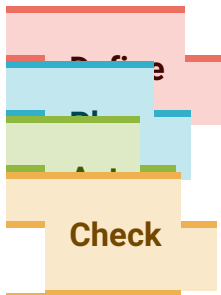


# Gender Mainstreaming Cycle



This is the starting point when you define the precise policy needs to be addressed by the public intervention in a specific policy field. You have to assess in which way and to what extent the policy is gender relevant and needs specific interventions to address gender gaps and differences. The first step is to gather any sex-disaggregated data and information that are useful to analyse the situation of women and men in the respective policy domain. Then, try to answer the following questions:

- In which ways does the policy affect the everyday lives of women and men in general or specific groups of women and men?
- Are there any gender differences and/or gaps in the policy sector (with regard to rights, participation/representation, access to and use of resources, values and norms that affect gender-specific behaviour)?

Specific methods that can be used in this phase are [gender analysis](#) and [gender impact assessment](#). It might be pertinent to provide training to the staff who will conduct the analysis.

Do not forget to check whether knowledge has already been generated in this area (e.g. studies, programme or project reports, evaluations from previous policies). Data and information will contribute to a robust understanding about the reality, help to design a better policy or programme, avoid negative effects on women or men, and address existing gender inequalities.

[Click here](#)

for inspiration on how to conduct a proper literature review, to critically examine concepts and theories, taking into consideration underlying assumptions that may be gender-biased.

Consider consulting stakeholders (e.g. gender experts, women's organisations, other civil society organisations) on the topic at hand to share and validate your findings and improve your policy or programme proposal. This will enhance the learning process on the subject for all those involved and will improve the quality of the work done at the EU and Member States level.

When defining your policy or programme:

- Take into account the findings from your analysis;
- Define gender-sensitive and gender-specific policy goals based on these findings;
- Define gender equality objectives.

Here are a few tips that can be used for your gender analysis when assessing the representation of women in different policy sectors:

- Identify gender gaps among professionals (wages, access to hierarchical positions) in the main institutions in the sector;
- Identify the role of women in decision-making at the local and national levels in the sector;
- Consider the governance of an institution through a gender lens, to assess whether selection, appraisal, promotion and evaluation practices may reflect gender stereotypes that disadvantage both women employees and women managers.

Gender Plan refers to the process of planning the implementation phase of policies or programmes from a gender perspective. It involves identifying gender policy objectives and appropriate approaches and interventions to achieve them.

Plan specific actions to be conducted in order to achieve the goals and measures established in your policy or programme.

In this phase, it is relevant to analyse budgets from a gender perspective. Gender budgeting is used to identify how budget allocations contribute to the promotion of gender equality. Gender budgeting shows how much public money is spent for women and men. It is a technique that can be used in the planning stage, but also to monitor on-going programmes and to review past expenditures. 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. Check here to know how to conduct [gender budgeting](#).

When planning, do not forget to establish [indicators](#) that will allow for monitoring of equality objectives - measure and compare the effect of the policy or programme on women and men over the timeframe of its implementation.

Remember that it is also important to define the appropriate moments to monitor and evaluate your policy.

When preparing calls for proposals in the framework of funding programmes, or terms of reference in the context of [public procurement](#)

procedures (notably for contractors to be hired for policy support services), do not forget to formalise gender-related requirements. In practical terms, the following requirements may be included:

- Gender-balanced composition of the project team
- A specific section about gender-related concerns in the grant application: mapping of the situation of women and men in the concerned area; elaboration of gender-specific objectives in line with the latest findings and with the objectives of the call; and explanation on how these objectives would be achieved.
- The application of user-centred and/or participatory methodologies which take into account a gender dimension by directly involving a fair share of women in the process and by looking at how gender inequalities/differences are structuring the domains and the contexts of a particular policy area.

These aspects are to be included in the evaluation criteria of the proposals or tenders and checked during the implementation of the project.

Ensure the participation of gender experts in teams or groups where decisions are taken, especially regarding the definition of work programmes and the attribution of budgets. Make sure that all those who are expected to take the gender dimension into consideration are properly briefed. Think about members of committees and panels, expert groups, juries, and – very importantly – expert evaluators of proposals.

Strive to bring transparency into the whole process. Make your plan, monitoring and evaluation reports publicly available. This will build confidence between your institution and the target group(s) of your policy or programme.

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 this is not the case, set up briefings and capacity building initiatives according to the staff's needs. Gender equality training – as part of capacity building initiatives - to raise capacity on how to integrate a gender equality dimension in the sector will usually be needed for all actors who are expected to contribute: researchers, proposal evaluators, monitoring and evaluation experts, scientific officers, programme committee members, etc. It is also important that support measures are put in place, so that during implementation, difficulties can be overcome and further guidance is available. Support can take various forms, such as:

- Coaching by a gender expert;
- The existence of an appointed gender focal point in the department who can assist staff integrate a gender perspective in their work;
- Sharing experiences, lessons and good practices about gender in a certain policy area with colleagues. You may want to consider setting up an informal working/support group on the issue of gender equality in the policy sector;
- Offering the possibility to consult gender (mainstreaming) experts, for example through a helpdesk;
- Referring to EIGE for advice.

The promotion of gender competence will greatly contribute to a smooth implementation of your policy or programme.

Publications, communications, press releases might be issued during the implementation of your policy or programme. Do not forget to give visibility to gender issues and avoid the use of sexist language and stereotypical or discriminatory images. Click [here](#) to know more on how to communicate in a gender-sensitive way. Furthermore, when organising events and conferences, think carefully about the list of speakers: Is there a good balance between women and men speakers? Are women experts given sufficient attention?

Bear in mind that gender mainstreaming is as much about addressing gender inequalities in society through policies, as it is about the organisation in question. Existing working cultures, practices, processes and procedures, need to be critically (re-)considered. Internal obstacles for effective gender mainstreaming should be removed, and daily routines adapted to accommodate a gender mainstreaming approach.

[Learn more about Institutional Transformation](#)



To follow up progress and remedy possible unforeseen difficulties, it is necessary to monitor on-going work. This is needed at the programme level, but also at the project level. Indicators therefore have to be set and specific monitoring activities planned and implemented. You will need to collect data and information based on the indicators you have defined, in order to verify whether your goals and measures are being achieved.

Gender-sensitive [monitoring](#) allows gaps and difficulties to be identified and redressed as soon as possible, while changes that are necessary to accomplish what has been planned can still be introduced. Consider conducting gender-specific monitoring, i.e. monitoring that has the approach towards realising gender equality as its main focus.

According to the monitoring timeline you defined in the planning stage, follow up to ensure everything is taking place as planned. This exercise should take into account the indicators defined in the planning phase. Consider corrective actions in case obstacles, that can be immediately redressed, are identified in the process.

Ensure that the implementation of activities related to gender is followed up and reported upon. Reporting on monitoring results contributes to the learning on what works best, which is of paramount importance.

Monitoring of course also promotes accountability: hold those responsible for the implementation of actions accountable. Consider sanctions if needed.

In addition to monitoring, an evaluation should take place either on-going or ex post. It should take into account information and data collected and collated in the course of the policy or programme, as well as other knowledge and sources. Gender-sensitive evaluation should rely on evaluators with gender expertise, who are able to identify and apply evaluation questions and methods which integrate a gender equality perspective. Do not forget to formalise these requirements in the evaluation's Terms of Reference.

Consider conducting a gender-specific evaluation, focussing on the approach towards realising gender equality that has been followed. Such evaluation will significantly contribute to understanding what works well and where the difficulties are, allowing for the gender mainstreaming approach to be fine-tuned in future actions.

Make your evaluation publicly accessible and strategically disseminate its results to promote its learning potential. Keep in mind that this is a learning process. Your findings, the lessons learnt and recommendations from the evaluation will be very useful when redesigning the next framework of your policy or programme, and may even feed into the work of other policy areas.

