

Gender Budgeting

Steps for defining partnerships and multi-level governance

The CPR offers guidance on multilevel governance in relation to defining groups of partners to include in stakeholder consultations and representation on monitoring committees.

Defining groups of partners to include in stakeholder consultations

urban and other public authorities

Bodies responsible for promoting gender equality in urban and other public authorities include government agencies, such as advisory councils on gender equality, semi-autonomous central administrative bodies, and entities at the subnational/provincial and municipal levels^[1].

Gender-relevant partners may include focal points, or individuals responsible for promoting gender equality with legal or administrative roles, or sector-specific jurisdiction.

economic and social partners

Country-specific economic and social partners can include gender equality bodies that are enhancing gender equality in the labour market and through workplace social dialogues. They include trade unions, industry bodies and local economic development agencies.

relevant bodies representing civil society, environmental partners and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, fundamental rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality and non-discrimination

Relevant civil society organisations include centres for women’s studies and research; feminist organisations; skills training, academic and educational institutions; women’s enterprises; other social enterprises; private sector companies; the local and national media; and NGOs. They especially encompass women’s organisations, NGOs working to promote gender equality, civil society organisations led by people with disabilities, and civil society organisations representing people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds, including immigrant women’s associations, among others.

Representation on monitoring committees

Monitoring committees guide the implementation of EU Funds and ensure that this meets the criteria set out in Article 39 of the CPR: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value. Gender inequalities have impacts on all of these criteria. Therefore, ensuring that these criteria are met requires high levels of gender competence, in the form of guidance from gender relevant partners and experts. Representation on monitoring committees should take different aspects into account.

- **The representation of gender relevant stakeholders.** This means ensuring the representation of the aforementioned gender-relevant stakeholders – especially gender experts – in monitoring committee consultation activities.
- **The representation of both women and men.** Ensuring gender balance among group members (i.e. at least 40/60 representation) is vital. This also means looking at the representation of women and men as policy beneficiaries and in decision-making processes. Women should benefit from EU policies to the same extent as men. However, compared with men, they are significantly underrepresented in decision-making positions. When there is a gender imbalance in participation related to planning and decision-making processes on policy actions, this affects the outcomes – with serious impacts for women and men. Policies benefit from diverse perspectives. More gender-balanced representation brings in different experiences that can improve decision-making processes and overall results.

Austria: civil servants increase their knowledge on equality and monitoring within the EU Funds

Under the auspices of Austria’s PA, the country has taken multiple steps towards the inclusion of gender experts and partners. As discussed earlier in this toolkit, these include:

- forming focus groups that include experts on gender equality;
- holding day-long open conferences about the interim results of public comments on the draft budget;
- involving an official national representative expert on gender equality (from the Federal Chancellery);
- making sure there is balanced participation of women and men in the programming group.

The civil servants involved in the ERDF benefitted from training for gender equality initiatives organised with technical assistance from the fund. The evaluation of the ERDF's OP includes a distinct evaluation of the horizontal principles, including gender-mainstreaming activities across the individual priority axes. The evaluation also actively involved relevant stakeholders by including them in steering groups and workshops. In terms of the fund's implementation, monitoring and the steering of activities, gender experts and partner representatives are included in the monitoring committee. As members, they ensure the balanced, diverse representation of different perspectives.

To ensure that applicants and managing authorities' staff understand gender equality, two different measures are implemented, targeting these two groups separately. Each applicant receives an equal opportunities questionnaire, which boosts their awareness of existing gender inequalities and how to address these within funded activities. At the same time, training sessions on gender equality are conducted to increase knowledge among managing authorities' staff.

ESF measures also include efforts to increase the 'knowledge bank' for gender equality within the fund. Intermediary agencies (zwischenengeschaltete Stellen) are supported, as are beneficiaries engaged in implementing gender equality systematically within all project phases. In each ESF investment priority, at least half of the budget must target women and at least half of all participants in planned activities are women. To monitor the ESF, two separate focus groups were set up: one for gender mainstreaming and one for gender equality. Created during the planning phase and intended to last for the entire lifespan of the fund, these groups monitor progress on reducing identified inequalities between women and men through ESF measures.

[1] For more information on national gender structures for each EU Member State, see EIGE, Gender Mainstreaming in the EU Member States, Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/countries>
