

Gender Budgeting

Gender budgeting as a way of promoting accountability and transparency in public finance planning and management

What does this mean?

An important part of gender budgeting is analysing the impact of budgets on women and men. This makes gender budgeting key to monitoring how public budgets are working towards meeting a country's gender equality goals. Gender budgeting is "a mechanism for establishing whether a Government's gender equality commitments translate into budgetary commitments"^[1] – in essence, applying gender budgeting means holding governments accountable for their gender policy commitments. Auditing institutions, parliaments, civil society and the media all play a crucial role in monitoring and holding governments accountable for public budgets. The Women's Budget Group in the United Kingdom is a good example of civil society doing this.^[2]

Applied systematically, gender budgeting can contribute to increasing participation by providing gender-responsive participation mechanisms in budget processes. This, in turn, increases transparency. For example, establishing a practice of public consultations and participation in budget preparation, or of public participation in monitoring budgets, boosts participation in budget processes^[3] as long as we ensure the equal participation of women and men in all their diversity, while taking into account their contributions equally.

Spain: steering Operational Programme actions in a more gender-equal direction

In Spain, efforts to achieve goals through the EU Funds recognise the importance of high quality gender analysis. New investments can cause new inequalities. For example, gender analysis revealed that new technologies in public administration services – such as e-administration or e-government – would mean a decrease in the number of actual employees within public administration. This would hit women the hardest, as most employees in this sector are women. In tandem, e-services were identified as having a potentially positive impact on work-life balance by speeding up time-consuming administrative procedures and reducing care burdens by delivering services electronically, such as medical services.

This situation was identified and addressed in Spanish Operational Programmes (OPs), which are aligned with the objectives of Spain's national gender strategy. The active participation of national and subnational gender equality bodies in OPs' M&E enabled gender mainstreaming throughout all phases of the OPs.

Alongside strong gender analysis, initiatives such as Spain's National Network on Gender Equality in the European Funds^[4] have been key instruments for disseminating experiences, good practices, pilot activities, training and capacity development, while fostering collaboration and cooperation between fund managers. The network offers:

- several guides;
- the organisation of training initiatives;
- technical advice for fund managers;
- support for local initiatives, enabling stakeholders responsible for these initiatives to submit documents for comments and revision;
- the continuous collection of experiences in its database.

Footnotes

[1] Sharp, R. & Broomhill, R. (2002), 'Budgeting for Equality: The Australian experience', *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 8, No 1, p. 26.

[2] For more information, see: <https://wbg.org.uk/>

[3] EIGE (2017), *Gender Budgeting*, EIGE, Vilnius. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-budgeting>

[4] For more information, see: <http://www.igualdadgenerofondoscomunitarios.es/>
