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GUIDE FOR ASSESSING GENDER MAINSTREAMING: DIAGNOSING IMPROVEMENTS AND STATE OF PLAY

20
25 Deliverable presenting the
approach and experiences of
the Gender Flagship Project

**GENDER
FLAGSHIP**

GENDER MAINSTREAMING
IN PUBLIC POLICY
AND BUDGET PROCESSES

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About the Gender Flagship project

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This gender mainstreaming assessment (GMA) guide was prepared as part of the project “Gender mainstreaming in public policy and budget processes” - i.e. the “Gender Flagship Project” - financed through the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). The project is being implemented by Expertise France (EF) in partnership with SG REFORM, European University Institute (EUI) and European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

The Gender Flagship Project aims to support Member States in understanding how to advance gender equality by better mainstreaming gender into their policies and budgeting, as well as addressing any related gaps. It offers technical support for analysing policies and budgets with a focus on gender mainstreaming, ensuring that all citizens, regardless of gender, have the opportunity to fully participate in and contribute to a fair society.

The project works with twelve Beneficiary Authorities (BAs) across nine Member States over a 49-month period (2022-2026). Each BA receives:

- In-depth analysis of current practices and development of tailored Gender Action Plans;

- Technical support from dedicated Local Experts and core Gender Flagship Project team experts to build capacity and implement tools, such as developing and improving their equality-related programmes and indicators, enforcing gender mainstreaming through developing specific processes (e.g. circulars), and developing gender-responsive budgeting methodologies.

Additionally, the Gender Flagship Project provides capacity development through overall online and in-person specific trainings on the latest trends, methodologies, and tools for effective gender mainstreaming. The project also facilitates peer learning and exchanges between countries, through study visits and workshops, helping Member States enhance their targeted approaches in specific sectors, policy areas, or regions.



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA Beneficiary Authority

CEDAW UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CoE Council of Europe

CSOs Civil Society Organisations

EF Expertise France

EIGE European Institute for Gender Equality

EU European Union

EUI European University Institute

GAP Gender Action Plan

GE Gender Equality

GIA Gender Impact Assessment

GM Gender Mainstreaming

GMA Gender Mainstreaming Assessment

GRB Gender-Responsive Budgeting

MoF Ministry of Finance

MS Member State

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

SG REFORM Reform and Investment Task Force of the European Commission

TSI Technical Support Instrument

FOREWORD. WHY GENDER MAINSTREAMING ASSESSMENTS MATTER FOR POLICY AND BUDGETING

Member States and stakeholders engaged in gender equality initiatives have shown significant interest in applying effective tools for gender mainstreaming¹, such as a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)² and Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)³. These tools play a crucial role in advancing national or regional strategies or action plans on gender equality. To support these efforts, an in-depth assessment of the state of play of gender mainstreaming serves as a foundational step in identifying challenges and opportunities for strengthening gender mainstreaming practices.

The purpose of the in-depth gender mainstreaming assessment (GMA) is to provide a deeper understanding of existing gender mainstreaming practices and procedures. It aims to examine how tools such as GIA and GRB are utilised and to identify areas for improvement. This process allows for a focused and evidence-based approach to addressing gaps in gender equality efforts, tailoring the gender mainstreaming assessment to the specific needs and priorities of the stakeholders involved.

Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)

Gender impact assessment is the process of comparing and assessing, according to gender relevant criteria, the current situation and trend with the expected development resulting from the introduction of the proposed policy. (European Commission)

Gender Mainstreaming (GM)

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. (United Nations)

The findings and recommendations derived from the gender mainstreaming assessment form the basis for developing a roadmap on gender mainstreaming, commonly referred to as a Gender Action Plan (GAP). This roadmap provides actionable guidance for integrating a gender perspective into public policies, programmes, and budgets. The ultimate goal is to enable policymakers, civil society representatives, and gender advocates to implement strategies that promote gender equality and ensure inclusivity.

¹ UN definition: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>

² European Commission definition: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/91d046cb-7a57-4092-b5d3-e4fd68097bb2>

³ Council of Europe definition: <https://rm.coe.int/1680596143>

Each GMA should be customised to reflect the unique context, gender equality related challenges and concerns at the national or regional level. The scope of the assessment should be defined collaboratively with key beneficiaries and stakeholders involved. This participatory approach ensures that the assessment is relevant, focused, and actionable, covering key areas such as gender mainstreaming processes and mechanisms, the gender impact of policies and services, and gender-responsive budgeting practices.

Through this process, the in-depth assessment of the state of play of gender mainstreaming becomes a strategic tool for fostering meaningful change. By illuminating pathways for improvement, it empowers stakeholders to take informed and effective steps towards achieving greater gender equality.

Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

It is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. (Council of Europe)



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Section 1

WHO CAN
BENEFIT FROM
THIS GUIDE –
USE CASES

The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming assessments is to enable national or regional public administrations to address and rectify gender disparities by considering the different needs, experiences, and impacts on individuals of all genders. Likewise, this guide enables administrations to design and implement strategies that promote gender equality and ensure inclusivity. Even though public administrations, who usually undertake these assessments, are the key target group, gender mainstreaming assessments can also be undertaken or used by policymakers, civil society, gender advocates, academia and researchers.

Use cases

National or regional public administrations

Develop tailored national, regional or local policies that address specific gender issues and gaps identified during gender mainstreaming assessment.

Policy makers

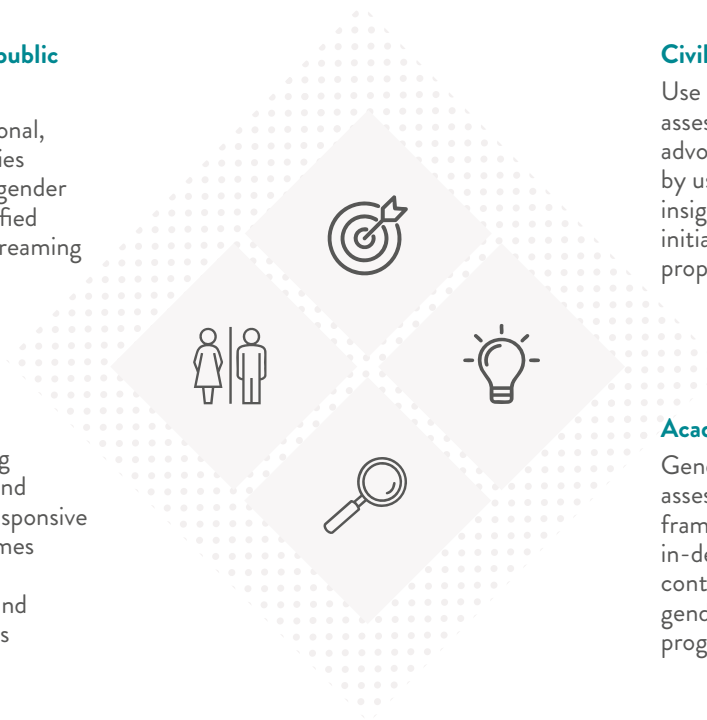
Using the results of gender mainstreaming assessments, design and implement gender-responsive policies and programmes by identifying gender mainstreaming gaps and addressing inequalities effectively.

Civil society organisations

Use gender mainstreaming assessment results to advocate for gender equality by using evidence-based insights to inform campaigns, initiatives, and funding proposals.

Academia and researchers

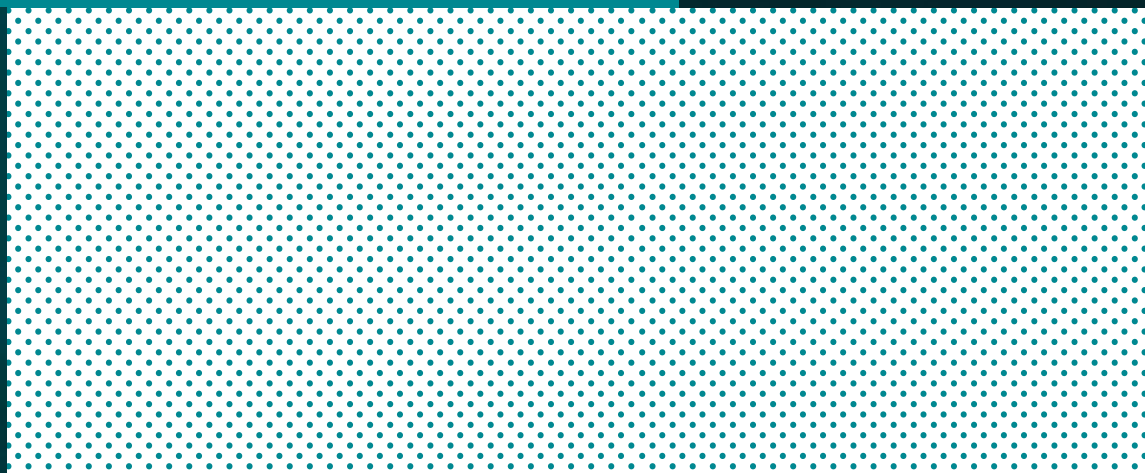
Gender mainstreaming assessments provide a framework for conducting in-depth studies and contributing evidence to gender-related policy and programme development.





Section 2

HOW TO READ
THIS GUIDE



This gender mainstreaming assessment guide is designed as a practical resource.

It provides a structured approach to evaluating gender mainstreaming in policies, budgeting, and governance structures.

To effectively use this guide, consider the following key points:

- The guide follows a step-by-step approach, allowing users to conduct comprehensive or targeted gender mainstreaming assessments depending on their needs.
- The methodology is flexible and can be adapted to different policy sectors, levels of governance, and institutional contexts. Use the table below to identify which sections to prioritise based on your primary objective. Not every assessment requires equal depth in all sections - the table provides a recommended pathway through the guide, distinguishing between essential starting points, core analytical work, and optional components that can be added as resources permit. You can also combine or sequence multiple approaches if your objectives evolve over time (for example, starting with a sectoral pilot and later expanding to a national strategy, or conducting data development work in parallel with GRB implementation).
- Each assessment step is accompanied by examples in the boxes. These boxes are informed by the gender mainstreaming assessments that were conducted for each beneficiary of the Gender Flagship Project. They illustrate what findings and information gender mainstreaming assessments can produce.

Scenario 1

National Gender Equality Strategy or Policy Framework

Main focus

Given the comprehensive whole-of-government scope, all sections of this guide are relevant and should be covered, though with varying depth based on available resources.

Priority sections and how to use them

START HERE:

- Step 1.1 – International commitments (map all EU/UN/CoE)
- Step 1.2 – National framework (comprehensive review)

THEN (CORE ANALYSIS):

- Step 2.1 – Policy cycle (all stages)
- Step 2.2 – Governance structures
- Step 2.3 – Accountability mechanisms
- Step 6 – Findings & recommendations

INCLUDE AS NEEDED:

- Step 3 – Resources and capacity (where roles/resourcing uncertain)
- Step 4 – Data and evidence (system-wide gaps)
- Step 5 – Outcomes and impacts (if initiatives exist)

Assessment emphases

Emphasise effectiveness of the current national GE machinery, cross-government stakeholder mapping, formal coordination mechanisms, accountability links, and coherence with higher-level frameworks.

Scenario 2

Sectoral Policy or Programme Pilot

Main focus

Assessment of sector design and delivery (policy cycle, governance, and use of evidence within one sector).

Priority sections and how to use them

START HERE:

- Step 1.3 – Pilot policy/sector assessment (define scope, entry points, challenges)

THEN (CORE ANALYSIS):

- Step 2.1 – Policy cycle (sector-specific)
- Step 4 – Data and evidence (sector administrative data, service statistics)
- Step 3 – Resources and capacity (where delivery units thin/fragmented)
- Step 6 – Findings & recommendations (sector action plan)

INCLUDE AS NEEDED:

- Step 1.2 – National framework (alignment, sector-relevant laws)
- Step 2.2 – Governance (if cross-ministry coordination needed)

Assessment emphases

Focus on sector budget/policy cycle entry points; capacity to mainstream gender, use sector indicators and datasets to evidence findings.

Scenario 3

Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Implementation

Main focus

Assessment of how gender is (or can be) integrated across the budget cycle.

Priority sections and how to use them

START HERE:

- Section 5 – Complete GRB assessment (all subsections 5.1.1–5.1.8: budget cycle entry points, MoF capacity)

Assessment emphases

Emphasise the extent of GM in the budget preparation and execution processes, budget circulars and instructions, expenditure classification, gender budget statements, and MoF and line-ministry training needs.

Scenario 4

Data Development or Gender Statistics Framework

Main focus

Assessment of gender data systems, indicators and use (availability, quality, governance and use of sex-disaggregated data).

Priority sections and how to use them

START HERE:

- Step 4 – Data and evidence analysis (inventory existing data, identify gaps, indicator definitions, quality assessment)

THEN (CORE ANALYSIS):

- Step 3 – Resources and capacity (statistical office capacity, data governance/roles, inter-agency coordination, training needs)
- Step 6 – Findings and recommendations (data development strategy)

INCLUDE AS NEEDED:

- Step 1.2 – National framework (data-related legal provisions only)
- Step 2.2 – Governance (data coordination mechanisms)
- Section 5.1.7 – Use of gender data in budgeting (if GRB relevant)

Assessment emphases

Align with SDG/EU indicators; review data collection methods and documentation standards; check intersectional disaggregation and actual use in M&E systems.

Scenario 5

Regional, Municipal or Local Initiative

Main focus

Assessment of sub-national governance, capacity and evidence for translating national commitments locally.

Priority sections and how to use them

START HERE:

- Step 2 – Implementation and governance (adapted to sub-national structures, regional/municipal departments, local coordination)

THEN (CORE ANALYSIS):

- Step 3 – Resources and capacity (local budget, regional staff capacity)
- Step 4 – Data and evidence (community-level data, local admin data)
- Step 6 – Findings and recommendations (local action plan)

INCLUDE AS NEEDED:

- Step 1.2 – National framework (how it applies locally)
- Step 1.3 – Priority local policy areas (transport, urban planning, services)

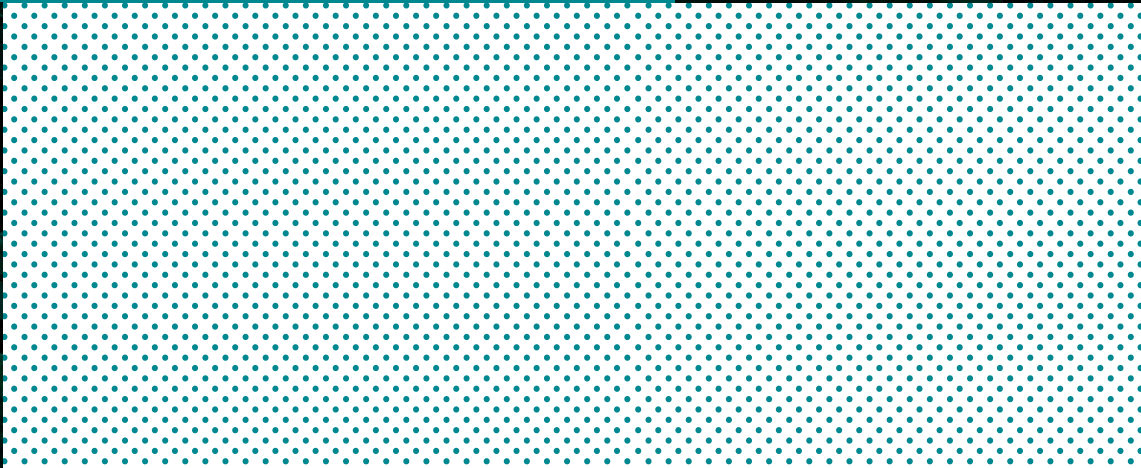
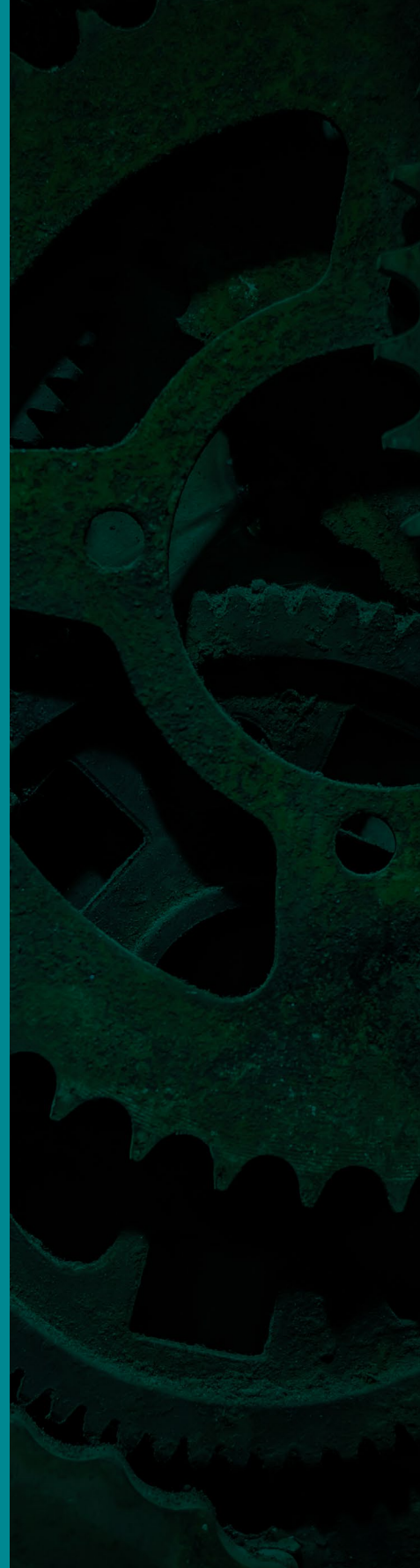
Assessment emphases

Emphasise participation/consultation processes and suitability of indicators at municipal/regional level; gender advocates and community engagement and local service delivery.



Section 3

KEY BUILDING
BLOCKS FOR GENDER
MAINSTREAMING
ASSESSMENTS:
CONTENT AND
PROCESS



A comprehensive gender mainstreaming assessment requires attention to two interrelated dimensions: content and process. These building blocks provide the foundation for understanding gender dynamics and formulating effective strategies to promote equality.

- Content assessments examine what is being done or proposed—such as policies, programmes, action plans, and budget allocations—and evaluate whether they are gender-sensitive and effectively promote equality. This dimension focuses on assessing the presence, quality, and impact of existing normative frameworks and available resources aimed at advancing gender equality.
- Process assessment investigates how actions are carried out and who is involved in decision-making and implementation. This includes evaluating internal government gender equality mechanisms (existing processes and structures), coordination among institutions, and external consultation processes involving diverse stakeholders such as civil society organisations, businesses, and academic institutions.

Together, these dimensions provide a holistic perspective that highlights both the structural and operational aspects of gender mainstreaming.

Below you can find the detailed framework for gender mainstreaming assessments, with content and process assessments integrated within those categories. This guide then follows this structure.

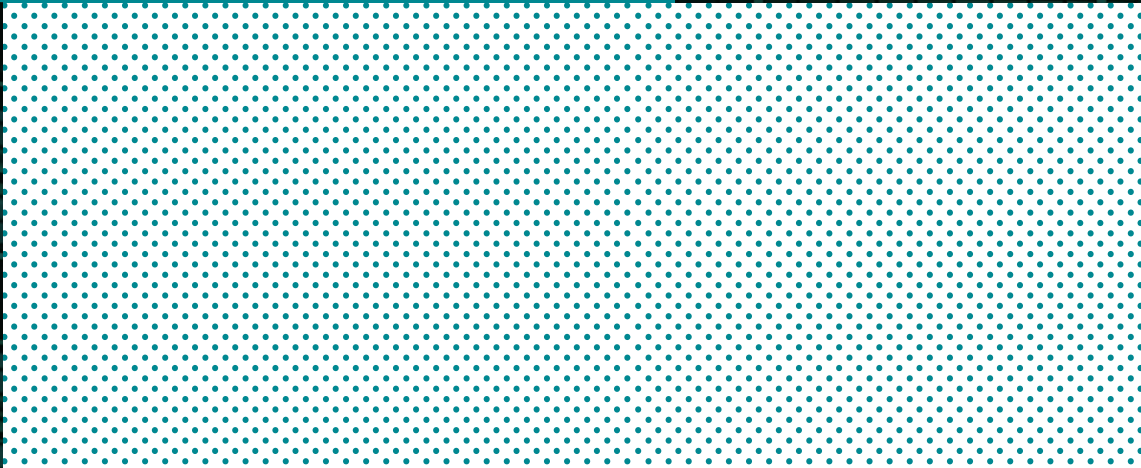
<p>1. Strategic and contextual assessment</p> <p>1.1 International commitments to gender equality</p> <p>1.2 National (or sub-national) policy and legal frameworks</p> <p>1.3 Pilot policy or sector assessments</p>	<p>2. Implementation and governance assessment</p> <p>2.1 Policy cycle</p> <p>2.2 Governance structures and processes</p> <p>2.3 Accountability mechanisms</p> <p>3. Resource allocation and capacity assessments</p>	<p>Human and financial resources and capacity assessment</p> <p>4. Data and evidence analysis</p> <p>5. Outcomes and impacts</p> <p>6. Findings and recommendations</p>
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While this guide primarily focuses on gender mainstreaming analysis, particular emphasis is placed on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) as a critical but often overlooked component. Drawing on our Gender Flagship project’s approach, the dedicated section in this guide provides guidance on assessing GRB, recognising it as a powerful tool for translating gender equality commitments into concrete policy and budgetary decisions. GRB offers added value by linking resources to results and ensuring that public spending contributes to gender equality outcomes. **Below is the detailed framework for GRB assessment that this guide follows.**

<p>Extent of gender-responsive budgeting</p> <p>1.1 Budgeting system and gender equality principles</p> <p>1.2 Institutional roles and coordination mechanisms</p>	<p>1.3 Existing gender budgeting practices</p> <p>1.4 Entry points for gender-responsive budgeting</p> <p>1.5 Public participation and gender advocacy in budgeting</p>	<p>1.6 Gender budgeting reference documents</p> <p>1.7 Use of sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators</p> <p>1.8 Capacity and training needs</p>
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Section 4

GENDER
MAINSTREAMING
ASSESSMENTS
– STEP BY STEP



1. *Strategic and contextual assessment*

1.1 INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY

- Review the international gender equality (GE) commitments of your country, such as the EU Gender Equality Strategy, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, (Istanbul Convention), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other frameworks.
- Assess and highlight their relevance at national/regional/local level.
- Discuss not only their content and targets, but also how strong the commitments towards these international strategies and objectives are and how the implementation is enforced.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments:

Leveraging international commitments to advance gender equality – a case study from Romania

Romania's alignment with international and European gender equality frameworks illustrates how global commitments can drive national policy development and implementation. As a member of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union, and other organisations promoting democratic values, Romania has committed to harmonising its legislation and practices with international norms. Key commitments include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the European Strategy for Gender Equality (2020–2025), the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention (2011), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

Against Women (CEDAW, 1979).

These frameworks emphasise integrating gender equality objectives across policy areas, promoting SDG 5 on gender equality, and ensuring gender-responsive budgeting. Recent national efforts have focused on embedding program-based budgeting that aligns with international standards such as OECD guidelines and SDG-linked indicators. For instance, in 2022, Romania advanced its technical self-assessment for OECD accession, addressing the Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life (OECD/LEGAL/0418).

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Romania, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.

1.2 NATIONAL (OR SUB-NATIONAL) POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

- Analyse the extent of implementation and impact of national gender related policy and legal frameworks, the extent of gender mainstreaming, including gender policies, strategies, laws, gender equality/gender mainstreaming programs, action plans, services and mechanisms.
- Assess the content of existing national policy and legal frameworks, national priority strategies, and government initiatives from a gender perspective to determine whether they are gender-sensitive and geared to promote gender equality.
- Assess the alignment of these national frameworks with international commitments.
- Identify gaps in legal and policy provisions that hinder effective gender mainstreaming.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments:

Integrating gender mainstreaming into local governance - a case study from Strasbourg

The City of Strasbourg has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to gender equality by being a signatory of the European Charter for Equality between Women and Men in Local Life since 2010. This commitment obligates the city to integrate gender considerations into all municipal activities, including budgeting processes, to advance equality. Strasbourg's efforts have been operationalised through the adoption of three successive gender equality action plans (2012–2016, 2017–2020, and 2022 onward), each building on the previous to address identified challenges and gaps.

The city's equality policy rests on three pillars: promoting professional equality within the administration, fostering a culture of equality across the city, and integrating women's rights and gender equality into public initiatives and policies. However, reviews of the earlier action plan revealed challenges, including insufficient cross-cutting integration of gender into municipal operations and the reliance on broad indicators that did not reflect local realities. Recognising these limitations, Strasbourg launched a targeted project in 2021–2022 to address the gaps. This involved technical support and training workshops aimed at piloting gender-responsive budgeting with the sports and citizen participation directorates. The initiative emphasised co-creation and experimentation to develop practical methods for embedding gender analysis into budget planning and impact assessment, ensuring municipal policies better address the differentiated needs of women, men, and diverse groups.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in City of Strasbourg, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments:**Strategic priorities for gender mainstreaming – a case study from Ireland**

Ireland's commitment to gender equality is enshrined in its Programme for Government 2025: Securing Ireland's Future, which outlines transformative objectives, including gender equality, gender-responsive budgeting, supporting women's participation in politics and STEM research and education, and promoting women's health. These commitments are supported by high-level strategies such as the National Strategy for Women and Girls (NSWG) 2017–2020, its successor Strategy for Women and Girls currently being developed, and targeted frameworks like the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence: Zero Tolerance.

Key advancements include integrating equality budgeting across government departments, piloted since 2018 and expanded following OECD recommendations.

However, challenges remain, including inconsistent implementation of gender impact assessments and a lack of systematic gender-disaggregated data. While progress has been made, such as the creation of interdepartmental networks and the development of a National Equality Data Strategy, gender mainstreaming remains unevenly implemented across government departments, often limited to ad hoc initiatives or nominal compliance.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Ireland, 2023 (with some adjustments in 2025). Gender Flagship Project.

1.3 PILOT POLICY OR SECTOR ASSESSMENTS

Describe the pilot policy, sector or program under your review – whether new or existing, and its relevance to gender equality, e.g. policy objectives, sector or program effect on gender mainstreaming, importance of gender mainstreaming, etc.

- Key considerations include a description of gender-specific challenges, actions taken to address them, available funding, and the extent of resources allocated to support gender mainstreaming within that policy or sector.
- Describe the effects of the pilot (new/existing) policy/sector/program/plan, etc., on gender equality and gender relations. This may include looking at structural inequalities, access to resources, participation in decision-making, and any unintended consequences—either positive or negative.
- Briefly describe the positive and negative effects of the pilot (new/existing) policy, sector or program on the target group, including women and men, girls and boys. It should help to identify areas where adjustments or improvements may be needed.

When identifying and selecting pilot areas for gender mainstreaming assessments, consider the following key factors:

- Target sectors where significant gender disparities exist, such as employment, health, education, infrastructure, and social protection.
- Prioritise areas that are undergoing policy reforms or budget planning processes, as these are opportunities where gender mainstreaming can be effectively integrated.
- Ensure the availability of data by choosing sectors that provide sex-disaggregated data and relevant statistics to support the assessment.
- Select areas with strong institutional commitment, where stakeholders are willing to collaborate and drive change.
- Focus on scalability by identifying sectors where successful gender-responsive strategies can be expanded to other policy areas/sectors.



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2. *Implementation and governance assessments*

2.1 POLICY CYCLE

Describe the extent of inclusion of a gender perspective in policy decision-making processes, from initial planning to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and dissemination.

- In the *planning phase*, the assessment should examine whether gender equality is explicitly recognised as an objective and whether a gender analysis informs decision-making. This includes examining the use of sex-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive indicators, and the involvement of key stakeholders, such as women’s organisations and gender experts.
- During *implementation*, the focus shifts to how gender-responsive strategies are applied in practice. This involves assessing whether specific mechanisms are in place to ensure equitable benefits for all genders and whether sufficient institutional support and financial resources are allocated to gender mainstreaming efforts.
- During *monitoring and evaluation (M&E)*, the assessment should determine whether policies track their differential impact on women and men. The focus should be on the assessment of gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data in M&E frameworks.
- In the *reporting and dissemination phase*, the assessment should examine how gender-related findings are communicated, and whether the progress on gender equality is documented and shared with relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, civil society organisations, and the general public.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Strengthening gender mainstreaming implementation – a case study from Ireland

A baseline analysis of Ireland's gender mainstreaming initiatives highlighted significant gaps in the implementation of gender equality measures across government departments, particularly within the policy development cycle. Ireland's gender mainstreaming initiatives face challenges due to gaps in implementation, inconsistent application of frameworks, and insufficient resources. Strengthening the Equality and Gender Equality Unit is critical to address this. Increased resources and staff would enable the Unit to:

- Define roles and accountability for gender equality across government;
- Provide tools, templates, and training for consistent implementation;

- Establish centralised monitoring and reporting systems;

- Lead interdepartmental networks like the Equality Budgeting Expert Advisory Group and the Equality Budgeting Interdepartmental Network.

Collaboration with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is recommended to integrate gender equality obligations under the Public Sector Duty into a cohesive action plan. Additionally, revisiting the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality's recommendation for a statutory body for gender equality or conducting a scoping exercise could provide long-term solutions if current efforts fall short.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Ireland, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.

2.2 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

- Map all key actors, examine the roles of governmental gender equality bodies, advisory structures, and mechanisms. For example, use the Stakeholder Mapping Matrix:

Category	Definition	Example of actors
Key players (high influence, high interest)	Actors with significant decision-making power and commitment to gender equality.	<i>Governmental gender equality bodies, cabinet ministers, national equality institutions, equality commissioners, ministries of finance.</i>
Influential observers (high influence, low interest)	Actors with power but limited direct interest in gender equality.	<i>Ministries of finance, other line ministries, influential public officials without gender portfolios.</i>
Supporters (low influence, high interest)	Actors committed to gender equality but with limited decision-making authority.	<i>Civil society organisations, gender experts, academia.</i>
Marginal players (low influence, low interest)	Actors with limited interest or influence in gender equality issues.	<i>Private sector bodies, some local government departments.</i>

- Examine the processes by which decisions are made regarding resource allocation, policy formulation, and program design. Assess policy coordination and integration of gender equality considerations.
- Assess whether these processes are transparent, inclusive and equitable.
- Analyse the role of the Department for Gender Equality or any other key body – to what extent is the Department able to impose a GM, GRB practice over other line ministries?
- Examine what role other line ministries / departments/ regions/ municipalities have in the application of GM to policy, and GRB in budgeting processes?
- Assess consultation processes involving gender advocates, civil society, and other external stakeholders. The assessment should cover external processes, such as policy and budget consultation processes involving gender advocates, civil society organisations, businesses, academia, think-tanks, media, etc., in the country/region.
- Evaluate coordination between ministries, regions, municipalities, and other stakeholders.
- Assess gender parity. Gender parity—equal representation, opportunities, and rights for all genders—is both a goal and a key contributor to good governance. Additionally, good governance provides the conditions necessary for achieving gender parity.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Governance structures and processes – a case study from Berlin

Berlin's gender mainstreaming assessment highlights the long tradition of Gender Mainstreaming policies including the Gender Check, a tool for gender impact assessments of senate bills in force since 2005. However, the Berlin State Government's gender policy and legal framework face coordination, monitoring, and implementation challenges. The decentralised decision-making structure leads to inconsistency across Senate and district administrations, while weak monitoring and evaluation systems hinder the ability to assess the impact of measures. The limited availability of gender-disaggregated data further reduces the effectiveness of tools like the Gender Check.

Capacity gaps, including variability in gender competence across departments, exacerbate these issues. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted key activities, such as networking, slowing progress further. The analysis identified that a more integrated and systematic approach was needed to strengthen Berlin's gender equality efforts, with a revised version of the gender check, improved monitoring and enhanced gender competence.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Berlin, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Governance structures and processes – a case study from Saxony-Anhalt

In Saxony-Anhalt - similarly to the other 16 German federal states - the implementation of gender equality as a cross-sectional task assigns responsibility to all ministries, with the Gender Equality Coordination Unit playing a central role in coordinating and addressing overarching gender equality issues. Despite this structure, the principle of ministerial autonomy - which is very pronounced in the

national administrative tradition - limits the unit's ability to enforce goals or measures. Instead, it can only propose and negotiate, leaving ultimate decisions to each ministry. The lack of a tradition or organisational culture of goal-driven action further hampers cohesive implementation. This governance model relies heavily on coordination and voluntary compliance, creating challenges for uniform progress across ministries.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Saxony-Anhalt, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.

2.3 ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

- Analyse the processes in place to design, monitor and evaluate the implementation of gender policies and programs
- Assess mechanisms and indicators for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on gender equality commitments.
- Analyse stakeholder dynamics to ensure accountability, including civil society, academia, media, and private sector roles.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Monitoring and indicators – a case study from Hamburg

The three central, overarching instruments of the Hamburg Gender Equality Strategy are the Equality Policy Framework Programme (Gleichstellungspolitisches Rahmenprogramm, GPR), the digital equality monitor (Gleichstellungsmonitor) and the Gender Equality Budget Management (Gleichstellungswirksame Haushaltssteuerung, GWHS). All three instruments stipulate targets, key figures and indicators, and enable monitoring. The gender mainstreaming assessment revealed that these instruments should be further developed in such a way that equality

policy objectives, indicators, and key figures are coordinated and systematically applied to all three instruments. The GPR could play the role of situation analysis, impact target specification, indicator development, measure description, and evaluation of the measures. The GWHS could ensure that the budget is aligned with the equality policy impact objectives defined in the GPR and that supervision is carried out. The Equality Monitor could provide the necessary data for this and measure the impact of the implemented equality policy using the GPR indicators.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Hamburg, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Governance structures and processes – a case study from Romania

The gender mainstreaming assessment for Romania revealed a nuanced landscape in terms of legislative and institutional frameworks, along with gaps in political and practical implementation. On the strengths side, Romania benefits from a robust legislative framework, particularly Law 202/2002, which has undergone successive enhancements to specify institutional mechanisms for promoting gender mainstreaming. Key elements include the establishment of the National Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (Comisia națională în domeniul egalității de șanse între femei și bărbați – CONES) and the County Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (Comisia județeană în domeniul egalității de șanse între femei și bărbați - COJES), recommendations for designating equal opportunity experts in institutions with over 50 employees, and the approval of mechanisms to support these entities' roles. The assessment also identified

the need for creating a mechanism and tools at the national level that will reinforce the political commitment by creating new instruments for assuring political support. This should help to reduce the impact of frequent leadership changes, and reinforce the implementation of legal provisions on gender equality. Institutional structures like CONES and COJES face operational challenges related to efficiency and demonstrate inconsistencies in the criteria applied for member selection, hence they could benefit from enhanced transparency processes. Furthermore, there is insufficient integration of gender mainstreaming in sectoral strategies and a lack of measurable indicators in action plans. Resource constraints in financial, technical, and human capacity domains—particularly evident in areas such as gender budgeting and strategic planning—present challenges to continued advancement. These resource considerations underscore the importance of strengthened political commitment and ongoing capacity-development initiatives.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Romania, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.



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3. *Resource allocation and capacity assessment*

Analyse sufficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation (staff, budgets, technical support) for implementation of gender mainstreaming.

- Analyse the extent of policy implementation and budget allocations aimed at achieving equality across sectors (or in a policy, strategy, action plan, etc.), including annual budgets or medium-term expenditure frameworks.
- Evaluate the alignment of resources with national gender equality objectives. The main goal is to examine whether human and financial resources are allocated in a way that supports national priorities and international obligations related to gender equality. Such assessments should include the following:
 - Assess whether resource allocations reflect the priorities outlined in national gender equality policies, action plans, or strategic frameworks.
 - Analyse how gender considerations are integrated into budgeting processes, including GRB initiatives.
 - Identify funding gaps - where gender mainstreaming efforts are underfunded or overlooked in key sectors.
 - Identify gaps in human resources.
 - Identify funding mechanisms or programs that specifically support international gender equality commitments.
- Assess stakeholders' structural and technical capacities and training needs, and design a capacity development plan to enhance their understanding and effective implementation of gender mainstreaming.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives in promoting gender equality.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Resource allocation and capacity building – a case study from Portugal

Availability of financial resources

In Portugal, the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018–2030 (ENIND) (“Portugal + Igual”) marked what evaluators described as a “paradigm shift” in the implementation of gender equality policies. [1] However, in Portugal, as in many other countries, budgetary constraints remain a challenge for equality and non-discrimination policies – a concern also noted by international bodies. Portugal’s Major Planning Options (Grandes Opções do Plano) outline the government’s strategic priorities and multi-annual budgetary allocations. While not specific to the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018–2030, they support its implementation by financing related objectives. The Strategic Challenge “A fairer country with greater solidarity” includes a policy area dedicated to equality, diversity, inclusion, and combating discrimination and violence, with the goal of improving Portugal’s position in the EU Gender Equality Index. This Strategic Challenge is funded through national resources and European programmes (Portugal 2030 and the Recovery and Resilience Plan), with allocations decreasing from €1.132 billion in 2024 to €975 million in 2028.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in its 2015 and 2022 observations, highlighted the insufficient budgetary allocations for

the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), the primary body responsible for implementing gender equality policies in Portugal. CEDAW emphasised that these financial limitations hinder the CIG’s ability to effectively fulfil its broad mandate, which includes promoting gender equality, combating domestic and gender-based violence, and coordinating related public policies.

Capacity building

In Portugal, gender equality training has been recognised as a strategic area under the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (ENIND). While there is no specific legal framework for gender equality training, it is now mandated to be delivered by certified institutions following guidelines from the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG).

Key measures include training public servants on gender impact assessments, gender budgeting, and non-discrimination. Future plans aim to extend gender equality training to all public servants. Additionally, awareness-raising actions are integrated into national action plans, but their assessment remains largely quantitative, focusing on the number of activities rather than their quality or impact. This highlights the challenge of effectively evaluating the outcomes of gender equality training initiatives.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Portugal, 2023. Gender Flagship Project. [1] External evaluation “Monitoring and evaluation study of the National Strategy for Equality and Non Discrimination - PORTUGAL + IGUAL and the IV Action Plan for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings”, March 2022

4. *Data and evidence assessment*

- Analyse the availability of data related to gender disparities, such as employment and income levels, educational attainment, health outcomes, access to finance and resources, gender-based violence, and participation in decision-making.
- Evaluate whether data collection methods are disaggregated by gender and other intersecting factors to ensure comprehensive understanding.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Monitoring and indicators – a case study from City of Strasbourg

In Strasbourg, there is recognition among directorates regarding the importance of Equality between Women and Men (EFH) in their activities. However, this recognition has not translated into a systematic effort to collect and analyse gender-specific data across all directorates. Most directorates have not gathered - nor analysed when available - data to objectively assess the impact of public policies, nor reorient them effectively. One example of good practice is the Citizen Share Directorate's integration of gender data into its evaluation of Participatory Budgeting, influencing its next cycle. While some directorates, such as those dealing with culture and public spaces, identify gender issues through field observations, these insights

remain unsupported by systematic sex-disaggregated data analysis to inform policies and programs. Existing data, such as audience studies in culture, remain underutilised. The Directorate for International and European Relations gathers gender-specific data for Sustainable Development Goal 5 reporting but questions its reliability. The Security Department and others lack critical gender-disaggregated data to address issues such as profiling of victims and perpetrators of violence. Barriers to sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis must be identified and addressed, particularly as gender data collection is highlighted as a crucial next step in the city's gender mainstreaming process.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in the city of Strasbourg, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Gender disaggregated data – a case study from Cyprus

The proposed Gender Mainstreaming Law of 2024 introduces a significant policy shift by, among others, mandating the collection of gender-disaggregated data across all levels of government and the wider public sector. The proposed legislation represents a step forward in institutionalising gender-responsive policies through evidence-based decision-making. This data is essential for understanding the distinct needs of women and men and for designing targeted policies that address gender inequalities effectively. Accurate gender-disaggregated data is also critical for gender-responsive budgeting reforms, enabling Ministries and Deputy Ministries to

allocate resources based on gender-specific needs.

Under the prompting of the current Commissioner for Gender Equality, a key development in this area was the Statistical Service's publication of the first Gendered Statistics Report in May 2023, with an updated version expected in 2025. Despite this progress, data gaps in Cyprus remain a challenge, limiting the ability to fully integrate gender considerations into policymaking.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Cyprus, 2025. Gender Flagship Project.

5. Outcomes and impacts

Assess whether existing initiatives are successfully achieving their goals, while also identifying areas for improvement.

- Examine the intended and unintended outcomes of policies and programs on different gender groups.
 - Examine whether policies and programs are fulfilling their objectives in terms of promoting gender equality.
 - Assess whether initiatives are resulting in measurable changes in societal attitudes toward gender roles.
 - Assess if there are any negative economic, social, or cultural impacts stemming from the policies.
 - Consider the sustainability of gender equality initiatives, whether the programs are creating lasting change, or a temporary solution.
- Assess whether all (or specific) gender groups benefit equally, or if inequalities exist.
- Incorporate feedback by engaging directly with beneficiaries to understand their experiences and perspectives.
- Use findings to build a body of evidence for best practices and lessons learned, to refine policies and programs based on their outcomes, ensuring that future policies are more effective.

6. Findings and recommendations

Your gender GMA should result in specific policy-relevant recommendations.

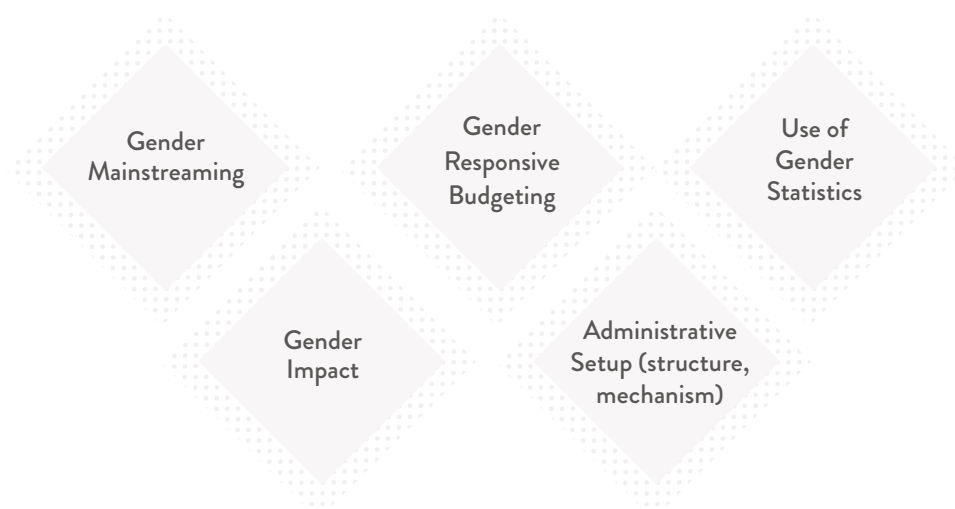
6.1 POLICY ADJUSTMENTS

- Provide a summary of whether strategies, policies, action plans, or programs need redesign or improvement, or new ones need to be introduced.
- Ensure that the recommendations that you develop based on the gender mainstreaming assessment are concrete, realistic, and feasible for implementation by the public administration. Focus on concrete proposals to improve the gender responsiveness of the pilot policy / sector/programme / budget /service.

6.2 GOOD PRACTICES

- Identify and highlight transformative cases or good practices currently in place.
- Provide examples that can serve as models for replication or adaptation.

The following categories could guide the areas of focus when looking for good practices:



Section 5

THE EXTENT
OF GENDER-
RESPONSIVE
BUDGETING



This section provides steps to examine the extent of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) within the country or region. Begin by identifying the budgeting system in use, including whether it incorporates gender equality principles during budget preparation and execution. Review the roles and coordination mechanisms of key institutions, particularly the Ministry of Finance (MoF), and assess the existing practices related to GRB. Examine potential entry points for integrating a gender perspective across all phases of the budgeting cycle—planning, approval, implementation, and review—and evaluate opportunities for public participation, including the involvement of gender advocates and civil society organisations. Furthermore, analyse references to gender-responsive budgeting in official budgeting documents and the use of sex-disaggregated data or gender-sensitive performance indicators. Finally, assess the capacities of the MoF and other stakeholders, including previous training on gender equality, and identify needs for further training on GRB and gender statistics.

1.1 BUDGETING SYSTEM AND GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES

- Identify the budgeting system in use (e.g. Performance-Based Budgeting, Line-Item Budgeting) and its application in the MS administration.
- Determine whether gender equality principles (along with other principles) are explicitly integrated into the budget preparation, execution and reporting.
- Assess whether the MoF and budget-related institutions acknowledge gender-responsive budgeting as part of their fiscal planning and policy objectives.
- Describe the current public budgeting system including a brief description of the role of the MoF and other budget institutions, their coordination in budget preparation and execution.

1.2 INSTITUTIONAL ROLES AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

- Describe the role of the MoF in budget preparation process, including shared responsibility between MoF departments, etc.
- Describe budget coordination mechanisms among various stakeholders, including MoF budget departments, line ministries, and local governments, to determine GRB inputs.
- Identify key institutions involved in budget preparation and whether they incorporate gender considerations in their decision-making processes.

1.3 EXISTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING PRACTICES

- Identify and describe any existing gender-responsive budgeting practices (if any).
- Identify specific policies, initiatives, or pilot projects where gender-responsive budgeting has been implemented.
- Evaluate the extent to which GRB has influenced resource allocation and expenditure priorities.

1.4 ENTRY POINTS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

- Consult and identify any entry points to add a gender perspective (apply GRB) in the national budgeting cycle – during all four phases:
 - 1 Planning: whether gender concerns are integrated into budget formulation and fiscal policies.
 - 2 Approval: if gender considerations are addressed in parliamentary or government budget approval processes. If budget proposals include gender-related information, impact assessments, etc.
 - 3 Execution: whether ministries and agencies are required to allocate funds for gender-sensitive programs and services. Describe any expenditure tracking tools, or tagging mechanisms to monitor spending on gender equality initiatives.
 - 4 Review and audit: if budget oversight includes an analysis of the gender impacts of allocations, and whether or not sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive performance indicators are used in budget monitoring and evaluation.

1.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND GENDER ADVOCACY IN BUDGETING

- Identify opportunities for public participation (contributions by: gender advocates, women's rights organizations, CSOs, civil society) in the budgeting process.
- Identify at what stage of the budgeting process public participation occurs and whether gender considerations are addressed in these consultations.

1.6 GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Examine any gender-responsive budgeting references in official documents issued by the MoF, such as: budget circulars and instructions, budget statements (draft annual budget law), budget preparation guidelines to line ministries, counties, municipalities other budget institutions, budget review and audit reports.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Gender-responsive budgeting – a case study from Italy

Italy has developed a robust gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) framework, evolving from local initiatives in the early 2000s to a national system embedded in Law 196/2009. Strengthened by Legislative Decree No. 116/2018, GRB now assesses the gender impact of public spending and revenue policies, also aiming to integrate Equitable and Sustainable Well-being (BES) indicators. The annual Gender Budgeting Report, presented to Parliament since 2017, evaluates state expenditures, taxation, and public (State) employment through a gender lens.

Coordinated by the State General Accounting Office, it involves, as line/active administrations complying with, and subject or replying to the annual circular, all ministries and the Presidency of the council of the Ministers and institutions such as ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics) and INPS (National Institute for Social Security) as the main data providers. Furthermore, other institutions at the national level, mainly the main Italian research institutes, cooperate

with the State General Accounting Office in order to support in-depth analysis of specific areas of the context analysis; for Health: the Italian High Institute for research in Health (ISS) and the National Research Council (CNR)); for Education ANVUR: Italian Agency for Evaluation in Higher Education and Research).

Italy has embedded GRB in law and developed comprehensive gender indicators, yet some areas for improvement remain. Expenditures are sometimes classified as gender-neutral due to limited capacity among public officials, and some ministries struggle to assess the gender impact of spending. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) presents an opportunity to add GRB to the ex-ante planning to existing GRB from ex-post analysis. To strengthen GRB as an effective tool for gender equality, further investment in training, data quality, and monitoring is essential.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Italy, 2025. Gender Flagship Project.

1.7 USE OF SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA AND GENDER INDICATORS

- Determine whether the MoF and/or the gender equality department collect and use sex-disaggregated data and information to prepare the annual budget and/or to monitor budget execution.
- Assess whether gender-sensitive performance indicators are used to monitor the effectiveness of government spending.

1.8 CAPACITY AND TRAINING NEEDS

- Assess whether the MoF and other budget institutions have capacities (knowledge, skills, and dedicated staff) to apply gender-responsive budgeting.
- Identify training gaps and determine whether additional capacity-building is needed, including:
 - general training on gender equality and gender mainstreaming,
 - tailored technical trainings on gender-responsive budgeting, gender impact assessments, and gender statistics and indicators.

Example outcome of gender mainstreaming assessments: Gender-responsive budgeting – a case study from Greece

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in Greece remains in its nascent stages, with significant gaps between legislative provisions and practical implementation. While the concept of GRB has been embedded in the legislative framework, notably through Law 4604/2019 and reinforced within the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2021–2025, the operationalisation of GRB processes has yet to commence. Essential mechanisms, such as ministerial decisions on budget planning, funding allocations, and

staff training, remain at the policy planning level. Regardless of the recent financial and COVID-19 crisis, the sound groundwork and strong political will to integrate GRB into public policy addressed the barriers hindering an effective transition from policy to practice, without risking the momentum for achieving gender-responsive governance. In fact, the planned shift from line budgeting to performance budgeting offers an opportunity to integrate GRB mechanisms from the outset, potentially revitalising efforts to align public budgets with gender equality objectives.

Source: Gender mainstreaming and needs assessment in Greece, 2023. Gender Flagship Project.



Section 6

SUGGESTED DATA
COLLECTION
METHODS
FOR GENDER
MAINSTREAMING
ASSESSMENTS



A comprehensive gender mainstreaming assessment should rely on a mixed-methods approach to data collection, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. This ensures a holistic understanding of the current gender mainstreaming situation and enables triangulation of findings. The following data collection methods and sources are recommended to inform a gender mainstreaming assessment:

- A thorough **desk-based** review should be undertaken to analyse existing policies, national strategies, gender action plans, and other available and accessible documents. Also consider previous gender mainstreaming assessments or evaluations, institutional reports and government and civil society publications.
- Collection and analysis of **sex-disaggregated data and statistics** should inform the assessment. The possible sources could include national and other statistical office databases; administrative data held by line ministries and public institutions (if available), existing surveys and research studies.
- **Semi-structured interviews** should be conducted with representatives from institutions directly responsible for or involved in gender mainstreaming, including the Gender Equality Department, pilot sector ministries, pilot sector departments, other institutions, etc.
- Where feasible, structured **surveys** may be deployed to gather broader input from public officials working in relevant (pilot) ministries and departments.
- **Stakeholder consultations and participatory feedback mechanisms** could also be employed to inform the gender mainstreaming assessment. For example, engagement with key civil society gender advocates, academic institutions, local think-tanks, etc. ensures that the assessment reflects diverse perspectives and draws on external expertise.

Further reading and additional resources

In this section, you'll find a curated selection of further reading materials, toolkits, and guidelines from EIGE that provide deeper insights into the topics covered in this guide. These resources are designed to help policymakers, practitioners, and researchers expand their knowledge and apply best practices effectively.

- Toolkits and guides: available at <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides>
 - Gender mainstreaming resources: available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>
 - Gender statistics database: available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>
-

Expertise France is the French international technical cooperation agency, operating under the aegis of the French government as a subsidiary of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

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