



Gender in regional cohesion policy



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The European Institute for Gender Equality created the online Platform on Gender Mainstreaming to support the EU institutions and governmental bodies with the integration of a gender perspective in their work. The Platform provides insights on the relevance of gender in a variety of policy areas and offers online tools for gender mainstreaming.

The Platform helps to improve individual and institutional competences to mainstream gender into the different sectorial areas and throughout the different stages of the development of any policy/programme/project. Understanding how to design, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate policies from a gender perspective will strengthen EU policies, increasing their societal relevance and responsiveness.

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1. Relevance of gender in the policy area

EU regional policy is an investment policy that targets all regions and cities in the EU. In recognition of its importance, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union devotes five articles to 'economic, social and territorial cohesion' (Articles 174-178). The policy aims to reduce the economic, social and territorial disparities between EU regions by supporting job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, improved quality of life and sustainable development (1).

Regional policy is embedded within the regional cohesion policy and gender equality is considered under this framework. Regional policy has a strong impact in many fields. Its investments help to deliver many EU policy objectives and complement EU policies such as those dealing with education, employment, energy, the environment, the single market, and research and innovation.

Regional policy is delivered through three main funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). Together with the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, they make up the European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds. Gender equality is addressed in the objectives of the ESI funds.

Gender equality is formally mentioned in the regional cohesion policy in relation to promoting economic development and pursuing women's empowerment.

Promoting gender equality is important in reducing regional economic and social disparities and for ensuring the long-term development of regions, which are the two main objectives of the cohesion policy. Failure to overcome gender disparities means that the development objectives of growth, competitiveness and employment cannot be fully achieved (2). The economic theory of gender equality recognises that gender equality is an essential precursor for promoting economic development. A lack of gender equality between women and men implies that human resources are not being used to their greatest extent for the development of the economy, and society at large. In economic terms, gender equality means 'utilising everyone and

letting everybody — both men and women — be assets on which to build development through e.g. employment in the labour market, higher education, research, innovation and entrepreneurship' (3).

Gender equality thus broadly means women and men experience a city and its services and infrastructures differently. According to the World Bank, women's and men's priorities are often not the same for basic services such as urban housing, water and sanitation, solid waste management, and public transport. Applying a gender lens to ERDF funds and the CF when focusing on these intervention areas is essential to achieve gender equality in urban areas (4).

In term of investments, improvement in physical infrastructures can reduce at least three significant barriers that reinforce gender inequalities:

- women's lack of free time due to the unequal distribution of caring responsibilities;
- women's exclusion from many local economic opportunities;
- women's lesser presence in, if not complete absence from, well-resourced networks and important decision-making arenas (5).

However, the literature on gender equality in regional development reveals that developing infrastructure is not enough. Besides the lack of adequate infrastructures, access to infrastructures, where they exist, is particularly relevant for people who may be exposed to a greater risk of social exclusion, such as women (6). Literature on gender equality and infrastructures emphasises that in looking at women's access to infrastructures, it is important to consider the needs of women and men in the informal sector.

(1) Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/investment-policy/.

(2) Pollack, M.A. and Hafner-Burton, E., 'Mainstreaming gender in the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 7, No 3, Special Issue, 2000, pp. 432-456, http://pages.ucsd.edu/~ehafner/pdfs/gm_eu.pdf.

(3) Nordregio, *Nordregio News*, Issue 2: Gender equality for regional growth, 2013, <http://www.nordregio.se/en/Metameny/Nordregio-News/2013/Gender-Equality-for-Regional-Growth/>.

(4) World Bank, *Making urban development work for women and men: Tools for task teams*, 2010, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1270752196897/Making_Urban_Development_Work_for_Women_and_Men.pdf.

(5) World Bank, *Making infrastructure work for women and men: A review of World Bank infrastructure projects (1995-2009)*, 2010, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1270752196897/Gender_Infrastructure2.pdf.

(6) International Finance Corporation, *Gender impact of public private partnerships*, 2012, <http://www.pidg.org/resource-library/results-monitoring/pidg-ifc-gender-impact-of-private-public.pdf>.



Poor women, living in unplanned settlements, are generally less mobile and therefore more affected than men by living in overcrowded conditions and households. They are also more exposed to the risks of uncollected waste and the stress of looking after children in unsafe places. Thus, the provision of safe places for children to play and of social and cultural infrastructure contributes to advancing gender equality (⁷).

Investments affect women and men differently, according to their different positions and roles in society. This is true of 'hard-core' infrastructure investments into facilities such as roads, water supplies and railways, as well as of 'soft' investments into skills development in the job market and education. For example, if the EU invests strongly in sectors such as the automotive sector, aeronautics, engineering, space, chemicals and pharmaceuticals (⁸), there is a major risk that gender gaps will increase, as women workers account for only 20 % of the workforce in these sectors and tend to work in lower-qualified and lower-paid jobs (⁹). However, if investments are made from a gender equality perspective (e.g. investing also in vocational training for women, child-care infrastructure), they will contribute to gender equality and will increase its effectiveness in terms of inclusive growth. Inequalities persist between women and men across most of the policy areas encompassed by the cohesion policy (e.g. the labour market, education and training). The EU's strategy on equality between women and men is focused on promoting innovation, supporting job creation, increasing employment rates among women and men, and supporting the development of a higher-skilled labour market across the EU through ESI funding. Applying a gender lens to these areas is crucial to ensuring a fair and successful process of recovery (¹⁰).

Despite the relevance of gender equality in the regional cohesion policy area, there are still gender gaps to be tackled via regional policy and ESI funds. These are (i) fragmented/insufficient use of the gender mainstreaming approach in ESI funds, and (ii) weak involvement of women in participatory processes relating to the programming and implementation of the ESI funds.

(⁷) Gaynor, C., and Jennings, M., *Annex on gender and infrastructure*, n.d., <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/PPPILP/Resources/PPPIGenderAnnex.pdf>

(⁸) European Commission, *Communication for a European industrial renaissance* (COM(2014) 14 final), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2014, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0014&from=EN>

(⁹) Martinuzzi, A., Kudlak, R., Faber, C. and Wiman, A., *CSR activities and impacts of the automotive sector*, RIMAS Working Papers, No 3/2011, Research Institute for Managing Sustainability (RIMAS), Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, 2011, http://www.sustainability.eu/pdf/csr/impact/IMPACT_Sector_Profile_AUTOMOTIVE.pdf

(¹⁰) Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, *Opinion on gender equality in Cohesion Policy 2014-2020*, 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/opinions_advisory_committee/opinion_on_gender_equality_in_the_cohesion_policy_2014-2020_en.pdf

2. Gender inequalities in the policy area

Fragmented/insufficient use of the gender mainstreaming approach in ESI funds

Several evaluations ⁽¹⁾ of the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 programming periods reveal that gender equality has not been integrated in the ESI funds coherently and systematically at all stages of the policy cycle. According to these evaluations, the integration of a gender perspective in the context analysis is carried out unevenly among the Member States; in some cases, regional operational programmes include a specific gender analysis in the part dedicated to the analysis of the context, while in other cases no reference to specific gender inequalities and their possible causes are presented.

In the programming phase, gender equality is generally present as a broad principle, but it is rarely broken down into gender-specific objectives, or objectives that include a gender equality perspective. If it is, this is only in an ad hoc manner. Furthermore, gender equality is often present in objectives that are immediately associated with gender inequalities (e.g. the labour market, childcare or elderly care). It is very seldom in those that are not 'immediately' related to women (e.g. energy, transport, internet and communications technology (ICT), waste). However, it should be noted that in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries, specific attention is paid to gender mainstreaming in all actions of the ESI funds.

Allocation of financial resources to gender equality is rather limited. According to a European Parliament study, during the period of 2007-2013 across the Member States on average only 3.7 % of the total ESF resources was allocated to specific gender equality actions. The study underlines that, despite the official declarations according to which the EU

2020 strategy was conceived as an opportunity to reform the economy in order to achieve more gender equality, and the intention to make gender mainstreaming the pivotal strategy for gender equality, [...] the gender perspective is far from being assumed in all policies, at all levels and at every stage of the policymaking process ⁽¹²⁾.

The implementation of a gender mainstreaming approach within the ESI funds is a widely debated issue in the literature; evaluations seem to show that the expectation of consistent reductions in gender imbalances in European societies has not been met. According to various experts ⁽¹³⁾, gender mainstreaming has been used instead as an excuse for neutralising positive actions, further reducing existing funds and incentives for gender equality, especially in the case of structural funds ⁽¹⁴⁾.

The selection criteria used to evaluate ESI funds applications are not generally gender-sensitive. The lack of adequate gender-sensitive criteria together with a lack of gender awareness among applicants, result in weak outcomes in terms of increased gender equality in society and the economy.

Weak gender-oriented monitoring and evaluation systems in the ESI funds

A limited set of indicators has been designed to monitor gender equality within ESI funds. These are mostly related to employment indicators and the population breakdown by sex within some of the created facilities (e.g. childcare facilities). However, there is a lack of gender-oriented result indicators on how women and men benefit from all the achievements of ESI funds. Specific evaluations of gender equality within ESI funds are rarely carried out.

⁽¹⁾ European Parliament, *Gender mainstreaming in the use of structural funding*, 2007, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/675/675221/675221en.pdf; European Commission, *Study on the translation of Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, on the promotion of gender equality, non-discrimination and accessibility for disabled persons, into cohesion policy programmers 2007-2013 co-financed by the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund*, 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/evaluations/2009/study-on-the-translation-of-article-16-of-regulation-ec-n10832006-on-the-promotion-of-gender-equality-non-discrimination-and-accessibility-for-disabled-persons-into-cohesion-policy-programmes-2007-2013-co-financed-by-the-erdf-and-the-cohesion-fund; CES, *Evaluation study of the integration of the gender perspective within structural funds during the programming period 2007-2013*, 2013, http://www.ces.uc.pt/myces/UserFiles/livros/1097_Est%20IG%20FE%20-%20SUSUM%20EXEC%20Junho%202013%20EN.pdf.

⁽¹²⁾ European Parliament, *The multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020 from a gender equality perspective*, 2012, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201201/20120123ATT36024/20120123ATT36024EN.pdf>

⁽¹³⁾ Stratigaki, M., 'Gender mainstreaming vs positive action: an ongoing conflict in EU gender equality policy', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 12, 2005, pp. 165-186; Mariagrazia, R. (ed.), *Gender policies in the European Union*, Peter Lang, New York, 2000.

⁽¹⁴⁾ European Parliament, *The multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020 from a gender equality perspective*, 2012, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201201/20120123ATT36024/20120123ATT36024EN.pdf>.



Weak integration of gender equality in the implementation of the selected projects, and in particular in employers' practices

Studies identify a weak integration of the gender equality perspective in ESI funds for a number of key reasons. First, there is a lack of political commitment on mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in the ESI funds at all levels. While there seems to be a commitment at high political levels, at lower levels the adoption of a gender equality perspective is mainly associated with compliance with international commitments. There is also an absence of specific equality bodies in charge of the programming and implementation of a gender perspective within ESI funds. Furthermore, there is a weak integration between the national/regional institutions in charge of ESI funds and the gender equality bodies at both national and regional level.

Second, there is a shortage of gender competence both within the institutions in charge of ESI funds and among project applicants. This lack of adequate skills is particularly relevant in those areas that are not explicitly perceived as having a differentiated gender impact (e.g. energy, urban infrastructure, waste).

Third, there is resistance on the part of public institutions to the subject of gender equality, while there is a lack of recognition of inequality on the part of the target population and society in general. The impact of the financial crisis contributed to making equality issues a low priority at both institutional and societal levels.

Weak involvement of women in participatory processes related to ESI funds

Even though the issue of the involvement of women's associations in the programming and implementation of ESI funds receives little attention in the evaluations of gender equality in structural funds, a World Bank study⁽¹⁵⁾ underlines that gender issues have been excluded from most of the participatory development initiatives and diagnoses. This has led to policies and interventions that often reflect a poor understanding of the nature and capacities of women's groups. Indeed, women's capacity to network is smaller than that of men due to greater limitations in terms of physical mobility, resources and time. Women's networks are therefore generally small, informal, and oriented towards everyday life and voluntary community activities. Indeed, such groups in themselves are unlikely to represent a strong lobbying potential in the adoption of a gender equality perspective in regional policy.

⁽¹⁵⁾ World Bank, *Making infrastructure work for women and men: A review of World Bank infrastructure projects (1995-2009)*, 2010, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1270752196897/Gender_Infrastructure2.pdf.

3. Gender equality policy objectives at the EU and international levels

As mentioned previously, regional policy is mostly tackled at the European level. Responsibility for regional policy is divided among EU institutions and EU Member States. EU institutions set the general framework for regional policy by laying down the common strategic framework for cohesion policy and defining the regulations and investment priorities of cohesion policy funds (ERDF, ESF and CF). Following the common strategic framework and ERDF/ESF/CF regulations, Member States sign a partnership agreement with the European Commission that afterwards translates into specific ERDF/ESF/CF programmes. Successively, these programmes are negotiated with and approved by the European Commission.

EU level

In the regional policy field, European institutions and EU Member States have made their commitment clear to ensuring the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the European Structural Funds, the operational tool of regional policy at EU level.

European Commission

Since the 1994-1999 programming period, the European Commission has been taking action to ensure the promotion of equality between women and men in structural funds (ERDF/ESF/CF).

Following the Amsterdam Treaty ⁽¹⁶⁾, which strengthened focus on the achievement of equal opportunities, a dual approach was promoted for mainstreaming gender within cohesion policy funds. The dual approach implies the use of vertical priorities — that is, a priority that is essentially contained within the aims and activities of a specific programme — and horizontal priorities specifically integrating equality objectives into all general policies and measures. This approach characterised both the 2000-2006 and the

2007-2013 programming periods ⁽¹⁷⁾. With the adoption of the 2014-2020 regulations, the European Commission has taken further action to consolidate gender equality in the cohesion policy funds (ERDF/ESF/CF). Indeed, in order to ensure a proper mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the 2014-2020 cohesion policy, the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men drafted an opinion on gender equality in the cohesion policy 2014-2020, identifying shortcomings and priorities to guide the definition of the new cohesion policy regulations ⁽¹⁸⁾.

The main provisions on gender equality in the 2014-2020 cohesion policy are included in Article 7 of the Common Provisions of the funds, which foresees that

Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective are taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including in relation to monitoring, reporting and evaluation ⁽¹⁹⁾.

⁽¹⁶⁾ See the *Official Journal of the European Communities*, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_1997.340.FULL.ENG.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:31999R1260>; Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 1999 on the European Social Fund, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/content/en/02_pdf/00_3_esf_en.pdf; Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 of 8 December 2006 setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32006R1828>; Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006R1080&qid=1465198084352>; Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006R1081>.

⁽¹⁸⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/opinions_advisory_committee/opinion_on_gender_equality_in_the_cohesion_policy_2014-2020_en.pdf.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303>.



Furthermore, according to the same article 'Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of programmes' ⁽²⁰⁾.

The main European Commission gender equality priorities in regional policy are included in ESF regulations:

- increasing the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment;
- combating the feminisation of poverty;
- reducing gender-based segregation;
- combating gender stereotypes in the labour market and in education and training;
- promoting the reconciliation of work and personal life for all as well as the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men;
- reducing inequalities in terms of educational attainment and health status;
- facilitating the transition from institutional to community-based care, in particular for those who face multiple forms of discrimination (e.g. women) ⁽²¹⁾.

Furthermore, the increased relevance of gender equality in the 2014-2020 programming period is included in the *ex ante* conditions laid down in the Commission and Member States' partnership agreement. Accession to cohesion policy funds depends on this being fulfilled. Accordingly, the gender equality *ex ante* conditionality consists of the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of EU gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI funds. The criteria to be respected for its fulfilment are:

- arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes,

including the provision of advice on gender equality in ESI funding-related activities; and

- arrangements for training staff in the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI funds in the fields of EU gender equality law and policy as well as on the subject of gender mainstreaming ⁽²²⁾.

There is a strong link between the ESI funds and other legal and non-legal tools for promoting gender equality at both EU and Member State level. The 2010-2015 strategy for equality between women and men foresees among its priorities:

- supporting the promotion of gender equality in the implementation of all aspects and flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy, especially as regards the definition and implementation of relevant national measures (through technical support as well as through the structural funds and other major funding programmes such as the seventh framework programme for research; and
- promoting gender equality in European funds, and in particular in the ESF funds to support Member States to implement operational programmes. This includes measures for increasing women's participation in the labour market and reducing gender segregation in career selection and professions as well as enhancing lifelong learning ⁽²³⁾. The 2011-2020 Gender Equality Pact outlines objectives and contains descriptions of the gender gaps to be tackled by the cohesion policy and the structural and investment funds, such as closing the gender gaps, combating gender segregation in the labour market and promoting better work-life balance for women and men ⁽²⁴⁾.

⁽²⁰⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303>.

⁽²¹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 1999 on the European Social Fund, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31999R1784&from=EN>.

⁽²²⁾ European Commission, *Guidance on ex ante conditionalities for the European structural and investment funds, Part II*, 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/eac_guidance_esif_part2_en.pdf

⁽²³⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0491>.

⁽²⁴⁾ Council of the European Union, *Council conclusions on the European pact for gender equality for the period 2011-2020*, 2011, http://www.spcr.cz/files/en/eu/ec/Equality_Pact_2011-2020_119628.pdf.

European Parliament

Promoting the use of structural and investment funds to enhance gender equality is also a priority of the European Parliament. The EU strategy for equality between women and men Post-2015 calls on the Commission to support Member States in the increasing use of the structural funds for investment in public childcare and care for the elderly, as a core strategy to increase women's participation in the labour market ⁽²⁵⁾.

In terms of the ESF, the European Parliament's influence has grown over the years. Under the Maastricht Treaty, the parliament was required to give its assent to the general provisions governing the funds, whereas under the Treaty of Amsterdam, the adoption of implementing rules for the ESF is subject to the co-decision procedure. Thanks to the European Parliament's action, in the current 2014-2020 programming period the ESF will account for 23.1 % of the total EU cohesion policy funding, and 20 % of each Member State's ESF allocation will have to be spent on social inclusion ⁽²⁶⁾. This is particularly relevant for women, considering they face a higher risk of social exclusion than men.

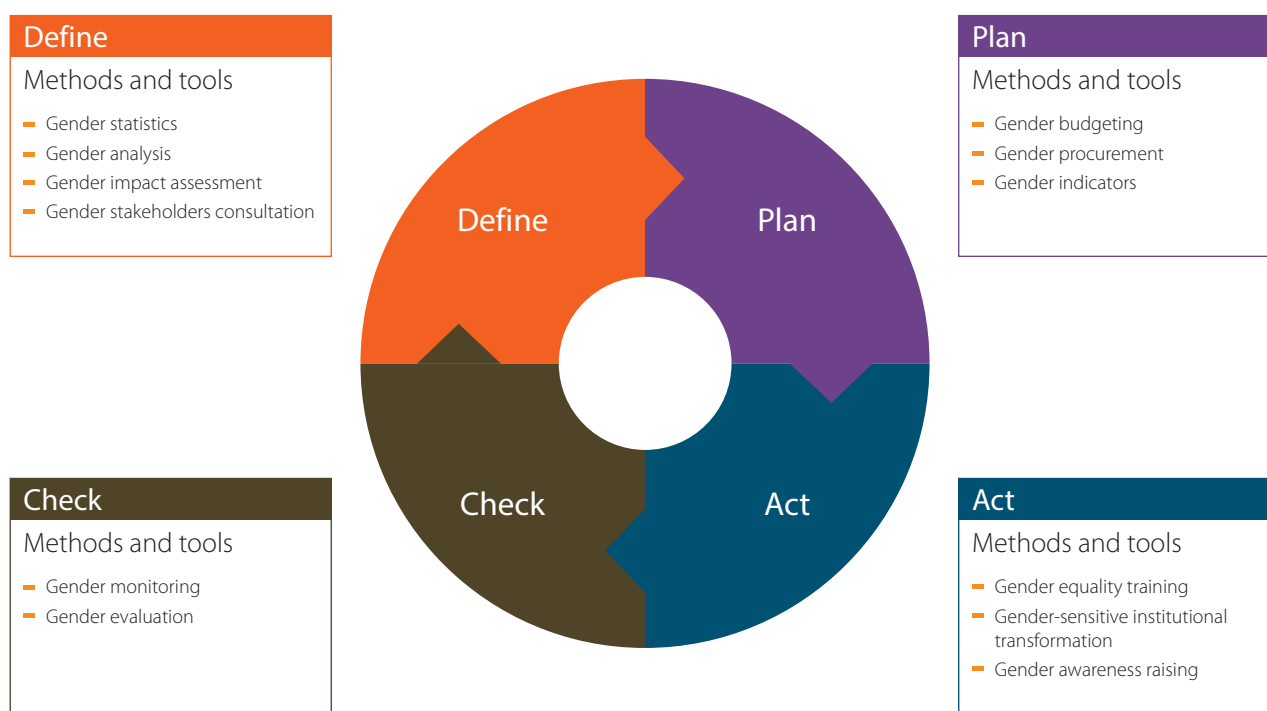
⁽²⁵⁾ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-549.092+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

⁽²⁶⁾ European Parliament, *European social fund factsheet*, 2015, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuld=FTU_5.10.2.html.

4. How and when? Regional development and the integration of the gender dimension into the policy cycle

The gender dimension can be integrated in all phases of the policy cycle.

Below, you can find useful resources and practical examples for mainstreaming gender into regional development. They are organised according to the most relevant phase of the policy cycle they may serve.



Define

DEFINE PLAN ACT CHECK

In this phase, it is recommended that information is gathered on the situation of women and men in a particular area. This means looking for sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, as well as checking for the existence of studies, programme or project reports, and/or evaluations from previous periods.

Examples of gender and regional development statistics

Eurostat (cohesion indicators section)

This section publishes a portfolio of indicators, grouped according to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, which are used to measure cohesion at the sub-national level. Some of the proposed indicators are disaggregated by sex.

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/cohesion-policy-indicators/cohesion-indicators>

Eurostat (regional statistics section)

The EU places considerable emphasis on the cohesion policy, with the objective of bringing Europe's regions and cities closer together in economic, social and environmental spheres. In allocating cohesion policy funds (ERDF, ESF; CF), regional statistics are used. Among the regional statistics collected by Eurostat, the following are disaggregated by sex at regional level: demography; education; science and technology; labour market; health; poverty and social exclusion.

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/regions/data/database>

Examples of studies, research and reports

Pollack, M. and Hafner-Burton, E., 'Mainstreaming gender in the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 7, No 3, Special Issue, 2000, pp. 432-456.

This article examines the adoption of gender mainstreaming by the EU, and traces its implementation in five issue-areas of EU policy: structural funds, employment, development, competition, and science, research and development.

http://pages.ucsd.edu/~ehafner/pdfs/gm_eu.pdf

Hudson, C. and Ronnblom, M., 'Regional development policies and the constructions of gender equality: The Swedish case', *European Journal of Political Research*, 10/2006, Vol. 46, No 1, 2006, pp. 47-68.

This article uses a discursive approach to analyse how gender equality has and is being constructed and given meaning in the context of Swedish regional policy. Drawing on Carole Bacchi's *What's the problem?* approach, it explores how arguments concerning the new forms of regional policy are assigning different categories of people different subject positions and, in particular, it focuses on the kind of subject positions that are being given to women as a group in this context.

http://www.researchgate.net/publication/229775695_Regional_development_policies_and_the_constructions_of_gender_equality_The_Swedish_case

European Parliament (2007)

Gender mainstreaming in the use of structural funding.

The study outlines to what extent gender mainstreaming has been taken into account in the 2000-2006 structural funds programming and implementation.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/675/675221/675221en.pdf

European Commission (2009)

Study on the translation of Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, on the promotion of gender equality, non-discrimination and accessibility for disabled persons, into cohesion policy programmes 2007-2013, co-financed by the ERDF and the CF.

The study analyses the integration of the gender perspective, non-discrimination and accessibility for disabled persons in cohesion policy programmes co-financed by ERDF and the CF. A total of 15 examples of good practice across Member States and policy areas are identified and analysed. Conclusions and useful lessons to strengthen the gender, non-discrimination and disability dimensions in the current and next policy programming period are derived.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/evaluations/2009/study-on-the-translation-of-article-16-of-Regulation-ec-n10832006-on-the-promotion-of-gender-equality-non-discrimination-and-accessibility-for-disabled-persons-into-cohesion-policy-programmes-2007-2013-co-financed-by-the-erdf-and-the-cohesion-fund

Campbell, J., McKay, A., McSorley, L., and Ross S., (2009)

The legacy of gender mainstreaming within the Scottish Structural Funds Programme 2007-2013.

The report analyses gender mainstreaming in the 2007-2013 Scottish structural funds programme and highlights lessons in terms of what worked and what did not work which could inform the 2014-2020 Scottish structural funds programme.

<http://www.gov.scot/resource/0043/00434671.pdf>

Lombardia region (2009), Evaluation of equal opportunities

(Part of the DOCUP_Objective 2, 2000-2006 final evaluation report for the Lombardia region).



The evaluation assesses the effects of the programme in terms of equal opportunities for the dimensions of female entrepreneurship, accessibility to the job market and improvement of life conditions for women.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/68

IRS and CSIL (2009) Work package 7

Effectiveness of the cohesion policy: Gender equality and demographic change.

The present evaluation provides an assessment of the extent to which the ERDF-supported regions are adapting to demographic change and fostering gender equality, as well as a better understanding of what ERDF interventions can deliver in this respect during the future planning periods.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/expost2006/wp7_en.htm

Sidlauskiene, V. (2010)

Evaluation of the influence of structural funds allocated to Lithuania for the period 2004-2006 on the promotion of equality between women and men in Social Research 2010, NR 1 (18).

The article examines the application of gender mainstreaming in Lithuanian structural funds policies between 2004 and 2006 and analyses to what extent there has been any progress in gender equality by using structural funds.
http://www.su.lt/bylos/mokslo_leidiniai/soc_tyrimai/2010_18/sidlauskiene.pdf

World Bank (2010). Making infrastructure work for women and men

A review of World Bank infrastructure projects (1995-2009).

This report reviews 15 years of infrastructure lending at the World Bank. Unlike most stocktakes of projects supporting water, roads, energy and other infrastructure development, this one applies a gender lens. In doing so, it reveals important progress on the integration of gender concerns into infrastructure lending operations.
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1270752196897/Gender_Infrastructure2.pdf

Projects and Quality Management and ACCIPE (2011)

Evaluation of the EU funds impact on implementation of the horizontal priority *equal opportunities*, defined in planning documents in Lithuania.

The evaluation assesses the impact and contribution of EU funds on horizontal priority of equal opportunities as set in planning documents. In addition, the evaluation characterises potential risks that could hinder the implementation of equal opportunities priority and proposes recommendations for the improvement of the implementation of the policy. The main report is available in Lithuanian, while the executive summary is in English.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/3

Spanish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Ministry of Work and Immigration (2011)

Strategic thematic evaluation on gender equality.

The study's objective is to analyse the contribution of the funds (ERDF, ESF, CF) to the implementation of the equality principle between women and men. The study covers both specific actions, namely specifically designed for women (priority theme 69), and horizontal actions, in order to ensure the integration of equality in all phases of implementation of the funds. The study is available in Spanish.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/43

GHK and FGB (2011)

Evaluation of the European Social Fund's support to gender equality.

The report provides an overall assessment of the ESF's (2007-2013) support to gender equality policy by drawing an overall picture of the gender sensitivity of ESF programmes addressing the three evaluation questions defined in the original request for services.
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6643&langId=en>

Centro de Estudos Sociais (CES) (2013)

Evaluation study of the integration of the gender perspective within structural funds during the programming period 2007-2013.

The main objective of the study is to analyse the ways in which the gender perspective has been integrated into the concept, programming, implementation and monitoring of operational programmes supported by the ESF and the ERDF. The study included types of measures directly or indirectly associated with the subject of gender equality.

http://www.ces.uc.pt/myces/UserFiles/livros/1097_Est%20IG%20FE%20-%20SUM%20EXEC%20Junho%202013%20EN.pdf

Perrons, D. (2013). 'Regional development, equality and gender: Moving towards more inclusive and socially sustainable measures',

Economic and Industrial Democracy, August 2013, Vol. 34, pp. 483-499.

The article examines what kind of development model would be inclusive, and economically and socially sustainable. Current indicators of regional performance are based on growth alone; they overlook distribution and so misrepresent the performance of regions in terms of social well-being. An alternative, more inclusive measure of regional development and a gender-sensitive variant is calculated for UK regions. On these measures London falls from the top-ranked region to a middle rank on the regional development indicator and on the gender-sensitive variant falls to the lowest position, arguably better reflecting the experience of life in this region. Optimistically, the use of these measures would lead to more inclusive models of development that would render the more contentious social, redistributive policies less necessary.

<http://eid.sagepub.com/content/34/3/483.abstract>

Callerstig, A., and Wielpütz, R., Thematic report, 2014

New skills and jobs and gender in the ESF.

The main aim of the report is to discuss the 'anchoring' of a gender perspective in relation to the agenda for new skills and jobs, and specifically concerning the role of the ESF in fulfilling the EU 2020 strategy and the gender equality strategy as well as the pact for gender equality.

<http://www.gendercop.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/new-skills-and-jobs-and-gender-wielputz-callerstig.pdf>

Examples of gender analysis

The European standard of gender mainstreaming in ESF (2014), Gender-CoP

The purpose of this standard, produced by the European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming (Gender-CoP), is to provide clear requirements and good practices on how to achieve gender equality in all cycles of the ESF. It can be used both as a guide to implement the dual gender equality approach within the ESF and as a tool to assess and monitor existing practices — from policy to project level in all steps such as planning, programming, implementing to monitoring and evaluation. All examples and good practices have been selected by the Member States and derive from ESF experiences with gender equality across the EU. The standard is currently under piloting in four Member States' ESF programmes: Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Finland and Sweden.

<http://standard.gendercop.com/>

Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee (JämStöd) (2007)

Gender mainstreaming manual.

The manual includes a set of various methodologies and tools for gender mainstreaming in policies and organisations. Among the different methodologies proposed, it's worth emphasising that the 4R method is also particularly useful for analysing gender mainstreaming in regional development, and especially in structural funds and organisations in charge. The 4R method may be used as a basis for analysing and surveying activities, and for providing an overview of how activities are run and financed, and how they should be changed to reduce gender inequality.

http://www.includegender.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/gender_mainstreaming_manual.pdf

European Commission (2000)

Mainstreaming equal opportunities for women and men in structural fund programmes and projects.



The paper provides a checklist that summarises the principal requirements concerning the integration of equal opportunities between women and men in the European Structural Funds. It can be used to verify that the plans and programmes respect the relevant provisions in the General Regulation, and that the most important elements are in place to support the mainstreaming of equal opportunities in the management of assistance.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/doc/mainst_en.pdf

Equal Managing Authorities of Belgium, Estonia, Spain, Austria and Finland (2006)

Integrating the gender equality principle in the new ESF programmes.

The guide includes a checklist for assessing the inclusion of a gender equality perspective in the National Strategic Reference Frameworks. Furthermore, the guide also provides a series of examples of good practices.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/200606-reflection-note-gender_en.pdf

Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming

Assessment grid for ESF operational programmes

The grid provides a checklist for assessing how gender equality is taken into consideration in the ESF programmes.

Example of gender impact assessment

Department for Equal Opportunities, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (1999)

VISPO — Strategic Impact Assessment on Equal Opportunity (updated in 2006).

The guidelines include a methodological framework for gender impact assessment, gender analysis and gender evaluation of policies, and in particular of structural funds, to provide operational support to regional managing authorities and stakeholders in the planning of actions from a gender perspective. VISPO aims to:

- create context analysis and an assessment of scenarios aimed at an effective reading of one's own territory from a gender perspective;
- identify and define equal opportunities criteria for the selection of projects, which are valid for different types of actions to be financed, that make it possible to assign a preference and to identify those most representative;
- identify indicators for output and results that allow for ongoing evaluation focusing on equal opportunities.

<http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/resources/italy/vispo-valutazione-di-impatto-strategico-pari-opportunita>

International Finance Corporation (2012)

Gender impact of public-private partnerships

The study assesses the actual and potential gender impacts of public-private partnership (PPP) infrastructure projects across a number of sectors, among which the following are addressed by ERDF funding: healthcare, energy, industrial, transport and water/waste infrastructure. The study proposes a set of input, output and outcome indicators to assess the gender impact of PPP in these areas. Some of the proposed indicators can also be used for other areas targeted by ERDF.

<http://www.pidg.org/resource-library/results-monitoring/pidg-ifc-gender-impact-of-private-public.pdf>

Examples of stakeholders that can be consulted

European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming

(for integrating a gender perspective in ESF)

During 2010-2014, the European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming (Gender-CoP) was a community dedicated to integrating the gender dimension into the ESF programmes (2014-2020) in relation to the EU-2020 targets. The aim of the Gender-CoP was to integrate gender mainstreaming into ESF management in order to improve ESF management and the possibilities to reach gender equality objectives set by the EU, national governments and the managing authorities.

<http://www.gendercop.com/>

WINNET Europe (the European Association of Women Resource Centres)

Enhancing women's active participation in regional development and growth.

WINNET Europe, the European Association of Women Resource Centres, was formed in 2006 by national, regional and local women resource centres. In 2014, WINNET Europe had member organisations in 11 of the 28 EU Member States, with one outside the EU. The association's mission is, in a collaborative effort among national, federal/regional and local organisations in EU Member States, to support and reinforce the activities of resource centres for women and other similar women's organisations.

<http://www.winneteurope.org/web/page.aspx?refid=47>

Women in Europe for a Common Future

Women in Europe for a Common Future is an international network of over 150 women and civil society organisations implementing projects in 50 countries and advocating globally to shape a just and sustainable world in the main fields tackled by ESI funds.

<http://www.wecf.eu/>

Thematic Group on Equality

Sharing knowledge about equal rights and opportunities, gained from ESF projects.

The Thematic Group on Equality used to be one of the ESF's five national thematic groups. Now Arbetsmiljöforum i Norden AB — Working Life Forum is the owner. Its focus is on equality in the work-life balance, ensuring that the knowledge gained from hundreds of projects run under the ESF are at the disposal of the labour market's actors. Their principal issues are: (i) methods for equal treatment in working life; (ii) skills enhancement relating to all grounds of discrimination; (iii) gender mainstreaming; (iv) accessibility for people with disabilities.

Semester Alliance

The European Anti-poverty Network coordinates the work of the Alliance, which currently includes 15 EU major networks/organisations and three national pilot alliances (Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland). All European organisations involved are committed to engaging their national members in the alliance's work and in the European Semester. The overall aim of the EU Alliance is to achieve progress on a more democratic, social and sustainable EU strategy, by improving civil society and social actors' engagement in the European Semester. Its main objectives are therefore to: (i) ensure that all policies, including macroeconomic, contribute to the social, environmental/climate targets and equality commitments of the EU's Strategy (EU 2020 strategy); (ii) improve the legitimacy of the EU strategy through strengthening the engagement of environmental, social, equality organisations and trade unions in the EU decision-making process, (the European Semester) starting at the national level.

<http://semesteralliance.net>

Plan

DEFINE PLAN ACT CHECK

In this phase, it's appropriate to analyse budgets from a gender perspective. Gender budgeting is used to identify how budget allocations contribute to promoting gender equality. Gender budgeting brings visibility to how much public money is spent for women and men respectively. Thus, gender budgeting ensures that public funds are fairly distributed between women and men. It also contributes to accountability and transparency about how public funds are being spent.

Example of gender budgeting in regional development

Frey, R., in collaboration with Savioli, B. and Flörcken, T. (2012)

Gender budgeting in the federal ESF — a qualitative analysis.



The report presents a methodological framework for gender budgeting within the German Federal ESF programmes and concrete examples of its application. From a methodological point of view, the proposed approach suggests a qualitative application of gender budgeting that is not concerned with the quantitative funding allocation among men and women, but rather with what is expected with regards to content, namely the contribution to equality. This approach includes a classification of all funded activities according to their potential for affecting equality outcomes and the linkage of the (qualitative) classification with the implemented budget.

http://www.esf-gleichstellung.de/fileadmin/data/Downloads/Aktuelles/qual_gb-report_agency_gender_equality_esf.pdf

The European Parliament 2012 study 'The multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020 from a gender equality perspective ⁽²⁷⁾' proposes a gender budgeting methodology for analysing in a gender perspective the multi-annual financial framework proposal for 2014-2020. Furthermore, the study tests this methodology in five gender equality areas (economic independence; education and training; health and well-being; environment; fundamental rights and external relations), showing that the attention to gender is not given evenly by issue and that evaluation/monitoring in a gender perspective is still not as widespread as it should be to ensure an actual implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Examples of indicators for monitoring gender and regional development

Regional policy is embedded within the cohesion policy, and in particular within the ESI funds. ESI funds (ERDF/ESF/CF) finance several policy sectors that are associated with gender inequalities. For example, employment/unemployment, education and training, childcare or elderly care, social inclusion, and poverty in the ESF framework and energy, transport, ICT, environment, tourism, culture in the ERDF framework. Each policy sector has its own specific indicators for monitoring and evaluation. In some cases, gender-sensitive indicators are also included. For gender-sensitive indicators referred to in regional policy, please see the indicators included in each sector of the website: education, entrepreneurship, youth, poverty, employment, health, migration, digital agenda, energy, research, culture, tourism, environment, transport.

⁽²⁷⁾ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201201/20120123ATT36024/20120123ATT36024EN.pdf>

Examples of procurement

European Commission (2010)

Buying social: A guide to taking account of social considerations in public procurement

The purpose of this guide is (a) to raise contracting authorities' awareness of the potential benefits of socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) and (b) to explain in a practical way the opportunities offered by the existing EU legal framework for public authorities to take social considerations into account in their public procurement, thus paying attention not only to price but also to the best value for money.

Even though not specifically designed for regional development, SRPP can have a relevant impact on some intervention areas targeted by ERDF and ESF where public purchasers command a large share of the market such as construction, business services and IT.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6457&langId=en>

Act

DEFINE PLAN ACT CHECK

In the implementation phase of a policy or programme, ensure that all who are involved are sufficiently aware about the relevant gender objectives and plans. If not, set up briefings and capacity-building initiatives according to staff needs. Think about researchers, proposal evaluators, monitoring and evaluation experts, scientific officers, programme committee members, etc.

Examples of capacity-building initiatives about gender in regional development

Haataja, M., Leinonen, E., and Mustakallio, S. (2011)

Training and consulting project of the gender mainstreaming development programme Valtava.

The guide *Gender mainstreaming in development programmes and projects* is drawn up on the basis of the EU's structural fund programmes and it provides indications on how to mainstream gender in the cohesion policy and funds.

<http://www.gendercop.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Gender-mainstreaming-in-development-programmes-and-projects.pdf>

Department for Work and Pensions, European Social Fund in England, 2012

Gender equality good practice guide.

This guide aims to: promote a gender dimension to supporting disadvantaged people within the ESF programme; remind partners of the need to consider gender alongside other protected characteristics such as disability, race and age when designing and delivering programme support; and provide clarity on the issue of promoting female participation in the ESF programme. The guide includes a checklist for assessing the gender dimension of training within ESF.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/314951/esf-gender-equality-good-practice-guide-2012.pdf

Example of gender language in regional development

It is not yet a common practice to include gender aspects in hard investments. A short movie produced by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions illustrates situations where gender should ideally be applied, and concrete examples of gender mainstreaming in infrastructure and city maintenance. It's worth mentioning that these are two areas specifically targeted by ERDF.

The film is available in Spanish, German, English, French and Finnish.

<http://www.gendercop.com/new-film-shows-gm-in-practice/>

Check

DEFINE PLAN ACT CHECK

A policy cycle or programme should be checked both during — monitoring, and at the end — evaluation, of its implementation.

Monitoring the ongoing work allows for the follow up of progress and for remedying unforeseen difficulties. This exercise should take into account the indicators delineated in the planning phase and data collection based on those indicators.

At the end of a policy cycle or programme, a gender-sensitive evaluation should take place. Make your evaluation publicly accessible and strategically disseminate its results to promote its learning potential.

Example of monitoring and evaluation on gender in regional development

European Commission (2013)

EVALSED: The resource for the evaluation of socioeconomic development.

The guide is designed primarily for decision makers — specifically those who design and manage evaluations to enhance decision making on socioeconomic development policies. It defines the role of evaluation in socioeconomic development, discusses various ways to develop evaluation capacity and elaborates on evaluation approaches as well as providing guidance on how to design and implement evaluations and how to ensure their quality. The guide also includes a section on monitoring and evaluation from a gender equality perspective.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/guide/guide_evalsed.pdf

Agency for Gender Equality within the ESF (2012)

Guideline on evaluating the cross-sectoral gender equality goal in programmes.



The guide provides pointers for evaluating the cross-sectoral goal of gender equality in ESF programmes both at the level of implementation procedures and results and impacts.

http://www.esf-gleichstellung.de/fileadmin/data/Downloads/english_site/guideline_evaluation_agency_gender_equality_esf_2011.pdf

European Commission (1999)

MEANS Collection: Evaluation of socioeconomic programmes — transversal evaluation of impacts on the environment, employment and other intervention priorities.

Among the questions addressed by this book are the impact of structural measures in terms of employment, equality of opportunity between men and women and the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The book equips the reader with the tools necessary for analysing effects such as those not necessarily listed within the explicit objectives of the schemes evaluated. The book is not available free of charge.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/means_en.htm

Practical examples of gender mainstreaming in regional development

Germany

In March 2009, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs set up the Agency for Gender Equality within the ESF — a support structure for achieving more gender equality as a desired outcome of the ESF. The agency is based in Berlin. A team of experts advises the responsible actors on different levels of implementation of the ESF, with the goal of mainstreaming gender equality into the ESF programmes and their respective projects. The agency promotes this aim by offering ongoing support to ministries involved in programming and monitoring the ESF and implementation bodies. The agency offers training and counselling, publishes studies on ESF topics, offers detailed information on gender mainstreaming in the ESF via the internet, networks with national and international bodies and organisations and provides gender budget analysis.

<http://www.esf-gleichstellung.de/103.html>

Spain

The Institute for Women is an autonomous institution of the General State Administration, currently operating under the Secretary of State for Equality at the Ministry of Health, Social Policies and Equality to support gender mainstreaming within structural funds. The institute plays a double role in EU funds in Spain.

- As an intermediate body it is in charge of implementing measures aimed at promoting equality between women and men. For example the institute develops a number of activities aimed at strengthening gender mainstreaming in ESF implementation through transnational and interregional exchange and collaboration.
- It is also a national body responsible for ensuring compliance with gender mainstreaming in the operations co-funded by the funds. In this case several activities are organised, such as the Equality Policy Network which is a forum for debate and analysis to improve a real and effective integration of gender perspective in operations co-financed by the structural funds (ESF and ERDF) and the CFs.

<http://www.gendercop.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Comparing-Support-Structures-on-GM-Peer-Review-Stockholm-Oct-26-2011.pdf>

Italy

Several actions have been taken over the years to ensure gender mainstreaming in the structural funds programming and implementation. Some of the most relevant ones are:

- technical assistance to regional managing authorities of EU funds to promote the equal opportunity principle and gender mainstreaming in the programming and implementation of EU structural funds;
- the design of VISPO guidelines for assessing the gender impact of designed structural funds policies;
- the setup of gender task forces for the regional managing authorities in order to ensure the integration of the gender equality perspective in all the initiatives undertaken by the regional operational programmes.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/675/675221/675221en.pdf

UK

The gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming plan for England and Gibraltar 2007-2013 (revised in 2014) aims to:

1. reinforce and support the commitments made in the 2007-2013 England and Gibraltar ESF operational programme to mainstream gender equality and equal opportunities;
2. provide the national ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Sub-committee with a management tool and point of reference for assessing progress in mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities;
3. propose objectives which support the achievement of equality targets and to contribute, in particular, to increasing the female participation rate for the second half of the programme period.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/317358/equality-mainstreaming-plan-mar-14.pdf

Sweden

During the programming period 2007-2013, the Swedish Managing Authority financed the project ESF Jämt whose purpose was to assist other ESF funded projects with implementing gender equality. Between 2009 and 2012, eight project supporters and a national coordinator worked in ESF Jämt to make gender equality a central feature of selected ESF projects and projects applying for funds. The methods used by the project supporters include:

- initial talks and an introduction to gender equality;
- concrete advice and ideas on how to integrate a gender equality perspective into the projects;
- basic training and workshops in gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

<http://standard.gendercop.com/project/capacity-building/>

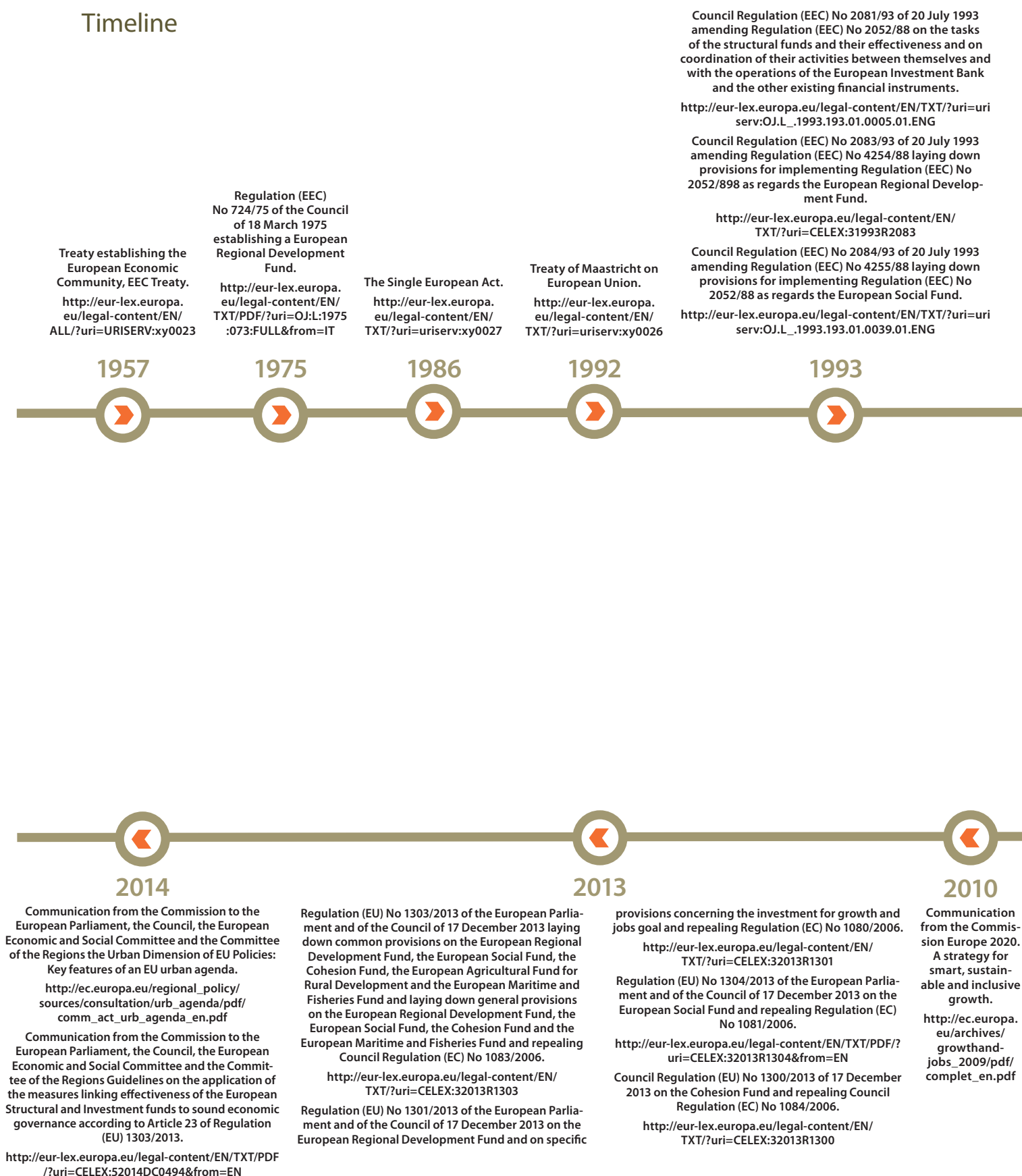
Poland

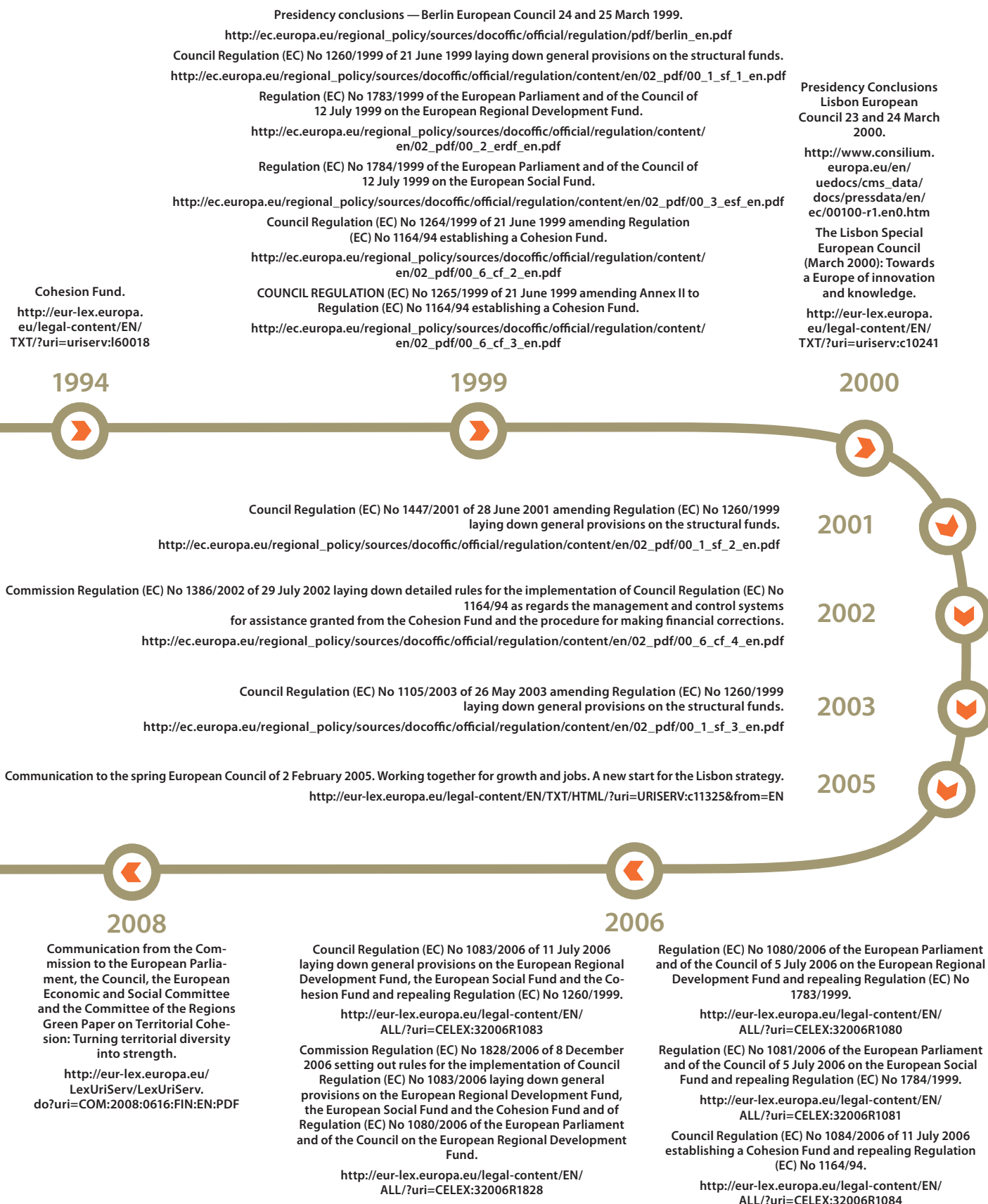
The implementation of the gender mainstreaming approach is ensured by obliging every application for funding to include an in-depth analysis of the situation of women and men. The evaluation of the project application is made according to minimum standard requirements, specified in the Project Evaluation Charter. The application is excluded from consideration for funding when it fails to achieve a minimum of two out of the six stated minimum standards. The minimum standards consist of the illustration of the real gender proportion in the project's problem area or increasing the presence of under-represented groups. The analysis of the real situation of men and women in the project must illustrate with appropriate data the situation of gender equality in the project's problem area, stressing the existence of any equality barriers. The actions planned in the project must adequately respond to the analysis of this situation, should address the barriers and take into account, if possible, the differences in needs of men and women. Also the expected results in the project must take into account the gender analysis. Finally, the applicant must also explain how she/he is going to provide for gender equality in the management of the project.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/implementation_gender_equality.pdf

5. Want to know more?

Timeline







6. Current policy priorities at EU level

At the EU level, regional development is embedded within the cohesion policy. Under the EU's 2014-2020 budget, the cohesion policy invests EUR 325 billion in Member States, their regions and cities to deliver the EU 2020 goals of creating growth and jobs, tackling climate change, energy dependence and reducing poverty and social exclusion ⁽²⁸⁾.

In the period 2014-2020 the cohesion policy focuses on 11 priority objectives:

- strengthening research, technological development and innovation;
- enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT;
- enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs;
- supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
- promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management;
- preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency;
- promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures;
- promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
- promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;
- investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning;
- enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration ⁽²⁹⁾.

The cohesion policy also aims to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU by correcting imbalances between regions. In fact, areas that are naturally disadvantaged from a geographical viewpoint such as remote, mountainous or sparsely populated areas will benefit from

special treatment to address possible disadvantages due to their remoteness.

Three structural and investment funds (ERDF, ESF and CF) support the delivery of these objectives. Even though the ERDF addresses all thematic objectives, it is mainly targeted at the following priorities:

1. productive investment which contributes to creating and safeguarding sustainable jobs, through direct aid for investment in SMEs;
2. productive investment, irrespective of the size of the enterprise concerned;
3. investment in infrastructure providing basic services to citizens in the areas of energy, environment, transport and ICT;
4. investment in social, health, research, innovation, business and educational infrastructure;
5. investment in the development of endogenous potential through fixed investment in equipment and small-scale infrastructure, including small-scale cultural and sustainable tourism infrastructure, services to enterprises, support to research and innovation bodies and investment in technology and applied research in enterprises;
6. networking, cooperation and exchange of experience between competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social partners and relevant bodies representing civil society ⁽³⁰⁾.

Member States and regions are required to invest a significant part of the ERDF (between 50 % and 80 %) in these priority areas which receive up to EUR 100 billion (close to 30 %) of the ERDF budget ⁽³¹⁾.

⁽²⁸⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/what/future/index_en.cfm#_ftnref1

⁽²⁹⁾ European Commission, Panorama cohesion policy 2014-2020, No 48, 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/panorama/pdf/mag48/mag48_en.pdf.

⁽³⁰⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006.

⁽³¹⁾ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1301>
⁽³¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/what/future/index_en.cfm#_ftnref1

Through the ESF, the cohesion policy contributes to the EU 2020 priorities in the fields of employment, education and social inclusion (at least 20 % of the ESF in each Member State will have to be used to support this objective) ⁽³²⁾. In detail, the main priorities of the ESF for the period 2014-2020 are:

- promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
- promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, including gender discrimination;
- investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning;
- enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders, and efficient public administration ⁽³³⁾.

In addition, the ESF will also contribute to the following cohesion policy objectives, complementing ERDF funding:

- supporting the shift towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient, resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable economy;
- enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of ICTs;
- strengthening research, technological development and innovation;
- enhancing the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises ⁽³⁴⁾.

The CF focuses on the following investment priorities:

- supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
- promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management;
- preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency;
- promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures;
- enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities, stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the CF ⁽³⁵⁾.

⁽³²⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/what/future/index_en.cfm#_ftnref1

⁽³³⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1304&from=EN>.

⁽³⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1304&from=EN>.

⁽³⁵⁾ Council Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of 17 December 2013 on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1084/2006. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1300>.



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Organisations and institutions

Committee of the Regions' Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform — a group of over 170 cities and regions from the 28 EU Member States, monitoring how Europe 2020 is implemented on the ground and promoting the exchange of good practices. (No evident work on gender; however there is potential for spreading gender equality principles.)
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Semester Alliance — a broad coalition bringing together major European civil society organisations and trade unions, representing thousands of member organisations on the ground at European, national and local levels in the EU for a more democratic, social and sustainable Europe 2020 strategy, by strengthening civil dialogue engagement in the European Semester at national and EU levels.
<http://semesteralliance.net>

Thematic Group on Equality — sharing knowledge about equal rights and opportunities, gained from ESF projects.
www.temalikaehandling.se



<http://eige.europa.eu>



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