

Institutional Transformation

Step 5: Establishing a gender mainstreaming support structure

Key aspects

The gender mainstreaming support structure needs to have clearly defined tasks from the outset.

Precise organisational form of the gender mainstreaming support structure needs to be mapped out

Equal opportunities officers

Many public institutions already have equal opportunities officers who are responsible for preventing discrimination amongst the employees of an organisation and for promoting equal opportunities for the organisation's workforce. However, the tasks of this role are not the same as those of a gender mainstreaming support structure, meaning that a different organisational form and authority is required. While **equal opportunities officers focus** on equal opportunities within an organisation's personnel, a gender mainstreaming support structure's role is to facilitate organisational change with respect to an organisation's functionality and outcome. This is why the role of an equal opportunities officer should not be merged with that of the gender mainstreaming support structure.

Gender mainstreaming support structure - roles and tasks:

consulting the management regarding the development of the gender mainstreaming strategy and the implementation of all necessary steps

raising awareness, communicating gender mainstreaming, networking

conceptual tasks, e.g. the development of appropriate gender mainstreaming methods and tools

creating a gender equality competence development plan

supporting staff members with the implementation of gender mainstreaming methods and tools and the development of gender equality action plans

establishing and maintaining a gender information management system

quality management, for instance, carrying out gender impact assessments of planned

measures (e.g. funding programmes and projects)

monitoring the process of organisational change and the progress made in implementing gender mainstreaming

coordinating and regulating the process of introducing gender mainstreaming

Organisational form and position with the organisation

- 1 A gender mainstreaming support structure may be part of the workforce and included in the organisational structure:

it is strategically important to have both a direct link to the senior management as well as a connection with the specialist work

consider which position within the organisation is to be assigned to the gender mainstreaming support structure.

a temporary internal gender mainstreaming support structure may be set up, e.g. a steering committee or working groups for the [organisational analysis](#) and the [development of a gender mainstreaming strategy](#).

a permanent support structure to supervise the implementation of gender mainstreaming can then, for example, take the cross-organisational form of a separate organisational unit or have a decentralised organisation, e.g. assigned officers in each unit of the organisation.

- 2 A gender mainstreaming support structure can also be set up as an externally commissioned unit:

The advantage of this is that skills and knowledge about implementing gender mainstreaming that are needed but not available from within an organisation can be provided by external experts over a set period of time.

However, an external support structure can only act in an advisory capacity as it is not integrated into an organisation's internal procedures and hierarchies.

Resources and skills



Qualifications: *methodological knowledge in this field, specialist gender expertise and familiarity with the organisational development.*

If staff members are to take on the tasks of the gender mainstreaming support structure, it may be necessary for them to receive relevant further training or be temporarily supported by external experts.

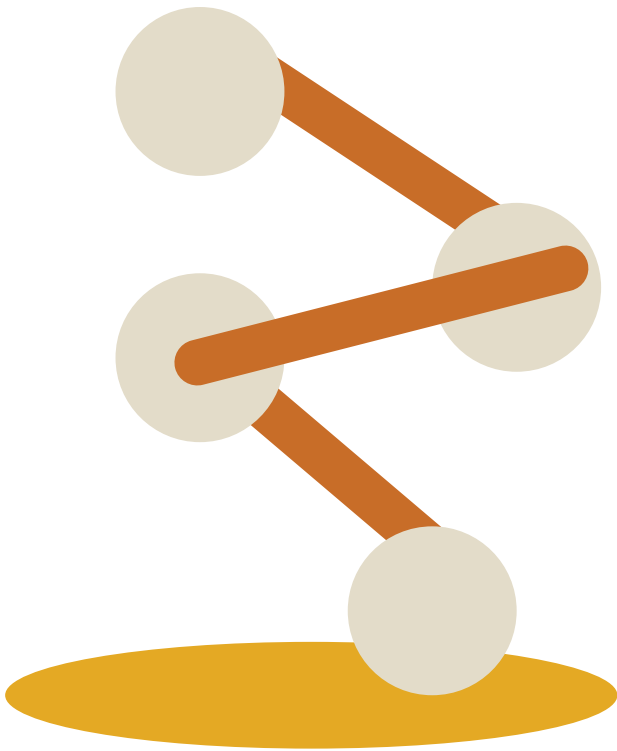


Time resources: *working hours should be determined and planned realistically in accordance with the varied range of tasks - explicitly specify the exact percentage of time allocated for supporting the implementation of gender mainstreaming*



Financial resources: *it may be useful for the gender mainstreaming support structure to have its own budget.*

Financial resources may, for example, be used to pay for external consultants and trainers, for commissioning the development of gender mainstreaming methods, carrying out surveys, the publication of brochures or the creation of a website.



Authority: *consider what powers of authority should be assigned to the gender mainstreaming support structure*

the integration of the gender mainstreaming support structure into the organisation's decision-making processes is also a key aspect for creating accountability.

Examples

In Vienna, the Department for Gender Mainstreaming supports the departments and offices of the Vienna City Administration in their gender mainstreaming process. The department is responsible for the strategic coordination and networking and provides information on gender aspects.

[View Example](#) →

The Belgian Institute for the Equality of Women and Men undertakes research, provides recommendations to public authorities, supplies information and has established a network with various key players, among other activities.

[View Example](#) →

The German Agency for Gender Equality within the ESF (2009-2014) was set up as a support structure to accompany the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the German ESF programme.

[View Example](#) →