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CASE STUDY **PARTICIPATION OF GREECE** **AT SUBNATIONAL LEVEL IN** **THE GENDER FLAGSHIP PROJECT** **2024-2026**



**GENDER
FLAGSHIP**

GENDER MAINSTREAMING
IN PUBLIC POLICY
AND BUDGET PROCESSES

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About the project

This case study was prepared as part of the project “Gender mainstreaming in public policy and budget processes” (hereafter referred to as the “Gender Flagship Project”, funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). The project is implemented by Expertise France (EF) with the support of the European Commission, SG REFORM, in partnership with the European University Institute (EUI) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).



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Implementation period: 49 months (June 2022 to July 2026)

Beneficiary Member States: Cyprus, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Spain

Key activities: Technical methodological support, capacity building through trainings, workshops and study visits, dissemination and capitalisation

Implementation:

Funder: EU (SG REFORM) through TSI

Implementer: Expertise France, in collaboration with European University Institute (EUI) and European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

The Gender Flagship Project aims to support public authorities from the EU Member States at national and local level, in understanding how to advance gender equality by better mainstreaming gender into their policies and budgeting, as well as address any related gaps. It offers technical support for analysing policies and budgets with a focus on gender mainstreaming, ensuring that all citizens, regardless of gender, have the opportunity to fully participate in and contribute to a fair society.

The project works with twelve Beneficiary Authorities (BAs) across nine Member States over a 49-month period (2022-2026). Each BA receives:

- In-depth analysis of current practices and development of tailored Gender Action Plans;

- Technical support from dedicated Local Experts and core Gender Flagship Project team experts to build capacity and implement tools, such as developing and improving their equality-related programmes and indicators, enforcing gender mainstreaming through developing specific processes (e.g. circulars), developing gender-responsive budgeting methodologies.

In addition, the Gender Flagship Project provides capacity development through general online training and specific in-person training on the latest trends, methodologies and tools for effective gender mainstreaming. The project also facilitates peer learning and exchanges between countries through study visits and workshops, helping Member States to enhance their targeted approaches in specific sectors, policy areas and/or regions.



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA	Beneficiary Authority
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
DEPIS	Municipal Committees for Gender Equality
EC	European Commission
EKDDA	National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government
EF	Expertise France
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EN.PE	Union of Greek Regions
EUI	European University Institute
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GIA	Gender Impact Assessment
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GSEHR	General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights
IDA	In-Depth Gender Analysis
K.E.D.E.	Central Union of Municipalities of Greece
KETHI	Research Centre for Gender Equality
LA	Local Authority
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
MSCF	Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family
NAPGE	National Action Plan for Gender Equality
NCGE	National Council for Gender Equality
NRRP	National Recovery and Resilience Plan
PEPIS	Regional Committees for Gender Equality
RA	Regional Authority
SG REFORM	Reform and Investment Task Force of the European Commission
TSI	Technical Support Instrument

Executive summary

Greece took part in the Gender Flagship Project across two cohorts. In the first (2022–2025), the project supported the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights (GSEHR), under the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family (MSCF), in strengthening Greece's gender mainstreaming mechanism at central-national level. This support included a Gender Mainstreaming pilot Implementation Circular (GMpIC); an Interministerial GM Working Group of appointed representatives from across the ministries; a central-level GM Dossier with practical Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) tools; and a training module. That first phase is the subject of a separate case study. This case study concerns the second phase, which began in 2024 and extended that work to the subnational level – to selected municipalities and regions, while also continuing central-level support for these efforts.

An In-Depth Gender Analysis (IDA), delivered during the project, found that Greece had built an extensive Gender Equality (GE) architecture on a strong legal foundation, but that implementation at the subnational level remained uneven: gender equality bodies were set up in almost all local and regional administrations, yet their functionality and performance were found to diverge. Inter-municipal collaboration was limited, and the core tools – Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), GRB and GIA – were applied only in a limited way. The IDA traced this not to any single level but to an imbalance across all three levels of governance: local and regional authorities varied widely in preparedness and capacity, while the central administration – strong in its legal framework, political will and gender mainstreaming expertise – had limited human and technical resources to provide tailored support and guidance to local and regional authorities, and did not yet have a mechanism to monitor and evaluate authorities' progress. While the central administration was in regular contact with local and regional authorities through its day-to-day support, a systematic, two-way channel for communication on gender mainstreaming between the levels was still lacking.

In response, a Gender Action Plan (GAP) – the single roadmap guiding the project's support, distinct from the Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) that individual municipalities and regions produce – organised the support around three aims: building the gender mainstreaming competences of the selected authorities; developing methodologies and tools, customised to the Greek subnational context, that any authority can use to apply gender mainstreaming in its policies; and strengthening cooperation between the central, regional and local gender equality actors. Eleven pilots took part – eight municipalities and three regions – selected to reflect the diversity of Greece's subnational landscape, spanning metropolitan, mainland and island authorities of differing size and institutional capacity, so that the methodology and tools could be tested across the range of conditions the IDA had identified. The project delivered an interlocking suite of customised tools, built around a GM Dossier (an adaptation to the subnational level of the Dossier developed at central level in the project's first phase) and a monitoring mechanism, and supported by an Information Package and a proposed GM Working Group. The GM Dossier brings together a GEP methodology – with a built-in diagnostic questionnaire and sample GEPs – and the GRB and GIA tools. The monitoring mechanism draws on two complementary elements: a proposed 'Gender Equality' thematic category within the Ministry of the Interior's Local Government Performance Monitoring Hub, and the BA's annual survey to all local and regional authorities, with the diagnostic questionnaire feeding into the survey. Alongside these, an Information Package supports wider dissemination of the tools, and a proposed GM Working Group would advise and support the GSEHR's Department for Monitoring Gender Equality Policies.

The above-mentioned tools were complemented by tailored, hands-on training, focused on the municipal and regional staff who design, budget for and deliver local or regional services, alongside their Gender Equality Committees. Across 11 in-person sessions – staff training sessions for municipalities and regions, a dedicated workshop for the elected leadership of pilot municipalities, and a closing Training of Trainers for the GSEHR – the capacity-building activities reached over 440 people in all.

By the close of the support period in June 2026, the effort had moved from diagnosis to a working foundation: a complete set of customised tools and a first cohort of trained authorities. The directions identified for the next phase (see Section 4) point towards embedding, activating and extending what has been delivered: in the near term, folding the 'Gender Equality' thematic category and the enriched annual survey into the GSEHR's monitoring cycle, formally constituting the GM Working Group, and disseminating the GM Dossier and Information Package to all local and regional authorities; over the longer term, institutionalising training in cooperation with EKDDA and adapting the legal framework to extend gender mainstreaming and budgeting obligations to the subnational level – with the ultimate aim of nationwide implementation across all 332 municipalities and 13 regions.



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Section 1

CONTEXT AND
RATIONALE FOR
SUPPORT

This section draws primarily on the in-depth gender analysis undertaken in the first half of 2025, led by Dr Valia Kalaitzi, the project's local expert for Greece, with technical guidance and input from Rezart Xhelo and Imane El Rhomri El Fatmi – Expertise France key experts.

1.1 Beneficiary Authority (BA)

The General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights (GSEHR), operating under the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family (MSCF), was the Beneficiary Authority for the Gender Flagship Project in Greece. It is the country's main body for promoting gender equality and for designing, implementing and monitoring national equality policies, including efforts to combat gender-based discrimination. Its work follows the dual approach to gender equality: gender mainstreaming – integrating a gender perspective into all policies, at every level of public administration – complemented by targeted measures to eliminate discrimination.¹

The GSEHR also runs a HelpDesk on Gender Equality Policies, operational since 2023. It is the central administration's standing point of contact for municipalities and regions, offering technical and scientific guidance on developing and implementing Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), gender mainstreaming actions and gender-responsive budgeting. It also helps authorities meet their commitments under the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life².

Greece has taken part in the Gender Flagship Project across two cohorts. In the first (2022–2025), the GSEHR and the MSCF worked on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting at the national level – a regulatory circular, an inter-ministerial coordination structure, practical GRB/GIA tools and a training module. This case study concerns the second phase of Greece's participation in the project, which began in 2024 and extended that work from the central level to the subnational level.



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¹ EIGE, <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1235>

² https://ccre-cemr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Charter_2022_EN.pdf

1.2. Context when joining the project

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL SETUP

Greece operates a three-tier public administration – central, regional and local – with gender equality (GE) responsibilities at each level. At the central level, the gender equality structure comprises the GSEHR together with the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI), the Equal Treatment Department of the Ombudsperson, and the National Council for Gender Equality (NCGE). Law 4604/2019 also provides for Ministerial Units for Gender Equality across the ministries, though to date these have been established only in the Ministries of Labour and Social Security, National Defence, and Foreign Affairs. At the regional level, the Law Promoting Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence (Law 4604/2019)³ provides for a Regional Committee for Gender Equality (PEPIS) in each of the 13 regions, an Independent Equality Office in each region, and a Gender Equality Office within the Union of Greek Regions (EN.PE). At the local level, the same law (Article 6) makes a Municipal Committee for Gender Equality (DEPIS) mandatory in all 332 municipalities. These are complemented by dedicated equality units, scaled to municipal size, under Law 3852/2010⁴, and by a Gender Equality Office within the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (K.E.D.E.).⁵

Despite this extensive legal structure, implementation remained uneven. By 2024, 327 of 332 municipalities (98.5%) had established some form of GE body, yet meetings were held only irregularly and inter-municipal collaboration was limited.⁶ The structures were largely in place, but the gender mainstreaming tools – GEPs, GRB and GIA – were applied only in a limited and fragmentary way at local and regional levels.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Greek Constitution⁷ provides a strong legal foundation for gender equality. Article 4 enshrines equal rights for all citizens, Article 116 mandates the removal of existing inequalities – particularly those to the detriment of women – and the 2001 constitutional revision explicitly permits positive measures to promote equality. Greece also ratified CEDAW in 1983⁸.

Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality⁹ is the most comprehensive legislative achievement in this area. It introduced, for the first time, legal definitions of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, and it set out the full GE institutional mechanism across all three levels of public administration. Its binding gender-responsive budgeting provisions, however, apply only to central government and have not yet been extended to local and regional authorities.

³ <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC227658/>

⁴ [kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/132966/nomos-3852-2010](https://www.kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/132966/nomos-3852-2010)

⁵ This section describes the institutional framework in force during the project's implementation. On 29 June 2026, after the close of the support period, the new Local Government Code (Law 5314/2026) was published, reforming the framework governing the municipal and regional equality committees. Its implications postdate the data collection for this case study. [e-nomothesia.gr/autodioikese-demoi/nomos-5314-2026.html](https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/autodioikese-demoi/nomos-5314-2026.html)

⁶ General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights (GSEHR), Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, *The Implementation of Gender Equality Policies in Municipalities and Regions: Annual Report 2023* (published October 2024). The figures reflect 2024 data and are cited in the project's *In-Depth Gender Analysis* (2025).

⁷ <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/en/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Syntagma/>

⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

⁹ <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC227658/>

On the policy side, the GSEHR's National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2021–2025¹⁰ (its successor, the NAPGE 2026–2030, was still forthcoming at the time of writing¹¹) set gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting priority (Priority 4, "Introduction of gender mainstreaming in all policies"). At the subnational level, the NAPGE treats municipalities and regions as core implementation partners and, among other things, sets indicators and actions on women's representation in local government, including monitoring of the 40% gender quota for candidates in municipal and regional elections. It was developed in consultation with the NCGE, women's rights organisations, parliamentary committees and academic bodies. This commitment sits within a wider reform agenda. Greece's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), "Greece 2.0" (2021–2026)¹², set national priorities for social cohesion and institutional transformation, and the drive to meet its goals – alongside those of the NAPGE – has helped underpin efforts to embed gender mainstreaming across all three levels of public administration. Several of the reforms foreseen under the NRRP carry explicit gender equality objectives, notably the labour-law modernisation, whose work-life balance pillar aims at narrowing the gender employment gap.

1.3. *Reasons for the beneficiary's participation in the project*

Greece's participation in the second cohort of the Gender Flagship Project reflected the recognition by the political leadership responsible for gender equality policy: despite significant progress at central-government level, including through Greece's first-cohort participation, which had strengthened the gender mainstreaming mechanism for central public policy, the effective implementation of gender equality policies continued to face challenges at the local and regional levels. Experience with policies addressing vulnerable social groups had already shown how difficult it was to translate national strategies into practice across the diverse needs, capacities and realities of local communities.

Regional and local authorities therefore required more systematic support to deepen their understanding of gender mainstreaming, develop actions tailored to their territories, and make better use of available policy instruments. The objective was to strengthen the capacity of municipalities and regions to integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation and evaluation of their own policies, while fostering a structured policy dialogue between central government and subnational authorities, in line with the National Action Plans for Gender Equality (NAPGE), including the forthcoming NAPGE 2026–2030, which is expected to place gender mainstreaming among its key strategic priorities.



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¹⁰ <https://isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ΕΣΔΙΦ-2021-2025.pdf>

¹¹ <https://isotita.gr/en/national-action-plan-for-gender-equality-transitional/>

¹² https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/c2606b67-318e-48a3-bc00-2af08a1cb7bd_en?filename=nrrp-greece_2_0_greek_280721.pdf

The IDA confirmed the necessity of this approach: earlier initiatives had introduced important tools, such as GEPs, GRB and GIA, but their implementation had often been fragmented and their sustainability limited, while uneven institutional capacity and shifting priorities underlined the need for stronger coordination across levels of governance. Beyond the project's immediate objectives, the longer-term goal was to build political consensus between central and subnational levels of government and support the systematic integration of a gender perspective into public policies and budgeting alike.



GSEHR chose to submit a proposal for the Gender Flagship Project, believing that lasting progress on gender equality requires change in the way public institutions operate. We wanted to move beyond policy commitments and help local and regional authorities build the skills and understanding needed to integrate a gender perspective into their everyday work. Given the important role municipalities and regions play in shaping citizens' lives, the project represented a valuable opportunity to support more inclusive, responsive and evidence-based decision-making where it matters.



The representative of the Beneficiary Authority

1.4. Project objectives and aims

The project pursued three aims: to enhance the GM competences of subnational authorities; to develop methodologies and tools, customised to the Greek subnational context, for applying GM in local and regional policies; and to enhance cooperation between the central, regional and local gender equality actors.

Eight municipalities – Athens, Peristeri, Palaio Faliro, Ilion, Alexandroupolis, Zakyntos, Rhodes and Syros-Ermoupoli – and three regions – Crete, Thessaly and Western Greece – were selected as the project's pilots, spanning metropolitan, mainland and island authorities of differing size and capacity. The support began with an in-depth gender analysis, which assessed the extent to which GM tools (GEP, GRB, GIA) were applied across these authorities, identified the main factors hindering or facilitating effective GM integration, and examined how local and regional efforts could be linked to the central GM mechanism to form a cohesive national approach.

Building on these findings, the IDA's recommendations informed a practical roadmap – the Gender Action Plan (GAP) – for integrating a gender perspective into local and regional policies and budgets and, crucially, for re-balancing and strengthening collaboration across all three levels of public administration so they could build on a common footing and work together more effectively. In practice, this meant building the GM capacity of the pilot authorities, strengthening the central administration's support to them, and disseminating the resulting tools and practices more widely.

Beyond the pilots, the project was oriented towards longer-term change: institutionalising gender mainstreaming across all 332 municipalities and 13 regions, supporting the introduction of gender budgeting to municipal and regional budgets, and equipping the GSEHR with timely, evidence-based information to monitor and advance gender equality policies. The GSEHR's ambition was full-scale, nationwide implementation, grounded in a whole-of-government approach that balanced institutional change with the contextual realities of subnational governance.



Section 2

TAILORED
SUPPORT
AND RESULTS
ACHIEVED

The technical support to Greece at subnational level was delivered not as a set of standalone products but as an interlocking suite whose parts reinforce one another. It brings together a GM Dossier (Section 2.1), which equips local and regional authorities to integrate the gender dimension into their policies by using GM tools (GEP, GRB, GIA) to plan, budget for and assess gender equality initiatives; a monitoring mechanism (Section 2.2), through which the central administration can follow that work and better align the levels of government; an Information Package (Section 2.3), which carries the additional information and guidance out to all 332 municipalities and 13 regions; and a proposal to establish the GM Working Group (Section 2.4), which is designed to provide field-driven advice on the coordination needed to sustain and scale the effort. Through the monitoring mechanism in particular, the developed tools link the local and regional levels with the central gender equality mechanism (the GSEHR and the other central-level equality bodies described in Section 1.2) and re-balance support across all three levels, extending the national-level work of the project's first phase into a coherent, whole-of-government approach.



For the Municipality of Rhodes, the Gender Flagship Project has been a catalyst for introducing gender mainstreaming into the Municipality's strategic planning and organisational culture. The project provided practical methodologies, technical guidance and capacity-building activities that transformed gender equality from a policy objective into a concrete governance tool for local administration.

One of the project's most valuable components was the two-day workshop delivered to municipal staff from different departments. For many participants, this was their first structured introduction to the concepts and practical applications of GM, GRB and GIA. The workshop strengthened institutional awareness, encouraged cross-departmental dialogue and highlighted how a gender perspective can improve the design, implementation and evaluation of municipal policies and services at all levels and fields.

Building on the methodologies and tools developed through the project, the Municipality of Rhodes is currently preparing its first Gender Equality Plan, aiming to embed gender equality as a cross-cutting principle in its strategic planning, decision-making processes and future actions. The experience and expertise gained through the Gender Flagship Project will continue to serve as a lasting reference point for strengthening inclusive and evidence-based local governance.



The representative of the Municipality of Rhodes

2.1. GM Dossier: an integrated toolkit for gender mainstreaming at the local and regional levels

The GM Dossier is the core package of support to Greece at the subnational level – an interlocking set of instruments through which local and regional authorities can plan, budget for and assess gender equality. It adapts to the subnational context the GM Dossier developed at central level during the project's first phase, so that all three levels of government work with a common family of tools and definitions. It brings together two components: (1) the **GEP methodology**, the planning framework that also carries the diagnostic questionnaire; and (2) the **GRB and GIA tools**, which extend GRB and GIA to the local and regional levels. The two are described in turn below.

2.1.1. GEP METHODOLOGY: TURNING GENDER MAINSTREAMING INTO A STRUCTURED, REPLICABLE LOCAL PLANNING PROCESS

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The GEP methodology – the project’s customised methodology for developing a Gender Equality Plan – is the central technical tool of the support to Greece at subnational level, developed by the expert team to build the gender mainstreaming capacity of the pilot authorities. It is intended for the municipal and regional staff responsible for designing, budgeting for and monitoring gender equality measures, working alongside their gender equality committees (DEPIS/PEPIS). It responds to a need identified in the IDA: at the start of the project, local and regional authorities had limited institutional literacy on gender mainstreaming and its tools, capacities varied widely between authorities, and there was no common, practical method for translating gender equality commitments into local policy and budgets.

The GEP methodology sets out what a GEP is – a structured set of objectives, actions, responsibilities, indicators and resources that drives organisational and cultural change in local government – and grounds it in Law 4604/2019. From there it provides a complete, replicable roadmap built around three elements: a seven-step process for building a GEP (see Box 1); a standard table of contents for the plan itself (legal framework, diagnosis of gender gaps, vision and objectives, strategic axes, action-plan table, monitoring and evaluation, and a communication and capacity-building plan); and an operational matrix that turns objectives into costed, trackable actions, with columns for objective, measure, responsible department, timeframe, indicators, baseline and target, estimated budget, funding source and follow-up notes.

Box 1. The seven steps to building a local GEP

- Define and commit – political will and a council resolution.
- Assess the current situation – gender analysis through data and consultation.
- Co-create the vision – engaging staff, citizens and partners.
- Design the plan – objectives, measures, indicators and budget.
- Approve and institutionalise – formal adoption and assignment of roles.
- Deliver and monitor – implementation and progress tracking.
- Build capacity and partnership – training, communication and adaptation.

Source: Gender Flagship Project



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An integral component of the methodology is the customised **diagnostic questionnaire** – a short, anonymous and voluntary citizen survey (around five to seven minutes) provided as a customisable template that a municipality adapts and administers to residents, together with its Municipal Committee for Gender Equality (DEPIS), to gather evidence on their experiences and needs. It operationalises the methodology's second step – assessing the current situation through data and consultation – and supplies the diagnosis of gender gaps that anchors the plan, so that residents' lived experience feeds directly into the prioritisation of local measures.

As the planning framework into which the other instruments connect, the methodology is the spine of the subnational toolkit: the diagnostic questionnaire feeds its diagnosis, and the GEP, GRB and GIA tools operationalise its findings into gender-responsive budgets and gender-assessed projects (Section 2.1.2). Whether authorities then adopt the resulting plans is tracked separately, through the monitoring mechanism (Section 2.2).

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The methodology proved immediately usable: in the technical session of every training, authorities populated its operational matrix in a hands-on exercise (Section 3), leaving each with the first building block of its own plan and a shared method for completing it. That it could be put to work in the room, rather than read and shelved, is the clearest evidence of its fit to the capacity levels the IDA identified.

Beyond the pilots, the project-developed methodology serves as the standing reference for GEP development across Greek local and regional government and is transferable nationwide through the GSEHR and KETHI by means of the Training of Trainers (Section 3.3). It is accompanied by the sample GEPs developed with the pilot authorities, which give other authorities concrete models to adapt. The trained pilot authorities have begun building the project's GRB and GIA tools into the GEPs they are drafting and finalising.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The development and deployment of the GEP methodology surfaced two main considerations. First, the pronounced capacity asymmetries between authorities, confirmed by the IDA, meant that a generic methodology would have been ineffective; its value depended on being hands-on and contextualised. Second, the methodology is a tool rather than a guarantee: the GEPs the pilots produced demonstrate the method, but their formal adoption by each authority – through political endorsement, funding and integration into the municipal operational plan – is what makes them operational, a set of conditions taken up at the elected-officials level (Section 3.2).



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2.1.2. GRB AND GIA TOOLS: EXTENDING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING AND GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TO THE SUBNATIONAL LEVEL

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The GRB and GIA tools extend gender-responsive budgeting and gender impact assessment to local and regional authorities. Like the GEP methodology, they respond to a finding of the IDA: GRB and GIA were applied only in a limited and fragmentary way at the subnational level, and – as set out in Section 1.2 – the binding gender-budgeting provisions of Law 4604/2019 reach only central government. The tools give municipalities and regions a shared, practical method for bringing a gender perspective into their own budgets and project design, ahead of any formal extension of those obligations to the subnational level.

The two tools are complementary. The first is a **GRB tool** that treats each local "project" (any policy or project a municipality or region develops and implements with public funds) as the unit of analysis and classifies it on a four-point scale against four gender equality objectives – preventing and combating gender-based violence; equal participation in economic life and the labour market; equal participation in decision-making; and integrating the gender dimension into sectoral policies. A structured analysis sheet then records, for each project, the responsible unit, the budget, its gender relevance, its alignment with strategic objectives, the gender indicators in use and the human resources involved. The second is a **GIA tool**: a five-step methodology – defining the project's purpose; establishing its gender relevance, including intersectional factors; analysing the current situation by sex and prevailing gender norms; weighing the gender consequences; and drawing conclusions, recommendations and monitoring indicators – supported by a set of guiding questions and a summary checklist.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The GRB and GIA tools give local and regional authorities a concrete, replicable method for two tasks they had previously approached only sporadically: reading their budgets through a gender lens and assessing the gender impact of individual projects. They build directly on the GRB and GIA forms developed at central level in the project's first phase, adapted for the local and regional context – a deliberate choice, so that all three levels of government work with common tools. This strengthens the foundations laid centrally and supports the GSEHR's future ability to monitor gender mainstreaming across the three levels using consistent, comparable data. The GEP methodology also relies on them directly: when a plan's actions are costed and their gender impact is assessed, the GRB and GIA tools are the instruments used for those steps. This completes the toolkit an authority needs to move from a GEP on paper to gender-responsive budgets and gender-assessed projects.



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CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The development of the GRB and GIA tools surfaced the structural constraint identified in the IDA: because the binding gender-budgeting provisions of Law 4604/2019 apply only to central government, the tools function for now as voluntary guidance rather than a mandatory instrument at the subnational level, and their uptake will depend on political commitment and, ultimately, on any future extension of the legal mandate. GRB also remained the most technically demanding element across the support – presupposing sex-disaggregated data many authorities do not yet collect – so the tools are best accompanied by continued coaching rather than left to stand on their own. Improving data collection is addressed through the monitoring mechanism (Section 2.2), whose indicators require disaggregated reporting, and through the longer-term directions in Section 4, including the possible extension of legal reporting obligations.

2.2. Monitoring mechanism: a central evidence base on gender mainstreaming across authorities

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The monitoring mechanism is intended to give the GSEHR a comparable evidence base on the gender equality status of authorities across the country. It responds to a finding of the IDA: although gender equality structures existed in almost every municipality, no systematic, comparable monitoring data existed. The mechanism draws on two complementary elements, designed to be folded into the GSEHR's annual monitoring cycle so that the central administration can follow subnational progress in a structured, comparable way.

The first element is a 'Gender Equality' thematic category developed for the Ministry of the Interior's Local Government Performance Monitoring Hub¹³ – the standing platform through which municipalities report performance data. The thematic category would add a structured set of gender equality indicators to the Hub, giving the central administration, and the GSEHR in particular, a systematic, comparable picture of where each municipality stands, and serving the project's intended outcome of equipping the GSEHR with timely, evidence-based information to monitor and advance gender equality policies.

The thematic category is organised in two domains. "Organisation" captures the institutional footprint of gender equality in each municipality – whether an Equality Office operates and how it is staffed, staff participation in National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA) training, and the structures in place to combat gender-based violence. "Practices" captures what authorities do with that footprint – their use of gender mainstreaming tools, the state of their Gender Equality Plan, and the functioning of their Municipal Committee for Gender Equality (DEPIS). Most fields are quantitative and tied to documentary evidence, so reporting would produce verifiable figures rather than self-assessment, and a further strand would extend a gender lens to indicators already in the Hub. The "Practices" domain in particular tracks the outputs the other tools are designed to produce – whether an authority has adopted a GEP and whether it applies GRB and GIA – turning their take-up into comparable national data for the GSEHR.

¹³ <https://deiktesota.gov.gr/portal/>

The second element is the BA's annual survey to all local and regional authorities, which the project enriched with a gender mainstreaming component, developing recommendations on how to strengthen it. Where the 'Gender Equality' thematic category draws on the structures recorded in the Hub, the survey gathers authorities' own reporting on the content, implementation and functioning of their gender equality machinery, giving the GSEHR a recurring, self-reported stream to set alongside the Hub's data. **The GEP diagnostic questionnaire** (Section 2.1.1) feeds into this survey by gathering residents' experiences for the preparation of municipal GEPs. It thereby grounds the monitoring mechanism in residents' own reporting and helps identify needs and gaps on the ground.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The monitoring mechanism's value is that it gives the GSEHR a single evidence base on subnational gender equality drawn from the 'Gender Equality' thematic category and the annual survey, with the diagnostic questionnaire feeding into the survey. The tools are designed to fold into the GSEHR's annual monitoring cycle.

The 'Gender Equality' thematic category was developed jointly with the GSEHR and will be provided to the Ministry of the Interior with a view to integration into the Hub, which would plug gender equality into a mandatory reporting platform the Ministry already operates – an anchoring that would, once in place, offer a credible route to sustainability beyond the project's close. At the elected-officials workshop (Section 3.2), the Ministry of the Interior expressed interest in adding a 'Gender Equality' thematic category to the Hub, including indicators on GEPs and budget allocation to be refined jointly with the GSEHR.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Developing the tools to support the monitoring mechanism highlighted that the reliability of any monitoring instrument rests on shared definitions set centrally: the indicator for "certified" gender equality staff, for instance, can only be applied consistently once the central administration and EKDDA define what certification means and what such staff are expected to do. It also depends on data – disaggregated headcounts, incident records, itemised expenditure – that many municipalities do not yet collect systematically, so the thematic category begins with its dedicated GE indicators and extends a gender lens to existing Hub indicators gradually. Above all, its lasting value rests on two central actors beyond the project: the Ministry of the Interior embedding the 'Gender Equality' thematic category in the Hub as a permanent reporting theme, and the GSEHR folding the enriched annual survey into its regular monitoring cycle (Section 4).



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2.3. Information Package for local and regional authorities: a web-based repository to widen the reach of gender mainstreaming

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Information Package is a curated set of gender equality and gender mainstreaming resources, developed to be hosted on the GSEHR website and accessible to all Greek municipalities and regions. Its purpose is outreach: it carries the knowledge developed with the 11 pilots out across the wider subnational landscape, towards the project's intended outcome of institutionalising gender mainstreaming across all 332 municipalities and 13 regions.

The package brings together several resources. At its centre is a guide to key resources, reviewing the literature and case-study evidence on gender mainstreaming, organised by geography and by sector and reaching beyond the usual focus on urban planning into less-documented fields such as social care, education, procurement, agriculture and culture. It is accompanied by three in-depth EU case studies – Barcelona and Andalusia, with Umeå (Sweden) as a Nordic reference. Four practical tools complete it: a sample GIA checklist; a stakeholder-mapping guide; an intersectionality guide drawing on Council of Europe and Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) guidance; and an analytical overview of the key challenges in subnational gender mainstreaming, paired with context-specific solutions.

Several of the package's components map onto the GEP methodology's steps – stakeholder mapping, intersectionality and the GIA checklist – so it serves as the accessible on-ramp through which any authority, not only the pilots, can take up the tools (Sections 2.1.1–2.1.2).

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The Information Package gives every municipality and region a single, accessible base of practical, contextualised guidance, to be hosted on the GSEHR's own website and complementing the standing HelpDesk on Gender Equality Policies that the GSEHR already operates. Where the trainings and the GEP methodology reached the pilot authorities directly, the package extends the support to the wider subnational landscape. It also carries a deliberate message that runs through its case studies and challenge analysis: that local and regional authorities can lead on gender equality within their own sphere of competence, and at times outpace national progress, even where the wider legal and budgetary framework still lags – a message well suited to the Greek context, where binding GRB obligations do not yet extend to the subnational level.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The package's distinctive lesson is one it surfaces itself: the evidence base for gender mainstreaming at subnational level is thin and uneven – concentrated in urban planning and sparse in sectors such as social care, education and primary health – so the resource base available to authorities is still developing. As with the other instruments, its reach also depends on the GSEHR keeping it current and visible.

2.4. GM Working Group: institutionalising collaboration across levels

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The GM Working Group – formally, a standing Working Group for the Integration of the Gender Dimension into the Public Policies and Budgets of Local Government – is the operational proposal developed by the project, setting out how such a group would be constituted and function. It would bring local and regional practitioners together to exchange ideas, process evidence and formulate proposals to the GSEHR, with a particular focus on the practical needs of applying gender mainstreaming in the day-to-day operation of local authorities. Proposed to carry the project's results more widely and keep them in use, it responds directly to a central finding of the IDA: while gender equality structures were formally in place across almost all municipalities, they met only irregularly and inter-municipal collaboration was limited. It also serves the project's longer-term aim of sustaining gender mainstreaming across election cycles and across Greece's diverse subnational landscape, by giving local initiatives a durable, structured channel to the national gender equality mechanism and aligning them with national strategies and Law 4604/2019. In doing so, it also works to build, over time, the cross-level working relationships and confidence that effective multi-level coordination depends on – and that a limited tradition of structured collaboration between the central and subnational levels had left underdeveloped.

As designed, the GM Working Group would be constituted by official decision specifying its members, rapporteurs, scope of work and timeline; meet bi-monthly within normal working hours; report its conclusions to the GSEHR's Department for Monitoring Gender Equality Policies; and operate for a defined period of twelve months as a temporary body.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The GM Working Group would provide the coordination layer the IDA found lacking: rather than relying on ad hoc contact between authorities, it would offer a recurring forum in which municipalities and regions feed implementation experience upward to the GSEHR and draw shared solutions back down. In doing so, it would keep the tools, the Information Package and the monitoring data in active use after the project closes, giving the GSEHR a channel to refine them in light of practical experience rather than letting the suite freeze at the project's end.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Like the other capitalisation instruments, the GM Working Group's continuity depends on the GSEHR formally adopting and resourcing it, so that it convenes and reports as designed. Aligning it with the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2026–2030 would also help anchor its standing and continuity.



Section 3

CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Capacity building was the key strand of the support to Greece at subnational level, directed at strengthening the gender mainstreaming capacity of the pilot local and regional authorities. It was designed in direct response to the IDA, which had found limited institutional literacy on gender mainstreaming and its tools (GEP, GRB, GIA), pronounced capacity asymmetries between authorities, and a need for practical, participatory guidance grounded in the local context. The training sessions were built accordingly – hands-on, contextualised, delivered in Greek, and organised around the everyday realities of municipal and regional administration.

The support followed a deliberate logic across three audiences, each addressed in turn below: training for local and regional administrations, to equip staff to operationalise gender mainstreaming and prepare their own GEPs (Section 3.1); a dedicated workshop for elected officials, to secure political commitment at leadership level (Section 3.2); and a closing Training of Trainers, to equip the GSEHR and KETHI to sustain and scale the work nationwide (Section 3.3). The chapter closes with the national event that drew these strands together and handed the work to the authorities themselves (Section 3.4).

3.1. Equipping the front line: regions and municipalities

The largest part of the capacity-building effort targeted the operational level of subnational government – the municipal and regional staff who design, budget for and deliver local services, alongside their Gender Equality Committees. The design was deliberate: rather than generic awareness-raising, the trainings were built directly towards each authority producing its own GEP. Nine staff training sessions between October 2025 and March 2026 reached 420 members of staff: three regional sessions and six municipal ones.¹⁴ Because the regional trainings were open to every municipality in the region, their reach extended well beyond the pilots. Beyond individual skills, the recurring sessions gave the pilot authorities the experience of operating as a community – interacting with one another and with the GSEHR on a regular, structured basis rather than through ad hoc contact – a first, practical answer to the limited inter-municipal collaboration the IDA had identified.

Each training followed the same two-day, participatory design – a model the GSEHR and KETHI can replicate: an open awareness-raising day for a broad audience, followed by a technical day for the officials directly responsible for designing, budgeting for and monitoring gender equality measures, with a closing session on reporting and evaluation. Pairing a wide-reach day with a focused technical day let each visit build both general buy-in and concrete skills.



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¹⁴ Seven of the eight pilot municipalities took part – two trained jointly, one did not join.

The technical day of each training centred on a hands-on exercise: working in groups, participants identified concrete measures their own administration could build into its GEP, using the template discussed under Section 2.1.1, and drafted these as GEP activity outlines. This was where abstract gender mainstreaming became specific – and the range of measures the groups developed across the nine events was itself telling.

The trainings revealed as much about what comes next as about immediate gains. GRB – the most technically demanding topic – was consistently where participants progressed most, and three needs recurred: clearer step-by-step implementation guidance, more systematic collection and use of sex-disaggregated data, and stronger coordination between the GSEHR, EKDDA and the Ministry of the Interior in providing training and guidance to subnational authorities. Above all, political commitment emerged as the single most important enabler – which is what the workshop for elected officials set out to secure (Section 3.2).

Participants left each training tasked with developing their outlines into full GEPs, with continued advisory support from the project to help finalise them, drawing on the customised GEP methodology and tools described in Section 2.1.

3.2. Securing political commitment: elected officials

A one-day workshop in Athens engaged the elected leadership directly. Bringing together 15 participants – mayors and deputy mayors from five pilot municipalities, their equality focal points, and senior figures from the GSEHR, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family – it set out to convert ground-level capacity into political commitment: the leadership backing needed to institutionalise gender mainstreaming across the pilot administrations.

The sessions framed gender mainstreaming in the realities of local and regional governance, set out the case for it with examples from other European municipalities and regions, and examined what operationalising it would take in practice. The central message, echoed by the GSEHR's Secretary General and the Deputy Minister, was the need to align national commitments with subnational delivery – and, in particular, that the GEPs drafted by local staff now needed to be formally endorsed, funded and built into municipal operational plans to take effect.

The workshop produced several signals of institutional intent. The Ministry of the Interior expressed interest in beginning the steps needed to add a 'Gender Equality' thematic category to its Local Government Performance Monitoring Hub, with indicators covering GEPs and budget allocation, to be developed with the GSEHR. Participants discussed making GEP implementation and training for municipal employees mandatory; responded favourably to the idea of a dedicated gender equality unit within the municipal structure; and identified the overlapping mandates of the DEPIs, PEPIS and other social-service units as an issue requiring action from central government.

3.3. *Sustaining it from the centre*

The final capacity-building activity turned from the pilots to the centre: a Training of Trainers for eight officials from the GSEHR and KETHI, the institutions that would carry the work forward once the project closed. Its purpose was sustainability – equipping them to coach and scale gender mainstreaming nationwide rather than letting expertise disperse with the project team.

The session presented the training materials and customised GM tools, shared what the experts had learned in the field with the pilot authorities, and used that experience to take stock: it validated the IDA's findings on capacity asymmetries, drew out the recurring challenges and good practices, and turned to the practical question of how the GSEHR and KETHI could institutionalise gender mainstreaming in local and regional administration nationwide. Several forward-looking conclusions emerged – that incorporating the 'Gender Equality' thematic category into the Ministry of the Interior's Local Government Performance Monitoring Hub would be a significant systemic step; that effective GEPs are increasingly a gateway to EU funding streams such as the European Social Fund Plus, Horizon Europe and the Recovery and Resilience Facility; and that adequate personnel and resources would be essential to roll out the plans.

3.4. *Consolidating progress and looking ahead: closing event*

The capacity-building effort culminated in a national closing event at which the trained authorities themselves presented what they had built. On 25 June 2026, it brought together 84 participants – public authorities from all three levels of government – to mark the close of the project's subnational phase. Rather than a formal hand-over, it was conceived as a policy milestone: an occasion to take stock of what institutionalising gender mainstreaming across levels of governance requires, to surface the lessons and the conditions on which sustainability depends, and to set the direction for scaling the work nationwide. Pilot authorities shared their own implementation experience directly, and a dedicated forward-looking session turned the discussion towards embedding the tools in routine policy and budgeting cycles, strengthening coordination structures, and aligning the next phase with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030. In doing so, the event served less as an endpoint than as a bridge from the pilot phase to the broader, longer-term directions set out in Section 4.



All of the above was made possible thanks to the unwavering support of the European Union and the invaluable contribution of the outstanding experts involved in the project. Working in close cooperation with the Ministry's officials, they played a pivotal role in the successful delivery of the project's objectives and in creating the conditions for the sustainable advancement of gender mainstreaming in Greece.



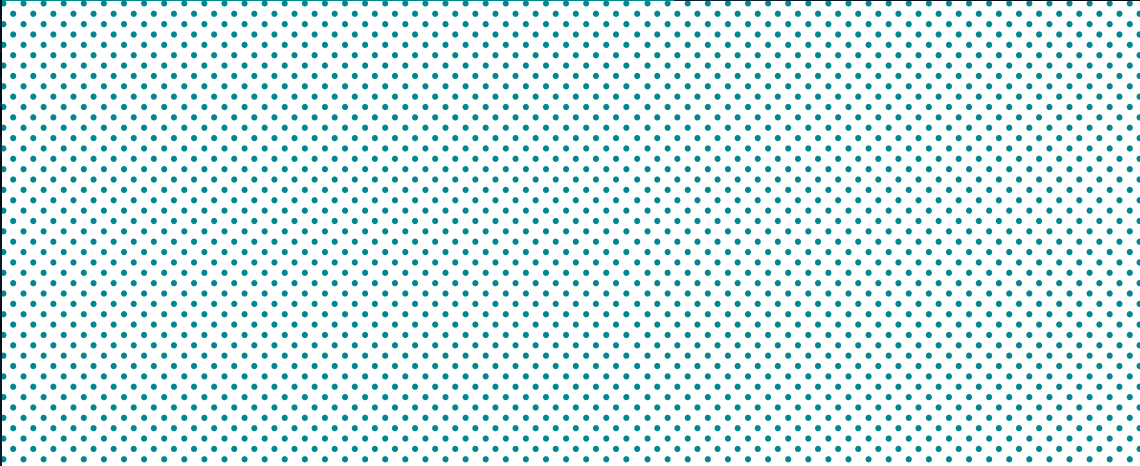
The representative of the Beneficiary Authority



Section 4



FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS





We strongly believe that the project should not end here. Continued technical support, capacity building and knowledge exchange are essential to help local and regional authorities move from pilot implementation to the systematic integration of gender mainstreaming into everyday governance. Sustaining this effort will be crucial to ensuring that the project's results are consolidated, expanded and translated into long-term institutional change across Greek local government.



The representative of the Municipality of Rhodes

By the close of the support period in June 2026, Greece's subnational gender mainstreaming effort had moved from diagnosis to a working foundation: a suite of customised tools, a cohort of trained authorities, and the beginnings of a central monitoring and coordination infrastructure. The directions below build on that progress; they are offered in a practical spirit, favouring achievable steps that deliver early wins and keep what has been delivered in lasting use.

Putting what has been delivered into routine use. The most immediate opportunities lie in finalising and embedding the deliverables in routine use. The 'Gender Equality' thematic category developed for the Ministry of the Interior's Local Government Performance Monitoring Hub could be finalised through consultations on its content with the Ministry, which has expressed interest in integrating it. It forms part of a monitoring mechanism with two elements – the 'Gender Equality' thematic category and the annual survey, with the GEP diagnostic questionnaire feeding into the survey – which the GSEHR could fold into its annual monitoring cycle to gain, for the first time, an evidence-based national overview and close the monitoring gap the IDA identified. The GM Working Group – for which the project delivered a fully developed design, its establishment resting with the authorities – could be formally constituted to give cross-level coordination an institutional home. The GM Dossier – the GEP methodology, the GRB and GIA tools, and the sample GEPs – is ready for immediate use and could, together with the training materials and the Information Package, be published on the GSEHR website and disseminated to all 332 municipalities and 13 regions. The pilot municipalities and regions would meanwhile receive continued support as they finalise and adopt their own plans. For practical inspiration on how to continue improving gender mainstreaming, the Information Package's case studies of Barcelona, Andalusia and Umeå show how peer administrations embedded gender mainstreaming in their everyday operations; the exchanges organised within the Gender Flagship Project also gave the Greek administration direct contact with such European experiences, and remain a source to draw on as the reform widens.

Broader and longer-term directions. Two more ambitious directions are offered for the beneficiary's consideration, both extending beyond the project's scope. The first is to institutionalise capacity building through a standing curriculum with EKDDA – the training arm of the Greek public administration, whose courses are open to all public servants and in certain cases mandatory. EKDDA already offers training on gender equality, and the project's training materials were delivered to the GSEHR with a view to their handover to EKDDA as the basis for gender mainstreaming courses; a standing curriculum reaching all municipal and regional officials and elected representatives, with certification, would ensure future cohorts are reached systematically. The second concerns the law: over time, the GSEHR may wish to consider adapting Law 4604/2019 to extend its gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting provisions to the subnational level, strengthen the monitoring of the DEPIS and PEPIS, and introduce a certified gender mainstreaming officer in each authority.

Sustainability. Lasting take-up rests on several conditions. The first is ownership: the tools and the Information Package kept current on the GSEHR website and through its HelpDesk. The second is knowledge transfer: the Training of Trainers and cooperation with EKDDA helping to mitigate the effects of staff turnover. The third is sustained literacy: annual training on gender equality and gender mainstreaming for all public officials, including elected representatives – ideally made mandatory – to raise GE/GM literacy and reduce internal resistance over time. The fourth is political continuity, broadened across institutions – notably the Ministry of the Interior and the national municipal and regional bodies – to carry the effort across electoral cycles and steadily build the cross-level coordination that effective reform depends on. Alongside these, the GSEHR could continue investing in its own technical capacity. With a small team supporting hundreds of diverse authorities, the GSEHR's assistance has largely taken a horizontal form, providing common guidance and templates for all, with little time available for individualised, tailored support. Better use of IT tools, and over time AI, could help make the support more targeted: the data from the monitoring mechanism could help identify where subnational authorities need support, and routine work such as processing survey responses and answering recurring HelpDesk queries could be progressively automated, freeing scarce staff time for tailored assistance.

Expertise France is the French interministerial agency in international cooperation and development, part of the French Development Agency (AFD) Group.



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