

CONSTRUCTING A GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICY PLAN

The important thing if one is to start gender mainstreaming is to construct a mainstreaming policy plan. The first step is to have an initiator, who will be responsible for the start of gender mainstreaming. The next step is to take stock of the actual situation – the prerequisite met, the characteristics of the policy-making process - and to design a plan that takes this actual situation into account. Finally, the last step is to monitor the results.

The basic steps of the development of a gender mainstreaming policy plan are to:

- 1) Identify the person or group in charge**
- 2) Reveal the actual situation: which prerequisites are met?**
- 3) Describe targets: what are the expected results?**
- 4) Choose a policy area, level and phase in a context-specific way.**
- 5) Identify tools and techniques, including the need to develop new tools, or to educate actors involved.**
- 6) Make clear who will be responsible for gender mainstreaming.**
- 7) Setup a monitoring system.**

The main aim in gender mainstreaming policy plan consists in linking up the necessary prerequisite and facilitating conditions and ingredients with the policy context.

A checklist containing aspects which should be taken into account when setting up a gender mainstreaming policy plan. This checklist is meant to be a red-thread rather than a strict working scheme, helping to start the mainstreaming process in a structured way.

TO WHAT DEGREE ARE THE PREREQUISITE FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING MET?

The first step of gender mainstreaming policy plan consists in giving an overview of the degree to which the necessary prerequisites and facilitating conditions, which stipulate the framework for mainstreaming are available.

Considering the necessary prerequisite and facilitating conditions, the following aspects should be kept in mind:

1) Is there a political will?

- Is there political will to adopt the goal of gender equality?
- To what degree is there public awareness?
- To what degree has the goal of gender equality already been accepted?
- Which further commitments should be taken?

2) What assistance is available from gender equality machineries?

- What is the position of the gender equality machinery?
- Are there focal points?
- What specific equality policies do exist?

3) What statistics are available?

- How complete is the range of statistics available?
- Are regular statistics desegregated by sex?
- Are statistics desegregated by other background variables?

4) Is comprehensive knowledge of gender relations available?

- Is knowledge of gender relations available?
- Are gender experts available?
- Is there gender expertise in other bodies?

5) How does the administration work?

- How is decision making process organized?
- How are key administrators trained?
- What actors are normally involved in policy making?
- Who is normally responsible?

6) Where are funds and human resources to be found?

- What financial and human resources will be needed?
- What decisions are needed to reallocate the finance?

7) Can support from representatives in political and public life be expected?

- What are the proportions of both sexes?
- Their activities in public and political life?
- Their involvement in decision making process?

HOW TO MAKE GENDER MAINSTREAMING PROCESS CONTEXT SPECIFIC?

The second step of gender mainstreaming policy plan consists in translating the various ingredients of a mainstreaming strategy into a plan of action that is context specific.

The checklist is an attempt to find a starting point for gender mainstreaming and to setup a comprehensive mainstreaming policy plan. The main objective of the checklist is to support gender mainstreaming initiative.

The following aspects should be considered:

Define which actors will be expected to play a role in gender mainstreaming?

Consider the following questions to make your choice:

- What role could the various actors play in terms of initiating?
- What should be the exact task of the various actors?
- What means would the various actors need?
- What would their respective responsibilities be?

Define the policy areas and levels that are most suited for starting gender mainstreaming?

Consider the following questions to make your choice:

- Which policy areas are most important?
- Which policy areas are generally recognized as important?
- Which policy areas will produce an eye-opening effect?
- Which policy levels are most suited?

Define the techniques and tools that will be used for mainstreaming?

Consider the availability of the following techniques and tools:

- Analytical techniques and tools such as surveys, forecasts, and statistics, gender impact assessment methods, evaluation and monitoring.
- Educational techniques and tools such as awareness raising, courses.
- Consultative and participatory techniques and tools, such as equal participation of both women and men.

What experience and means are available or necessary to develop new techniques and tools or to adopt existing ones?

Ideally gender mainstreaming should be a red thread leading through all fields and stages of the policy spectrum. In practice, it will be difficult to begin in all areas at the same time.

HOW TO MONITOR THE IMPACT OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

Once gender mainstreaming policy plan has been constructed and the gender mainstreaming process has been started, it is important to watch over the quality of mainstreaming initiatives. Monitoring is more than evaluation. It consists of the continuous scrutinizing, evaluation and follow-up of policies. The way monitoring takes place has to be decided when the gender mainstreaming project is started.

The most important steps of monitoring are:

- Identify who will be responsible for monitoring
- Identify what has to be monitored
- Choose techniques and tools
- Organize follow-up's

The description of the example includes as far as possible the following elements:

- **Who took the initiative**
- **Starting date**
- **Aim of the project/plan action**
- **Brief description of the content**
- **Policy areas concerned**
- **Policy levels concerned**
- **Techniques and tools used**
- **Group or type of actors involved**
- **Status of the example,(just started, running, finishing, evaluated)**
- **Why is the example relevant**
- **Further information (references).**