

# IMAG GMB

A short description of the website [www.imag-gmb.at](http://www.imag-gmb.at)

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## Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming/Budgeting (IMAG GMB)

The Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming/Budgeting was introduced on the basis of a Resolution of the Council of Ministers of 7 November 2000.

**Objectives:** creation of a basis for the implementation of the GM-Strategy at the federal level; compliance with the international obligations of Austria.

### Tasks:

- support and monitor the implementation process of GM in all departments and at all political levels;
- exchange information and best practices in the various departments, as well as other domestic and foreign best-practices;
- develop criteria for the implementation of the GM strategy;
- monitor and evaluate ongoing projects, measures and the application of the GM-objectives.

**Chair:** The Federal Minister for Women and Integration at the Federal Chancellery

### Management

The Department for Gender Equality Policies at the Federal Chancellery is responsible for the management of the inter-ministerial working group. The management invites the members of the group to the meetings and takes minutes of the meetings. **Managing director:** Federal Chancellery, Department III/1

### Members

Representatives of all federal ministries, the supreme authorities, the Union of Public Service and representative of the federal provinces.

In order to successfully implement Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting in the public administration, competences and responsibilities ought to be established. In this context, the tasks and function of those responsible for Gender Mainstreaming/Budgeting in the respective departments have to be defined.

In 2009, the Inter-Ministerial Working Group developed an assignment profile defining the detailed tasks and objectives for the people responsible for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming/Budgeting in the various departments.

## Gender Mainstreaming

### What is Gender Mainstreaming?

On the legislative level the equality of women and men has been already been put in place. In practice, however, there are still large disparities in terms of income, profession, career etc. for women. The goal of Gender Mainstreaming is to recognize these differences and to integrate gender aspects into all policy areas. This includes the simultaneous mobilisation of legal instruments, financial resources and the nation's analytical and organizational capacities in order to build balanced relationships between women and men.

Opportunities in our society are different for women and men, which leads to different interests and needs. In order to avoid disadvantages, these should be taken into account in all decisions and projects of Austrian politics and administration. Gender Mainstreaming is integrated into all policy areas. Primarily responsible for its application are the politicians (top-down approach), who must provide the necessary framework conditions. Subsequently, a new way of thinking must be established among all employees to integrate a gender perspective into all measures.

In 1998 the Council of Europe has defined Gender Mainstreaming as "the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies, at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policymaking."

What is the difference between Gender Mainstreaming and the promotion of women?

Gender Mainstreaming **does not replace positive actions for women**, but it follows a holistic approach to sustainably anchor gender issues at all levels.

Promotion of women/feminist politics	Gender Mainstreaming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aims directly at the <b>reduction of disadvantages</b></li> <li>• responds to existing inequalities in the political, economic, social and cultural life</li> <li>• concerns women and/or one or several defined groups of the female population</li> <li>• aims at finding solutions to directly improve the lives of women</li> <li>• is implemented by competent organizational units, that also submit proposals in other policy areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aims to set up a <b>framework</b> and structures to systematically take gender equality into account</li> <li>• analyses the current situation based on data and aims to integrate the idea of equal opportunities for women and men into all policies and programmes</li> <li>• concerns women and men equally</li> <li>• focusses its attention mainly on the long-term elimination of unequal structures</li> <li>• design, implementation and evaluation of policies concerns all actor at all levels</li> </ul>

➔ Gender mainstreaming and affirmative actions are **not contradicting** each other!

Gender Mainstreaming and positive affirmative actions for women are **two complementary strategies** with the aim of achieving full equality between women and men.

### Legal basis

Austria has obliged itself politically and legally to implement Gender Mainstreaming at national level. This obligation is based on various international as well as European political action plans and is also enshrined in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, making it primary law of the European Union.

The legal basis in Austria for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming can be found in Art 7 para. 2 of the Austrian Federal Constitution:

*"The Federation, Länder and municipalities subscribe to the de-facto equality of men and women. Measures to promote factual equality of women and men, particularly by eliminating actually existing inequalities, are admissible."*

The key foundation for gender-responsive budget management in all public authorities lies in the Austrian Federal Constitution. A gender-responsive allocation of public funds is an important contribution to achieve effective equality of women and men.

### **Political implementation at the federal level**

Gender Mainstreaming is a strategy applied to achieve equality between women and men. In 2000, the Council of Ministers set up an inter-ministerial working group on Gender Mainstreaming (IMAG GMB).

This group supports and accompanies the continued implementation of Gender Mainstreaming at the federal level. In 2010, following the working group's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, an impact assessment was carried out, showing that, despite the need for continued efforts, the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming had been quite successful, particularly in the areas of gender neutral language and Gender Budgeting. Six resolutions of the Council of Ministers concerning Gender Mainstreaming, as well as the constitutional enshrinement of Gender Budgeting, show a very strong political commitment and have been important contributions to the achievement of effective equality between women and men in Austria.

### **Fields of action**

The Gender Mainstreaming strategy in public administration is implemented in various key sectors, such as gender disaggregated data collection, outcome-oriented governance, in the budgeting and legislative processes or in the field of public procurement. Furthermore, the use of gender-neutral language is important in public relations work.

In its resolution of the council of ministers of 6 September 2011, the federal government has highlighted the importance of language and gender budgeting, but also emphasized the need for further measures in the fields of data, subsidies, procurement, training, awareness-raising and in the legislative process.

Most recently, the federal government committed itself in the 6th resolution of the council of ministers on Gender Mainstreaming of 4 March 2020 to actively support the anniversary year of 20 years of gender mainstreaming in Austria and to continue to implement the gender mainstreaming strategy comprehensively.

### **Budget**

Public budgets are societal, social and economic priorities and reflect certain socio-political concepts. Budget policies have a direct impact on society and the economy. The budgetary procedure can amplify, reduce or eliminate already existing gender differences. The distribution of financial resources has different effects on the lives of women and men, who have different starting positions in both the economic and social area. The achievement of de facto equality between women and men in the public budget system is also enshrined in the Austrian constitution.

### **Data**

Accurate and comprehensive data and statistics are crucial for the effective implementation of Gender Mainstreaming. The collection and analysis of the current situation are at the beginning on every Gender Mainstreaming process. To perform such an analysis, a uniform information base as well as well-founded knowledge of gender specific inequalities are necessary. Both data bases as well as indicators must be examined and, if necessary, adjusted to adequately display the specific situations of women and men.

Gender disaggregated data helps to

- determine the current situation,
- examine circumstances,
- carry out comparisons,
- evaluate progress and
- create the foundations for policies, programmes and measures.

In its Resolution of September 2011, the Council of Ministers agreed that data must continuously be collected, analysed and presented in a gender disaggregated manner.

In recent years, international, national and operational statistics have increasingly been differentiated according to gender. The Austrian Minister for Women's Affairs publishes an **annual gender index**, containing data on demographic structures or forms of life, education,

employment, economic situation, representation and participation, health, violence in the family or in the social environment.

### **Legislative processes**

The law as the main instrument of the government and parliament is not gender-neutral. Regulation may have different effects on the women and men. Gender Mainstreaming means that all parties involved in all phases of the legislative process must take into account gender aspects and ensure that legislation actually helps to promote equality of women and men.

The Federal Budget Law 2013 comprises detailed regulations on outcome oriented administration including the consideration of the objective of effective equality of women and men. Equality aspects are explicitly a factor throughout the management cycle of administrative action, from planning to implementation to evaluation. The outcome oriented impact assessment gives information for laws, ordinances, other legal frameworks and projects. It is part of the legal material from its draft to the final decision-making in parliament. The impact assessment includes a problem analysis, objectives and measures including indicators as well as an assessment of a range of impacts. Only impacts exceeding certain criteria need to be assessed in detail. Public budgets, gender equality, social affairs, children and youth, consumer politics, administrative burden for citizens, administrative burdens for businesses, businesses, economy and environment are part of the outcome oriented impact assessment. Every impact assessment has to be evaluated within five years after entering into force.

### **Human Resource Management**

An important means of implementing Gender Mainstreaming is gender sensitive human resources management and in particular human resources development as these tools contribute significantly to the motivation of employees and thus to the success of an organisation. Additionally, they provide an important field of action for the promotion of equality of women and men.

The staff appraisal is one contribution to gender sensitive human resources management. It should give managers and employees the opportunity to reflect on gender aspects in the current working environment. A preparation sheet serves to help managers and employees to effectively prepare for the staff appraisal according to the criteria of gender equality.

The promotion of paternity leave, flexible working hours or the creation of a non-discriminatory working environment are parts of a gender sensitive human resources management as well, as

they are all essential to the overall satisfaction of employees and a positive image of modern and attractive organizations.

### **Language**

Language conveys values and standards and reflects our social reality. In a society committed to equality of women and men, both sexes must be expressed linguistically. A critical approach to language and images in the media and the political public sphere is important to reduce discrimination and promote equality.

To formulate in a gender-sensitive manner means to realize equality of women and men in our language. Only a gender-neutral language ensures that women and men feel equally approached. A general statement that women are "included" in male forms of expression does not suffice.

In 2001 the Council of Ministers decided that all the ministries must pay attention to gender-appropriate language. Various guides are available to support employees to express themselves in a gender-appropriate manner.

### **Public Procurement**

The Austrian constitution lays down the responsibility of the federal government, states and municipalities to ensure the achievement of de facto equality of women and men when using public funds. This political mandate was reiterated in 2013 within the framework of the outcome-oriented management of public finances.

## **Gender Budgeting**

### **What is Gender Budgeting?**

Gender budgeting is not another strategy, but the application of Gender Mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means to analyse the federal, state and community budgets with regard to their impact on the lives of women and men, and to adapt them according to gender equality objectives. It is not an additional budget item, but asks questions such as "Do women or men benefit more from public spending and subsidies? Are women and men affected differently by austerity measures?"



## **Legal basis**

### **Art 13 (3) Federal Constitution of Austria:**

*"Federation, Länder and municipalities have to aim at the equal status of women and men in the budgeting."*

### **Art 51 (8) Federal Constitution of Austria:**

*"In the management of the Federal budgets the principles of striving for efficiency, mainly under respect of the goal of equal treatment of women and men, transparency, efficiency and a true picture of the financial situation of the Federation as much as possible are to be respected."*

## **Outcome Orientation**

The desired effects in society and the necessary services are the basis of administrative actions in outcome-oriented management. The effect, and not only the mere action, ought to be the ultimate goal of federal activities.

When implementing the method of Outcome Orientation two applications ought to be distinguished:

- Performance Budgeting with the objective of effective and efficient public administration
- Regulatory Impact Assessment of laws, ordinances, other legal frameworks and projects as well as their internal evaluation with the objective of better regulations and project planning.

### **Performance Budgeting**

Since 2009, the objective of de facto equality between women and men in the context of budgetary planning is enshrined in the Federal Constitution (Article 13). Since 2013, Gender Budgeting must be applied at federal level. This was realized in the course of the introduction of Performance Budgeting. In 2013 the Austrian federal budget reform changed the classical principles of the federal budgetary management. According to Article 51 para. 8 in managing the federal budget, the principles of outcome orientation must be observed, particularly with regard to the goal of actual equality between women and men, transparency, efficiency and the most accurate possible representation of the financial situation of the federal government.

The de facto equality between women and men has to be considered in all stages of administrative action, from the formulation of objectives to their implementation and evaluation. This means that every federal ministry and institution (Parliament, constitutional court, etc.) is required to define five outcome goals with at least one of them having to be an equality goal. In the implementation of these outcome goals, a maximum of five measures, including an equality measure, as well as appropriate indicators must be formulated as well.

### **Regulatory Impact Assessment**

Impact assessments, i.e. the systematic gathering and assessing of government projects, are a key instrument in the implementation of better regulations. Austria has introduced Regulatory Impact Assessment on 1 January 2013. This impact assessment system was a significant part of the Austrian federal budget reform. The specific legal provisions can be found in section 17 and 18 of the Federal Budgeting Act 2013 (BHG 2013).

The impact assessment gives information for laws, ordinances, other legal frameworks and projects. It is part of the legal material from its draft to the final decision-making in parliament. Therefore the impact assessment is also valuable for the interested public, as it increases transparency and effectiveness of public administration.

The impact assessment includes a problem analysis, objectives and measures including indicators as well as an assessment of a range of impacts. Only impacts exceeding certain criteria need to be assessed in detail. The following impact dimensions are part of the Regulatory Impact Assessment:

- Public budgets
- Gender equality
- Social affairs
- Children and youth
- Consumer politics
- Administrative burden for citizens
- Administrative burden for businesses
- Businesses
- Economy & Environment.

Every impact assessment has to be evaluated within five years after entering into force.

In 2013, the organizational processes concerning the Regulatory Impact Assessment have been established. Part of this implementation process was extensive training for civil servants on the methodology and for a special IT-tool, which has been developed. The IT-tool contains a guided process and calculators; data sets are provided and it generates automatically the necessary legal material. Additionally, a comprehensive manual for the Regulatory Impact Assessment is available.

In April 2015 a simplified impact – oriented assessment has been introduced, which may be applied when assessing projects without significant effect within the impact dimensions and without a grave financial impact.

### **Data**

Data are an essential basis for the process of Regulatory Impact Assessment and the evaluation of the impact of standards and projects on gender equality. The following links give an overview of the data available in the field of equality between women and men and are intended as a helpful tool when implementing Regulatory Impact Assessment .

### **Best practices**

National and international examples of gender budgeting activities help illustrate the variety of possible ways of implementation. Additionally these examples may be used as guidelines when establishing gender sensitive budgetary procedures.

## **Gender Projects**

### **Gender Mainstreaming – just a buzzword?**

Not at all. Rather, it describes an entire strategy which affects all areas of life. In the last years, a plethora of initiatives and projects endorsing Gender Mainstreaming have been implemented in order to promote gender equality.

### **On the website [www.imag-gmb.at](http://www.imag-gmb.at), we will inform you ...**

about more than 220 projects implemented at federal, regional (Länder) or municipal level in a concise and succinct way. the website features projects for reconciliation of work and family life, the Gender Pay Gap, information on untraditional career choices, gender medicine, and support measures for women (e.g. prizes or mentoring programmes) as well as awareness-raising campaigns such as the initiative "Equal Pay Day".

### **We provide you with ...**

- A concise list of all gender equality initiatives launched by the ministries, the Länder, the cities and the municipalities.
- A structured overview of all projects, inclusive of project descriptions (aims, target group(s), subject-matter, results) and contact persons.
- Filters to search projects by subject-matter, project title, organisation/institution. Therefore, you can easily find out who offers or has offered a certain project at what time.

Just take a look at our [database](#) (in German)! It's worth it. You will be surprised by the sheer amount and diversity of projects.

Your GM project is not displayed in the list? Please, e-mail us at [imag-gmb@bka.gv.at](mailto:imag-gmb@bka.gv.at)!