

Toolbox:

How to Mainstream Gender in Environmental Policy



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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is committed to assist the 56 countries in the region to make gender equality a reality. In line with its mandate as a Regional Economic Commission, UNECE works towards advancing the situation of women and men in the economies of the region through capacity building, policy dialogue and data collection.

The current toolbox was developed in a response to a request received from the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia to strengthen capacity on integrating gender aspects into environmental policies.

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Introduction

Foreword

This toolbox was developed to assist the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia to integrate gender equality considerations into their various sectoral programmes and policies. It seeks to provide a practical and workable approach to Gender Mainstreaming of environmental policy. It was applied to two programmes to exemplify the approach during a training session, but can be applied to any other sector of environmental policy, possibly during thematic workshops involving the experts in charge of developing the specific programme or policy, as well as internal or external gender experts.

Gender concepts

Gender is understood as a set of cultural constructs describing characteristics that may historically be related to femininity, masculinity, women and men and their power relations. It relates to social norms, socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society considers appropriate for each gender. In contrast, sex is understood as a set of characteristics associated with reproduction and biology that generally assign individuals into categories of “male” and “female” at birth. Current gender concepts go beyond the rigid binary model of classification of people into either female or male, thereby taking into account the continuum between these poles, and including LGBTIQ* (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, inter, queer ...) people.

- ▶ Moreover, inequality and discrimination based on other social categories such as ethnic origin, class or age, need to be taken into account, as these multiple discriminations interfere (intersectionality). Yet, analysing many different subgroups in an inter-categorical approach is complicated, and often there is a lack of appropriate data. A practical approach is therefore to start from gender inequality, and then look into the most relevant further social categories.

Gender is not just a characteristic describing individual people, but gender norms are also inscribed in institutions, social relations and legislative systems.

- ▶ At individual level, gender identities are personal conceptions of oneself as male or female or both, or neither, as a result of a combination of internal and external factors.
- ▶ At symbolic level, gender hierarchies are rooted in norms and values. Male characteristics and perspectives are considered the norm (androcentrism), while female characteristics are considered inferior and a deviation from the norm.
- ▶ At systemic levels, gender relations shape institutional and physical structures as well as power relations.

Structures and systems influence individuals, and vice versa (‘doing gender’). In gender analysis, all three levels have to be taken into account.

Topics for the application of the toolbox

For this toolbox, two topic related programmes of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Serbia have been chosen:

- ▶ The 2019 ‘National Waste Prevention Programme for the period 2020-2025’ (NWPP) covering measures in the priority areas industrial waste, hazardous waste, packaging waste, food, construction and demolition waste, waste of electric and electronic equipment, and household waste;

- ▶ The 2020 'Roadmap for circular economy in Serbia' (RCE) comprising recommendations for priority sectors manufacturing industry, agriculture and food, plastics and packaging, and construction.

The two topics are highly interrelated, as waste prevention is a core idea of a circular economy. In the latter, ideally, all waste is either prevented, e.g. by extending product lifespan, or can be fed into the production and consumption cycle again. Therefore, both programmes have to consider the production side, as well as the consumption side.

The two programmes differ insofar, as the waste prevention programme is highly operationalised, with many concrete policies and actions including timelines and responsibilities, while the circular economy programme is an extensive analysis of the status quo and a collection of ideas to pursue on the way towards a circular economy.

Gender Mainstreaming approach and its application

1. What gender data do we have in the sector?

For the waste sector, various data collections are available. Here are the most important issues:

- ▶ There are significant gender differences in attitudes and behaviour towards avoiding waste: Women, more strongly than men, find waste prevention important and believe that consumers have a role to play to avoid waste. Women are more willing to change their behaviour in order to reduce and separate waste, avoid food and packaging waste than men. For Serbia, these findings have been confirmed by surveys from UN Women Serbia.
- ▶ There are indications from various studies that women generate more household waste, including food waste. Yet, it is questionable if these data are meaningful, as it is not clear how generated waste is attributed to individual members of a household. In the case of single person households, men's behaviour might lead to more waste generated elsewhere (e.g. if they eat out rather than cook themselves), while women. Other characteristics of households might have a larger influence on waste generation, such as number and age of children, or income.
- ▶ Unpaid waste work at home is mostly done by women, while paid work on waste is mainly done by men, particularly in operative and senior decision making positions.
- ▶ Among employees in the waste sector, women's priorities are related to behavioural change, awareness raising and waste prevention, while men's priorities are related to improving operations, such as optimising waste collection and recycling, and reducing landfill.

As for circular economy, as it is a broad concept, there are no specific gender data available. But here are some general observations that are important for gender considerations:

- ▶ On the consumption side, there is evidence from many studies and surveys that women are more motivated than men to consume more sustainably. Yet, on the other hand, there are some sectors where women consume more, e.g. clothes, and others, where men consume more, e.g. electronics.
- ▶ In most households, women are primarily in charge of family care and household chores such as cleaning and laundry. On average, women spend over two hours more than men on unpaid labour. Therefore, purchasing decisions at household levels are mainly taken by women. Yet, these are often small scale, while decisions on larger investments are often taken by men.
- ▶ On the production side, men are overrepresented in many sectors such as heavy industry, construction, and information technology, while women are overrepresented in production sectors for cheap goods. Moreover, women are overrepresented in the so called 'non-productive' sectors such as care and services.
- ▶ Men are overrepresented in decision making position in almost all sectors.

2. Gender Screening of a Programme

In the following, a pragmatic approach is provided to engender a broader programme of policies.

1. Entry points for gender balance / gender parity and inclusion and participation of women and women's organisations

- ▶ Are any bodies going to be created, such as cross-sectoral coordination bodies, specialised agencies, expert / advisory boards, or networking schemes?
Then, provisions for gender balance of these bodies should be included.
- ▶ Are any events planned such as dissemination conferences, expert workshops or trainings?
Then, provisions for gender balance both on the side of speakers / panels, and of participants should be included. Moreover, specific training activities for women and women's organisations should be considered, if the topic is especially relevant for them.

NWPP: International conference on sustainable production and consumption business models (5.2), dissemination conference on R&D results for cleaner products (5.2), training on eco-design (5.2), training for repairing EEE of socially disadvantaged people (5.4), information seminars on EMS (5.5), training of food industry staff on food waste prevention (5.6), training for SME staff on hazardous substances (5.7), capacity building on waste prevention at local levels (5.8)

RCE: Training for manufacturing company staff, capacity building of food bank

- ▶ Are any outreach activities such as information campaigns planned?
Then, information should be gender-sensitive (see checklist).

NWPP: Information provision / campaigns (5.4 on reuse and repair, 5.6 on food waste, 5.8. on prevention of household waste, sustainable consumption, packaging waste, 5.9 on littering)

RCE: Media campaign on single-use plastics

- ▶ Does the programme involve participatory approaches?
Then, gender balance must be ensured and a gender-sensitive approach must be pursued. See also the checklist on participation further below.

2. Entry points on the contents

- ▶ Is gender (and social) equality included in the objectives of the programme?
Gender and social issues should be mentioned, e.g. in the preamble, referring to the concept of sustainability that includes social aspects, and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).
- ▶ Are there any data to be collected?
Then, these should be sex-disaggregated.
- ▶ Is any gender analysis such as a Gender Impact Assessment foreseen?
If not, call for gender analysis where appropriate. Best would be to include a provision for gender and social impact assessment in the overarching part of the programme where purpose and objectives are described. Moreover, similar provisions should be included in those parts of the programme resp. in those policies and measures, where data suggest that there are gender aspects to be considered.

RCE: Include gender analysis at the beginning of section 5.6 (Roadmap for priority sectors), and in the recommendations

- ▶ Which sectors do the planned policies and measures seek to influence?
Are planned actions primarily targeting households / consumers, and are relevant sectors missing, for

example the supply side, i.e. industry, commerce and trade? This might put a disproportionate burden on households, rather than addressing the root causes, see also the gender dimension 'care economy'.

Both programmes address the supply as well as the demand side

- ▶ Who are the target groups of planned policies and measures?
Are they mentioned explicitly, are the planned actions adequately designed to reach them?
- ▶ Which fields of action are directly affecting persons and households?
Planned policies and actions in these fields or sectors should receive a closer look: How can these actions be improved in order to avoid unintended impacts on gender equality, to better respond to people's needs, preferences and capacities, and to maximise positive social and gender effects.
- ▶ Are there any policies that explicitly address women or gender issues, and are other social dimensions such as poverty or migrant situations mentioned in the description of policies?
- ▶ Are there gaps from a gender perspective?
This could be actions that have a potential to contribute to gender equality beyond their environmental effects. Often, it is difficult to identify such actions, and there is no systematic way of doing this. One option is to learn from other programme, either in other countries or in other sectors. If a more detailed Gender Impact Assessment is carried out, some ideas might come up for additional policies and actions that would contribute to gender equality.

3. Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) of a policy measure or programme

A GIA is a more thorough analysis of a programme, policy or project.

Key questions for a GIA are: Which undesired impacts might the policy have on gender relations? How can it be improved in order to contribute to gender equality and maximise positive social and gender effects?

The options to answer these questions are either

- ▶ A GIA which is usually carried out within the institution by experts, including gender experts, or
- ▶ Participatory approaches involving the target groups. For more information see below step 4.

GIA is a means of gender analysis that helps to estimate the effects of a climate policy, programme or project on gender equality and gender relations. The GIA challenges the assumption of policy-makers that policies affect everyone in the same way, by revealing the differentiated impacts on different genders. The assessment should lead to ideas on how to improve these policies, e.g. by a modification of the policy, selecting another policy instrument or adding specific accompanying measures to address gender inequality.

A GIA is usually carried out during the planning stage of a policy. It can also be part of the monitoring of a policy

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