

Gender mainstreaming in development programmes and projects

Guide for authorities and project actors

Leverage from
the EU
2007-2013

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**Training and Consulting Project of the
Gender Mainstreaming Development
Programme Valtava**

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1. Why this guide?

This guide was produced to support the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in various development programmes and projects.

In its various activities, the European Union is committed to promoting equality between women and men. According to the Lisbon Treaty, the principle of gender mainstreaming must be applied throughout European Union activities, in order to integrate and mainstream the gender perspective and promotion of gender equality in all public sector processes and into assessing the impacts of the activities. In concrete terms, gender mainstreaming involves the development of operating methods, procedures and practices within areas such as administration and projects, in order to ensure that these activities promote gender equality.

In Finland, too, public authorities are under a strong obligation to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all activities, on all levels

and at all stages of activities: planning, preparation, decision-making, implementation and assessment of activities. The obligation to promote gender equality in the activities of public authorities was more specifically defined in the reform of the Act on Equality between Women and Men in 2005, by adding the principle of gender mainstreaming to section 4 of the Act.

In Finnish:

sukupuolinäkökulman valtavirtaistaminen

In Swedish:

integrering av könsperspektivet

In English:

gender mainstreaming

Taking the gender perspective into account means that the objectives and contents of activities can be developed to better meet the different needs of various groups. It therefore represents one way of improving the quality and impact of activities.

In national and regional policy development work, structural funds are a key tool for converting goals into actions. Constituting one of the key principles guiding the EU's operations, gender equality and its promotion are included in structural fund programmes.

The aim of gender mainstreaming is to change gender neutral (taking no account of gender) ways of thinking and procedures, and

In many cases, authorities and project actors lack sufficient knowledge of gender equality, are insufficiently aware of, or skilled in, gender mainstreaming, or lack the required tools. This guide meets this need.

the related operating culture. While authorities and project actors must themselves engage in the development of work processes, development can be supported by means of training and consulting.

Gender mainstreaming requires public authorities and project actors to be able to combine information on and insight into gender equality with their expertise and professional practices. This, in turn, requires clarification of gender equality issues related to work or project activities, and the motivation and skills to develop such activities on this basis.

Ministry of Employment and the Economy's Gender Mainstreaming Development Programme Valtava's Training and Consulting Project aimed to uncover the benefits of gender mainstreaming in the operations of authorities and Valtava projects, and to engender and strengthen the motivation of each actor to take account of the gender perspective in its work. The project was implemented by KoulutusAvain Ltd., based in Kajaani, and the Helsinki-based WoM Ltd. The project comprised implementation of a training need analysis, training and consulting provided for funding authorities and Valtava projects, seminars, the production of electronic training materials, and this guide.

The guide was drawn up on the basis of the EU's structural fund programmes, but is suitable for everyone involved in the planning, implementation and assessment of various development programmes and projects.

The guide examines the promotion of gender equality and its significance in programming (Chapter 3) and project work (Chapter 4), and provides instructions for practical actors. As an introduction, and in support of practical work, Chapter 2 includes a glossary for managing and understanding gender mainstreaming. The responsible authors of Chapters 3 and 5 of the guide were Development Director Marja-Leena Haataja, Master of Education and Consultant Eija Leinonen, Master of Education, KoulutusAvain Ltd. Equality Consultant Sinikka Mustakallio, Managing Director of WoM Ltd., was the responsible author of Chapters 2 and 4.

The guide is published in a printed and electronic version, available on the websites of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and KoulutusAvain Ltd. and WoM Ltd., at www.tem.fi/valtava, www.koulutusavain.fi and www.wom.fi. In addition to the guide, electronic training material on accounting for gender in programming and project work was produced for use by authorities. This material is available on the aforementioned websites.

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2. Glossary for understanding gender mainstreaming

Sinikka Mustakallio

This Chapter presents the basic gender mainstreaming concepts required by everyone involved in programming and in conducting projects.¹

Dual strategy in promoting gender equality

The European Union's structural fund programmes and projects implement a so-called dual strategy in promoting gender equality. This means that gender equality is promoted through gender equality projects whose main aim is to promote gender equality. Moreover, gender equality is also promoted in all other projects, by mainstreaming (integrating) the gender perspective into all stages of project and programme activities.

Gender Equality project

A project with the primary aim of promoting gender equality.

A project into which the gender perspective must be mainstreamed (integrated)

A structural fund programme project, whose main aim is something other than gender equality. By gender mainstreaming, all projects, even those that are not gender equality projects, must promote gender equality in addition to other objectives. The gender perspective must be mainstreamed, i.e. integrated into all stages of all project activities.

Gender equality

Gender equality means equal rights, possibilities and obligations for both men and women in society. As an objective, gender equality entails that stereotyped concepts of gender roles must not restrict the opportunities of individuals. It also means equal appreciation of the values, choices and life experiences typical of women and men. Gender equality does not mean seeking to make women and men the same.

In Finland, gender equality also refers to equality of gender minorities, according to the current interpretation of the Act on Equality between Women and Men. People whose biological, social and/or psychological gender cannot be uniformly defined as male or female, such as those

¹ Preparation of this glossary was based on the glossary in the publication *Gender Glasses in Use*. A handbook in support of government ministries' gender equality work. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Publications 2009:13. The glossary in that publication was modified and concretised to serve project activities.

defining themselves as transsexual, transgender, transvestite or intersexual, constitute gender minorities.

Belonging to a gender minority is a question of a person's gender identity. Therefore, gender minorities are not the same as sexual minorities, which concern a person's sexual orientation when it is other than heterosexual (gay, lesbian and bisexually oriented people).

Gender Equality Act

The Act on Equality between Women and Men, the Gender Equality Act, imposes a prohibition on direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of gender. Prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender also applies to gender minorities. This act obliges employers, authorities and training providers to promote gender equality.

Public authorities are obliged to promote gender equality in all activities, i.e. mainstream the gender perspective into all activities and services. All educational institutions, excluding comprehensive schools, must prepare a gender equality plan on their teaching activities. All teaching and teaching materials must promote gender equality.

Gender neutrality/gender blindness

Gender neutrality refers to a situation in which gender genuinely plays no role in a given activity. The gender neutrality of a project can only be established as result of high-quality assessment, but cannot be based on presuppositions or everyday knowledge.

Gender neutrality can also mean that no attention is paid to gender, or that its significance in terms of goals or an activity goes unrecognised. In such a case, gender neutrality often means so-called gender blindness in practice, i.e. the inability to perceive gender and understand its significance. Gender blindness is a significant attitudinal obstacle to making progress in gender equality.

In many cases, project planners may be under the false impression that projects should be gender neutral and that gender neutrality promotes gender equality. However, the contrary is true: gender-conscious action promotes gender equality by taking conscious account of the significance of gender and the differences between the genders in terms

of status, needs, life situation and expectations concerning the matter at hand. Projects therefore promote gender equality through gender mainstreaming in project objectives and activities.

Gender perspective

The gender perspective refers to how an issue, problem, objective or measure applies to the different genders. Whenever an issue is reviewed from the gender perspective, it is viewed from both the female and male perspective. Hence, reviewing an issue from the gender perspective will highlight issues to be taken into account, or requiring improvement, as regards women, men and multi-gender people. Taking the gender perspective into account in projects enhances the needs orientation, activities and impact of projects, respecting both women and men.

When reviewing issues or activities from a gender perspective, account must also be taken of the fact that not all people are unambiguously divided into women and men in terms of gender identity. When applying a gender perspective, care must be taken not to enforce a merely bipartite concept of genders or stereotypical ideas of gender roles.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming refers to a strategy for promoting gender equality, involving integration of the gender perspective and the promotion of gender equality in all activities, i.e. moving them into the mainstream of activities. In structural fund operations, gender mainstreaming (integration) entails that account must be taken of the gender perspective in all programming and the activities of all projects throughout their lifecycles.

Gender mainstreaming aims at the introduction of gender-conscious thinking and procedures in structural fund activities. This means taking conscious note of the significance of gender and the impact of gender differences on the activity, while ensuring that the activity promotes gender equality in addition to other objectives. The aim is for programming and project activity to take conscious account of the significance of gender, rather than being gender neutral.

In such a case, programming and project work involves the application of gender conscious mindsets and working practices. All project actors

and funding authorities are responsible for gender mainstreaming in structural fund activities.

Gender impact assessment

Gender impact assessment is a key gender mainstreaming method. It consists of analysing and assessing the impacts of objectives and measures in terms of gender and gender equality.

In project activities, gender impact assessment means that the needs, objectives, target groups, activities, communications and best practices associated with a project are assessed regarding the status, life situations, needs and expectations of different genders. Gender impact assessment must be conducted at the planning, implementation and assessment stages of projects.

When assessing project activities, the key issue is to render gender visible in project planning and to analyse the differences between genders with respect to the issues in which project activities are involved. For such an analysis, gender disaggregated statistics, and qualitative analysis and research data from the equality and gender perspective, must be collected.

Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are simplistic or stereotyped ideas and assumptions about what women and men are "usually" like, or what constitutes "appropriate" behaviour for them. Gender stereotypes are often subconscious, "self-evident truths", deeply rooted in the culture. They are superficial and harmful everyday "knowledge" of gender. Stereotypes may prevent factual information acquisition and in-depth understanding of gender-based phenomena.

When gender mainstreaming is carried out in programming or project activities, one must avoid setting out from the basis of stereotypical assumptions about the different genders or the differences between them. Information-based gender impact assessment must be used to examine what actual average differences exist between the genders within the activity the project involves.



3. Gender mainstreaming in Structural Fund programming

Eija Leinonen and Marja-Leena Haataja

Hundreds of research and development programmes, broadly seeking to develop and engender progress in our society, the wellbeing of citizens and environmental issues are underway in Finland. Each has its own objectives, focus areas and instruments for implementing various development measures, projects and undertakings and each supports activities either at national or international level. Various EU programmes are among the key programme frameworks in Finland, having mainly replaced national programmes since Finland joined the EU in 1995. Via EU programmes, various organisations, corporations and associations (the public, private and 3rd sector) implement different types of research and development projects, of which framework programmes (research) and structural fund and rural development programmes are in a key position with regard to volume.

Programmes are implemented during programme periods that last for a certain period of time, which further entails that the programme strategy and objectives are composed for certain periods. Each programme period therefore has objectives, priorities and lines of action that are defined separately on the basis of a broader EU (and partly global) level programme and funding framework, and naturally, the challenges of the operating environment. Many of these programmes also claim to promote and mainstream gender equality, as required by various national and international level agreements. Even though this guide focuses on EU Structural Fund Programmes, reviewing them at both programme and project level, it is also relevant to mainstreaming work being performed in other development programmes and projects.

3.1. Gender perspective in programme framework

Finland is implementing two Structural Fund Programme frameworks: the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In the current programme period, 2007–2013, there are two ESF programmes: the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland and Eastern Finland, and four ERDF programmes; those of Southern Finland, Western Finland, Eastern Finland and Northern Finland.

In terms of promoting gender equality, it is vital that the programme frameworks and the majority of steering instruments shown in Figure 1 include the requirement of promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming. In line with the EU dual strategy, in addition to separate measures the gender perspective must be mainstreamed in the planning, preparation, implementation, steering and assessment of development activities. However, except in certain cases, these are not included in regional programmes, for instance. In the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland, it is estimated that the gender perspective has not been sufficiently implemented at project level, and only moderately at programme level.

This guide reviews attention to gender and the promotion of gender equality in the Structural Fund Programme and project cycle, without reference to specific programme periods, although the examples used are programmes belonging to the current programme period and the focus areas of such programmes.

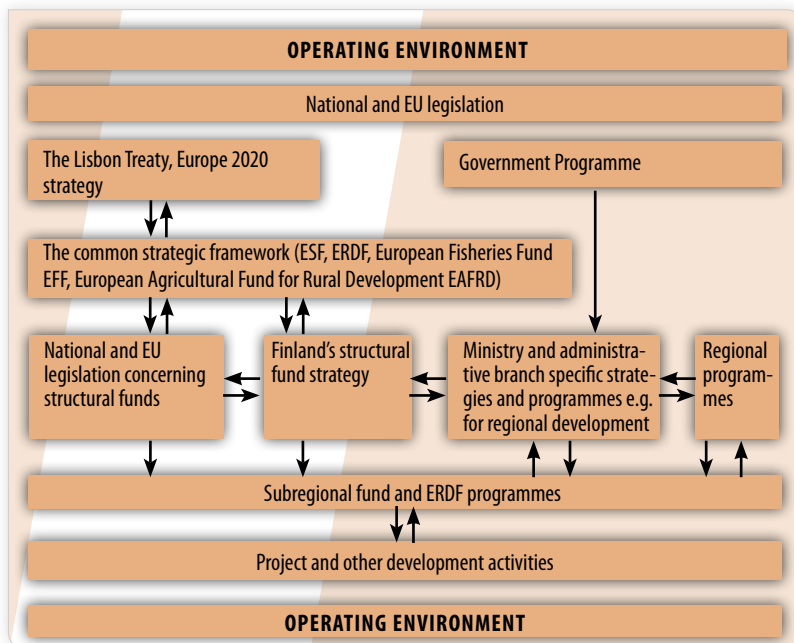


Figure 1. Instruments steering structural fund programming and project work. Leinonen 2011, on the basis of different sources.

The Structural Fund Programme preparation and implementation process is steered by

- current challenges in the operating environment and future assessments of these challenges,
- experiences of previous programme periods,
- legislation on structural funds, including the Act on Structural Funds, Decree on ESF and Decree on ERDF,
- EU objectives, policy, broader scale programmes and frameworks,
- national level programmes, government programmes and the strategies and programmes of ministries and regions in key role.²

Separate programmes and thematic projects for gender equality promotion have been implemented for around twenty years. In the 1990s, themes included women's employment and the promotion of entrepreneurship, particularly in Employment programmes, while the early 2000s saw women and technology, for instance, being funded through the Equal programme. For the 2007–2013 programme period, the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland includes national development programmes, the Gender Mainstreaming Development Programme Valtava coordinated by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and Equality in working life – gender equality in society coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Several gender equality projects are being funded by these programmes.

The objectives and focus areas of the structural fund strategies and programmes for each programme period are thus determined in accordance with a comprehensive analysis and prognosis of the operating environment, and a broader strategy and programme framework. For instance, in the current structural fund period 2007–2013, key focus areas common to ESF and ERDF programmes have included

- Promotion of entrepreneurship
- Promotion of innovations and networking, and enforcement of competence structures
- Improvement of regional accessibility and the operating environment
- Development measures related to competencies, workforce and employment.³

² ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013. ³ ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013 and, for instance, the Southern Finland ERDF Operational Programme 2007-2013.

From the gender equality perspective, the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland has highlighted the following, among others, as key societal challenges:

- gender pay gap
- more even distribution of family responsibility
- education and labour markets drastically divided according to gender
- reducing violence against women and
- stereotypical portrayal of women and men in the media.⁴

According to Structural Fund Programmes, separate gender equality projects are required to meet these challenges. Such programmes must be implemented within all lines of action and could be targeted at women and men alike. As examples of themes, the ESF programme mentions promoting women's entrepreneurship, the dismantling of horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour markets and education, the reconciliation of work and family life, supporting fatherhood and the more even distribution of family responsibilities, the employment in particular of men socially excluded due to long-term unemployment, and the promotion of equal pay for women and men.⁴

Structural Fund Programmes emphasise the promotion of gender equality as integral to all activities at all stages, which requires an analysis of the operating environment, situation and the problem to be solved. Lack of information broken down by gender makes this challenging. Such information is either not available to a sufficient degree, or cannot be utilised and analysed, and its significance is not understood.

On the other hand, under themes other than entrepreneurship, employment and competence, the theme of gender equality and the significance of gender, so-called gender relevance, may be difficult to identify and concretise. For this reason, the following chapter examines some special themes in line with structural fund priorities, in order to highlight examples of what gender equality is about.

⁴ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013.

3.2. Promoting of gender equality in structural fund priorities - examples

Entrepreneurship development

Promotion of women's entrepreneurship has been an ESF programme theme throughout Finland's EU membership. In 2008, the working group for promoting women's entrepreneurship commissioned a survey for Employment and Economic Development Centres (currently Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment) on women's entrepreneurship projects implemented in the regions. This survey indicates that some projects have supported women's entrepreneurship, by aiming to increase the number of women's entrepreneurs, while others promote women's entrepreneurship, targeting existing women entrepreneurs in particular. The largest number of projects has been implemented sector-specifically, while the lowest number was targeted at immigrant women.⁵ In Finland, women entrepreneurs account for around 32% of all entrepreneurs, a relatively high figure compared to the EU. Finland has set a target at 40%.⁶ From the viewpoint of entrepreneurship too, the degree of segregation in our society, i.e. the division of the education and labour market into men and women's sectors, represents a major challenge.

Support for and development of women's entrepreneurship must continue, particularly in innovative sectors, but should also be viewed on a broader scale than merely in terms of increasing the number of women entrepreneurs. The prerequisites for business activity should be more closely assessed in different sectors, and also by gender:

- How are the founding, growth and internationalisation of an enterprise supported,
- What kind of funding opportunities are on offer to entrepreneurs in different sectors,
- Does such support promote regional equality too?

Promotion of gender equality and the related issues should also be regarded as major sources of enhanced wellbeing at work, and even as a factor enhancing the competitive advantage of all businesses. Moreover, entrepreneurship development measures must seek to dismantle segregation and develop innovation activity, while taking both genders into account.

⁵ Final report of the workgroup for promoting women's entrepreneurship 4/2010, MEE. ⁶ MoniNainen and Renewing Women's Entrepreneurship. Final report of the working group to promote women's entrepreneurship. Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy 4/2010.

Promotion of innovations and networking, and reinforcing of competence structures

Historically, the concept of innovation is highly technology-oriented and, according to certain assessments, systematic innovation activity is still more common in industry than in services.

A definition by Statistics Finland links the modernisation of production and working practices to innovation: "An innovation is a new or significantly improved product (goods or services) brought to market by an enterprise or a new or significantly improved process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations implemented by an enterprise. Innovation (product, process, marketing method or organisational method) must be new to the enterprise in question".⁷

Discussion of social innovations and their development activities has only recently begun. What is social innovation? In her book on social innovations, Vappu Taipale defines social innovation as follows: "A social innovation is created when a new solution to a challenge or problem is found by reviewing a phenomenon or life from a new perspective and developing new equipment, operating methods, policies or networks, or combinations thereof, to meet the need thus created."⁸

The 'ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007–2013' document lists innovation activity development and enhancement as a key priority. Social innovation activity has been highlighted alongside technological innovation activity. The programme document describes the social innovation development process as follows: "Social innovations are born as experiences and know-how are converted into novel technologies, products and services that generate wellbeing, or ways of organising work that can be repeated and multiplied."⁹ The ERDF programme highlights the discovery of innovations that promote women's entrepreneurship, by developing the range of methods in business services, among other methods, as a special theme of innovation activity.¹⁰

ESF-project activity is thought to have produced a large number of new social innovations that should be identified, developed and distributed.

⁷Innovation activity 2008, Official Statistics of Finland, Statistics Finland, Science, technology and information society 2010. ⁸Vappu Taipale Hannu Hämäläinen: Stories of social innovations. Stakes 2007. ⁹ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013. ¹⁰ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013 and e.g. Southern Finland ERDF operational programme 2007-2013.

All priorities and projects of ESF activity must take social innovation activity into account, since this is one of the guiding principles of ESF activity in addition to gender equality, sustainable development, partnership and securing the position of small-scale actors. However, the document does not consider or propose how these principles guiding ESF activities could be concretised, for instance by reviewing social innovation activity from a gender perspective.

Innovation activity and gender mainstreaming

As national innovation strategies, documents and policies are apparently technology driven, they tend to support traditionally male-dominated sectors and enterprises. Too little attention is paid to the female-dominated social and health service sector, currently providing most employment, while the National Innovation Strategy pays no attention to the low numbers of women involved in innovation activity. Likewise, promotion of women's entrepreneurship seems completely absent from this strategy. Such an approach results in the invisibility of the other gender and groups, such as pensioners, who are not viewed as important in terms of trade and industrial policy. This also continues to maintain the division of the labour market into two – male and female – sectors. Finland's current Government is also committed to continuing gender mainstreaming in the drafting of bills, preparation of budgets and other projects significant to gender equality. The gender perspective should therefore be included in all strategies and programmes of national importance, such as the policy report on education, research and innovation.

Example of women's innovation activity

In Sweden, the development programmes of VINNOVA,¹¹ the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, have engaged in gender sensitive innovation environment research and development throughout the 2000s. The results prove that the standard model of innovation policy and trade and industrial development, the triple helix, discriminates against incentives that typically appeal to women. In the triple helix model, influential actors in the innovation environment include industry, academia and political institutions, excluding e.g. various organisations and foundations.

Malin Lindberg's field work in female resource centres demonstrates that the practices and policy definitions of triple helix actors guide women's

¹¹ VINNOVA is the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, corresponding to Tekes in Finland, www.vinnova.se.

incentives towards the sphere of voluntary work and civic activity.¹² Such activity in organisations, projects, networks or foundations is not regarded as industrial, research or regional policy activity under the triple helix model. Instead, it constitutes civic activism.¹³ However, third sector activities and networks play a key role in the generation and further development of innovations.

Gender mainstreaming in innovation activity and networking requires a more thoroughgoing change in thinking, involving the further development of the triple helix model into a quattro helix model. Based on this model, the public, private, academic and NGO sectors are regarded as influential parties in the innovation environment.¹⁴ In comparison with the widely applied triple helix model, this new model is novel in that it recognises the significance of civic activity and information-producing actors, other than research institutions, in the development of the innovation environment. It must be understood that innovation environment actors, such as those facilitating women's entrepreneurship, need to be reviewed more broadly than in current traditional innovation system thinking, research and policy.

Competence, workforce and employment

Key challenges to competence, workforce, employment and entrepreneurship from the gender equality viewpoint include the segregation of the education and labour markets and enterprises, the pay gap, uneven distribution of family leave, and issues related to women's leadership. However, promotion of gender equality is a very broad issue and should be regarded as a cross-sectional theme in all aspects related to the development of competence, workforce and employment. In fact, reviewing the significance of gender, and the new perspectives it entails, promotes a large variety of development themes. Facts and gender-disaggregated information, which should be made available and exploited to a greater extent, form a key starting point.

Examples of a more broad-based review of the gender perspective as regards development themes related to competence, workforce and employment, are given below.

- The gender perspective should be taken into account when reviewing and developing workforce availability and, for instance, work-related

¹² Malin Lindberg: 1. Organisering av innovationssystem och innovativa processer. Teknisk Rapport 2006:8 Luleå tekniska universitet. 2. Samverkansnätverk för innovation. Doktorsavhandling 2010, Luleå tekniska universitet. ¹³ Gunilla Fürst Hörte: Behovet av genusperspektiv - om innovation, hållbar tillväxt och jämställdhet. Utvärdering. VINNOVA Rapport VR 2009:16. ¹⁴ Malin Lindberg 2010.

immigration, for example as follows:

- In which sectors do we need experts and what kinds of experts do we need?
- Are we supporting female and male sectors in different ways on a justifiable basis?
- Are development measures targeted at women and men in the same way?
- Do women and men have equal opportunities?
- In issues related to long-term unemployment, the differences between the genders should also be reviewed:
 - Which factors cause prolonged unemployment for men, which for women?
 - Are existing support and development measures targeted at women and men in the same way?
 - Do women and men have equal opportunities?
 - Do phenomena differ regionally?
 - In what ways do business cycles influence male and female dominated sectors?
- Wellbeing at work can be promoted by reviewing the differences between women and men in terms of wellbeing at work and its constituents (physical, mental and social wellbeing); for instance studied and clear differences between the genders can be found in terms of health and wellbeing, physical exercise and dietary habits. Projects promoting wellbeing at work could therefore examine the following:
 - What kinds of differences between women and men can be found in the wellbeing sector in question?
 - What kinds of issues do women find significant in promoting wellbeing at work? Which do men find important?
 - Are various development measures targeted differently at men and women?
- By reviewing the prolongation of working careers and methods of promoting this from the gender perspective, new information and development targets can be obtained, for instance:
 - Do the motivation of men and women, or the possibilities for prolonging their careers, differ?
 - What kinds of factors motivate women to continue working? How about men?
 - Are the current measures and methods of prolonging careers targeted differently at women and men?

- Young people's social exclusion and employment is studied, assessed, supported and developed in many ways, but without paying attention to gender except in a few, exceptional cases. As regards young people, it would be important to note the heterogeneity of the group and, for instance, differences due to gender in terms of needs and problems, as an important basis for support and development measures.
- Greater account of gender and its significance should be taken in information, advice and guidance services for adult education and study, since the life history, education, work history, experiences and interests of women and men differ on average, resulting in differences in their service needs.
- Partnerships between various actors must be strengthened further and the significance and involvement of third sector actors as equal partners must be recognised as regards competence, workforce and employment promotion development themes. The construction of partnerships should take account of gender equality experts and parties responsible for promoting and implementing gender equality.

Improvement of regional accessibility and the operating environment

Prepared annually, the regional strategic programme and the regional strategic programme implementation plan are key tools in guiding regional planning. The implementation plan includes key projects for implementing the regional strategic programme, possible other measures and a plan for funding them.¹⁵ Today, structural fund programmes are the most significant funding tool in regional development. Closer review of regional strategic programmes reveals that these programmes are proposing few targets or separate concrete measures for promoting gender equality.

Key regional challenges in Finland include depopulation and a high unemployment rate in sparsely populated areas, increasing population numbers in growth centres, and ageing in the whole country. In terms of these challenges too, the gender perspective generates more information on the phenomena underlying these challenges and the related development possibilities. The gender perspective is also significant from the viewpoints of regional accessibility and development of the operating environment. A gender impact assessment should therefore be more extensive as regards these issues. Do multi-channel services improve the possibilities of women and men in different ways to access the services they need? What kinds

¹⁵ Act on Regional Development 29.12.2009/1651. <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2009/20091651>.

of regional differences exist, in this respect, between women and men, when the age factor is also taken into account? What kinds of people live in different parts of Finland? Do regional changes affect women and men in different ways? Do women in rural areas have different opportunities to men in having an influence?

3.3. Development programmes are implemented following a cyclical model – gender mainstreaming as well

Like many other development programmes, Structural Fund Programmes are implemented following a cyclical model, both at programme and project level. A cyclical model divides the programme development entity into five stages. Figure 2 depicts the programme cycle stages within **green** text frames.

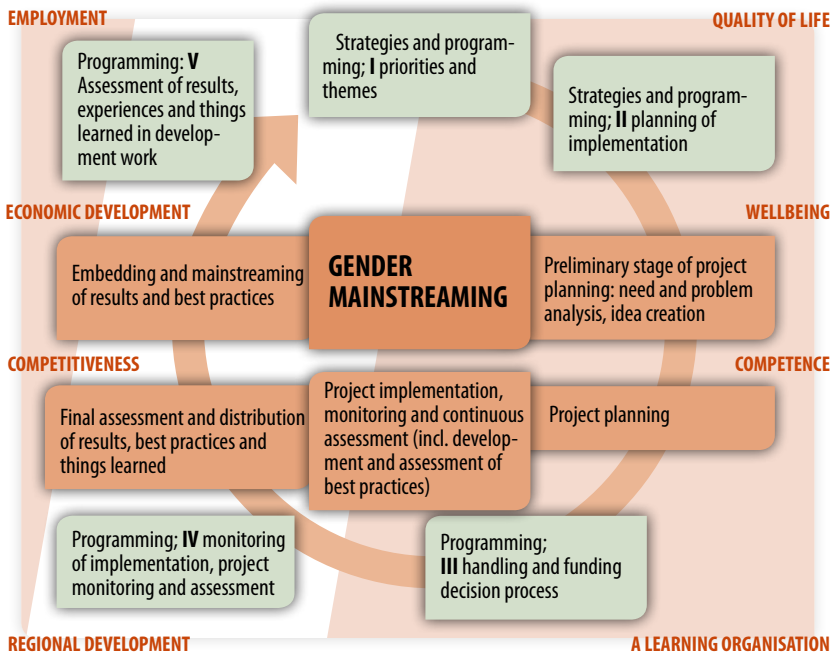


Figure 2. Gender mainstreaming in project work and programming. Leinonen and Haataja 2010.

On programme level, gender mainstreaming involves the inclusion of this perspective in the various stages of the programme cycle. As regards gender equality, development programmes can be of two kinds: Firstly, their primary aim may be to promote gender equality. Secondly, the development programme's development target may be something else, with gender equality being reviewed at the various stages of the cycle, based on its linkage to the actual content-related operations. For this option, it is important to identify and acknowledge the significance of gender at all stages of the cycle.

The **orange** text frames in Figure 2 indicate project work. Actual development projects are linked to stages II – IV of programming. At project level, the gender perspective may be accounted for in two ways: planning and implementing a so-called gender equality project or plan and implementing a development project, in which gender is mainstreamed in the way required by the programme, and to the required extent. It is important to identify the significance of gender equality in all projects, in other words, promoting gender equality should not be left solely to gender equality projects.

This model involves two different approaches because the EU's dual strategy for promoting gender equality entails that the gender perspective must be included in all planning, activities, decision-making and assessment on programme and project level, in addition to separate gender equality programmes and projects being implemented from time to time to achieve more marked leaps in development. In order to succeed in integrating the gender perspective into the various stages of the programme cycle, it is useful to view cycle stages as various work phases. During each phase of work, the gender perspective and positive action are reviewed separately.

Phases of work following the programme cycle

Planners face genuine challenges regarding the accessibility, processing, understanding and application of information. That is why gender is taken into account at various stages of the cycle, 'step by step,' through four different approaches (Table 1).

In the very beginning, awareness (1) and understanding of, and skills in, equality and gender and their significance to those participating in programme planning and implementation, must be assessed and enhanced.

When actors understand their own and other participants' skill levels and need for additional information, gender and gender equality information can be applied. Review targets include programme (2) goals, spearhead themes, measures and participants in light of gender and gender equality information.

Knowledge of gender equality-conscious programme and project planning can easily remain the preserve of a small circle dedicated to the issue, unless information can be formulated into instructions, advice and solutions for the parties involved in programme planning and implementation. It is therefore essential that all parties are subject to comprehensive 3. communication on gender equality objectives and methods, and are provided with instructions.

On their own, current modes of operation and mindsets in programming do not lend themselves to gender mainstreaming. That is why it is necessary to plan and implement separate measures for programmes 4. to guide and train participants in taking account of gender issues in content-related work.

Approach Stages of programme cycle	1. Awareness and understanding, knowledge and skills	2. Objectives, spearhead themes, measures and participating parties	3. Instructions and informing (communications)	4. Separate measures
I Selection of programme priorities and themes				
II Planning of programme implementation				
III Funding – handling and decision process				
IV Monitoring of implementation, project monitoring and assessment				
V Assessment of results, experiences and things learned as a basis for new planning				

Table 1. Attention to gender issues at various programme cycle stages.

Programme cycle stages can be assessed using the following sample questions:

I Selection of programme priorities and themes (analysis of operating environment in the background)

1. Awareness and understanding, knowledge and skills
 - What kind of factual information do those preparing programming possess on gender equality challenges in the operating environment? What kind of gender equality-related challenges are there in the problems and needs on the basis of which basis programme priorities and themes are chosen?
 - How experienced and skilled are those involved in preparation, in terms of having a far-reaching influence on gender equality?
 - Is it necessary to hear gender equality experts and researchers?
 - Is the information gained from the programme area on the gender equality situation sufficient and relevant?
 - For what standard of analysis, of silent gender equality signals and trends, would resources suffice?

2. Programme objectives, spearhead themes, measures and participating parties
 - In what way does gender segregation have an impact in the background? Is gender segregation verifiable, for instance as regards earnings or commercial potential, pay, health; do age, standard of education, profession, sector have an influence?
 - Does the programme latently deepen gender segregation in work or business life, civic participation, applying for educational courses etc?
 - Does the programme promote dismantling of gender segregation in the job and educational markets?
 - Do programme policy definitions favour one gender and, if so, is this justified?
 - Does the programme openly support the participation of women and men alike?

3. Informing and instructions
 - Do the programme documents awaken the interest of the authorities responsible for funding decisions in the gender equality situation and in trends in the programme target area?

- What level of gender knowledge and gender equality expertise would be required, in order to understand and adopt the justifications of the programme?
4. Separate measures
- What kinds of separate programmes are required in order to promote gender equality?
 - What kinds of experiences have been gained from previous separate development programmes?

II Planning of programme implementation: funding instruments, selection criteria, target groups

1. Awareness and understanding, knowledge and skills
- What factual information do those preparing programme implementation have on the latest methods for promoting gender equality in the home country and internationally?
 - How experienced and skilled are those involved in preparation, in applying gender equality knowledge?
 - Is the knowledge basis sufficient for understanding target groups' gender-segregated needs, expectations and life situations?
2. Programme objectives, spearhead themes, measures and participating parties
- What criteria are used in application documents for assessing the gender equality competence of those implementing the project?
 - Is there a requirement for project applications to include concrete measures for gender mainstreaming?
 - Do concrete mainstreaming measures influence the success of project applications?
 - What indicators or assessment criteria have been created for enabling the assessment of results generated, operating models and best practices from the gender perspective?
3. Informing and instructions
- How are funding authorities informed of the programme's gender equality objectives and measures?
 - What level of gender knowledge and gender equality expertise would be required, in order to understand and apply the instructions?

4. Separate measures

- Is advice and training available for public servants on applying the programme's gender equality objectives and gender mainstreaming requirements?
- How do the instructions seek to prevent gender-blind project application assessment and decision-making?

III Programme implementation (funding handling and decision process)

1. Awareness and understanding

- What factual information do those handling funding applications, and decision-makers, possess on the latest methods for furthering gender equality in the home country and internationally?
- Do those responsible for handling, and decision-makers, have sufficient gender equality knowledge?
- Have those responsible for handling, and decision-makers, been trained or advised in accounting for and assessing the gender perspective?
- Do those responsible for handling, and decision-makers, understand the criteria for promoting gender equality?

2. Programme objectives, spearhead themes, measures and participating parties

- Are applicants required to provide a need, problem and objective analysis from the gender equality perspective?

3. Informing and instructions

- What kinds of instructions are project planners given on promoting gender equality and methods for implementing it?
- Do these instructions differentiate between ordinary and innovative promotion of gender equality?

4. Separate measures

- What methods are used to ensure the receipt of high-quality gender equality project applications?
- Can a gender neutral project application succeed, or are all applications required to take account of gender to at least a certain, minimum extent?

IV Monitoring of implementation, project monitoring and assessment

1. Awareness and understanding

- Does the implementation of the programme and projects involve practical promotion of gender equality? If so, how?

2. Programme objectives, spearhead themes, measures and participating parties

- What indicators are used for monitoring the impact of project decisions on the progress of gender equality?
- Is the requirement to promote gender equality included in the assessment criteria at both programme and project level?
- Do we monitor the meeting of gender equality promotion objectives in projects, at every project stage?
- Are the results achieved and best practices assessed from the gender perspective?
- Does project reporting and documentation include a gender equality promotion perspective?

3. Information and instructions

- What kinds of instructions do we give project actors on promoting and implementing gender equality? Which methods do we use for this?
- Do we also use project steering groups for informing people about the significance of promoting and methods of implementing gender equality?

4. Separate measures

- How do we utilise the gender equality expertise of gender equality projects and other projects?
- How do we distribute and embed the best gender equality practices?

V Assessment of results, experiences and things learned as a basis for new planning

1. Awareness and understanding

- Were the programme preparers' gender equality knowledge and application skills sufficient in the previous programme planning round?
- Were application handlers and decision-makers able to use gender equality promotion assessment criteria?
- What kinds of deficiencies in knowledge became apparent?
- How might this information be utilised in new planning?

2. Modes of operation, measures, contents, results, resulting practices from the programming perspective; programme assessment

- Is the requirement to promote gender equality included in the assessment criteria A) on programme level, B) on project level?
- Was the attainment of gender equality objectives monitored in the programmes and projects and at their various stages?
- Were project results and best practices assessed from a gender perspective?
- How might this information be utilised in new planning?

3. Information

- What range of measures would ensure the efficient distribution of information on best practices and well-functioning solutions?

4. Separate measures

- What methods are used for eliminating known deficiencies in gender equality knowledge?
- What party provides resources for gender equality knowledge training and advisory services?
- What separate measures and support structures does a new programme period need for promoting gender equality?



4. Gender mainstreaming in ESF and ERDF project activities

Sinikka Mustakallio

In the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union commit itself to promoting gender equality between women and men in all of its activities. This commitment means that the principle of gender mainstreaming is applied in all EU activities, in order to promote gender equality. The impacts of all actions must be assessed from the viewpoint of the different genders, and actions must be implemented so as to promote gender equality.

The EU implements a dual strategy in promoting gender equality: gender equality is promoted through special gender equality policy measures and by gender mainstreaming in all actions. The same dual strategy must also be implemented in project activities funded by structural funds. In compliance with the dual strategy, gender equality is promoted, both by means of gender specific equality projects and by taking the gender perspective into account in all other projects.

The gender perspective must be mainstreamed (integrated) in all stages of all structural fund programming and in conducting projects. While gender mainstreaming is a strategy for promoting gender equality, it also represents a way of carrying out better programming and projects with a greater impact. Taking account of the gender perspective improves the quality and effectiveness of programming and projects. Gender mainstreaming leads to a deepening of needs-orientation and the customer perspective in project activities.

Taking account of the gender perspective produces more specific information on the problem the project is seeking to solve, the target of project activities, and target groups. This creates a better and more precise knowledge base for the definition of project goals and planning of measures. Gender disaggregated statistics and research provide more detailed information on the needs, problems and expectations of project target groups. The project becomes better equipped to meet different needs and life situations within target groups, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of project measures.

Gender Equality projects

Projects with the primary aim of enhancing gender equality.

Projects into which the gender perspective must be mainstreamed (integration of the gender perspective)

Projects whose main goals are something other than enhancing gender equality. The gender perspective also must be mainstreamed (integrated) in such projects.

4.1. Enhancing the quality of gender equality projects

Special gender equality projects have been implemented in Finland since the 1980s. The first such projects were usually conducted with the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Since Finland's accession to the European Union, most gender equality projects have been implemented with financial assistance from the EU.

For instance, gender equality projects have involved

- Dismantling gender segregation in the labour market: introducing women to male-dominated sectors and positions, and men to female-dominated sectors and positions
- Dismantling gender segregation in education
- Developing equal practices in education and student counselling
- Promoting women's employment
- Promoting women's entrepreneurship
- Promoting women's career progress and leadership
- Developing gender equality planning at workplaces and equal practices in working life
- Reconciling work and family life
- Improving the position of immigrant women

When gender equality projects aim to promote gender equality, they can develop equality both for women and men. In the 2000s, a few projects have also been targeted at gender minorities. Some gender equality projects have been particularly targeted at women or men. For instance, a project may have involved a management training programme targeted at women, or may have promoted the orientation of men towards the care sector. In some projects, measures have been targeted at both genders.

When a project involves the planning of measures targeted at one gender only, these measures are female-specific or male-specific. The project plan must include a justification for this approach. For instance, special training has been arranged for women entrepreneurs on the grounds that entrepreneurial objectives differ between women and men. Studies indicate that, in the case of women entrepreneurs, goals associated with the business and family influence one another more than in the case of their male counterparts. A special course for women may provide better support for women entrepreneurs in setting and achieving personal targets in different areas of life. Such courses can also take account of needs and objectives common to and characteristic of women entrepreneurs, in training programme contents and learning methods. Moreover, on a women-only course, women's mutual interaction becomes more open and provides more support for women's self-confidence than on a mixed course.¹⁶ The same arguments can be considered to largely apply to leadership training targeted at women.

In light of these justifications, it may transpire that if men are allowed to participate in training targeted at women, the situation changes completely: the added value provided by women-specific training is thereby eliminated. The same applies to male-specific measures. For instance, in terms of group dynamics, the situation changes completely if women are included in the training as a minority. However, projects have also begun to implement, say, leadership training for women targeted specifically at women, but allowing men to participate.

People may well ask whether the actual objective of the project is then completely vitiated. It is for this reason that careful consideration should be given to whether such an approach to implementation fulfils the goals of the project. If, for instance, you wish to offer leadership or economic training to both genders in practice, the training should be consciously and openly offered to both genders. If a project involves the planning of female or male specific measures, grounds for these must be included in the project plan and the measures must be implemented as targeted at one of the genders only.

It is important that, in line with the EU's dual strategy, the funding of special gender equality projects continues. At the same time, funding authorities must use guidance and training in order to attempt to enhance the quality and degree of innovation in gender equality projects.

¹⁶ Räsänen Leila (ed.) Vammalan naisyrittäjäkurssi – Kivnoföretagarkursen i Vammala. (Course for women entrepreneurs in Vammala).

Gender equality projects should be capable of developing innovative best practices for promoting gender equality. Those in charge of planning new gender equality projects should have sufficient knowledge and skills in promoting gender equality, and knowledge of the best practices developed by previous gender equality projects to this end. In the planning of new gender equality projects, better account than at present should be taken of the experiences, results and best practices of previous gender equality projects.

Funding authorities must contribute to ensuring that planners of gender equality projects have sufficient basic knowledge of gender equality issues and previous gender equality projects and, if necessary, must use guidance and training to boost planners' capacity to implement gender equality projects of a sufficiently high standard. If necessary, funding authorities can also urge project planners to gain further training or consulting on positive action.

4.2. Gender mainstreaming in projects – policy definitions

The programme document of the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013 requires integration of the gender perspective in project activities at all levels and stages. Whenever the gender perspective is of significance to project activities, it must be taken into account at all stages of the project's lifecycle.

The programme document of the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013 includes the following instructions on gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality into the operations of ESF projects:

“Promotion of gender equality must be integrated as part of all operations on all levels and at all stages.

In every case, this requires an analysis of the operating environment, situation and problem to be solved. Such a basis is ideal for sharpening up the strategy, enhancing project quality and improving their focus in general. A status analysis is also of assistance in attending to the impacts of measures.

Promotion of equality applies to both genders, and both benefit from inclusion of the gender perspective in all projects.

The gender perspective must be taken into account whenever relevant. Analysis, from the gender perspective, of the operating environment, situation and problem to be solved, forms the basis for all that follows. In this context, gender disaggregated statistics play a key role. Should differences be detected between women and men, they must be taken into account throughout the project's lifecycle. Objectives and measures must be planned so that the project promotes equality between women and men.

If and when target group representatives are consulted during preparation of the project plan, steps must be taken to ensure that both women and men are heard.

When organising the project, the availability of the necessary expertise in gender equality issues must be ensured. For instance, this may entail the use of outside expertise and training of project personnel on these issues. Account must be taken of any additional costs resulting from the promotion of gender equality, when preparing the project budget.

Gender equality must be included in the project's monitoring and self-assessment system. In addition to quantitative indicators, qualitative indicators should be developed for this purpose. Project impacts must also be assessed with respect to gender equality.¹⁷

According to structural fund legislation, the promotion of gender equality must also be integrated into the operations of ERDF projects. All ERDF programme documents for the programme period 2007-2013 consider the promotion of gender equality. They also include an assessment by region of which gender equality issues are key in each area. Prepared by region, the ERDF's operational programmes emphasise the promotion of women's entrepreneurship among gender equality objectives.

ERDF programmes give no concrete instructions on how gender equality should be promoted in projects. However, the dual strategy of gender equality promotion, and the requirement that the gender perspective be taken into account in all projects, applies to ESF projects as well as ERDF projects. It can therefore be recommended that the instructions, issued in ESF programme documents, requiring that the gender perspective be integrated into all projects, are also applied in ERDF projects.

¹⁷ The programme document for the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013, p. 72.

In the case of funding authorities and project actors, it would be particularly important to strengthen their awareness of the gender mainstreaming obligation in all projects. Funding authorities are in charge of ensuring that account is taken of the gender perspective in funded projects.

When assessing project applications and plans, the funder must ensure that the project application and plan clearly and concretely show how the significance of the gender perspective for the project has been examined, and how the project takes account of the gender perspective. If necessary, the funder must guide the party preparing the project to correct and complement the application by taking the gender perspective into account.

Checklist for funders on gender mainstreaming in projects

1. Is the project planner aware of the gender mainstreaming obligation?
 Not at all To some extent Commendably

2. Do the project application and plan clearly and concretely show how the gender perspective is taken into account at various stages of the project?
 Not at all To some extent Commendably

3. Does the project planner have sufficient knowledge and skills for gender mainstreaming at all stages of the project?
 Not at all To some extent Commendably

4. If the project planner does not have sufficient knowledge and skills for gender mainstreaming at all stages of the project, can you assist the project planner in gaining sufficient knowledge and skills for gender mainstreaming in the planned project
 based on your own knowledge, by means of guidance,
 by means of training?

Funding authorities can also train project planners, insofar as possible, in gender mainstreaming in projects and give advice on how project planners themselves can acquire the additional know-how, training or consulting they need on gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming. Practical skills in gender mainstreaming must be strengthened in all project activities.

Programme instructions must clearly convey the message that gender mainstreaming is required in projects and that this will be used as an assessment criterion. This will make project planners take account of the fact that, from the very beginning of project planning, operating methods that solve gender mainstreaming issues concretely, at all stages, must be created within the project. The gender perspective cannot be glued on to a project whose planning is already complete.

For project planners to succeed in gender mainstreaming, examining the significance of gender from the beginning is a key issue, i.e. from the outset of the analysis and description of project starting points, of the problem to be solved, and of the operating environment.

A checklist for project planners on gender mainstreaming in projects

1. Clarify for yourself what gender mainstreaming entails at all stages of the project.
2. Gain additional knowledge, training or guidance in gender mainstreaming for the project you are planning, if you feel that you cannot do all of this by yourself.
3. Find out about gender equality and the gender perspective regarding the operating target of your project. This will provide a factual basis for planning.
4. On the basis of the knowledge gained, assess the significance of gender at all stages of your project.
5. Make gender visible in your project application and project plan. Proceed systematically, one project phase at a time, and describe the concrete means and methods for taking account of the gender perspective.
6. Plan and implement your project so that the gender perspective is taken into account in all phases, and to ensure that the project promotes gender equality in addition to other targets.¹⁸

¹⁸ The publication *Gender Glasses in Use. A handbook in support of government ministries' gender equality work.* Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Publications 2009:13, also contains excellent instructions on a project actor's checklist and other issues.

Funding authorities and project planners must be equally aware of what gender mainstreaming entails in the various phases of projects. The following description of taking the gender perspective into account in projects may therefore be equally helpful to funders and those in charge of project planning and implementation.

4.3. Phases of gender mainstreaming in projects

The following phases can be indicated in gender mainstreaming (integration) in project activities:

- A. Assess the significance of the gender perspective in project activities
- B. When the gender perspective does play a role in project activities, at the project planning stage assess the significance of the gender perspective for each project phase.
- C. During project implementation, account should be taken of the gender perspective throughout the project, in accordance with the project and communication plans. Attention to the gender perspective must be monitored, assessed and reported on throughout the project.

A. Assess whether the gender perspective plays a role in project activities

Assessment of whether the gender perspective plays a role in project activities can also be termed 'reviewing gender relevance'.

When assessing whether the gender perspective plays a role in project activities, you should pose a series of questions to yourself at the planning stage. These questions will guide you to consider, acquire information on and analyse the project target and measures, from the viewpoint of the different genders. Because, to begin with, the significance of gender is difficult to review in an objective and unprejudiced way, these questions will help you to proceed beyond mere everyday knowledge and presuppositions on the significance of gender in project activities.

For instance, the following questions will help you assess whether the gender perspective plays a role in project activities:

- How are the problem area and operating environment different for different genders?

- Are the project’s planned measures or impacts targeted at people?
- Are there significant differences between genders in the activity at which the project is targeted?
- What are the proportions of genders in the project’s planned target groups?
- Are different measures, by gender, required to achieve the objectives planned for the project?
- Are the project’s planned measures targeted at genders in different ways, and are their impacts different in terms of the genders?

Project measures or impacts are usually targeted at people. Account must therefore be taken of the gender perspective in almost all projects. A project can only be considered gender neutral after a systematic assessment of the significance of the gender perspective to the project. This is done by reviewing the problem to be solved, the operating environment and the target of the project activity, as well as its objectives, target groups and preliminarily planned measures respecting the different genders. However, few projects can be considered gender neutral after such a review, if the project or its impacts are targeted at people.

When reviewing project applications, you may notice that some project planners clearly consider that projects should be gender neutral. They will therefore try to justify the project’s gender neutrality in the project application. However, the objective is not for projects to be gender neutral.

NOT IN THIS WAY

Project applications state that the project is gender neutral because “project measures are targeted at both genders” or because “project target groups include both men and women” or because “both genders can equally participate in project activities”. The very same statements are used, if necessary, to justify that the project promotes gender equality. However, such general statements do not suffice as justification in either case. First and foremost, they reveal the application’s gender blindness, i.e. that the significance of gender has not been perceived and understood.

BUT IN THIS WAY

The project planner assesses the problem to be solved in a concrete way with regard to the genders. On the basis of concrete information, this person examines the status of genders within the project’s sphere of activity; are project activities targeted at different genders in the same way, are different measures regarding the genders required and do the genders have different needs, expectations and prerequisites for participating in the activities? On the basis of the information collected, the project plan gives a concrete assessment of the significance of the gender perspective to the project.

On the contrary, the objective is for all projects to take conscious account of the gender perspective. Special justifications are required to establish that a project is gender neutral.

Funders should require project planners to provide the plan with a concrete knowledge-based assessment of the gender perspective's role in the project. General entries not based on a concrete analysis, or assessments based on mere assumptions or everyday knowledge, are insufficient to forming a project assessment from the gender perspective.

Project objectives are not always directly related to people. The gender perspective may be significant in this type of project if its measures or impacts are targeted at people.

EXAMPLE 1 – DO THIS

The project is aimed at preventing the impacts of climate change. In such a case, the project planner may easily believe that the gender perspective plays no role in the project. However, project measures may involve influencing people's awareness and lifestyle choices from the viewpoint of climate change. This means, that in terms of the effectiveness of project measures, awareness of women and men's differing attitudes, consumer habits and other lifestyle-related differences significant to preventing climate change, is essential. In this way, the gender perspective plays a role in the project and more effective measures can be planned when account is taken of gender differences in matters influencing the prevention of climate change.

EXAMPLE 2 – DO THIS

The project aims at enhancing the profitability of agricultural farms. Initially, you may think that the gender perspective can play no role in this type of project. However, if project measures involve the training of agricultural producers, project measures are targeted at people and you must find out whether the gender perspective plays a role in project implementation. You must also find out about the gender ratio among the agricultural producers and producer families targeted by the project, about the division of labour between genders on farms, about the different training needs in terms of content for women and men, and whether there are differences in what forms of training people want or are able to participate in. An analysis from the gender perspective would provide knowledge in greater depth on the target group and its needs, as well as a basis for planning measures to better meet target-group needs. This will enhance the effectiveness of project measures.

In the majority of projects, measures or impacts are targeted at people and there are differences between the genders that must be taken into account in the project. Measures usually involve training or the development of operations in other ways. Projects of this type can be gender neutral in extremely few, exceptional cases. Whenever projects are targeted at employment or entrepreneurship, the gender perspective matters.

EXAMPLE 3 – DO THIS

Many projects are targeted at various ways of promoting entrepreneurship. Certain differences between male and women entrepreneurs must always be examined concretely in the area at which the planned project is targeted. An analysis of gender-related differences in entrepreneurship within the target area must be included in the project plan, which must assess the significance of gender differences in terms of project objectives and measures. In general, the number of women among entrepreneurs is lower than that of men, women mainly operate in different lines of business to men, and women's enterprises are smaller. Moreover, women may face special challenges in reconciling work and family life.

While one should be aware of these general differences, merely stating them in the project application is not sufficient. Plans for projects targeted at promoting entrepreneurship must always concretely explain the gender ratio of entrepreneurs in the project's target area, the lines of business in which women's and men's businesses operate, the size of women's and men's businesses, the development stage of these businesses and any other challenges in terms of skills, business and growth development faced by female and male entrepreneurs. Until now, a basic account of the gender perspective has been lacking in many project applications aimed at promoting entrepreneurship. In the future, approval should not be given to entrepreneurship project applications lacking an account of the gender perspective.

B. Assess the significance of gender perspective at various stages of the project

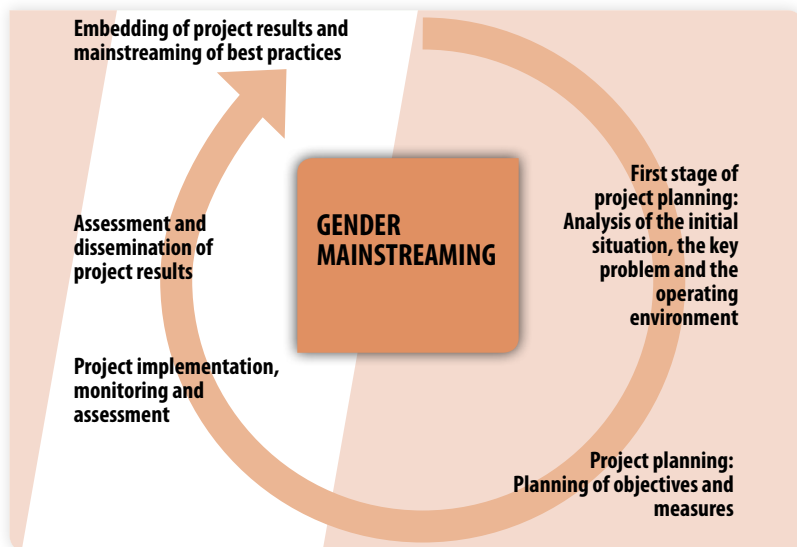


Figure 3: Gender mainstreaming at all stages of a project's lifecycle. Mustakallio and Tanhua 2011.

The significance of the gender perspective must be assessed at all stages of the project. On the basis of information gained from the assessment, project objectives, measures and ways of implementing them are planned so as to promote gender equality. Account must also be taken of the gender perspective in project monitoring and assessment, and in communications and the dissemination and embedding of best practices.

Hence, project assessment from the gender perspective involves the following phases:

1. Assessment of the initial situation, the key problem and the operating environment
2. Assessment of project goals
3. Assessment of target groups
4. Assessment of measures planned
5. Assessment of monitoring and assessment methods
6. Assessment of communications
7. Assessment of dissemination and embedding of best practices

Information must be compiled for project assessment from the gender perspective

Project assessment from the gender perspective means that information is acquired on the genders and realisation of gender equality in the activities or problem, operating environment and target groups that the project involves.

With the help of information gained on the gender perspective, project objectives, measures, monitoring and assessment, communications and the dissemination and embedding of best practices must be assessed and developed so that the project promotes gender equality. Both quantitative and qualitative information must be compiled for assessment purposes.

If the project involves surveys forming the basis of the planned activity, you must remember to compile and assess information itemised according to gender. The project should not be planned on the basis of everyday gender-related knowledge only, because this may involve subconscious assumptions and stereotypes of the roles, behaviour and needs of women and men. In the absence of critical consideration, there is a danger that the acquisition of information will also be targeted at irrelevant factors. Without the appropriate acquisition of information, project planners may end up justifying the gender neutrality of the application because they lack a factual basis for assessing the significance of gender to the project.

Minna – the Centre for Gender Equality Information in Finland at www.minna.fi is an excellent primary source of information for project planners. This database contains plenty of information on gender equality and the gender perspective in different sectors of society. Every project planner should therefore check information related to their project in the Minna database.

1. Assessment of the initial situation, the problem to be solved, and the operating environment

When assessing the problem to be solved, and the operating environment from the gender perspective, the following list helps in targeting the acquisition of information at essential issues. Appropriate questions also depend on the type of problem or activity the project involves.

- 1.1. What is the number or proportion of women and men or girls and boys involved in the activity, problem or operating environment at which the project is targeted?

- 1.2. What kinds of divisions according to gender, i.e. gender segregation, are apparent in the project's target activity or operating environment?
- 1.3. What kinds of quantitative and qualitative information (studies, statistics etc) is available on the status and gender equality in the project's target activity?
- 1.4. What kinds of differences between genders are evident in the project's target activity, according to research data?
- 1.5. What kinds of differences between the genders exist, for instance in terms of needs, problems, life situations and aspirations, within the project's target activities?
- 1.6. What kinds of notions of gender are related to the project's activity target? What kinds of stereotyped notions and expectations towards the genders are apparent?
- 1.7. What kinds of problems, life situations and aspirations do people belonging to gender minorities have?
- 1.8. How are different resources (money, time, space) and opportunities divided between the genders within the project's target activity?
- 1.9. Is gender visible in the values, standards and operating instructions that steer project activities?

The funder is responsible for verifying whether information on these issues has been compiled and used in the project application, with respect to the description and assessment of the project's initial situation. The proportions of genders in the project's target activity constitute basic data that must be established for all projects. If it is not possible to obtain accurate information, a justified assessment must be provided of why. For instance, projects improving employment must examine how employment affects women and men and projects promoting entrepreneurship must examine the proportions of women and men among entrepreneurs in the area in question.

When information on numbers by gender is compiled, you must proceed to analyse the differences that exist between the genders within the project's target activity. For instance, an employment project must examine the reasons why women, and on the other hand, men are unemployed, the occurrence of long-term unemployment by gender, whether differences exist between unemployed women and men in terms of training, previous work experience and whether other differences exist between the genders in terms of the prerequisites for finding employment.

If a project is targeted at education, working life or employment, gender segregation of education and the labour markets will always influence the project as a background factor. Education and working life projects must therefore regularly examine gender segregation in the education and labour markets, within the area at which the project is targeted. Likewise, gender segregation must always be analysed in entrepreneurship-related projects. In many other projects too, gender segregation in education and working life is a significant background factor which must be taken into account. Alleviation of gender segregation is a key gender equality policy objective. The questions that should be asked in all projects are: what are the project's impacts on gender segregation in education and working life, and whether the project contributes to alleviating segregation. Project planners must critically ensure that the project does not unconsciously confirm stereotypical gender notions and expectations and therefore maintain gender segregation in society.

Differences between genders in terms of needs, problems, life situations and aspirations within the project's target activity may have considerable impacts on the success and effectiveness of project activities. It is therefore necessary to examine these differences in every instance, assessing their significance to the project.

2. Assessment of project goals

Attention to the gender perspective should be visible in project goals, in order for these goals to guide consideration of the gender perspective in the planning and assessment of measures.

- 2.1. Are the genders visible in project goals?
- 2.2. Is attention to the gender perspective evident in the objectives?
- 2.3. Is promotion of gender equality evident in the objectives?

3. Assessment of target groups

In many cases, a high-quality account of the project's initial situation, the problem to be solved and operating environment themselves highlight the genders and the differences between them within target groups. If it is not evident from the description of the initial situation, the proportions of genders and differences between genders within target groups must be analysed and accounted for separately in the project plan.

- 3.1. What is the gender ratio in the project target groups?
- 3.2. What are the differences between the genders within the target groups regarding the needs, problems, life situations and expectations related to project activity?
- 3.3. Are stereotyped notions and expectations of genders related to target groups?
- 3.4. How are different resources divided between target groups according to gender?

Analysing the gender ratio of project target groups and presenting it in the project plan is a basic requirement for every project. If it is not possible to

NOT THIS WAY

Many project applications provide a general answer to the question of how the gender perspective is taken into account in target group need assessment, such as "the project offers all participants equal access and the right to participate in project activities".

In too many cases, project applications include unjustified assumptions that, for instance, the project's target group includes both genders equally. A project application concerning young people's entrepreneurship states the following: "The target group comprises young entrepreneurs and young people and students aiming to enter the creative sectors. The target group therefore covers both genders equally." No justification is given for this assumption.

These types of general entries are insufficient. Without a concrete account, general statements on equal access and participation remain empty and unjustified and in no way ensure the project's actual gender equality.

BUT THIS WAY

The gender ratio in project target groups must be established on the basis of the facts. The proportions of genders in project target groups must be concretely analysed, alongside the differences between genders as regards needs and life situations in relation to project goals and planned measures.

As regards entrepreneurship among young people, it can be assumed that the ranks of young entrepreneurs do not comprise an equal number of both genders since, in general, approximately one third of entrepreneurs are women. In addition, the differences between the genders may be significant in terms of the project's objective, for instance respecting the creative sectors towards which young people and students are orientated in the initial situation, what kinds of factors motivate them as entrepreneurs and what kinds of factors promote or prevent their becoming entrepreneurs. As regards gender, entrepreneurship among young people looks totally different based on the facts to the way it looks on the basis of stereotyped, everyday knowledge and assumptions.

gain accurate information on gender ratio, a justified assessment must be given of why. Moreover, consideration must be given to whether there are differences between the genders in target groups, in terms of their needs, problems, life situations and expectations of project activities. Information on these differences is absolutely vital to facilitating the planning of project activities in order to meet the needs and life situations of both genders, thereby rendering them efficient in terms of their influence.

If the gender ratio and differences between genders remain unanalysed in target groups, there will be no solid basis for the planning of measures. The risk that measures will not meet the needs of different genders equally well will be high and the effectiveness of measures will remain poor. On the other hand, there is high risk that the project will unknowingly enhance gender stereotypical trends, for instance in entrepreneurship, and not dismantle gender segregation.

4. Assessment of measures planned

- 4.1. How are measures targeted at genders?
- 4.2. Do the planned measures meet the needs of the genders equally well?
- 4.3. Are the actual impacts of measures different for the different genders?
- 4.4. On what kinds of notions of gender is the planning of measures based?
- 4.5. Do these measures maintain or dismantle existing gender segregation?

In order to achieve the project goals, when planning the project you must concretely analyse how the planned measures are targeted at the different genders and whether they meet their needs equally well.

EXAMPLE 4 – DO THIS

The project aims at motivating people to engage in physical exercise, to make new people active in physical exercise and to arrange physical exercise events that support these objectives and bring together large numbers of people. The project application states that both genders have equal opportunities to participate in these activities. However, the plan does not include information on women and men's physical exercise activity; how much women and men engage in physical exercise, what types of exercise the genders favour, what motivates women and men to exercise, and whether women's and men's exercise opportunities differ from one another. Had this type of information been examined gender-specifically in the target group, it could have been ensured that the project was able to motivate both genders equally well into becoming physically active, arranging events that equally inspire and attract both genders.

EXAMPLE 5 – DO THIS

The project's aim was to promote the working capacity and wellbeing of entrepreneurs running a small business. A key activity was to motivate entrepreneurs to engage in physical exercise and to arrange physical exercise for them. The project application stated that project activities are equally suitable for women and men and that both can participate equally. In practice, the project arranged aerobics lessons. As a result, women participated but men did not. The project's objectives to activate female and male entrepreneurs to engage in physical exercise equally were not met. If, at the project planning stage, the forms of physical exercise that inspire women on the one hand and men on the other, and which forms of physical exercise interest both, had been concretely examined, project activities could have been planned in such a way as to ensure that the goals were met. In this case, the project did not function appropriately with respect to the initial situation. On the basis of general information, you can in fact assume that men running small businesses particularly need to engage in more physical exercise. Had the initial situation been concretely examined according to gender and taken into account during the planning of project activities, the project's success and effectiveness would have been enhanced.

5. Assessment of monitoring and assessment methods

The gender perspective is included in project monitoring and assessment throughout the project. The gender perspective must be taken into account in the self assessment conducted during the project, and the interim reports and final report made for the funder.

A viable solution would be to design the quantitative and qualitative data collection and indicators used in project monitoring so that they generate information relevant from the point of view of different genders. It is not enough to compile only quantitative data on participants by gender.

For instance, participant feedback must be produced by gender and an analysis must be conducted on what such feedback reveals about the experiences of the genders and the benefits they gained from the project. It is also important to analyse what quantitative monitoring of data by gender indicates regarding the project's success in meeting its goals. It is important that all experiences are written down in the assessment, including any problems and obstacles met in observing the gender perspective and promoting gender equality, and that these are also included in project reports.

In monitoring and assessment, the following questions draw attention to the development of project staff skills, problems and solutions, data collection methods, and analysis of the collected data and results by gender.

- 5.1. Have project staff, target groups and stakeholders been trained in mainstreaming the gender perspective in project activities?
- 5.2. What kinds of problems and obstacles have been met in taking the gender perspective into account and promoting gender equality in project activities?
- 5.3. What kinds of new solutions and measures are necessary to succeed better in taking the gender perspective into account and enhance gender equality?
- 5.4. What does quantitative monitoring data by gender reveal?
- 5.5. Are indicators monitoring qualitative gender equality impacts used in assessment?
- 5.6. Do the participants' experiences differ by gender?
- 5.7. Has the activity been equally accessible to different genders and has it met their needs on an equal basis?
- 5.8. What are the project's impacts like in terms of gender?
- 5.9. Who will utilise the project results, is there a difference between the genders?
- 5.10. What will be the project's long-term impacts on gender equality?

6. Assessment of communications

The gender perspective must be taken into account when preparing and implementing the project's communications plan. Like the project plan, the communications plan must make gender visible and indicate how the gender perspective is taken into account in communications content and dissemination.

The following questions facilitate the assessment of communications from a gender perspective:

- 6.1. How is the gender perspective taken into account in the project's communications contents (verbal and visual)? Are different genders equally present in communications, both as actors and in utilising the results of activities?
- 6.2. How have communications reached both genders?
- 6.3. What kind of feedback has each gender provided on communications?
- 6.4. Has project interaction been equally active with different genders?
- 6.5. What image of gender do the project communications create? Are stereotypes dismantled by giving a diverse image of gender and the scope for action of different genders?

7. Assessment of dissemination and embedding of best practices

The following questions can be used for assessing the dissemination and embedding of best practices generated by the project, from a gender perspective:

- 7.1. Do the project's best practices benefit both genders equally?
- 7.2. Has the dissemination of best practices reached both genders equally?
- 7.3. Have best practices that promote gender equality also been disseminated and embedded?¹⁹

C. Gender mainstreaming in the project

The project planning stage creates the basis for taking account of the gender perspective when implementing the project. Well-conducted assessment of the gender perspective regarding the various project stages creates the preconditions for succeeding in gender mainstreaming. Without consciously including the gender perspective in the planning of project goals, activities, communications and assessment, no account of the gender perspective can be taken in project implementation.

During project implementation, it is important to implement the measures planned for gender mainstreaming. In practice, projects have too often set objectives for promoting gender equality but then failed to monitor and implement them during the project. In future, project funders and project actors must take better note of gender mainstreaming in project planning, and of its implementation as planned.

Gender mainstreaming is a new issue for many in charge of implementing projects. Time must be allocated to investigating this issue. It is advisable that the steering group acquire expertise on gender mainstreaming, ensuring that the entire steering group is inducted with respect to this issue. This will enable the steering group to support gender mainstreaming throughout the project.

One person alone should not be made responsible for gender mainstreaming. Success is achieved by considering and implementing the issue together. The key is conscious willingness to explore the issue and learn about it together. Sharing experiences with other projects can promote your own

¹⁹ These checklists were compiled with the assistance of an article by Hillevi Lönn and Mia Teräsaho: Instructions for taking the gender perspective into account in the project plan. Structural fund newsletter 3/2011 and the publication Gender Glasses in Use. A handbook in support of government ministries' gender equality work. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Publications 2009:13.

learning. Gender mainstreaming entails consideration of project objectives and activities from a new perspective, posing new questions and applying new knowledge. An open mind and willingness to experiment will help in getting started on the issue, and all experiences will carry you forward.



5. The Training and Consulting Project of the Development Programme Valtava produced the Gender Mainstreaming Guide

Marja-Leena Haataja and Eija Leinonen

The Training and Consulting Project of the Gender Mainstreaming Development Programme Valtava

Coordinated by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Gender Mainstreaming Programme Valtava is a national development programme, to be undertaken during the 2007–2013 programming period of the European Social Fund (ESF). The goals of the Valtava Development Programme include supporting and developing the expertise of gender equality actors and project funders, increasing general knowledge of the gender perspective and gender mainstreaming, developing gender mainstreaming and its assessment, dismantling gender segregation in education and work careers, and supporting the activities of resource centres for women and women's entrepreneurial potential.

The Training and Consulting Project of the Gender Mainstreaming Development Programme Valtava (2009–2011 and 2011–2013) aims at promoting the knowledge and awareness of Valtava development programme projects and funding authorities, and the regional authorities of mainland Finland and those participating in other ESF projects of gender equality and methods for promoting it, and at furthering the attainment of the Valtava development programme's and project goals. The goal is to provide information on the status and equality situation of women and men in Finland, while creating concrete tools for gender mainstreaming. The project is being run in the programme area of mainland Finland.

Project target groups

- Project personnel of Valtava development programme projects
- ESF coordinators, Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres)
- Key persons at ELY Centres and among regional councils' funding authorities
- Key persons in regional cooperation group
- Other ESF projects

The project included the following measures

- A) Training need analysis for project target groups
- B) Workshops for the training and expert team
- C) Training and consulting for Valtava development programme projects
- D) Training of funding authorities
- E) Seminars for broader groups of participants
- F) Electronic training material and gender mainstreaming guide for the use of employment and economic administration and the education administration

The key result of training need analysis was that there is a need for basic information on gender equality and ways of promoting it

Training and consulting within the project was rendered concrete and practical in order to meet the needs of the trainees in the best possible way, to provide knowhow in recognising the significance of gender in operational terms, and to implement the process of mainstreaming in one's own work or project activities. The training need analysis helped to target the tailoring of training and consulting at meeting the needs of project participants and authorities. As a key result, the training need analysis highlighted the need for basic information on, and ways of promoting, gender equality.

Planning and implementation were supported by the preliminary charting performed as part of the project 'Gender Mainstreaming in practice'²⁰ that highlighted the scarcity of gender mainstreaming in regional and local state government and among funding authorities. In many cases, separate gender equality projects are implementing gender equality work in the regions. Assessment of the experiences and results of the previous structural fund programme period (2000–2006) came to similar conclusions. The programme document of the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland 2007-2013 states that the problem of gender mainstreaming can be crystallised in the form of insufficient capacity and instructions among both project actors and authorities.

Coordinated by Sosiaalikehitys Ltd, the project 'Gender Mainstreaming in practice' is creating new operating models, methods and tools for gender mainstreaming in the activities and services of municipalities and central government. A guide on this issue was published in February 2012.

²⁰ Mainstreaming in practice 2010–2012, implemented by Sosiaalikehitys Ltd, KoulutusAvain Ltd and WoM Ltd.

Training and consulting for funding authorities

Training and consulting for funding authorities was implemented in two parts in the areas of eleven ELY Centres. Titled 'Basics of Equality', the first part focused on training, including the following themes:

- Targets of promoting gender equality and obligations for gender equality mainstreaming (international obligations, Equality Act and programme document of the ESF Operational Programme in mainland Finland)
- What is gender equality (gender equality and parity, Finnish phenomena, gender equality promotion targets)? What does gender equality mainstreaming mean? What is gender impact assessment?
- The benefits of mainstreaming and gender impact assessment (statistics, efficiency, quality and effectiveness, new perspectives)?
- Promoting gender equality in regional programming and development work.

The second part was a consultative workshop focussing on a gender impact assessment of project applications, on the basis of authorities' own project applications.

The training and consulting method was regarded as a highly successful form of implementation. Participants said that it had helped them to concretise gender mainstreaming, supporting their practical work both in terms of assessing project applications and guiding project actors. The training and consulting project model can therefore be regarded as successful and should also be implemented in the next structural fund period. Implemented as part of the Training and Consulting Project, training of funding authorities continued during the follow-up of the project that began in the autumn of 2011.

Consulting Valtava projects

Consulting the Valtava development programme projects was based on project needs from the gender equality promotion perspective. Gender mainstreaming, both during and at various stages of a project's lifecycle, has been the key theme of consulting. Participants have mainly included project personnel and those implementing sub-projects, while steering group members have also participated in some projects. Project participants have also met at joint workshops and seminars considering the thematics of gender equality promotion, project work and gender equality work issues.

Parallel to this guide, an electronic training material has been produced. This material is available on the websites of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, KoulutusAvain Ltd and WoM Ltd at www.tem.fi/valtava, www.koulutusavain.fi, www.wom.fi.

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Gender mainstreaming in development programmes and projects

The guide concerns gender mainstreaming (integration) in development programming and project work. Gender mainstreaming enhances the effectiveness of programmes and projects. The guide provides practical advice on successful gender mainstreaming in programme work and project activities. The guide was written on the basis of the EU's structural fund programmes, but is suitable for everyone involved in the planning, implementation and assessment of various development programmes and projects, and for authorities and elected officials. It was produced by the Gender Mainstreaming Programme Valtava development programme (MEE) training and consulting project, by KoulutusAvain Ltd and WoM Ltd.

Based in Kajaani, KoulutusAvain Ltd was established in 1992. The company engages in organisational and personnel development, enhances wellbeing at work, provides psychologist and recruitment services, draws up recruitment strategies, and improves work processes. We also offer equality training and consulting and project-work expert services for the public and private sectors. www.koulutusavain.fi

World of Management Ltd (WoM) is an equality training and consulting company. Since 2000, WoM has trained and consulted in the public and private sectors on working life equality issues, equality planning at workplaces and gender mainstreaming in public sector activities and services. www.wom.fi



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