

# Gender-responsive Public Procurement

## Needs assessment

Depending on the users/beneficiaries of the procurement, **needs assessment** may be a strictly internal process (e.g. office furniture or equipment is purchased) or may involve external people and organisations (e.g. social housing or a civic centre is constructed or a website/application is made accessible to the public). Needs assessment may be undertaken either formally (e.g. through a questionnaire or structured consultation) or informally through conversations with users. Regardless of the approach, it is important to ensure that the respondents reflect the broader group of intended users and a **gender balance** is ensured among the respondents.

In some cases, it may make sense to involve an external organisation to ensure that gender considerations have been adequately addressed at this vital first stage.

The results of the needs assessment will inform the drafting of tender documents and the information made available to bidders as part of the preliminary market consultation (see "[Preliminary market consultation](#)"), if this is undertaken. One way of doing this is by creating a needs statement, which describes the reason for the purchase and should clearly incorporate the gender aspects identified.

## Example tool: Checklist to assess the gender relevance of purchases (by the city of Vienna, Austria)

In **Austria**, to make it easier for different departments to assess the gender relevance of a specific purchase, the city of Vienna has developed a simple checklist on the gender relevance of purchases. Completed with guiding questions, this checklist is useful when considering if the gender perspective is relevant to a contract. It also helps to promote thinking about how gender considerations can be integrated into the procurement process.

After a paragraph introducing the importance of gender aspects in procurement, the checklist asks three questions. First, it asks if the product or service has an impact on people; some guiding examples are also given. Second, two subquestions address gender and other aspects, such as age or disability. Third, the checklist asks how the gender perspective will be addressed in the contract.

This checklist can be adapted and used to raise awareness of GRPP and to support procurers when identifying the procedures in which to include gender aspects. It targets people working in administration who are not experts in GRPP and it aims to offer an easy-to-use approach. This checklist of the city of Vienna also usefully provides the contacts of GRPP experts.

As an example of how the checklist was used, for the organisation and implementation of an annual day of action to get girls interested in traditionally male-dominated professions, the city of Vienna required the successful bidder to implement measures for their staff on improving work-life balance during the performance of the contract.

## **Examples of needs assessment in public procurement procedures**



In **France**, the department of Gironde employed a gender consultant at the preliminary stage of a tender to help design and build new secondary schools to ensure that a gender perspective concerning the use of space was included in the tender documents.

**Fictitious example.** In a **contract for the management of a public recreation centre**, the needs statement might include the following: 'The operator will be responsible for ensuring that the facility is used equally by women and men, by ensuring that the allocation of space, activities, equipment, training and time slots encourages equal participation and opportunities for users of all abilities and interests.' It might also include more specific requirements regarding consultation and communication with users.

## **How to act**

Identify the elements of a tendering procedure in which gender aspects can be integrated before starting a needs assessment. Then, identify the potential users of what is procured to establish who to gather information from. For example, for public transport, consider if there may be different users at different times of the day or in different parts of the city.

See if similar products, services or works were procured in the past and, if this information is available, identify what the impact was on different users (including users of different genders and different family situations).

Use different channels (e.g. social media, postal mail, live events) to gather information for the different end users (e.g. teenagers, pensioners) affected by specific products, services or works.

### **Mistakes to avoid**

The earlier in the process that different needs are taken into account, the greater the impact that can typically be achieved. Avoid, therefore, delaying incorporating gender considerations until the drafting of the tender documents.

When assessing the different needs of men and women, girls and boys, refrain from making assumptions. If possible, engage users directly, ensuring equal representation of women and men in all their diversity, or involve experts.

When retendering for a requirement, avoid assuming that users' needs remain the same, as this may perpetuate gender inequalities in the way that the product or service is provided.