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Gender Mainstreaming

Gender-responsive evaluation



Gender-responsive evaluation

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EIGE created the online platform on gender mainstreaming to support EU institutions and governmental bodies with the integration of a gender perspective in their work. The platform provides insights on the relevance of gender in a variety of policy areas and offers online tools for gender mainstreaming.

The platform helps to improve individual and institutional competences to mainstream gender into the different sectorial areas and throughout the different stages of the development of any policy/programme/project. Understanding how to design, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate policies from a gender perspective will strengthen EU policies, increasing their societal relevance and responsiveness.

European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union established to strengthen gender equality across the EU. Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the EU and EIGE's task is to make this a reality in Europe and beyond. This includes becoming a European knowledge centre on gender equality issues, supporting gender mainstreaming in all EU and Member State policies and fighting discrimination based on sex.

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Abbreviations

DG	Directorate-General
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
GRPP	gender-responsive public procurement
HRBA	human rights-based approach
MFF	multiannual financial framework
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

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1. What is gender-responsive evaluation?

Gender-responsive evaluation is an assessment aimed at:

- independently measuring progress towards achieving intended gender-related objectives and goals set out in policies, programmes and projects;
- evaluating from a gender perspective the relevant processes, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts of an intervention.

Gender-responsive evaluations assess to what extent an intervention has resulted in progress (or the lack thereof) towards intended and/or unintended results regarding gender equality ⁽¹⁾. It assesses any changes related to gender equality – such as changes to cultural values, norms, attitudes, social behaviours and power relations, the participation and representation of women and men in all their diversity, the access and control over opportunities and resources, and shifts in policies, legislation and organisational rules.

‘Lived realities’ of women and men ‘in all their diversity’

It is important to consider the lived realities of women and men in all their diversity. While the term ‘lived realities’ is meant to recognise differences between women and men, the addition of ‘in all their diversity’ recognises how other characteristics such as age, socioeconomic situation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion and rural or urban location also affect women and men in their lived realities (e.g. the lived reality of a young woman living in a rural area of Sweden will be very different from that of an older woman living in an urban area of Spain). *Source: EIGE (2020).*

As a gender mainstreaming method, gender-responsive evaluation is applicable to all types of interventions, including those not necessarily aimed at gender equality and gender-specific interventions. This way, gender-responsive evaluation also assesses to what extent an intervention has pursued gender mainstreaming.

Evaluating gender equality policies is different from conducting a gender-responsive evaluation of any type of intervention not necessarily aimed at promoting gender equality. The term ‘gender evaluation’ has been used in the literature to refer specifically to the evaluation of gender equality policies ⁽²⁾, which can be both targeted gender equality interventions and gender mainstreaming strategies. The evaluation of gender equality policies is also important to assess the changes and shifts these policies have produced ⁽³⁾. Similarly, the evaluation of gender mainstreaming strategies allows for judging the extent to which they have been successful in integrating a gender perspective into the work of an institution, a policy area, etc.

⁽¹⁾ UN Women (2015), *How to Manage Gender-responsive Evaluation – Evaluation handbook*, New York (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>).

⁽²⁾ Bustelo, M. (2017), ‘Evaluation from a gender+ perspective as a key element for (re)gendering the policymaking process’, *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, Vol. 38, No 1, pp. 84–101.

⁽³⁾ See footnote ⁽²⁾.

More about gender-responsive evaluation

- Gender-responsive evaluation recognises that progress towards gender equality is a long-term endeavour and that, frequently, changes are not easily countable. For that reason, gender-responsive evaluations adopt a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, appropriate for measuring and evaluating social change ⁽⁴⁾.
- Gender-responsive evaluation entails an inclusive and participatory process. It must rely on and respect the views of those who benefited or were affected by an intervention, and aim to empower and promote accountability among all participating stakeholders ⁽⁵⁾.
- Gender-responsive evaluation requires evaluation frameworks that pay attention to gender-specific evaluation questions. In a gender-responsive evaluation, the gender perspective is mainstreamed into the evaluation framework and design. It also provides information on the choice of methods, data collection tools and protocols, and the data analysis and interpretation. Attention to gender equality is reflected in the choice of reporting strategy and the utilisation plan that results from the evaluation findings. See more on how to conduct a gender-responsive evaluation in Section 3.
- The adoption of a gender-responsive approach to evaluations contributes to the design of better and more transparent interventions that adequately respond to the different needs and priorities of women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, leading to more gender-equal results and, ultimately, advancing gender equality.

⁽⁴⁾ European Commission (2018), 'Evaluation with gender as a cross-cutting dimension' (<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/81444/download?token=ncpCxHlj>).

⁽⁵⁾ See footnote (1).

2. Legal and policy context in the EU and Member States

Evaluation is a well-established feature of EU governance and policymaking. It has a legal and political basis in Article 318 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) ⁽⁶⁾, the EU's financial regulations ⁽⁷⁾ and some sector-specific funds. Evaluation plays a significant role in ensuring strong accountability and transparency in EU policymaking. Besides, the 'evaluate first' principle adopted by the Commission, by which existing interventions are evaluated before bringing forward new proposals in the same area, aims to closely integrate evaluation findings into EU decision-making and the policy cycle.

2.1. The 'Better regulation' agenda and the EU evaluation policy

The EU evaluation policy is framed by the 'Better regulation' agenda, introduced by the Commission communication on better regulation for better results in 2015 ⁽⁸⁾. The 'Better regulation' agenda sets out the Commission's approach to designing and evaluating EU policies transparently based on evidence and the views of citizens and stakeholders. The purpose of the 'Better regulation' agenda

is to simplify EU laws and make them more targeted and easier to comply with ⁽⁹⁾.

The commitment to the 'Better regulation' agenda is also sealed in the interinstitutional agreement on better law-making ⁽¹⁰⁾. It was signed in 2016 by the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission. In this interinstitutional agreement, the three EU institutions recognise their joint responsibility in delivering high-quality legislation for the EU ⁽¹¹⁾.

The most recent communication on better regulation ⁽¹²⁾, adopted in 2021, commits to improving the use of evaluation findings and the reporting of unintended consequences. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) also feature prominently in the updated 'Better regulation' agenda. Under the agenda, the developed legislation and policies must ensure that the EU recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and shape a more resilient and equal world for the next generation. To ensure this, the Commission plans to identify the relevant SDGs in each policy proposal and examine how they support their achievement. For this purpose, evaluations and impact assessments should establish links to the SDGs as part of their analysis ⁽¹³⁾.

⁽⁶⁾ European Union (2012), Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 326, Publications Office of the European Union (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:326:FULL:EN:PDF>).

⁽⁷⁾ Article 34 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the Financial Rules Applicable to the General Budget of the Union, Amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and Repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32018R1046>).

⁽⁸⁾ Commission communication – Better regulation for better results – An EU agenda, COM(2015) 215 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52015DC0215>).

⁽⁹⁾ European Commission (2021), 'Questions and answers on the better regulation communication' (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_1902).

⁽¹⁰⁾ European Union (2016), Interinstitutional agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on better law-making, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 123, Publications Office of the European Union ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32016Q0512\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32016Q0512(01)&from=EN)).

⁽¹¹⁾ See footnote ⁽¹⁰⁾.

⁽¹²⁾ Commission communication – Better regulation: Joining forces to make better laws, COM(2021) 219 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2021:219:FIN>).

⁽¹³⁾ See footnote ⁽¹²⁾.

More on the Commission's definition of evaluation in the European Union

In the EU, the Commission has adopted a specific definition of evaluation as a working method for policymaking.

An evaluation is an evidence-based judgement of the extent to which an intervention:

- is **effective** (the extent to which an intervention has achieved its objectives);
- is **efficient** (the relationship between inputs – usually human, organisational and financial resources – and outputs delivered by the intervention);
- is **relevant** (the extent to which the objectives and the design of the intervention match the actual needs of society);
- is **internally** (the extent to which the components and activities of the same EU intervention work well together to achieve its objectives) and **externally coherent** (the extent to which the components and activities in the context of an EU action do not overlap with the activities of another (EU) intervention);
- has achieved **EU added value** (the change brought about by the EU intervention that would not otherwise have taken place).

All EU evaluations should base their analysis on these five mandatory criteria. If necessary, additional criteria can be added, but this should be duly justified. An evaluation must go beyond an assessment of what has happened. It should also consider why something has occurred and, if possible, how much has changed as a consequence.

Source: European Commission, 'Better regulation guidelines', SWD(2021) 305 final.

2.2. Legal and policy basis for considering gender equality in evaluations in the EU

The EU treaties enshrine equality between women and men as a core value of the EU and a fundamental right and oblige the EU to combat gender inequalities in all its activities⁽¹⁴⁾. These provisions form the legal basis for the role of the EU and Member States in promoting gender equality and implementing gender mainstreaming. The EU gender equality strategy, adopted in 2020, sets out the key gender equality policy objectives and measures for the EU to advance towards a gender-equal society⁽¹⁵⁾. It reinvigorates the EU's commitment to the dual approach to gender equality that combines targeted measures to

achieve gender equality with strengthened gender mainstreaming. Specifically, the Commission commits to enhancing gender mainstreaming by systematically including a gender perspective at all stages of policymaking, including evaluations, and in all EU policy areas and adopting intersectionality as a cross-cutting principle.

The Beijing Platform for Action provides a comprehensive agenda to advance gender equality at the international level. All Member States have signed it, and the EU is committed to monitoring its implementation. Two of its strategic objectives, namely under 'Area H' on institutional mechanisms for gender equality and gender mainstreaming, are particularly relevant for the promotion of gender-responsive evaluation: H.2 on the integration of a gender perspective in legislation, public

⁽¹⁴⁾ Article 2 and Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union, 2012/C 326/01 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF); Article 8 of the TFEU; Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2012/C 326/02 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriSer v/LexUriSer v.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:326:FULL:EN:PDF>).

⁽¹⁵⁾ Commission communication – A Union of equality: Gender equality strategy 2020–2025, COM(2020) 152 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>).

policies, programmes and projects, and H.3 on the generation and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data for planning and evaluation.

The EU is also committed to implementing the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs – adopted by all Member States – in all its policies.

In 2020, the Commission committed to strengthening the assessment of gender impacts in impact assessments and evaluations in the 'Better regulation' framework⁽¹⁶⁾. This commitment is intended to promote gender equality, gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities in the implementation and monitoring of the 2021–2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF). It is worth noting that this commitment appears under the rubric of budgetary transparency. This is in line with the understanding that gender-responsive evaluation and gender mainstreaming, in general, can contribute to more transparent and more efficient policymaking⁽¹⁷⁾. The 2021 communication on better regulation⁽¹⁸⁾ builds on the commitment to improving the reporting of gender impacts. The Commission pledged to pay greater attention to the gender equality dimension and equality for all and give it consistent consideration in all stages of policymaking in line with Articles 8 and 10 of the TFEU⁽¹⁹⁾⁽²⁰⁾.

Calls for the implementation of gender-responsive evaluation from other EU institutions have mainly focused on the scrutiny of EU funds from a gender perspective. Before the preparation of the 2021–2027 MFF, the European Parliament called in a resolution for a gender-responsive evaluation of the previous EU budget that would inform the preparation of the new MFF and support the introduction of gender budgeting⁽²¹⁾. The 2021 European Parliament resolution on the gender dimension in the cohesion policy contains extensive recommendations for the Commission and Member States to ensure the integration of gender equality into evaluations⁽²²⁾. The European Parliament called for the assessment of gender impacts as part of *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluations of Member States' programmes under the cohesion policy, in connection with the promotion of gender equality in how the funds are spent and to ensure that the mid-term review of the post-2020 cohesion policy adopts a gender perspective.

In its conclusions on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on gender equality, the Council of the European Union invited the Commission and the Member States to ensure that gender mainstreaming is taken into account and promoted throughout the implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the EU funding programmes⁽²³⁾.

⁽¹⁶⁾ European Union (2020), Interinstitutional agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 433I, Publications Office of the European Union (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.LI.2020.433.01.0028.01.ENG>).

⁽¹⁷⁾ EIGE (n.d.), 'What is gender mainstreaming' (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>).

⁽¹⁸⁾ See footnote⁽¹²⁾.

⁽¹⁹⁾ While Article 8 refers to equality between women and men, Article 10 concerns the legal obligation of the EU to combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation when defining and implementing its policies and activities in the TFEU.

⁽²⁰⁾ See footnote⁽¹²⁾.

⁽²¹⁾ European Parliament (2021), European Parliament resolution of 19 June 2020 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2021 budget, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 362, Publications Office of the European Union (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2021:362:FULL&from=EN>).

⁽²²⁾ European Parliament (2022), European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2021 on the gender dimension in cohesion policy, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 67, Publications Office of the European Union (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0276_EN.html).

⁽²³⁾ Council of the European Union (2021), 'Council conclusions on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on gender equality' (<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8884-2021-INIT/en/pdf>).

In its assessment of gender mainstreaming in the EU budget ⁽²⁴⁾, the European Court of Auditors called on the Commission to carry out gender analyses of needs and impacts of EU funding and programmes as part of evaluations and performance reporting, along with impact assessments. The European Court of Auditors also recommended that the Commission update the 'Better regulation guidelines' to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of legislative proposals with a gender perspective.

2.2.1. Provisions on gender-responsive evaluation in specific EU policy areas and programmes

Apart from the general evaluation and gender equality policy frameworks, other regulations and policy documents of various EU programmes and policies also include specific provisions relevant for gender-responsive evaluation. For example, the common provisions regulation for shared management funds ⁽²⁵⁾ covering the 2021–2027 period establishes gender equality as a horizontal principle and mandates gender mainstreaming and the integration of a gender perspective throughout the preparation, monitoring, report and evaluation of programmes ⁽²⁶⁾.

Provisions on gender-responsive evaluation are also found in EU external action – particularly in

the EU's action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in external action 2021–2025. One of its strategic objectives (Objective 4) establishes the systematic use of gender-specific or sex-disaggregated indicators in the monitoring and evaluation system of EU-funded action for EU delegations, the Commission and Member States to ensure gender mainstreaming in all action and targeted action. This provision provides a basis to integrate a gender perspective in the evaluation cycle of the EU external action and international cooperation and development projects.

The approach to gender-responsive evaluations in the field of international cooperation and development is informed by the Directorate-General (DG) for International Partnerships, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and Foreign Policy Instruments' approach to evaluations with gender as a cross-cutting dimension, realised in 2018 ⁽²⁷⁾. The document is linked to the human rightsbased approach (HRBA), which puts human rights and the rights holders at the centre of EU external action ⁽²⁸⁾. A toolbox, adopted in 2014 and updated in 2021, on applying the HRBA to international partnerships, created a framework to integrate the HRBA into all EU development tools and activities ⁽²⁹⁾. HRBA is a complementary approach to gender mainstreaming, and it is used to integrate the gender perspective in all development activities, including evaluation.

⁽²⁴⁾ European Court of Auditors (2021), *Gender Mainstreaming in the EU Budget: Time to turn words into action – Special report 10/2021*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (https://op.europa.eu/publication/manifestation_identifier/PUB_QJAB21009ENN).

⁽²⁵⁾ The common provisions regulation covers eight funds: European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

⁽²⁶⁾ Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1060>).

⁽²⁷⁾ European Commission (2018), 'Evaluation with gender as a cross-cutting dimension' (<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/81444/download?token=ncpCxHlj>).

⁽²⁸⁾ Council of the European Union (2014), 'Council conclusions on a rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights' (https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/142682.pdf).

⁽²⁹⁾ European Commission (2021), 'Applying the Human Rights Based Approach to International Partnerships. An Updated Toolbox for Placing Rights-Holders at the Centre of EU's Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation' (https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/54c77670-4179-49f0-9af3-d1b18ff2d41f_en?filename=swd-2021-human-right-based-approach_en.pdf).

Box 1. Example: Gender-responsive evaluation requirements for EU international partnerships

The 'Applying the human rights-based approach to international partnerships' toolbox specifies that evaluations that apply HRBA and gender equality should do the following ⁽³⁰⁾.

- Integrate human rights and gender equality into indicators and evaluation processes.
- Use sex-disaggregated data and gender-equality indicators. Furthermore, the use of gender-transformative indicators is suggested to measure the change in gender power dynamics and focus on structural aspects such as social norms and barriers.
- Include gender expertise in the evaluation teams.
- Ensure the right to privacy of individuals' data, abide by the principle of self-identification in order to respect personal identity and human rights, and avoid harm.
- Ensure the participation of the people and groups that are subjects of the data in data collection, dissemination and analysis.
- Use data to increase accountability of duty bearers.

In the field of research and innovation (R & I), the EU has established requirements for gender mainstreaming, including specific emphasis on evaluation. For example, having a gender equality plan with arrangements for data collection, monitoring and evaluation is an eligibility criterion for accessing funding under Horizon Europe ⁽³¹⁾ ⁽³²⁾. Moreover, the European research area agenda commits to developing principles for integrating and evaluating the gender dimension in R & I ⁽³³⁾.

2.2.2. Key players in gender-responsive evaluation in the EU

Several European Commission DGs have commissioned or are authors of gender-responsive evaluations. DG International Partnerships (formerly known as DG International Cooperation and Development) and DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation (DG ECHO) play an important role in assessing the EU's activity in

the field of international development and cooperation and the EU's humanitarian action respectively. Other DGs, including DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, DG Research and Innovation, DG Justice and Consumers, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, and the European Parliament's DG Internal Policies, also carry out evaluations integrating a gender perspective.

Other bodies, including EIGE, the European Evaluation Society and especially their working group on gender and evaluation also play a key role in promoting gender-responsive evaluations at the EU level. The European Evaluation Society brings together voluntary organisations for professional evaluation that are organised in associations or informal networks. These organisations play a role in promoting the professionalisation of evaluation, including gender-responsive evaluations.

⁽³⁰⁾ See footnote ⁽²⁹⁾.

⁽³¹⁾ European Commission (2021), *European Research Area Policy Agenda: Overview of actions for the period 2022–2024*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/ec_rtd_era-policy-agenda-2021.pdf).

⁽³²⁾ EIGE (2022), 'Gender equality in academia and research – GEAR tool' (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>).

⁽³³⁾ See footnote ⁽³¹⁾.

2.3. Gender equality in Member States evaluation policy frameworks

Overall, the institutionalisation of evaluation across Member States remains low. Few Member States have national evaluation laws, regulations or policies that guide or require the implementation of evaluation. When they do, they do not require a gender perspective to be integrated into the evaluation process. Very few Member States have harmonised national evaluation policies that would guide and require systematic implementation of evaluation⁽³⁴⁾. Instead, the commitment or obligation to evaluate policies is usually established only within concrete sectoral policies and laws. As a result, evaluations are not systematically carried out but scattered across different institutions and policy areas.

Against this backdrop, the institutional context and the existence of both supporting evaluation and gender mainstreaming structures highly influence whether and what regulations and procedures for gender-responsive evaluation are in place.

Member States' policies on gender equality generally recall, however, the obligation to incorporate a gender equality perspective at all stages of policymaking and in all areas. These provisions constitute the primary reference point for the development and implementation of gender-responsive evaluation. In some cases, national gender equality policies include specific emphasis on evaluation, concerning both the integration of a gender perspective into the evaluation of all types of interventions and the evaluation of gender-specific interventions (see Box 6).

Box 2. Example: References to gender-responsive evaluation in national gender equality policies

- France has adopted an integrated approach, as set out in Article 1 of Act No 2014-873 of 4 August 2014 on substantive equality between women and men, to mainstream gender equality issues into all public policies. The law states that the state and local authorities and public establishments that implement specific actions for gender equality law must be evaluated in its Article 1.
- Article 3 in the Act on Gender Equality, passed by the Croatian Parliament at its session on 15 July 2008, Class: 011-01/08-01/96, Reg. No: 71-05-03/1-08-2, states that the impact of actions on the position of women or men shall be assessed and evaluated with a view to achieving genuine equality between women and men.
- Since 2009, Article 13, paragraph 3 of the Federal Constitution of Austria obliges public authorities at federal, provincial (Länder) and municipal level to aim for the equal status of women and men in their budgeting, whereby the Federal Budget Law comprises detailed rules for implementation at federal level. In line with this law, ministries must formulate gender equality objectives, measures and (performance) indicators when drafting their budget, based on the four phases of analysis (4 Phasen Modell), which includes an evaluation stage. The ministries and supreme organs have to undergo an evaluation of both outputs (priority to be set and measures taken by public administration to achieve the desired result) and outcomes (effects on society), which entails describing causal effects of implemented activities of a policy field.

⁽³⁴⁾ Stockmann, R., Meyer, W. and Taube, L. (eds) (2020), *The Institutionalisation of Evaluation in Europe*, Springer Nature (<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-32284-7>).

Overall, the efforts to establish norms and standards for gender-responsive evaluations in the Member States are scarce and concentrated only in some policy fields. Across the Member States, regulations and procedures for gender-responsive evaluation can be found especially in the areas of development and international cooperation, gender equality, employment, social affairs, education and R & I. Given the EU requirements for considering gender equality within the EU funds, the provisions for gender-responsive

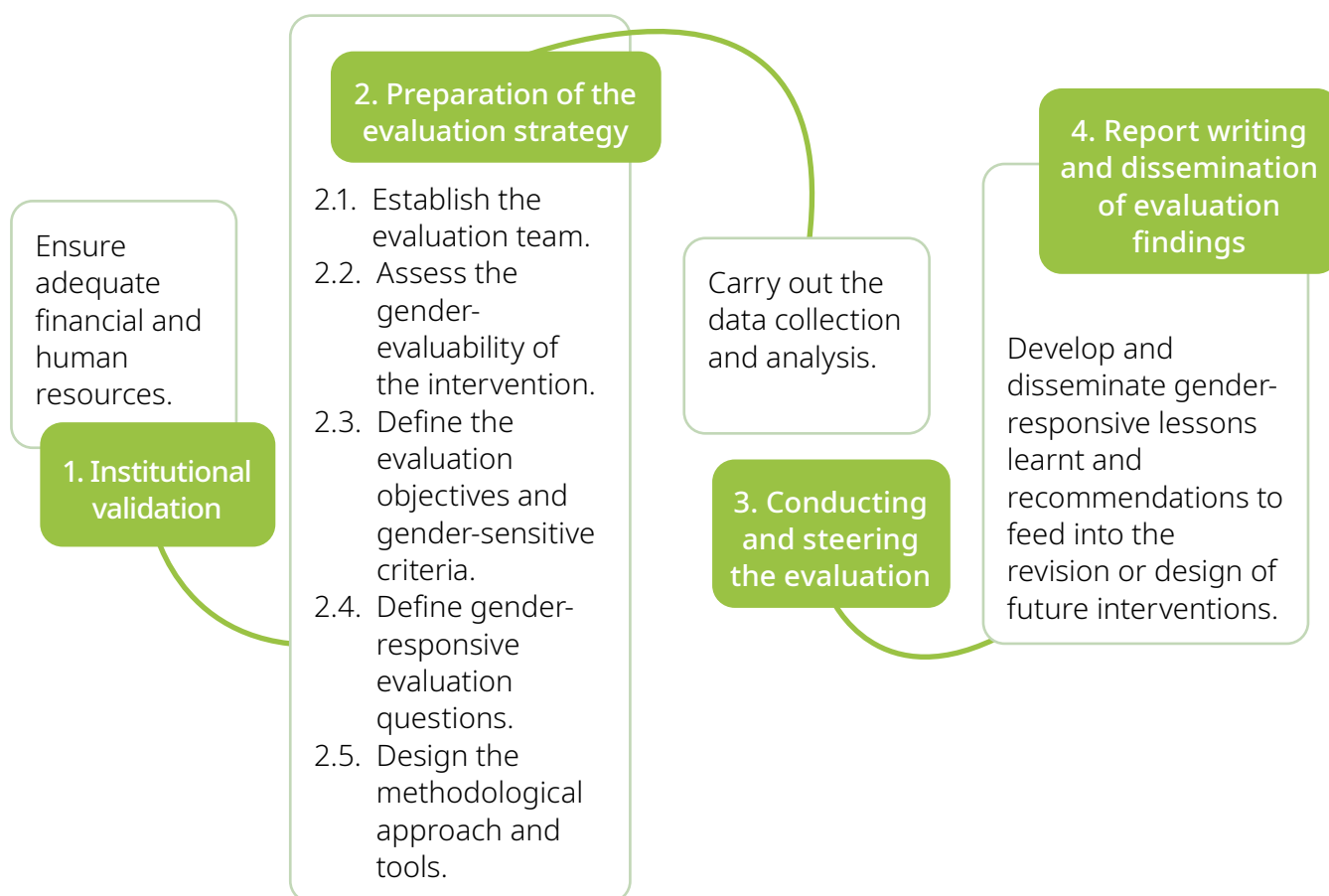
evaluation also tend to be integrated into the national programming documents for the EU funds programmes.

The lack of integrated evaluation systems that are gender-responsive contradicts the EU and Member States' gender equality legal and policy frameworks. It is also a missed opportunity to advance the principles of good governance and the achievement of gender-equal results.



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3. How does gender-responsive evaluation work?



A gender-responsive evaluation takes the following procedural steps.

1. **Institutional validation.** This will ensure that there are adequate resources (both financial and human) to implement the evaluation in a gender-responsive manner. It will also facilitate access to data and informants and will contribute to a better buy-in of the findings of the evaluation.

2. **Preparation of the evaluation strategy.** A gender-responsive evaluation requires careful preparation to ensure that it is of high quality, credible and useful.

2.1. Establish the evaluation team. The evaluation team must include sufficient gender expertise, including among those managing and steering the evaluation. A

gender-balanced evaluation team is desirable and aspects such as cultural and geographic representation should also be considered.

2.2. Assess how the intervention tackles gender equality. Before preparing the evaluation design, it is important to determine the **evaluability** of gender equality in the intervention at stake. This requires assessing whether gender equality is the primary focus of the intervention or not, whether the intervention takes account of gender-specific considerations, whether sex-disaggregated data was collected, etc. The information gathered in this **evaluability exercise** will inform the design of the evaluation.

More on technical specifications and gender-responsive public procurement

Many institutions request the assistance of external contractors to conduct evaluations. The procurement of outsourced work for evaluations should also integrate a gender perspective. This requires the development of public procurement contracts that are themselves gender-responsive ⁽³⁵⁾. This way, gender-responsive public procurement (GRPP) and gender-responsive evaluation as methods for gender mainstreaming can go hand in hand when conducting evaluations.

Contracting authorities may choose to include one or more criteria addressing GRPP in their tenders. All criteria must be linked to the subject matter of the contract, meaning they must be specific to the goods, services or works that the public body is purchasing. They cannot concern general policies or practices of the bidding company. When gender elements have been included in the subject matter of the contract, the technical specifications will also reflect this. The development of gender-responsive technical specifications of evaluations requires paying attention to the following aspects, among other strategies ⁽³⁶⁾.

- Devising technical specifications that reflect the gender aspects of the evaluation.
- Integrating gender equality into the selection criteria, for example by requesting a gender-balanced team of those performing the contract and attesting sufficient expertise in gender-responsive evaluation. The GRPP selection criteria must be proportionate and linked to the subject matter of the contract.
- Integrating gender equality into the contract award criteria to compare bids in terms of gender performance and award marks accordingly.
- Applying contract performance conditions, for example through the obligation to take the gender perspective into account when carrying out the commissioned tasks and enforcing compliance.
- Use gender-sensitive language ⁽³⁷⁾ to refer to the bidders, stakeholders and staff assigned to a contract.

⁽³⁵⁾ EIGE (2021), *Gender-responsive Public Procurement*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-responsive-public-procurement>).

⁽³⁶⁾ See EIGE (2022), *Gender-responsive Public Procurement: Step-by-step toolkit*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-responsive-public-procurement-step-step-toolkit>).

⁽³⁷⁾ See EIGE (2019), *Toolkit on Gender-sensitive Communication*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/toolkit-gender-sensitive-communication>).

More on designing interventions that are evaluable from a gender perspective

Gender-responsive evaluation, as a method for gender mainstreaming, can be applied to any intervention.

However, when interventions do not integrate a gender perspective into the design (implementation, monitoring and reporting) they can compromise the quality of the findings of a gender-responsive evaluation⁽³⁸⁾. For example, if an intervention did not include baselines and did not envision gender indicators nor collected sex-disaggregated data, the analysis of the effects of the interventions on gender equality can be difficult as there may be insufficient data to draw conclusions.

Because of this, it is important to adopt a gender perspective at all stages of the policy-making process. For instance, at the design stage, it is important to conduct a gender analysis to understand the state of play for women and men and girls and boys in the intervention area⁽³⁹⁾, and a gender impact assessment to prevent unintended consequences for gender equality⁽⁴⁰⁾. It is also essential to develop a gender-responsive monitoring system that collects reliable monitoring data.

Monitoring consists of the systematic collection of data to track progress on the implementation of an intervention. It allows the objectives of an intervention to be verified to ensure they are being achieved as planned and allows corrections to be made if needed. While evaluations occur at specific moments (*ex ante*, midterm or *ex post*), monitoring occurs on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring indicators allow progress towards the milestones/targets to be measured against the baseline situation. A gender-responsive monitoring system is built on a set of monitoring indicators that are, at least, disaggregated by sex. However, sex ratios⁽⁴¹⁾ (e.g. the representation of women and men in decision-making positions such as parliament or company boards) may not be enough to record progress on gender equality. Thus, gender-responsive monitoring indicators should also capture qualitative aspects, such as changes in women's and men's experiences or attitudes⁽⁴²⁾. Thus, the monitoring system should contain a balanced mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

While monitoring data is only one of the sources of information for evaluations, all these elements will contribute to developing interventions that are evaluable from a gender perspective.

2.3. Define the evaluation objectives, scope and evaluation criteria. This step requires clarifying what kind of learning the evaluation will produce and how the findings

are expected to be used. Assessing the evaluation's contribution (or not) to gender equality must be stressed as a key objective of the evaluation. While there is

⁽³⁸⁾ Espinosa, J. (2013), 'Moving towards gender-sensitive evaluation? Practices and challenges in international-development evaluation', *Evaluation*, Vol. 19, No 2, pp. 171–182.

⁽³⁹⁾ See EIGE (2019), *Gender Analysis*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-analysis>).

⁽⁴⁰⁾ See EIGE (2017), *Gender Impact Assessment – Gender mainstreaming toolkit*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment>).

⁽⁴¹⁾ International Labor Organization (2020), 'Guidance note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation', *Planning and Designing Evaluations* (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_165986.pdf).

⁽⁴²⁾ EIGE (2019), *Gender Statistics and Indicators*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/indicators.pdf>).

a standard set of EU evaluation criteria, other criteria could also be considered, such as sustainability, impact, equity⁽⁴³⁾, empowerment⁽⁴⁴⁾, etc. The evaluation criteria must be revised to ensure they adopt a gender perspective. Evaluation criteria such as equity and fairness consider aspects such as whether an intervention is socially just and whether the benefits or effects of an intervention were evenly distributed across different groups, stakeholders, regions, etc. While the criteria of equity and fairness may incorporate gender equality considerations, a standalone criterion on gender equality is recommended to ensure a detailed evaluation of gender equality aspects.

Integrating a gender perspective into evaluations requires mainstreaming gender through the standard evaluation criteria.

- **Relevance:** assessing the relevance of an intervention from a gender perspective requires verifying that the intervention responds to the gender-specific needs of the target population, and that its objectives are appropriate for addressing gender equality considerations in the intervention's social, economic and cultural contexts. For instance, it requires examining whether the intervention is based on sound gender analysis⁽⁴⁵⁾ that uses sex-disaggregated data, captures gender gaps and reflects the different roles and needs of women and men.
- **Effectiveness:** evaluating the effectiveness of an intervention from a gender perspective requires assessing the extent to which, why and how the intervention contributed to the achievement of gender equality objectives and/or the reduction of gender inequalities (e.g. changes in perception on gender roles). It also provides evidence of how women and men benefited from these changes. Under this criterion, a gender-responsive evaluation also assesses whether the intervention or aspects of the intervention led to any unwanted (positive or negative) effects on gender equality.
- **Efficiency:** assessing the efficiency of an intervention from a gender perspective requires analysing if there was an equitable and efficient allocation of resources. This criterion also assesses the level and adequacy of resources used for tackling gender inequalities compared to other aspects tackled by the intervention. It can also include an assessment of the cost of not providing resources for gender equality, in other words, evaluating the enhanced benefits that could have been achieved with a certain amount of investment⁽⁴⁶⁾.
- **Coherence:** assessing the coherence of intervention from a gender perspective requires looking at the extent to which its various components are coordinated and complement each other to sustain advancements in gender equality (internal coherence) and to what extent they interrelate to other interventions to achieve gender equality in society (external coherence).
- **EU added value:** assessing the EU added value of an intervention from a gender perspective seeks to gather evidence of the changes towards achieving gender equality that would not have been obtained without an EU-promoted or funded intervention⁽⁴⁷⁾.

⁽⁴³⁾ European Commission (2021), *Better Regulation Toolbox*, Brussels (https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox/better-regulation-toolbox-0_en).

⁽⁴⁴⁾ UNEG (2011), *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG guidance*, New York (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>).

⁽⁴⁵⁾ See EIGE (2019), *Gender Analysis*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-analysis>).

⁽⁴⁶⁾ See footnote ⁽⁴⁴⁾.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ European Commission (2018), 'Evaluation with gender as a cross-cutting dimension' (<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/81444/download?token=ncpCxHlj>).

2.4. Define gender-sensitive evaluation questions. Evaluation questions break down the evaluation criteria and help further define the objectives of the intervention. In a gender-responsive evaluation, the evaluation questions must allow all the relevant aspects of an intervention to be evaluated with a gender perspective including the processes, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

The following are examples of gender-sensitive evaluation questions that can be used to mainstream gender into the EU evaluation criteria ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Relevance

- Did it contribute to the national, sub-national and EU legal mandates and policy commitments regarding gender equality?
- Does the intervention align with the national gender equality strategy and goals?
- Was a gender impact assessment conducted before the design of the intervention? Were the findings of the gender impact assessment and its recommendations used to ensure the design of the intervention promotes gender equality?
- Was a gender analysis conducted to inform the design of the intervention?
- Was the design of the intervention informed by consultations with target groups and other relevant stakeholders?
- Did the design of the intervention consider the gender dimension throughout its objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities with a view to promoting gender equality?

- To what extent did the objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities address the causes of gender inequality relevant to the beneficiaries of the intervention, including the most disadvantaged or marginalised?
- Has the intervention effectively contributed to the creation of favourable conditions for gender equality?
- To what extent are the output and outcome indicators of the intervention gender responsive?
- Were adjustments made to respond to external factors of the intervention (e.g. economic crisis, new government) that influenced gender relationships?

Efficiency

- Were the means and resources being used efficiently to achieve results in terms of improved benefits for both women and men and girls and boys?
- How many resources were spent on women and men beneficiaries? How does this compare to the resources spent on everyone?
- What services, infrastructures and/or goods were received respectively by men and women and boys and girls as a result of the intervention?
- Have the results for women and men been achieved at a reasonable cost, and have costs and benefits been allocated and received equitably?
- Were resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) allocated strategically to achieve gender-related objectives?

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Compiled from International Labor Organization (2020), 'Guidance note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation', *Planning and Designing Evaluations* (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_165986.pdf); European Commission (2018), 'Evaluation with gender as a cross-cutting dimension' (<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/81444/download?token=ncpCxHlJ>); EIGE (2020), *Gender Budgeting: Step-by-step toolkit*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-budgeting>).

- Were resources (financial, time, people, technical and gender expertise) sufficient to address the gender inequalities defined during the design of the intervention?
- Did the intervention's monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms include a gender perspective and allow relevant evidence to be collected?

Effectiveness

- Did the intervention results turn out to be effective in achieving gender equality?
- Have the results contributed to the achievement of the planned gender-related results and outcomes? Have benefits favoured women and/or men as target groups? What kind of progress was made, and what were the obstacles? What factors played in favour or against the achievement of the expected results?
- Did the results (effects of activities and outputs) of the intervention affect women and men differently? If so, why and in which way?
- What effects (expected/unexpected) did the interventions have on power relations between women and men?
- In what way do the project's outputs and outcomes contribute to gender equality?
- Were specific risks and challenges inherent to the achievement of gender equality adequately taken into consideration and mitigated? If so, how?
- Did the evaluation team have adequate gender expertise?
- Did the project have a monitoring system in place that collected sex-disaggregated data and monitored gender-related results?

- Were the gender-related objectives and results of the intervention effectively communicated?
- Did stakeholders (organisations, institutions, indirect target groups) benefit from the interventions in terms of institutional capacity-building in the area of gender equality and the development of gender competence among their staff?

Coherence

- Was the treatment of gender equality issues throughout the implementation phase logical and coherent?
- To what extent was the intervention coherent with the EU commitments in the areas of gender equality and gender mainstreaming?
- To what extent was the intervention coherent with the implementation of the EU gender equality strategy and/or national gender equality strategies and goals?
- To what extent was the intervention coherent with commitments to gender equality in other policy areas?

EU added value

- To what extent would the changes towards gender equality brought about by the intervention not have been obtained in the absence of an EU-funded or -promoted intervention?
- To what extent did the intervention add benefits to or link to Member States' interventions in the area of gender equality and gender mainstreaming?
- To what extent did the results of the intervention in the area of gender equality trigger bilateral interventions of the Member States?

Gender-sensitive evaluation questions can also be included in the following frequently used criteria.

Impact

- What has been the impact of the project's outcomes on wider policies, processes and programmes that enhance gender equality and women's rights?
- What are the possible long-term effects on gender equality of the intervention?

Sustainability

- Are achievements in gender equality likely to be sustained after funding ends?

- To what extent have strategic gender needs of women and men and girls and boys been addressed through the intervention, and has this resulted in sustainable improvement of women's rights and gender equality?
- Did the intervention promote sustainable changes in the area of gender mainstreaming?
- To what extent has capacity for gender mainstreaming through the project been built and institutionalised?
- To whom and how are findings of the evaluation disseminated?

More on evaluating budgets with a gender perspective

A gender-responsive evaluation also assesses the budget of a given intervention from a gender perspective. This may involve, particularly under the criterion of efficiency, answering questions such as to what extent the allocation of financial resources benefited women and men and girls and boys in all their diversity, equally and to what extent the financial resources were sufficient to deliver on the gender-relevant objectives of an intervention. In turn, a specific gender-budgeting evaluation requires the following steps⁽⁴⁹⁾:

1. assess the intervention for financial aspects including expenditure (how does expenditure reach both women and men and girls and boys, according to their needs?), income (who is paying tax, value-added tax and/or fees?), macroeconomic effects (what impact has an intervention had on subnational economic growth and sustainability?) and decision-making processes (how have women and men been represented in the decision-making?);
2. calculate resource allocations using sex-disaggregated data, analyse who was reached and what would have been the impact on the intervention's total budget if women and men had received the same amount of support or consideration;
3. assess to what extent alternative or complementary resources and activities were needed, such as unpaid or voluntary work, additional funding for transport and premises;
4. draw conclusions based on a gender assessment⁽⁵⁰⁾.

2.5. Design the methodological approach and tools. Gender-responsive evaluations apply mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) for data collection and analysis as it increases the reliability and validity

of the evaluation findings. They also adopt participatory approaches that ensure the involvement and consultation of stakeholders.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ EIGE (2020), *Gender Budgeting: Step-by-step toolkit*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-budgeting>).

⁽⁵⁰⁾ See footnote ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

More on gender-responsive evaluation methods

Gender-responsive evaluations recognise the complexity of change towards gender-equal societies as a process that goes beyond the single intervention being evaluated. Advancing gender equality, as a process of social change, is not necessarily a linear process and it depends on the interaction of many variables strongly related to the context ⁽⁵¹⁾.

Feminist evaluators and theorists propose the use of mixed methods ⁽⁵²⁾, reflexive and participatory approaches to gather and analyse information, and a more longitudinal analysis ⁽⁵³⁾. To achieve this, they have proposed evaluation frameworks that acknowledge the complexity in which interventions are implemented, the existence of facilitating and hindering factors (such as availability of data, competences, resources) along with mid- and long-term changes with regard to gender equality that may be difficult to measure ⁽⁵⁴⁾.

The use of participatory approaches and consultation of stakeholders, not only for data collection, but also to inform the design of the evaluation, echoes feminist principles about knowledge and value being culturally, socially and temporally contingent, and the importance of listening to those affected ⁽⁵⁵⁾. Gender-responsive evaluation methods also draw from feminist theory and methodologies that acknowledge gender roles and power dynamics, use gender analysis frameworks ⁽⁵⁶⁾ and sex-disaggregated data.

3. Conducting and steering the evaluation.

During the data collection and analysis stage, a gender-responsive evaluation employs a flexible and culturally sensitive approach that understands and acknowledges the constraints of informants. It also pays utmost attention to ethical considerations such as confidentiality, fair representation and avoidance of harm. Evaluators must also acknowledge their privileged position of power in the process of evaluation. Thus, all their judgements must be based on the evidence gathered and the triangulation of information from various data collection methods and sources. Ultimately, this step of a gender-responsive evaluation seeks to gather solid

evidence to assess and report on the gender impacts of an intervention, the expected and unexpected changes related to gender equality it has prompted and the extent to which it has adopted a gender perspective.

4. Report writing, dissemination of evaluation findings and follow-up actions.

Before the final report is produced, it is recommended that preliminary findings are discussed with participants in the evaluation, including stakeholders, in order to ensure that the findings are relevant and meaningful for all. The evaluation report should use sex-disaggregated data to account for the findings across all the evaluation criteria. The report

⁽⁵¹⁾ Buehrer, S. et al. (2021), 'How to implement context-sensitive evaluation approaches in countries with still emerging evaluation cultures', *Public Policy and Administration*, Vol. 20, No 3, pp. 368–381 (<https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.ppa.20.3.28371>).

⁽⁵²⁾ See UNEG (2011), *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG guidance*, New York (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>) for instructions on how to tailor common research methods to address gender equality aspects.

⁽⁵³⁾ Bustelo, M. (2017), 'Evaluation from a gender+ perspective as a key element for (re)gendering the policymaking process', *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, Vol. 38, No 1, pp. 84–101; Schmidt, E. K. and Graversen, E. K. (2020), 'Developing a conceptual evaluation framework for gender equality interventions in research and innovation', *Evaluation and Program Planning*, Vol. 79 (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2019.101750>); Minto, R., Mergaert, L. and Bustelo, M. (2020), 'Policy evaluation and gender mainstreaming in the European Union: The perfect (mis)match?', *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, Vol. 3, No 2, pp. 277–294 (<https://doi.org/10.1332/251510819X15725988471100>).

⁽⁵⁴⁾ See footnote ⁽⁵¹⁾.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Bustelo, M. (2017), 'Evaluation from a gender+ perspective as a key element for (re)gendering the policymaking process', *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, Vol. 38, No 1, pp. 84–101.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ See EIGE (2019), *Gender Analysis*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-analysis>).

should also use gender-sensitive language. The findings of the evaluation should be used to develop gender-responsive lessons learnt and recommendations to feed into the

revision or design of future interventions. The final results of the evaluation should be disseminated among all participants and stakeholders.



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4. Why is gender-responsive evaluation important?

Evaluations provide reliable evidence for decision-making, learning and accountability. For gender-responsive evaluations, the learning produced during the evaluation process seeks to promote social change and advance gender equality in a sustainable way⁽⁵⁷⁾. It can serve as a driver for better and more transparent evidence-based policymaking, a more efficient allocation of resources and greater accountability to gender equality.

Gender-responsive evaluations provide credible and reliable evidence to decision-makers and improve the planning and efficiency of future interventions

Evaluations should inform the decision-making process and the development and revision of policies. Gender-responsive evaluations generate knowledge and evidence about what works and what does not to advance gender equality, why and for whom.

Policies and policymaking, including evaluations, are not gender neutral. On the contrary, how gender is framed or overlooked in policies has consequences. Thus, adopting a gender-responsive approach to evaluation generates reliable evidence about how an intervention has responded to the different needs of women and men and girls and boys, in all their diversity⁽⁵⁸⁾.

Gender-responsive evaluations also unravel the (unintended) gendered impacts of the intervention and the achievements, limitations and

difficulties encountered during the design and implementation process. These findings constitute valuable evidence against future gender-blind policymaking. They can serve to prompt policymakers to take action and address gender inequalities, consider a gender perspective and deploy resources more efficiently to respond to the needs of all beneficiaries, even in those interventions where the gender dimension is not apparent.

Gender-responsive evaluations support accountability, empower stakeholders and enhance their participation in the policy-making process

The accountability function of gender-responsive evaluations is extremely relevant as it demonstrates results, transparency and commitment to stakeholders by providing information to participants and stakeholders about the results and unintended effects of the intervention on gender equality⁽⁵⁹⁾.

The involvement of the relevant stakeholders (citizens, civil society, researchers, business, etc.) in evaluations through participatory and empowering approaches echoes feminist principles about knowledge and value being culturally, socially and temporally contingent, and the importance of listening to those affected⁽⁶⁰⁾. Through the involvement of different stakeholders, including final beneficiaries, a gender-responsive evaluation contributes to enhancing their knowledge and capacities to promote gender equality and challenge

⁽⁵⁷⁾ UN Women (2015), *How to Manage Gender-responsive Evaluation – Evaluation handbook*, New York (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>).

⁽⁵⁸⁾ It is important to recognise how characteristics such as age, socioeconomic situation, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and rural or urban location affect women and men (e.g. the lived reality of a young woman living in a rural area of Sweden will be very different from that of an older woman living in an urban area of Spain). EIGE, 2022, *Gender Budgeting: Step-by-step toolkit – Guidance for mainstreaming gender into the EU funds*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-budgeting-step-step-toolkit>).

⁽⁵⁹⁾ See footnote ⁽⁵⁷⁾.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Bustelo, M. (2017), 'Evaluation from a gender+ perspective as a key element for (re)gendering the policymaking process', *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, Vol. 38, No 1, pp. 84-101.

inequalities⁽⁶¹⁾. It also re-engages citizens with the policymaking process and contributes to social and institutional change⁽⁶²⁾.

Gender-responsive evaluations promote learning for gender equality and strengthen social and institutional change

A gender-responsive evaluation can detect where, when and how the gender perspective was lost or weakened across the design and implementation phases of intervention and propose ways to reintegrate it⁽⁶³⁾.

Frequently, a gender perspective is adopted during the design of an intervention and the planning

stage, but that perspective is lost or watered down during the implementation and during its monitoring. The evaluation stage is a privileged stage to promote learning for gender equality because it is the stage where the policy process is reviewed and recommendations for improvement are suggested⁽⁶⁴⁾. The emphasis on learning underlines a key feature of evaluation that is consistent with the need to derive lessons learnt for future policymaking about what works and not to achieve gender equality.

Gender-responsive evaluations promote social change by using the learning produced during the evaluation process to promote gender equality in a sustainable way⁽⁶⁵⁾.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Espinosa, J. (2013), 'Moving towards gender-sensitive evaluation? Practices and challenges in international-development evaluation', *Evaluation*, Vol. 19, No 2, pp. 171–182.

⁽⁶²⁾ See footnote ⁽⁵⁷⁾.

⁽⁶³⁾ Bustelo, M. (2017), 'Evaluation from a gender+ perspective as a key element for (re)gendering the policymaking process', *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, Vol. 38, No 1, pp. 84–101.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ See footnote ⁽⁶³⁾.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ UN Women (2015), *How to Manage Gender-responsive Evaluation – Evaluation handbook*, New York (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>).

5. Examples of gender-responsive evaluations

5.1. Examples at the EU level

Gender-responsive evaluations are more prominent in policy fields that include specific legal requirements to integrate a gender perspective into policymaking, such as external action and development cooperation and R & I. Other examples of evaluations that adopt a gender perspective to some extent were also found in the fields of social and human rights ⁽⁶⁶⁾, education ⁽⁶⁷⁾, rights of the child ⁽⁶⁸⁾ and thematic evaluations in the area of gender equality.

Gender equality is usually considered only under some evaluation criteria, particularly under effectiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, or effectiveness and impact. For instance, the evaluation of the EU humanitarian efforts in Yemen assessed the gender responsiveness of this EU action in the criteria of relevance, coherence and effectiveness (see Box 3). This is done by introducing some gender-sensitive evaluation questions.

Box 3. Example: Evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in Yemen and in humanitarian access (2015 -2020)

The evaluation on the EU humanitarian efforts in Yemen mainstreams gender to some extent through the evaluation questions for relevance, coherence and effectiveness. For example, the evaluation asked the following.

- Under the criteria of **relevance**, the evaluation inquired to what extent the design and implementation of EU-funded action in Yemen considered the needs of the most vulnerable populations affected, particularly women, children, elderly people and people with disabilities. When evaluating to what extent the EU's response to challenge considered the needs of final beneficiaries, the evaluation assessed to what extent mitigation strategies had considered gender mainstreaming.
- Under the criteria of **coherence**, the evaluation inquired to what extent the principle of 'do no harm' was being applied, including in relation to gender equality. To answer this question, the evaluation established evidence of the 'do no harm' concept being applied in the DG ECHO-funded operations in Yemen as an indicator with a view to ensure that DG ECHO action did not increase existing inequalities.
- Under **effectiveness**, the evaluation inquired to what extent cross-cutting issues such as gender have been incorporated into programmes, and to what extent gender, as a horizontal issue, was addressed and influenced by DG ECHO advocacy.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Allen, R. et al. (2015), *Thematic Evaluation on IPA Support to Roma Communities – Final report*, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/d2cc11f8-e10a-11e5-8a50-01aa75ed71a1.0001.03/DOC_1).

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Mantouvalou, K., Pavlovaite, I. and Irving, P. (2014), *Sex Discrimination in Access to Education: Evaluation of the need for and effectiveness of current measures in the Member States*, DG Justice and Consumers, European Commission (<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/31a2ae70-3e2e-4f47-b71c-8b1ce15c900e>).

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Day, L. et al. (2015), *Evaluation of legislation, policy and practice of child participation in the European Union (EU) – Final report*, DG Justice and Consumers, European Commission, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/45596>).

The evaluation established some gender and age-disaggregated indicators as part of its evaluation matrix. Data collection was carried out based on the gender–age marker, available data from gender needs assessments and the satisfaction of final beneficiaries of EU action disaggregated by gender. Despite the inclusion of gender aspects in these three criteria, the reporting of findings related to gender equality was mostly lacking, particularly in regard to coherence and effectiveness. Under the criteria of relevance, the evaluation report described that gender analysis to understand the local knowledge was not systematically carried out, which resulted in limited gender needs assessments.

Source: European Commission, 2022.

At other times, gender equality considerations are introduced under a stand-alone criterion on equity. This is the case of the interim evaluation on the implementation of the ‘Rights, equality and citizenship programme 2014–2020’. Under the

criterion of equity, gender equality aspects were considered together with rights of the child and rights of people with disabilities (see Box 4). However, a gender perspective was not adopted in the rest of the criteria.

Box 4. Example: Interim evaluation on the implementation of the ‘Rights, equality and citizenship programme’ (2014–2020)

This interim evaluation assessed the ‘Rights, equality and citizenship programme 2014–2020’ based on the EU standard evaluation criteria in addition to the criterion of equity. In relation to the criterion of equity, this interim evaluation assessed whether, and to what extent, the programme had distributed the available resources fairly among beneficiaries in different Member States, took into consideration the needs of target groups, and promoted gender mainstreaming, the rights of the child and the rights of people with disabilities.

The programme promotes the cross-cutting priorities of gender equality, rights of the child and rights of people with disabilities, and it also includes specific objectives in these areas. However, despite being a cross-cutting priority, gender equality was not mainstreamed throughout the rest of the evaluation questions. It is particularly significant that gender equality was not explicitly mainstreamed under the objective of effectiveness, as one of the specific objectives of the programme is to support the effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex (and other bases for discrimination).

In relation to equity, one of the key findings of this interim evaluation was that, while the regulation of the programme requires participants’ data to be broken down by sex, disability status and age, this was not being implemented. The lack of sex-disaggregated data would prevent the integration of a gender perspective in the *ex post* evaluation of the programme. Having more monitoring data is included as one of the recommendations.

Source: European Commission, 2018.

The strategic ‘Evaluation of EU support to gender equality and women’s empowerment in partner countries (2010–2015)’, commissioned by DG International Partnerships, specifically adopts a **gender analytical framework** based on the

‘5Cs’ as key factors that contribute to GEWE results. The analytical framework assumed that if the combination of the 5Cs is in place, the EU will contribute to a high level of GEWE results at country level.

More on the analytical framework of the 5Cs

- **Commitment:** institutional commitment in the form of vision, policy and strategy commitments; leadership from the top down through the organisation; and staff commitment throughout the organisation.
- **Capacity:** the EU delegations have the capacity to analyse, plan, implement, monitor, report and conduct dialogue in the GEWE area.
- **Cash:** there are financial resources allocated for GEWE programming and GEWE capacities.
- **Accountability:** institutional mechanisms and processes support and ensure systematic inclusion and reporting of gender equality concerns within the EU delegations and Member State representations.
- **Context and coordination:** there is a conducive context at the national level.

Source: European Commission, 2015.

In turn, the most recent evaluation of the EU action in this area reconstructs the intervention logic of the EU external action related to GEWE. The evaluation acknowledges, however, the

non-linearity of the intervention logic in an effort to recognise that changes related to gender equality do not always follow the pattern of a linear result change (see Box 5).

Box 5. Example: Evaluation of the EU's external action support to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (2010 -2018)

The 'Evaluation of the EU's external action support to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (2010–2018)' adopted a theory-based approach and relied on mixed methods for data collection and analysis. As the evaluation was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation had to remain flexible and innovative when dealing with unprecedented ethical, methodological and operational challenges.

The evaluators adopted a 'do no harm' principle to ensure the well-being and safety of all participants and informants. They also adopted a participatory approach and interviewed more than 285 stakeholders, including local and international civil society organisations, development partners, national authorities and EU institutions.

The evaluation highlighted the challenges in measuring outcomes and intermediate impacts of GEWE-related interventions, particularly due to a lack of sex-disaggregated data. The evaluation team pointed out that most of the EU reporting is done at the level of processes, activities and inputs, rather than on high-level results. As a result, it was challenging to assess the impact and sustainability of the EU's external action efforts in the area of gender equality. To overcome this challenge, the evaluation team combined a macro-level analysis on trends at a partner country level with a more detailed assessment of the effects – or likely effects – of selected EU-funded interventions, which were illustrative of the EU portfolio in the areas under review. They also focused on the identification of main barriers and factors of success.

The evaluation found that despite the importance of EU external action in the field of GEWE, the visible results at the macrolevel were limited and achieving these was hindered by the weaknesses in the design of EU support to GEWE. It was also hampered by some challenges that were beyond the scope of one single actor (like the EU) to resolve.

Source: European Commission, 2020.

It should be noted that, contrary to what could be assumed, EU evaluations in the area of gender equality do not necessarily adopt a gender-responsive design ⁽⁶⁹⁾. As highlighted by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) ⁽⁷⁰⁾, a gender-responsive evaluation has two essential components: what the evaluation examines and how it is undertaken. This second component, which emphasises aspects such as inclusiveness, participation of all stakeholders and accountability, should be particularly considered when conducting evaluations with a focus on gender equality.

5.2. Examples at the Member State level

In Member States, gender-responsive evaluations are mostly carried out as evaluations of policies on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. For example, such evaluations can be found in Spain ⁽⁷¹⁾, France ⁽⁷²⁾, Luxembourg ⁽⁷³⁾ and the Netherlands ⁽⁷⁴⁾. Some Member States also integrate a gender perspective into programme evaluations that dedicate a part of funding to gender interventions, such as in the field of social policy or technology and higher education (see example in Box 6).

Box 6. Example: Evaluation of Austrian science fund programmes ⁽⁷⁵⁾

Commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Science and Research of Austria, the evaluation focuses on the effects and impacts of the Hertha Firnberg and Elise Richter programmes, which specifically target women scientists. In addition to the effects on the sponsored women scientists, the focus is on whether, and in which form, the funding programmes created lasting change in the university facilities. The evaluation employed mixed and participatory methods, including a descriptive analysis of key funding programmes, an online survey of the beneficiaries of the programme and those that were rejected, in-depth interviews with scholarship holders and the personnel involved in the execution of the programmes, and workshops to reflect on the results and recommendations emerging from the evaluation.

Member States usually do not pursue a standard approach to gender-responsive evaluations. Specifically, the evaluations may follow stages of the policy in question (conception, implementation

and the results and effects) ⁽⁷⁶⁾ or rely on the evaluation questions to structure the evaluation report (see [section 3, step 2.4.](#)).

⁽⁶⁹⁾ This is the case, for example, in González Gago, E. (2019), *Evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic engagement for gender equality 2016–2019*, DG Justice and Consumers, European Commission, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/451205>).

⁽⁷⁰⁾ UN Women (2015), *How to Manage Gender-responsive Evaluation – Evaluation handbook*, New York (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>).

⁽⁷¹⁾ Ministerio de Igualdad (2007), *Evaluación de la aplicación de la Ley Orgánica 1/2004 de 28 de diciembre – Medidas de protección contra la violencia de género en el ámbito autonómico*, Gobierno de España (<https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/ca/planActuacion/seguimientoEvaluacion/pdf/balanceCCAA2009.pdf>).

⁽⁷²⁾ Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (2012), 'Évaluation de la politique française – «Genre et développement»' (https://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/OPFH_Rapport_GD-111212.pdf).

⁽⁷³⁾ Ministry of Equal Opportunities (2008), *Evaluation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality*, State of Luxembourg, Luxembourg (https://mega.public.lu/dam-assets/fr/actualites/2009/05/presse_plan_egalite/Endbericht_PAN_EN.pdf).

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Van den Brink, M. (2017), 'Doing gender identity justice – Evaluation of three years of transgender legislation in the Netherlands'.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Pohn-Weidinger, S. and Grasenick, K. (2011), 'Elita – Evaluierung der FWF Programme Elise Richter und Hertha Firnberg'.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ L'Institut wallon de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la statistique (2013), 'Évaluation du Plan Marshall 2.Vert – Évaluation thématique n°12: Aides à la promotion de l'emploi dans le secteur de l'enfance' (<https://www.iweps.be/publication/evaluation-plan-marshall-2-vert-evaluation-thematique-n12-aides-a-promotion-de-lemploi-secteur-de-lenfance/>). An executive summary in English is available at https://www.iweps.be/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/executive_summary_employment_promotion_aids.pdf.

Box 7. Example: Questions used in the evaluation of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' international gender policy (2007-2014) ⁽⁷⁷⁾

1. What has motivated the Dutch government to assume an active international role in addressing gender issues?
2. What have been the objectives and main characteristics of the ministry's overall international gender equality policy and the strategies used to realise these objectives and what are the links with the Netherlands' national emancipation policy?
3. Based on this international gender policy, has gender equality been incorporated into country and thematic policies and into concrete interventions and gender-equality focused approaches, and is this evident in the different stages of the policy/programme cycle?
4. What were the results of these interventions in terms of providing better conditions for women and have these results been sustainable?
5. What were the financial and institutional resources to implement the ministry's gender equality policy and were these used efficiently?

When evaluation follows a standard approach at country level, it tends to rely on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's

Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact ⁽⁷⁸⁾ (see Box 8).

Box 8. Example: Gender mainstreaming across evaluation criteria: evaluation of Belgian cooperation ⁽⁷⁹⁾

- **Relevance:** the relevance of the policy note 'equal opportunities for women and men' (which dates from 2002) in the light of developments in the international context.
- **Coherence:** the coherence of gender integration with international commitments, other policies and strategies of Belgian cooperation.
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which Belgian cooperation has contributed to the implementation of the action plan contained in the policy note, and the results that were achieved; the extent to which Belgian cooperation has contributed to creating the conditions required to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women, to effective empowerment, and in decreasing and preventing violence against women.
- **Efficiency:** the size of the budgets available for gender equality and the way these budgets were spent.
- **Sustainability and impact:** the sustainability and impact of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to gender integration and gender equality.

Examples of gender-responsive evaluations at the Member State level usually employ **interviews and focus groups** for gathering data and participatory methodologies that focus on the direct beneficiaries of the interventions (see Box 9). For

another example of an evaluation with a gender perspective that adopts a participatory approach, see Box 10.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ de Nooijer, P. and Mastwijk, K. (2015), *Gender Sense & Sensitivity – Policy evaluation on women's rights and gender equality (2007–2014)*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Netherlands.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation (2019), *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation – Revised evaluation criteria – Definitions and principles for use*, OECD, Paris.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Caubergs, L. et al. (2014), *A Difficult Path towards Equality – Gender and development in Belgian cooperation – Summary report*, Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Brussels.

Box 9. Example: Gender-responsive evaluation using participatory methods: evaluation of the regional plan on childhood and adolescence, Andalusia ⁽⁸⁰⁾

The evaluation of the second plan of action for childhood and adolescence of Andalusia adopted a gender-responsive approach by mainstreaming gender into the evaluation matrix, particularly in the criteria of effectiveness and equity. For instance, the evaluation assessed the following factors.

1. **Effectiveness:** has the political participation of girls and boys increased at local and regional level?
2. **Effectiveness:** have girls and boys participated in the preparation of local childhood plans? How was their participation?
3. **Effectiveness:** what new policies have been implemented targeting the most vulnerable girls and boys?
4. **Equity:** has the plan had a different impact on girls and boys?

The relevant indicators were disaggregated by sex. The evaluation also adopted a participatory approach by consulting girls and boys from the local childhood councils. In the reporting of findings, the evaluation report provides data on the type of informants by gender and age. The research findings are also disaggregated data by age and sex. Finally, the research report includes findings and recommendations in the area of gender equality, including in the area of sexual and gender-based violence.

Box 10. Example: Gender-responsive evaluation using participatory methods: night transportation in the city of Nantes ⁽⁸¹⁾

The evaluation had a special focus on analysing the different needs of women and men using public night transportation in the city of Nantes. Within the context of the evaluation, a space for work and debate brought together different economic stakeholders in transport and night life, user associations and citizens from the Nantes Night Council, the Metropolitan Council of Public Space Users, the Nantes Council for Gender Equality and Nantes&co Council 16-25. The approach aimed to identify the needs and uses of night travel, assess the effectiveness and efficiency of public transport and study their complementarity with alternative offers (private, associative, etc.).

The participatory evaluation had five specific ways to integrate the participatory approach, namely:

- reusing the 2015 survey results on commuting in Nantes (l'Enquête déplacement grand territoire 2015 pour l'agglomération nantaise);
- threenight travels, during which 174 users were met; the situation allowed flash surveys to be carried out and observations to be made;
- a collaborative cartography; the analysis of night routes via a geolocation application called 'Nanteslanuit' was carried out from 19 to 22 May 2016;

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Instituto Andaluz de Administración Pública (2021), *Informe de Evaluación – II Plan de Infancia y Adolescencia de Andalucía 2016–2020*, Seville (https://www.observatoriodelainfancia.es/ficheroisoia/documentos/7588_d_InformeEvaluacion-II-PIAA.pdf).

⁽⁸¹⁾ Maudit, B., 'Ville la nuit: Comment se déplacer facilement la nuit?', Dialogue Citoyen, Ville de Nantes, 2017 (<https://dialoguecitoyen.metropole.nantes.fr/project/comment-se-deplacer-facilement-la-nuit/presentation/presentation-169>).

- a diagnosis of the current situation; 24 people were interviewed in individual and collective interviews, including elected officials, transport stakeholders, citizens participating in nightlife and students;
- an analysis of the uses of modes of transport through participatory benchmarking.

5.3. Other examples

5.3.1. United Nations

At the international level, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), an interagency network that brings together the evaluation units of the UN system, has developed standards and practical

tools⁽⁸²⁾ for UN staff to integrate gender equality and human rights into evaluations.

In 2013, UN Women adopted an evaluation policy⁽⁸³⁾. This policy establishes a framework for ensuring the independent evaluation of UN Women's achieved results in the pursuit of gender equality and its role in leading and promoting gender-responsive evaluations across the UN system.

More on gender-responsive evaluations at UN Women

At UN Women, evaluations responsive to gender equality assess whether interventions⁽⁸⁴⁾:

1. have been guided by the relevant international (national and regional) normative frameworks for gender equality and women's rights, UN system-wide mandates and organisational objectives;
2. have analysed and addressed the structures that contribute to inequalities experienced by women, men, girls and boys, especially those experiencing multiple forms of exclusion;
3. have maximised participation and inclusiveness (with respect to rights holders and duty bearers) in their planning, design, implementation and decision-making processes;
4. sought out opportunities to build sustainable results through the empowerment and capacity-building of women and groups of rights holders and duty bearers;
5. have contributed to short-, medium- and long-term objectives (or the lack thereof) through the examination of results chains, processes, contextual factors and causality using gender- and rights-based analysis.

UN Women has also developed tools⁽⁸⁵⁾ to support the institutionalisation of gender-responsive evaluations and has a dedicated database⁽⁸⁶⁾ that

hosts and rates all its evaluations to support accountability and learning.

⁽⁸²⁾ UNEG Human Rights and Gender Equality Working Group (2018), *Guidance on Evaluating Institutional Gender Mainstreaming – Guidance document*, New York (<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2133>); UNEG (2011), *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG guidance*, New York (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>).

⁽⁸³⁾ Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2012), 'Evaluation policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women' (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/10/evaluation-policy-of-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women>).

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Please see footnote⁽⁸³⁾.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ UN Women (2015), *How to Manage Gender-responsive Evaluation – Evaluation handbook*, New York (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>); UN Women (2020), *Good Practices in Gender-responsive Evaluations*, New York (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/good-practices-in-gender-responsive-evaluations>).

⁽⁸⁶⁾ See UN Women's 'Global accountability and tracking of evaluation use – GATE system' (<https://gate.unwomen.org/>).

5.3.2. Independent evaluators and civil society

EvalGender+ ⁽⁸⁷⁾, which is part of the global partnership EvalPartners, is an international network that promotes gender-transformative evaluations to accelerate commitments to achieve the SDGs. They develop knowledge products to advocate for gender-responsive evaluations, provide funding and disseminate knowledge and best practices. They contribute to the **Gender & Evaluation Community of Practice** ⁽⁸⁸⁾, which is an open global platform to anyone working on

gender-responsive evaluations. Voluntary organisations for professional evaluation play a key role in promoting gender equality in evaluations since the evaluation of public policies is frequently conducted by external evaluators and consultancies.

In civil society sectors, evaluations with a gender perspective have been used as a tool for decision-making, advocacy and to demand accountability from political actors (see Box 11). Other times, civil society organisations cooperate closely with executive powers to conduct an evaluation (see Box 12)

Box 11. Example: An evaluation headed by representatives of civil society ⁽⁸⁹⁾

In Belgium, the Together against Violence coalition carried out an alternative evaluation of Belgium's action plan for the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). The evaluation was submitted to the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence as a way to make the voices of civil society heard.

The evaluation is structured on the main activities of the national action plan and does not employ standard evaluation criteria. The evaluation methodology relied on a broad participation of representatives of the non-governmental sector directly involved in various activities tackling violence against women and domestic violence: 50 civil society organisations (from the Brussels, Flemish and Walloon regions) organised 14 roundtables and participated in the drafting of the report.

The evaluation employs a feminist analysis and all recommendations address GEWE. The evaluation also has a strong intersectional component, particularly in relation to migrant communities.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ See <https://evalpartners.org/evalnetworks/evalgender/>

⁽⁸⁸⁾ See <https://gendereval.ning.com/>

⁽⁸⁹⁾ Ensemble contre les violences (2019), 'Évaluation de la mise en œuvre de la Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur la prévention et la lutte contre la violence à l'égard des femmes et la violence domestique par la Belgique' (<https://rm.coe.int/rapport-alternatif-belgique-shadow-report-belgium/1680931a73>).

Box 12. Example: An evaluation focusing on a consortium on gender-based violence ⁽⁹⁰⁾

In Ireland, the Evaluation Audit Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland commissioned an evaluation on the Irish Joint Consortium on Gender-Based Violence, which consists of civil society and non-governmental organisations. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide the consortium members with an independent evidence-based assessment of the structure, functioning and strategy of the Joint Consortium on Gender-Based Violence that will help to inform the future direction of the consortium from 2013.

The evaluation focuses specifically on the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the activities of the consortium. The evaluation methodology relied on a broad participation of the representatives of the 15 member organisations of the consortium, namely: (1) staff who have a specific involvement in the workings of the consortium via the steering group or one of the working groups; (2) chief executive officers and other senior managers from member organisations; (3) others who did not have direct involvement in the consortium, including other senior or middle managers, field-based staff and a technical adviser from the international network of a member. Furthermore, 11 out of the 15 member organisations were invited to participate in a workshop to discuss the interim findings of the evaluation.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ Williams, M. (2011), *Evaluation of Irish Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence (JCGBV) – Final report* (<https://www.oecd.org/derec/ireland/gender-based-violence.pdf>).

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- Council of the European Union (2021), 'Council conclusions on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on gender equality' (<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8884-2021-INIT/en/pdf>).
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