality and gender for the staff of these centres.
- Validating a model of introducing the strategy of Gender Mainstreaming in the Regional Government.

The definition, functions and tasks of the Gender and Equality Unit have been reformulated into a four-stage model of progressive introduction:

Stage 1: Awareness raising, diagnosis and training

At this stage the purpose is to find out the degree of implementation of the principle of equality between men and women in the Regional Government and to raise the awareness amongst its staff concerning the need for interventions to reach gender equality. That means that the staff may volunteer for participation in training programmes on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. In co-operation with the Unit individual working plans will be developed with staff members to apply gender mainstreaming in their daily work.

Stage 2: Motivation and organisation

This stage focuses on identifying the resistance and, sometimes unconscious, barriers to change at the decision making levels and also on establishing a group of people within the different departments of the Regional Government to act as promoters of the integration of the gender dimension. The idea behind this stage is to

stimulate and strengthen commitment amongst all decision-making levels, particularly the General Directors with whom special training programmes and a working plans are agreed, which are adapted to the specificities of their General Directorates. Thus, at this stage and compared to the previous one, commitment has shifted from an individual to a hierarchical level in order to progress toward structural change.

Stage 3: Implementation (to be carried out in 2006).

Once the Unit and the Director Generals have agreed the training programmes and working plans for their units, the implementation stage begins. This stage aims also at disseminating and transferring the tested and proven procedures and lessons learned to other General Directorates.

Stage 4: Generalisation

This last stage consists of the general implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming strategy, applied as a systematic and permanent process in all public policies.

WHO IS INVOLVED AND HOW

The Unit was launched by the Andalusian Woman's Institute and the Directorate General of European Funds of the region of Andalucía. However, the strategy of gender mainstreaming requires the active participation of the organisations that have to apply it. Thus, 14 Regional Ministries are involved through 84 of their General Directorates. Within these 84 Directorates, 145 administrative units have participated in activities promoted by the Unit.

MAIN SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS

To date, all the Regional Ministries participate in the project, with different degrees of involvement, and the integration of the gender perspective in the activities of 73 General Directorates of the Regional Government is being analysed. It is remarkable that in the Regional Ministry for Health all General Directorates and their departments, are involved.

The main success factor is that the intervention model is designed in a such a way, that once the 3 stages have been completed, it runs by itself and can be extended to all activities of the Regional Government.

During the implementation of the model, the barriers kept changing. During the first stage, the Unit was not known and the obligation to introduce the principle of gender equality in the daily work made it very hard to convince people to participate in the diagnostic process and in the training. During this stage, and because the Regional government had agreed that participation was to take place on a voluntary and individual basis another obstacle emerged: the lack of support and of recognition of those actively involved in introducing the gender perspective in their tasks. At the second stage, when compromises are reached at higher and structural levels, a different kind of obstacle could be observed. Despite the agreements at high and intermediate decision-making levels, passive resistance grew. It appears that the changes in the proceedings add to the existing work load, but are different from any other task and, thus, there is lack of time to implement them. Another important problem is the lack of formal procedures for designing the training programme and working plans for the General Directorates. Instead of relying on the willingness of decision makers, the introduction of protocols would be required to regulate the collaboration between the Unit and the various General Directorates.

RESULTS

As mentioned earlier, the integration of the gender perspective is being analysed within the activities of 73 General Directorates of the Regional Government. 352 staff-people have been trained in the basics of Gender Mainstreaming and in specific gender equality issues, such as gender relevance, gender and health and gender budgeting.

Partial, but significant changes have been already achieved, and these include:

- the use of gender disaggregated data;
- the use of non-sexist language;

- a revision of the criteria used for allocating grants, introducing the gender perspective;
- training of technical staff and inclusion of the topic of Equal Opportunities within the in-house training schemes;
- a revision of the information systems (web, data bases, forms, etc.)
- the elaboration of gender indicators.

6.2. At project level

6.2.1. *Gender mainstreaming in Austria*

GENDER GOES MAINSTREAM IN AN AUSTRIAN REGION GENDER MAINSTREAMING FICHE 3

A NEW MODEL INTEGRATES THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The **Austrian** DP Just GeM was successful in convincing organisations responsible for training and employment measures in the whole region of Styria to adopt strategies that take account of the diversity of their male and female “customers” instead of pushing them to adapt to the organisations’ procedures and cultures. About 30 organisations agreed to run gender mainstreaming pilot projects and to nominate a senior staff member in their organisation to participate in a training course for “Gender Agents”. Both the training programme and the pilot projects are already demonstrating the positive effects of horizontal mainstreaming on regional employment policies and practices.

The DP developed a theoretical foundation and a set of methods and tools, including:

- A six-stage model enabling the key players to look at every step, from design to evaluation, in the process of gender mainstreaming. The model starts with a gender impact assessment to find out how men and women are represented in the relevant decision-making processes and how they benefit from training and employment policies and practices. Based on the outcome, gender equality targets were formulated and a viable action plan was developed to attain them. During the implementation of the action plan the gender dimension had to be integrated into the management and control systems of each organisation involved. Finally, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were established to measure the progress achieved as compared to the situation at departure and the agreed targets.
- Awareness raising workshops for top level decision-makers and senior managers of organisations dealing with employment policies;
- Training of senior staff from different organisations such as municipalities, local development agencies and employment offices, trade unions and companies as “Gender Agents” to initiate and manage the gender mainstreaming process within their own organisations.
- The second version of training was targeted at organisations that implement labour market policy measures, as contractors of the authorities. Those who are responsible for the development and quality of the products (guidance courses, vocational training, counselling etc.) acquired the know-how to implement gender mainstreaming into planning, development and implementation and to work towards equality of women and men through all of their products.

- Criteria for pilot projects which were funded in the framework of the DP;
- Gender equality indicators used in a monitoring and benchmarking system called Gender Radar.

WHO WAS INVOLVED AND HOW

According to the DP the EQUAL partnership approach was the most important success factor in moving towards gender mainstreaming. Just GeM forged a coalition of all the policy makers who are in a position to turn its ambitious goals into reality. It has brought together the Regional Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Regional Employment Office, Social Partner Organisations, Chambers of Commerce, the Municipality of Graz (the capital of Styria), several district governments, the Association of Styrian Innovation Centres and the region's largest charity. Then, at the level of practice, the DP has joined forces with the six sub-regional employment pacts, training and education providers, research institutions, gender equality bodies and women's NGOs from throughout the region.

The DP was very aware that even this powerful alliance would achieve nothing without a clear top-down approach in the organisations that it sought to influence. This is why it dedicated a huge amount energy and time to contact and convince the highest level political decision-makers who committed their organisations to gender mainstreaming. The backing from the top secured the involvement of senior people and middle management in the DP's activities and was crucial for the development of the network of gender agents operating in Styria and beyond.

MAIN SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS

The DP identified several factors as crucial for its success. Obviously the partnership approach as described above was crucial for all the activities of the DP, including the dissemination and mainstreaming efforts of Just GeM towards organisations that had not been involved and also towards other regions.

A second decisive factor for success were the pilot projects which allowed the participating organisations to experiment with gender mainstreaming and find out about the advantages to be gained through this approach. The fact that the funding for the pilots did not come automatically, but the organisations had to present a detailed rationale and plan, created a competitive edge and strengthened commitment and performance of the organisations. The proposals were assessed by a high level jury and the "winners" visibly made the maximum of their experiments.

The specific features of the training programme for gender agents were clearly another success factor. The programme was modular and very practice-oriented, as whilst acquiring relevant knowledge and skills, the participants also developed and implemented their own pilot projects.

Moreover, the Regional Employment Office's strict ruling that gender mainstreaming must be adopted by all its sub-contractors triggered a high demand of these organisations in the training programme and resulted in visible change.

- Difficulties and barriers encountered were related to fact that changing structures requires to "disturb" long standing, deeply engrained patterns in organisations. Sometimes decision-makers of those systems tended to push the gender mainstreaming initiatives back to the stage of "awareness rising" and refused to undertake structural changes. Another difficulty was how the top level placed the "Gender Agents" within the hierarchy. In some cases their tasks are confined to the role of an internal counsellor who can be used at will but without power, which makes gender mainstreaming more or less the personal quest of the gender agents.

RESULTS

- 11 pilot projects launched in Styria thanks to EQUAL, are the living proof of change. They engendered sustainable results, which are currently being further developed within the various organisations. Outputs include:
- Gender impact analyses of services of the municipality of Graz, the region's capital, that has now embarked on gender budgeting to secure a fairer distribution of funding and/or subsidies in selected policy areas. The Graz City Government, for instance, developed tools and guidelines for gender mainstreaming in sports and family policies. Tools and guidelines are available for other municipalities.
- Analysis of the gender impact of a number of collective agreements carried out by the regional branch of the Austrian Trade Union Confederation and a training programme to help works councils identify and eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace.
- The very first inter-agency approach initiated by the Styrian Sozialhilfverband, an institution that is – as part of the public sector – responsible for social policies, including care and support for senior citizens and people with disabilities. The concept links charities, private companies, medical doctors and hospitals, which provide those services and takes account of the gender dimension concerning the needs of both the carers and the people cared for.
- The benchmarking system called [Gender Radar](#) is not only a valuable tool to present the levels of gender equality achieved in crucial areas such as education and training, employment, unemployment and political decision-making in the different districts of Styria, but also a push-factor for mainstreaming gender equality. The system enables comparisons to be made between all of the districts and all of the different policy areas. By comparing the indicators over several years, it is possible to identify and demonstrate progress in specific policy areas, as well as in general performance within geographical areas.

The Gender Radar clearly helped to create and enhance a climate that is favourable to gender mainstreaming. The visibility of their gender equality performance has led decision-makers in regional districts and local areas to become more conscious of their own policies and practices and the gender gaps they still need to tackle. As a result, both the six-stage model developed by Just GeM and the training programme for Gender Agents are now in great demand throughout Austria.

A second round EQUAL DP is now dedicated to further mainstreaming. All the labour market authorities and agencies that have benefited from Just GeM's activities are taking a much more proactive role. Building on their experiences of the introduction of gender mainstreaming, they are training and supporting other peers to follow suit. For instance, municipalities are coaching their counterparts in other Austrian regions and the Styrian branch of the Austrian Trade Union Federation teams up with other regional branches and also with its headquarters in Vienna. Moreover, a group of companies, including market leaders, came to recognise the added-value of gender mainstreaming. Facing skills gaps due to demographic changes, they are now implementing action plans to use the untapped potential of women and they are also aware that this requires a full fledged package of work-life-balance policies for both women and men.

7. ANNEX 3: RELEVANT LITERATURE, DOCUMENTS AND RELATED LINKS:

EQUAL Guide on Gender Mainstreaming, European Commission 2004, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/equal>

A number of Member States have produced guides and tools which may be useful, even if they were designed for the past programming period:

France:

- A special edition of Racine magazine on gender equality in the ESF in France (see <http://www.racine.fr/virtual/22/Documents/pdf/390-BUL.67VF.pdf>)
- A guide to integrating gender equality into ESF projects (see [http://egalitedeschances.racine.fr/virtual/27/Documents/pdf/ComFaire\(2\).pdf](http://egalitedeschances.racine.fr/virtual/27/Documents/pdf/ComFaire(2).pdf))
- An auto-evaluation guide for gender equality (see [http://egalitedeschances.racine.fr/virtual/27/Documents/pdf/18Quest\(3\).pdf](http://egalitedeschances.racine.fr/virtual/27/Documents/pdf/18Quest(3).pdf))

Austria:

- A guide to implementing gender mainstreaming in public administration www.popupgem.at/downloads/docs/4211_Praxisleitfaden.pdf
- Tips and tricks for implementing gender mainstreaming www.popupgem.at/downloads/docs/4209_ag-gender.pdf
- A gender mainstreaming tool box www.gem.or.at/de/downloads

Spain:

- A guide for incorporating gender equality in the activities of the Structural Funds (see <http://www.mtas.es/MUJER/politicas/guiaincorporacion.doc>)
- A methodological guide for evaluating the principle of equal opportunities in activities financed by the Structural Funds (see <http://www.mtas.es/MUJER/politicas/guigual.doc>)
- Recommendations on Equality between men and women in the new ESF programming period 2007-2013 (see <http://www.mtas.es/UAFSE/es/Igualdad2007-2013.pdf>)