



**Office of the Directorate General of Programmes**

**Guidelines on gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe's co-operation activities**

**Definition and Purpose**

These guidelines aim at ensuring gender mainstreaming in the planning, organisation and implementation of co-operation activities.

Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels at all stages, by the actors involved in policy-making<sup>1</sup>.

As stated in the Council of Europe (CoE) Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, *the CoE will strive to achieve gender mainstreaming in the development and implementation of co-operation programmes, projects and activities*<sup>2</sup>.

**Mainstreaming at different project/programme stages**

Gender mainstreaming should intervene at an early stage, during the first preparatory phases of policy making or project design, but should not be limited to that stage. It should be a constant thread throughout the whole process, i.e. from the preparation and planning stage, to implementation and evaluation<sup>3</sup>.

The following steps are practical examples of how to mainstream gender at project level:

<b>Planning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Taking part, as necessary, in an introduction/training on gender issues and in particular on what mainstreaming a gender perspective may entail in the planning, organisation and implementation of co-operation activities.</li><li>- Promoting gender equality as an integral element of CoE's co-operation policy, regardless of the type and area of the project; at all stages of the project, and in particular at early stages, when the proposal is drafted or the activity is planned.</li><li>- Carrying out a gender impact assessment as part of the preparatory work for co-operation programmes, projects and activities giving consideration to the fact that gender roles and power relations vary according to specific country, cultural and social situations. Applying the outcome of the Gender Impact.</li><li>- Using quantitative and qualitative data, disaggregated by sex, when determining the needs that should be addressed by the activity.</li><li>- Meaningfully involving representatives of both genders in consultation processes.</li><li>- Developing objectives for the activity in line with the needs of both genders and in particular of the disadvantaged one.</li><li>- Analysing the planned budget allocation of the activity in terms of its contribution to both genders' needs.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> CoE Gender Mainstreaming. Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices. Final report of Activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming (EG-S-MS), Strasbourg 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic objective 5: achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

<sup>3</sup> For more details on which stages of the policy processes are important for gender mainstreaming see: "Gender mainstreaming Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices", CoE 2004, p.18.



## Organisation/Implementation

- Striving for the recruitment of a gender-balanced project team as well as team members with an awareness of gender issues.
- Ensuring gender balance in the selection of experts, speakers and participants to an activity.
- Ensuring gender balance in programmes and projects' governing bodies.
- Choosing partners that are committed to gender equality and identifying contacts that could help you advance the agenda of gender equality.
- Making it clear to stakeholders (national and international partners, experts, etc.) that gender issues are to be integrated in their action.
- Adapting, as appropriate, the arrangements related to an activity (e.g. timing, location, procedure, childcare, etc.) in order to achieve meaningful participation of women.
- Including gender-related resources when providing the participants and stakeholders with general information on the topic of the activity. In that respect, use CoE material on gender mainstreaming and women's rights (please see resources below).



## Communication/visibility

- Ensuring communication on your activity includes a gender perspective (for example photographic documentation should be gender-balanced, press releases should highlight gender issues related to the activity) and use a gender-sensitive language (for example, ombudsperson instead of ombudsman, chairperson instead of chairman, humanity instead of mankind, etc.).
- Including the following sentence when sending letters/ reporting/ communicating on an activity: *According to the CoE Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, the Council of Europe is committed to achieving gender mainstreaming in the development and implementation of co-operation programmes, projects and activities.* [for example: *Please make sure you select both women and men to participate in this activity/Please make sure your intervention during the seminar include a gender perspective and use gender-sensitive language/etc.*] Adapt as necessary.
- Fighting gender stereotypes through rising awareness of them and promoting non-stereotypical gender behaviour (e.g. giving tasks/roles to women that are traditionally perceived to be men's tasks and vice versa).



## Evaluation/monitoring

- Including a gender perspective in the evaluation and reporting of your activity (e.g. gender balance, gender disaggregated data, how the gender perspective has been taken into consideration, highlight gender issues raised during the activity, etc.).
- Following a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system from the design phase onwards, including the establishment of a gender-diverse team for the evaluation exercise and indicators to measure the extent to which gender equality objectives are met and changes in gender relations achieved.

## Key definitions and other resources

**Gender equality** means “an equal visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equality is the opposite of gender inequality, not of gender difference”<sup>4</sup>.

**Gender impact** assessment is the assessing of policy proposals on any differential impact on women and men, with a view to adapting these proposals to make sure that discriminatory effects are neutralised and that gender equality is promoted”<sup>5</sup>.

**Gender analysis:** the systematic attempt to identify key issues contributing to gender inequalities so that they can be properly addressed. Gender analysis provides the basis for gender mainstreaming and is described as ‘the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men in their assigned gender roles’<sup>6</sup>.

**Gender sensitive** means “addressing and taking into account the gender dimension”<sup>7</sup>

### For more information

See the [Gender Equality website](#) of the Directorate General of Democracy.

### Other resources

- ✓ [CoE Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017](#)
- ✓ [CoE webpage with resources on gender mainstreaming](#), including:
- ✓ [Manual](#) “Supporting Gender Equality Rapporteurs (GERs) in their role”
- ✓ [Recommendation No. R\(98\)14](#) of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on gender mainstreaming
- ✓ CoE report “[Gender mainstreaming: Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices](#)” (1998)
- ✓ [CoE report “Gender mainstreaming: practice and prospects”](#) (2000)

<sup>4</sup> cf. Manual “supporting gender equality Rapporteurs in their role”

<sup>5</sup> cf. European Commission, 1998. 100 words for equality. A glossary of terms on equality between men and women

<sup>6</sup> [Toolkit on mainstreaming gender equality in EC Development Cooperation](#), Europeaid, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> cf. European Commission, 1998. 100 words for equality. A glossary of terms on equality between men and women

## Appendix - Background information

Achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures is one of the five strategic objectives of the CoE [Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017](#), which *inter alia* states that the organisation “will strive to achieve gender mainstreaming in the development and implementation of co-operation programmes, projects and activities”.

In 1998, the Committee of Ministers adopted [Recommendation No. R \(98\) 14 on Gender Mainstreaming](#), in order to disseminate the report on gender mainstreaming, produced by the (former) Steering Committee on Equality between Women and Men, which set out the conceptual framework for gender mainstreaming and a methodology for its implementation, accompanied by examples of good practice. In April 1998, the Committee of Ministers addressed [a message on gender mainstreaming to the CoE Steering Committees](#) asking them to take inspiration from the above-mentioned report on gender mainstreaming when preparing their programmes of activities, and take into account: “*the relevance and the interest of the activity for both women and men*”, and “*whether there are differences between women and men in the field concerned by the activity with regard to rights, resources, positions, representation, values and norms*”.

In its 2007 Recommendation on gender equality standards and mechanisms ([CM/Rec\(2007\)17](#)), the Committee of Ministers recalled the importance of adopting methodologies for the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy, including gender budgeting, gender-based analysis and gender impact assessment.

The Committee of Ministers has also adopted Recommendations to mainstream gender in specific policy areas, such as education ([CM/Rec\(2007\)13](#)) and health ([CM/Rec\(2008\)1](#)). In 2013, the Committee of Ministers adopted a Recommendation to address “the need to provide a gender equality perspective while implementing its established standards in the field of media” ([CM/Rec\(2013\)1](#)). A Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in sport was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in January 2015 ([CM/Rec\(2015\)2](#)).

### What is gender mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming is the “(re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making”<sup>8</sup>.

Gender mainstreaming cannot and should not replace specific policies and measures aimed at redressing situations of gender inequality. Specific gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming are dual, interdependent and complementary strategies which must go hand in hand to reach the goal of gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming is relevant for all policy areas and at all policy levels, as they directly or indirectly have an impact on the life of women and men. Policy areas which at first sight may not seem appropriate for mainstreaming might contain hidden aspects of gender inequality.

Gender mainstreaming is an important strategy since it puts people at the heart of policy-making. It leads people to better government, because it involves both women and men and makes full use of human resources. It makes gender equality issues visible in the mainstream of society and it takes into account the diversity among women and men.

People involved in policy-making (and not just gender equality experts) should be involved in gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is not an extra burden; it helps solving problems and makes policy-making more effective and efficient.

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<sup>8</sup> This definition was agreed by the members of the CoE Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming, set up between 1995 and 1998. See “*Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices*” (Council of Europe, 2004).

### **Pre-requisites for gender mainstreaming:**

1. Political will: without a strong political will to create little by little a consensus on, and a culture of gender equality, the policy of gender mainstreaming will not be successful. The political will to mainstream involves the will to question current gender relations and the structures, processes and policies perpetuating inequality (there is a strong correlation between the political will for gender mainstreaming and public awareness of gender equality issues).
2. Gender sensitive and gender disaggregated data and statistics: Data on the current situation of women and men, and on current gender relations, are absolutely necessary for mainstreaming. The problem is not only that statistics are not always segregated by sex, but also that data can be gender biased. Good statistics comprise data that are relevant for both women and men and that are split up by sex as well as by other variables.
3. Comprehensive knowledge of gender relations: As gender mainstreaming is not a goal in itself, but a strategy to achieve gender equality, it presupposes that the necessary knowledge of gender relations is available, including analysis of current imbalances between the sexes in different policy fields, and how future initiatives will affect women and men.
4. Necessary funds and human resources: Financial means are an absolute prerequisite for gender mainstreaming, as for any other policy strategy. Mainstreaming implies a reallocation of existing funds. Long-term benefits have to be taken into consideration when considering short-term costs of gender mainstreaming.
5. Knowledge of the administration system: Gender mainstreaming involves the re-organisation, development, implementation and evaluation of policy processes, as well as information about the administrative system. This includes knowledge of the location of gender expertise, but also of the policy process (actors involved, necessary steps, responsibility lines).

### **Getting started with Gender mainstreaming: steps in assessing the gender impact:**

1. Put on your gender glasses: Decide to integrate a gender perspective and challenge your (own) assumptions and so-called gender neutral policies and legislation.
2. List relevant gender differences: Which relevant social and cultural differences between men and women might play a role in my field?
3. Collect and analyse facts and figures: How to find and collect more information and (sex disaggregated) statistics on the possible differences? Conduct further research, ask experts and interest groups.
4. Reflect and make decisions: How should a policy/project take those differences into account? Which carefully weighted policy decisions should be taken?
5. Evaluate: How to monitor and evaluate policy? Search for sex-disaggregated data. Start planning the evaluation from the beginning of the process.

### **Gender mainstreaming tools and techniques:**

Gender mainstreaming puts the accent on a (re)organisation of policy processes so that all policies and actors are involved. One of the main issues regarding gender mainstreaming is that in many cases the gender issue is not recognised, and therefore there is a need for techniques and tools<sup>9</sup> of various types, such as:

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<sup>9</sup> For more information on gender mainstreaming tools and techniques, see: "Gender mainstreaming Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices", CoE 2004, pp. 19-22.

- Analytical tool and techniques, including statistics, surveys, cost-benefit analyses, research, checklists, guidelines, and gender impact and assessment methods.
- Educational tools and techniques are also relevant, from awareness-raising and training, to follow-up actions, mobile or flying expertise, manual and handbooks, booklets and leaflets, educational material for use in schools, etc.
- Consultative and participatory tools and techniques are necessary to involve all actors concerned by a given issue, either through working or steering groups, databases and organisational charts, and participation of both sexes in decision-making, conferences and seminars.

### **How to assess the gender impact?**

1. Might differences between women and men play a role?
2. Which relevant social and cultural differences between women and men might play a role?
3. How should the suggested activity/policy take those differences into account?

For further information on assessing the gender impact, including a checklist to identify if a gender perspective is relevant, please see the [Manual for Gender Equality Rapporteurs](#) (pages 23-29).