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PARTICIPATION OF GREECE AT NATIONAL LEVEL IN THE GENDER FLAGSHIP PROJECT 2022-2025



**GENDER
FLAGSHIP**

GENDER MAINSTREAMING
IN PUBLIC POLICY
AND BUDGET PROCESSES

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Written by: Gintaras Martinaitis, capitalisation expert

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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).



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 Member States 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
- DEGGA** Directorate for Evaluation of General Government Actions
- EF** Expertise France
- EIGE** European Institute for Gender Equality
- EKDDA** National Center for Public Administration
- EU** European Union
- EUI** European University Institute
- GAP** Gender Action Plan
- GIA** Gender Impact Assessment
- GM** Gender Mainstreaming
- GM Dossier** Gender Mainstreaming Dossier
- GmpIC** Gender Mainstreaming pilot Implementation Circular
- GRB** Gender-Responsive Budgeting
- GSEHR** General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights
- GSDFPGE** General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy, and Gender Equality
- KETHI** Research Centre for Gender Equality
- MNEF** Ministry of National Economy and Finance
- MS** Member State
- NAPGE** National Action Plan for Gender Equality
- SG REFORM** Reform and Investment Task Force of the European Commission
- TSI** Technical Support Instrument

Executive summary

This case study outlines the Gender Mainstreaming (GM) support provided to Greece through the EU's Technical Support Instrument (TSI), aimed at bridging the gap between a strong legislative framework—particularly Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence—and its limited implementation in central public administration. The project focused on three strategic areas: regulatory transformation, institutional coordination, and capacity building. Its main achievement was the establishment of the GM implementation mechanism foreseen in the law, creating an operational system to embed gender equality across public policy processes.

The mechanism was built on four elements: the Gender Mainstreaming pilot Implementation Circular (GMpIC), which translated legal commitments into administrative procedures; the Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group, with representatives from all 20 ministries applying tools such as Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and Gender Impact Assessments (GIA); the Gender Mainstreaming Dossier, which provided standardised tools, templates, and indicators; and a tailored GM Training Module designed for integration into the curriculum of the National Center for Public Administration (EKDDA).

In addition, the mechanism is linked to the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family's Observatory for Gender Equality, positioning it as a hub for data collection and monitoring. Through this work, GM has been operationalised and placed firmly on the agenda of Greece's central public administration, offering lessons for similar reforms across the EU. However, full implementation remains dependent on systemic changes, particularly the transition to performance-based budgeting, with the Ministry of National Economy and Finance playing a crucial role in formally adopting and expanding gender-responsive budgeting, which so far has been introduced only on a pilot basis in selected ministries.

Looking ahead, the sustainability of these efforts will require stronger institutional anchoring, particularly the integration of the GMpIC into the national budget circular, as well as active involvement of the national statistical office to strengthen data and evaluation. Equally important will be high-level political commitment, including advocacy targeting ministers and parliamentarians, to ensure gender equality remains a cross-governmental priority.

Section 1

CONTEXT AND
RATIONALE FOR
SUPPORT

This section is mostly informed by the in-depth gender analysis undertaken in the beginning of the project, led by project's local expert Dr. Valia Kalaitzi, with technical guidance and input from Rezart Xhelo, key expert.

1.1 Beneficiary Authority (BA)

The General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights (GSEHR)¹ serves as the country's primary authority responsible for advancing gender equality initiatives and ensuring gender mainstreaming principles are integrated across all government policies. Positioned under the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, the GSEHR is mandated with the formulation, implementation, and oversight of national policies aimed at achieving substantive gender equality and addressing discrimination across public administration. Through its consistent leadership, and irrespective of changes in government administration, Greece operationalises gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting across the public sector, in alignment with national legislation and international commitments.

1.2. Context when joining the project

Greece has established a comprehensive national gender equality mechanism operating at multiple levels. At the central level, GSEHR serves as the competent governmental authority for designing, implementing, and monitoring national equality policies. It collaborates with the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI)², ministerial Gender Equality Units, and the Ombudsperson's Department of Equal Treatment.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL SETUP

At regional and local levels, the institutional framework includes Regional Committees for Gender Equality, Independent Offices for Gender Equality within each region, Municipal Committees for Gender Equality, and various specialised units and sectors embedded in regional and municipal administrations.

This multi-level governance structure is underpinned by Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality, and the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence³. The law is implemented through a series of National Action Plans for Gender Equality (NAPGE), i.e. for 2016-2020 including the current NAPGE 2021-2025, which builds upon previous national strategies and action plans, thereby ensuring continuity and progressive development in gender equality policy across administrations.

¹During the project, the General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy, and Gender Equality (GSDFPGE), under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, was reformed. The GSDFPGE was renamed General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights (GSEHR) and was transferred under the auspices of the newly formed Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family.

²Κέντρο Ερευνών για Θέματα Ισότητας (ΚΕΘΙ)

³Νόμος 4604/2019 – Προώθηση της ουσιαστικής ισότητας των φύλων, πρόληψη και καταπολέμηση της έμφυλης βίας

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Greece has established a robust legal foundation for gender equality, rooted in the Constitution. Article 4 enshrines the principle of equality between men and women, Article 22 guarantees equal pay for work of equal value, and Article 116—strengthened in the 2001 constitutional revision—authorises positive measures to eliminate real inequalities, particularly those affecting women. Building on this basis, Greece’s legislative framework has been expanded through Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence, which establishes the principles of gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting in public policy and administration. This law established a broad, horizontal legal framework on substantive gender equality across the three governance levels -central, regional, local- and described tasks, responsibilities, and collaboration on GE among the three levels. The law mandates gender impact assessments, gender-sensitive budgeting, and the use of gender-disaggregated data across government levels. It is complemented by Law 4622/2019 on the Executive State⁴, which sets general provisions for policymaking, though it lacks explicit gender equality requirements. The main policy document is the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2021–2025, which aligns with EU and international frameworks and defines strategic priorities such as combating violence, promoting women’s participation, and integrating gender in all sectoral policies.

The importance of grounding gender mainstreaming and its tools - gender-responsive budgeting and gender impact assessments - in clearly defined policy priorities, with whole-of-government objectives, has been underlined in recent OECD guidance on best practices in gender-responsive budgeting⁵. According to the guidance, gender-responsive budgeting should be initiated through a government document bearing political authority and high credibility. In this regard, Greece may be seen as aligning with these principles by implementing gender mainstreaming (GRB/GIA) across central, regional, and local levels of administration, in line with the Law 4604/2019. The ongoing transformation has been supported primarily through the Technical Support Instrument.

⁴Νόμος 4622/2019 – Επιτελικό Κράτος: οργάνωση, λειτουργία και διαφάνεια της Κυβέρνησης, των κυβερνητικών οργάνων και της κεντρικής δημόσιας διοίκησης

⁵OECD. 2023. *OECD Best Practices for Gender Budgeting*, *OECD Journal on Budgeting*, Vol. 2023/1. OECD Publishing: Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/c947ecd0-en>



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

Greece's participation in the project stemmed from a critical implementation gap: despite a robust legal and institutional framework for gender equality - most notably Law 4604/2019 - the country lacked a functional GM implementation mechanism within its central public administration. Addressing this missing link was the principal objective of the Greek authorities in seeking support through the EU's Technical Support Instrument (TSI).

Law 4604/2019 had already introduced provisions on GRB, but implementation remained limited. This legal requirement and prior technical work provided the rationale for seeking targeted expertise through the Technical Support Instrument.

An in-depth diagnostic at the project's outset confirmed that, while key policy and legal instruments for GM, GIA, and GRB were in place, the absence of an operational mechanism—comprising clear procedures, designated roles, standardised tools, and coordinated structures—was the primary barrier to effective implementation.

This foundational gap was compounded by several interrelated challenges: delays in the issuance of implementation circulars; the lack of regulatory provisions mandating GIA in the legislative process; the absence of formally designated gender focal points across ministries; and weak institutional coordination. Additional obstacles included capacity constraints, underdeveloped monitoring systems, insufficient access to gender-disaggregated data, and limited exposure to international best practices.

Together, these findings underscored the central disconnect between Greece's well-developed gender equality legislation and the practical mechanisms required for its application. The project was thus designed to close this implementation gap by constructing a sustainable, institutionalised GM mechanism - embedded within the structures of public administration and aligned with European standards.



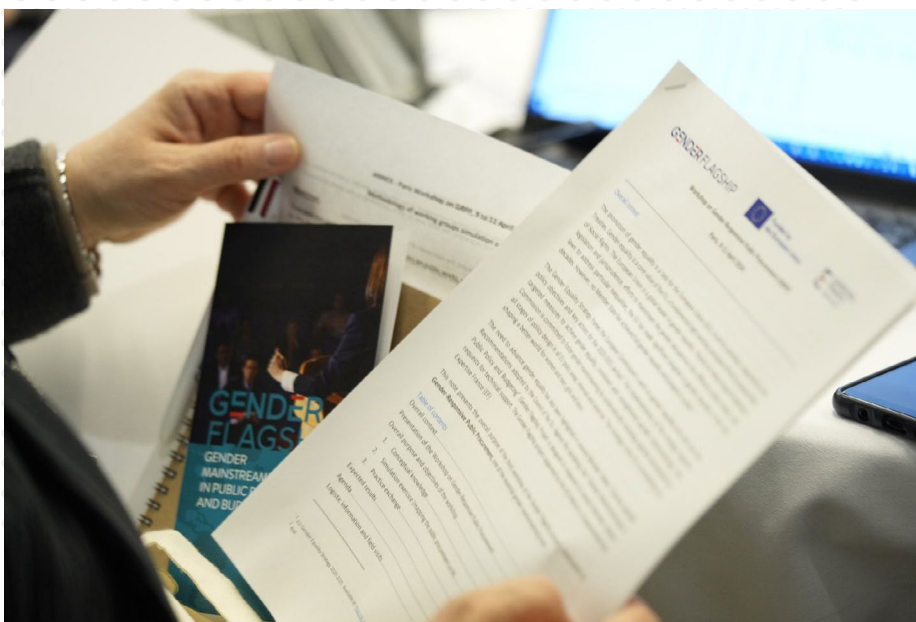
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1.4. Project objectives and aims

Recognising persistent policy, regulatory, implementation, and technical challenges, Greece sought support through TSI with three main objectives:

- To establish the regulatory and procedural framework for GM in central government, by consolidating the legislative basis and institutional mechanisms for GIA and GRB supported by interministerial coordination and policy tools.
- To initiate the operationalisation of the GM implementation mechanism through the development and piloting of integrated GIA/GRB tools, in close collaboration with four pilot ministries: the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of National Economy and Finance.
- To build capacity among implementing actors by delivering structured training aligned with the developed framework and integrating GIA/GRB training into the national civil service curriculum (through EKDDA), supporting the long-term institutionalisation of GM practices.

This assistance played a pivotal role in advancing the implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021–2025 by establishing the gender mainstreaming implementation mechanism at the central administration level—addressing prior gaps through the creation of ministerial focal points and the development of tailored methodologies, processes, and tools.



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Section 2

GENDER
MAINSTREAMING
SUPPORT
PROVIDED

The technical support provided to Greece constituted a multi-faceted approach combining regulatory development, capacity building and institutional strengthening, with the aim of embedding gender considerations into government operations. It centred on the creation of concrete deliverables: the Gender Mainstreaming pilot Implementation Circular (GMpIC), which provided a regulatory framework; the Gender Mainstreaming Dossier (GM Dossier), which offered practical templates and methodologies; and the Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group, which ensured cross-ministerial coordination. Supported by targeted training, these outputs gave Greece a structured mechanism for integrating gender equality into policy and budgeting processes.

2.1. Tailored support and results achieved



When we submitted our TSI proposal, we didn't know it would become a multi-country project. Later, SG REFORM informed us that it would be expanded in that direction—and that turned out to be one of the most interesting aspects. It gave us the opportunity to see how other countries are approaching gender equality, and even though the national contexts were completely different, that diversity made the experience especially valuable.



Project beneficiary

2.1.1. ESTABLISHING THE REGULATORY AND PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK FOR GM – GENDER MAINSTREAMING PILOT IMPLEMENTATION CIRCULAR (GMPIC)

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

At the core of the project was the development of a framework to enable gender-responsive governance in Greek central public administration. The central output of this effort was the Gender Mainstreaming pilot Implementation Circular (GMpIC), which was conceived as a practical instrument to operationalise the provisions of Law 4604/2019. Its purpose is to describe the GM implementation mechanism, with specific focus on the application of GRB and GIA tools, providing step-by-step guidance for their use across ministries.

The circular outlines the procedures, responsibilities, and timelines required to implement GM in practice, and serves as a foundational reference document for the pilot ministries involved in the project.

The GMpIC has been drafted and establishes a concrete mechanism to advance gender mainstreaming within public administration. Developed through an iterative process with input from key stakeholders, the circular outlines suggested procedures to integrate gender considerations into the work of ministries. While it was originally intended for integration into the Ministry of National Economy and Finance's annual budget circular, it was developed as a stand-alone document due to the current limitations of the national budgeting system - specifically, the ongoing transition from a traditional line-item budgeting approach to a performance-based budgeting framework. However, the GMpIC has not been officially approved or implemented by the Ministry of National Economy and Finance, which is the competent authority for budgetary processes. Further consultations are ongoing between the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family and the Ministry of National Economy and Finance, and the future of the circular remains under discussion.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

A key result of the project has been the drafting of GMpIC, which proposes a structured mechanism to advance GM across Greece's central administration. This represents an important institutional step forward, offering a concrete framework that connects legal commitments on gender equality with administrative processes such as GIA and GRB. The GMpIC was developed through a participatory, iterative process and piloted with four ministries during the final conference in Athens: the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of National Economy and Finance. While it has not yet been officially approved or implemented, pending further consultation and adjustment with the Ministry of National Economy and Finance, it establishes a clear GM mechanism and serves as a proof of concept for how such tools can be integrated into day-to-day governance.

Its structure offers a scalable model that could eventually be extended to all central ministries, provided that the necessary political and administrative conditions are in place. As the Circular has not yet been officially approved, its implementation currently depends on the voluntary political uptake of individual ministries and, ultimately, on the decision of the Ministry of National Economy and Finance to endorse and adopt it. Once approved, the Circular could become a mandatory tool across the pilot ministries and serve as a model for broader application across other ministries, laying the groundwork for a more coherent, system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming in public administration.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The development and piloting of the GM implementation mechanism - particularly the GMpIC - has been a significant achievement for the Greek beneficiary. However, it also revealed critical areas for further improvement.

First, while the GMpIC establishes a strong foundation, the refinement of procedural cooperation - especially between the Ministry of National Economy and Finance, the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights, the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, and the line ministries - will be essential for its adoption, institutionalisation and long-term sustainability.

Second, although the circular currently applies only to pilot ministries, its further refinement and formalisation - particularly in collaboration with the Ministry of National Economy and Finance - will be necessary if Greece decides to link gender-responsive budgeting more explicitly with performance-based budgeting frameworks, by applying the piloted green budgeting template.

In addition, the implementation effort faced a combination of technical and institutional challenges. The complexity of the subject matter, alongside varying levels of familiarity with gender mainstreaming concepts across ministries, influenced the pace and consistency of implementation efforts. The process also highlighted the importance of securing a steering role from the Ministry of National Economy and Finance and sustained engagement from all key stakeholders, particularly those involved in budgetary planning in the ministries. Moving forward, further progress will require both technical refinements to the Circular and continued efforts to raise awareness and build commitment across relevant administrative and leadership levels. The experience also reinforced the importance of the political leadership engagement and ownership, and the need for ongoing, contextualized capacity building in the Interministerial GM focal points.

For further details, see Annex. Spotlight Practice: Gender Mainstreaming pilot Implementation Circular - a practical tool for public administration.

2.1.2. REINFORCING THE IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE PRACTICAL TOOLS – GM DOSSIER

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

As part of the TSI project supporting the implementation of Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence, a central activity was the development of the Gender Mainstreaming Dossier (GM Dossier)⁶. This tool was designed to translate legal obligations into actionable procedures across Greek public administration.

The GM Dossier complements the GMpIC by providing ministries with concrete templates and methodological guidance. While the Circular sets out the regulatory requirements, the Dossier outlines the practical steps for implementation, thereby bridging the gap between policy intent and execution. The GM Dossier consists of two main components:

1. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) - includes both a classification form that rates program relevance to gender (scores 0–2) and a policy form capturing strategic gender indicators, objectives, and actions.
2. Gender impact assessment (GIA) - a five-step process guiding ministries to evaluate gender implications of policies through data, stakeholder input, and strategic recommendations.

Its structured implementation process, based on EIGE’s methodology, involves multiple stages: initiation by the Observatory for Gender Equality, preparation by ministerial Gender Mainstreaming Teams, assessment by the GSEHR, alignment with the Ministry of National Economy and Finance, formal submission, and ongoing monitoring. The process is supported institutionally by the Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group, promoting coordination across all 20 ministries and linking the initiative to Greece’s broader performance-based budgeting reforms.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The GM Dossier was developed as a practical tool to demonstrate how the legal framework for gender equality can be operationalised within public administration. While it has not yet been formally piloted or implemented within ministries, it was presented and explored during the Gender Flagship Project’s final conference in Athens (February 2025), specifically in a session with the Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group. During this session, participants engaged with concrete examples using the tool, offering initial feedback on its structure and potential relevance.

This presentation served as an important opportunity to test the usability of the dossier in a live setting, build familiarity with the proposed templates, and introduce its intended application in gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and gender impact assessment (GIA) processes. Although further steps are needed for full adoption, the interaction at the final conference marked a useful first step in raising awareness and stimulating discussion around practical implementation.

Looking ahead, the GM Dossier offers the potential to support stronger institutional coordination and internal capacity development—particularly by guiding the work of Gender Mainstreaming Teams and contributing to national gender data collection frameworks once formally integrated into administrative processes.

⁶Φάκελος Αποτύπωσης της Διάστασης του Φύλου

Box 1. GM Dossier structure

1. Cover page and general information

- Ministry identification
- Budget coordinator details
- Information about the ministry's gender equality strategy and expenditures for the relevant budget year
- Gender-sensitive directives (yes/no and description with budget impact and deadlines)
- Gender procurement plans (whether the ministry plans to adopt gender strategies in procurement contracts)

2. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) component

- GRB classification form
 - Program number and title
 - Classification score (0-2) rating the gender relevance:
 - Score 2: "Gender-targeted" policies specifically aimed at promoting gender equality
 - Score 1: "Gender mainstreaming" policies affecting both men and women with gender equality considerations
 - Score 0: "Neutral expenditures" without identifiable gender impact
 - Score 0*: "Potential indirect expenditures" with possible future gender relevance
 - Budget allocation (in euros)
 - Human resources allocation
- Context and policy GRB form
 - Department and responsible officer information
 - Gender relevance description of the intervention
 - Strategic objectives and program strategy
 - Gender context indicators with baseline data
 - Individual objectives and expected outcomes from a gender perspective
 - Gender-responsive outputs and indicators
 - Main activities/actions promoting gender equality
 - Implementation plans for gender analysis in transfers and procurement

3. Gender impact assessment (GIA) component

A structured five-step methodology to assess gender impacts:

- Purpose definition (identifying how the policy addresses gender issues)
- Gender relevance determination (analysing whether and how it impacts gender equality)
- Gender analysis (collecting sex-disaggregated data and stakeholder input)
- Gender impact evaluation (assessing positive/negative effects on gender relations)
- Recommendations (proposing enhancements to promote gender equality)

Practical implementation

1. **Initiation:** The Observatory for Gender Equality sends an invitation to the Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group to prepare GM Dossiers.
2. **Preparation:** Ministerial Gender Mainstreaming Teams examine policies/programs and complete the Dossier by:
 - Classifying programs according to gender relevance (scores 0-2)
 - Documenting gender-responsive objectives and indicators
 - Conducting gender impact assessments
 - Preparing budget allocations with gender considerations
3. **Assessment:** The General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights reviews submitted Dossiers and provides recommendations for improvement.
4. **Negotiation:** Ministry teams discuss the Dossier with the Directorate for Evaluation of General Government Actions at the Ministry of National Economy and Finance to align with budgetary processes.
5. **Submission:** Final approved Dossiers are formally submitted to both the GSEHR and the Ministry of National Economy and Finance.
6. **Monitoring:** The information from the Dossiers informs the gender database at the Observatory and contributes to policy evaluation and gender indicators.

These implementation tools have created a standardised format for ministries to document gender considerations in policies and budgets. The technical guidance developed for ministries on gender-responsive budget classification and reporting represent a significant step toward meaningful integration of gender considerations in budgetary decision-making.



Overall, the project helped us achieve strong results. The resources were well invested, and the experience deepened our understanding of how to design more effective policies. This was particularly important for all ministries involved, as it supported a more structured approach to gender-sensitive policymaking. We're optimistic that the knowledge gained can be multiplied through the training module. The project also helped us revive momentum—after the 2019 law and the interruption caused by COVID-19, the Gender Flagship created a solid basis to re-engage with gender equality in a meaningful way.



Project beneficiary

2.1.3. SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION STRUCTURES - ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERMINISTERIAL GENDER MAINSTREAMING WORKING GROUP

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

One of the project's key institutional achievements was the establishment of the Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group, formally institutionalised through a decision of the Secretary General for Equality and Human Rights published in the Government Gazette (Issue B' 6456/26.11.2024). The Group comprises representatives from 20 ministries, with two members per ministry appointed, and was designed to serve as a national network of gender focal points, tasked with supporting the operationalisation of gender mainstreaming across the central administration.

Its creation followed recommendations from the Gender Action Plan developed under the Gender Flagship Project and was intended to strengthen coordination across ministries. Although the Group was supported by project experts, its creation also drew upon pre-existing national efforts. The Working Group does not operate on a fixed meeting schedule but maintains regular informal contact and engages when concrete issues arise.

The Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group is envisioned in the GMpIC as the central coordination structure for supporting the implementation of both the GMpIC and the GM Dossier. According to the proposed framework, its members would be responsible for collecting relevant data, completing GRB and GIA forms, and preparing annual submissions to the GSEHR. However, these responsibilities have not yet been formally assigned and will depend on the outcome of ongoing consultations with the Ministry of National Economy and Finance.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The establishment of the Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group represents a critical step toward institutionalising gender mainstreaming within the core operations of central government. Its creation filled a major gap identified in the project's initial assessment: the lack of a sustainable coordination mechanism.

By ensuring that each ministry designates and empowers trained representatives, the Working Group has created a structured channel for integrating gender perspectives into policy and budgeting processes. It plays an essential role in the practical implementation of the GMpIC and the completion of the GM Dossier, thereby ensuring that GM is embedded within internal administrative workflows.

Additionally, the provision of specialised training and ongoing technical support by GSEHR has laid the foundation for sustained capacity building and knowledge transfer. Members of the Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group participated in two targeted training sessions under the Gender Flagship Project, funded by the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). The first, conducted online, provided a general introduction to gender mainstreaming - covering its purpose, principles, and implementation framework. The second, delivered during the project's Closing Conference in Athens, offered a detailed presentation of the gender mainstreaming mechanism, including practical examples and ministry-specific applications. Members of the Working Group now function as recognised reference points on gender equality within their ministries.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

While the Working Group's establishment has been a success, its long-term effectiveness will depend on continued support and engagement across ministries. As the central coordination structure, its sustainability hinges on:

- Ongoing institutional support from both the GSEHR and the MNEF;
- Regular training and guidance to maintain and strengthen capacity;
- Active integration of GM responsibilities into each ministry's internal planning and budgeting functions.

In this context, ongoing negotiations between the GSEHR and the EKDDA have led to an agreement to consider including the GM training module in the EKDDA's 2025 training programmes for public servants.

2.2. Capacity-building activities

As part of the capacity-building component of the Gender Flagship Project, Greece actively participated in a wide range of group activities aimed at enhancing institutional knowledge and practice in gender mainstreaming. These group-level events were open to all project beneficiaries and included online training sessions, thematic workshops, and international study visits. Greek representatives took part in both the general online trainings on GRB and GIA, as well as workshops and study visits held in Canada, Lisbon, Athens, Paris, and Strasbourg. Notably, Greece hosted the GIA workshop in Athens in June 2023, demonstrating national engagement in the project's core themes. Additionally, Greek officials participated in study visits to Ottawa, Vienna, and Helsinki, facilitating direct exchanges with international counterparts and exposure to good practices.

In addition to participating in joint group activities, Greece also benefitted from a comprehensive programme of tailored capacity-building sessions for civil servants from four pilot ministries aimed at strengthening their knowledge and expertise in GRB and GIA. These national-level trainings targeted key ministries and bodies involved in the Gender Flagship Project, including the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family; General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights; Observatory for Gender Equality; Ministry of National Economy and Finance; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Labour and Social Security; General Secretariat for Coordination.



The common workshops with other countries were among the most valuable aspects of the project, especially the study visit to Canada. It was a completely different experience compared to the EU context. Canada has advanced further in implementing gender-responsive budgeting, and is now even applying diversity budgeting—something that took them years to develop. That experience gave us hope and inspiration that such progress is possible for us too.

Project beneficiary



Between late 2023 and 2024, multiple rounds of GRB and GIA training were delivered through both online and in-person formats. These sessions were structured to progressively build knowledge, beginning with introductory and foundational content, followed by repetition rounds for consolidation. Specialised topics, such as gender-responsive public procurement, were also covered. In total, more than 50 Greek officials participated in these tailored sessions. The training programme ensured the dissemination of technical knowledge directly aligned with the operational requirements of the GM Dossier and contributed to embedding gender expertise across ministerial structures. While many are now well positioned to act as “ambassadors” for gender mainstreaming within their institutions, the extent to which they can actively disseminate this knowledge depends on the political ownership demonstrated by each ministry and the ability of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family to mobilise interministerial leadership and commitment.

In addition to the trainings and workshops held throughout the project, the Gender Flagship supported the development of a Gender Mainstreaming Training Module, which has now been incorporated into the official curriculum of the National Center for Public Administration (EKDDA) as of September 2025. The module draws on materials developed through the Gender Flagship Project, which were adapted by national authorities to align with the specific needs and requirements set by the National Center for Public Administration.

Online training will be delivered by the National Center for Public Administration to personnel across public administration by its selected trainers. Depending on participant feedback and uptake, further adjustments may be made in future iterations.

The training was designed to be flexible—usable as a full course or in shorter, targeted sessions based on the needs of different ministries or institutions. It combines conceptual understanding with practical exercises, checklists, templates, and guidance documents to help public officials apply gender mainstreaming in their everyday work.

By embedding the module into the standard public administration training curriculum, this initiative represents a significant step toward institutionalising gender equality capacity-building, ensuring long-term sustainability beyond the lifespan of the project.



Section 3

FUTURE
DIRECTIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS



The piloting of the gender mainstreaming mechanism in four ministries provided an effective entry strategy in Greece's complex administrative environment, allowing for testing and refinement before wider adoption. The pilot ministries were selected by the Beneficiary Authority based on their mandates' relevance to gender equality and public administration reform: the Ministry of Interior (oversight of all ministries), the Ministry of National Economy and Finance (budgeting processes), the Ministry of Labour (employment and gender equality in the private sector), and the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family (responsible for national gender equality policy). This targeted approach offers a replicable model for other Member States seeking to introduce or strengthen similar mechanisms.

Looking forward, the sustainability of GM efforts in Greece will depend on stronger institutional anchoring and wider political buy-in. Priority actions should include full integration of the GMpIC into the national budget circular, with active involvement of the Ministry of National Economy and Finance. Inclusion of the national statistical office in future gender-responsive budgeting initiatives would enhance data availability and policy evaluation. There is also a need to develop high-level advocacy and awareness-building programmes targeting ministers and parliamentarians, to ensure cross-governmental commitment to gender equality goals. Finally, the forthcoming National Action Plan for Gender Equality should build upon the tools and structures established through this project, while aligning with the EU Gender Equality Strategy and associated roadmap.

Greece has shown that political will and a whole-of-government approach are vital for advancing GM, including GRB and GIA. However, lasting impact depends on addressing key institutional bottlenecks, such as frequent changes in political leadership, lack of continuity and political prioritisation, internal resistance among middle-level management, and limited human resources. While institutional responsibilities for GM are formally defined, accountability mechanisms are often flexible or inconsistently applied, reducing overall effectiveness. Moreover, ensuring sustained implementation requires extending the reform beyond the central administration to the regional and local levels.⁷

To support this, systematic training for Gender Mainstreaming Teams should be provided. Broader capacity-building for all civil servants is also essential to foster a public administration culture supportive of gender equality. The forthcoming National Action Plan for Gender Equality should build on the project's achievements, while aligning with the EU Gender Equality Strategy and supporting further institutionalisation of GM practices.

In addition, in September 2024, Greece launched a new TSI-supported initiative aimed at strengthening gender mainstreaming capacities at the local and regional levels. The project focuses on Regional and Municipal Committees for Gender Equality, which form an integral part of the national gender equality machinery and act as intermediaries between the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights and local authorities. Currently implemented as a pilot with the participation of 8 out of 326 Municipal Gender Equality Committees (GECs) and 3 out of 13 Regional Gender Equality Committees, the initiative is intended to be scaled up nationally following the completion of the pilot phase. This new effort complements the current project by promoting coherence and coordination of gender mainstreaming practices across all levels of governance.⁷

⁷The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality. Progress on gender and equality budgeting within the European Union. Stockholm, 28-29 November 2024. Comments paper – Greece. Prepared by Dr. Vália Kalaitzi.

Annex

SPOTLIGHT
PRACTICE: GENDER
MAINSTREAMING PILOT
IMPLEMENTATION
CIRCULAR - A
PRACTICAL TOOL
FOR PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

Purpose and added value

One of the most tangible and transferable outputs of the support provided to Greece was the piloting of the Gender Mainstreaming pilot Implementation Circular (GMpIC). Developed as a roadmap for integrating gender considerations into public administration, the Circular provides detailed methodological guidance. However, it currently applies only to a limited number of pilot ministries, and its full implementation depends on further systemic reforms - particularly the transition to performance-based budgeting.

The circular represents a significant milestone in Greece's journey toward gender equality, offering precise guidance on how ministries should integrate gender considerations into policies, programs, and budgets. By examining this tool in detail, other countries and institutions can gain valuable insights into creating their own implementation frameworks for gender mainstreaming.

The GMpIC was designed as a practical roadmap for policy and budget planning specialists within Greek public administration. Rather than focusing on theoretical concepts, it prioritises actionable guidance that administrators can readily apply to their work.

The circular is structured in four main sections:

- 1. Overview** - introduces fundamental concepts, including definitions of gender mainstreaming, its constitutional and legal foundations in Greece, the circular's aims and objectives, the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, and the implementation timeline.
- 2. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)** - provides detailed guidance on how to apply gender-responsive budgeting at the ministerial level, including step-by-step processes and templates.
- 3. Gender impact assessment (GIA)** - outlines the methodology for conducting gender impact assessments of policies and programs, including practical checklists and forms.
- 4. Annexes** - contains all necessary templates and forms that ministries need to complete as part of the gender mainstreaming process.

The circular serves multiple purposes, helping users to:

- Identify and address gender issues in public service management;
- Integrate practical gender-responsive elements into planning and budgeting;
- Monitor gender-related interventions during implementation.

While initially focused on four pilot ministries, the circular was designed with scalability in mind, allowing for eventual expansion to all ministries within the Greek government.

Novelty

The GMpIC stands out for several innovative features that make it particularly effective as an implementation tool:

TRANSLATION OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS INTO OPERATIONAL PROCESSES

The circular operationalises the somewhat abstract requirements of Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence. While the law introduced gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting concepts, it lacked specific implementation mechanisms. The circular addresses this gap by providing:

- Clear definitions of what constitutes gender mainstreaming in practice;
- Specific procedures for incorporating gender considerations in policy development;
- Concrete timelines and deliverables expected from each ministry.

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF COORDINATION

Rather than treating gender mainstreaming as an individual responsibility, the circular establishes formal institutional structures for coordination:

- The Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group, with representation from all ministries;
- Clear delineation of roles between the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights, the Observatory for Gender Equality, and the Ministry of National Economy and Finance;
- Regular reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability and continuity.



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INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING SYSTEMS

Instead of creating entirely new processes, the circular integrates gender mainstreaming into existing administrative frameworks:

- Alignment with the budgetary cycle and procedures;
- Connection to the performance-based budgeting initiative;
- Utilisation of existing departmental structures while adding gender-specific responsibilities.

COMPREHENSIVE YET FLEXIBLE IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

The implementation mechanism established by the circular creates a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming across government. This can be visualised as an interconnected network of actors with specific responsibilities and timelines:

Key actors and their roles

- General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights (GSEHR): Overall coordination, assessment of GM Dossiers, providing recommendations, and reporting to the Minister;
- Observatory for Gender Equality: Data collection and analysis, invitation to prepare GM Dossiers, maintenance of gender indicators database;
- Interministerial Gender Mainstreaming Working Group: Representatives from all ministries responsible for completing GM Dossiers, implementing recommendations;
- Ministry of National Economy and Finance/Directorate for Evaluation of General Government Actions (DEGGA): Integration of gender considerations into budgetary processes, presentation to Parliament;
- Individual Ministries: Implementation of gender mainstreaming in their respective policy areas.

The circular outlines a six-step implementation process with a clear timeline while allowing for adaptation to ministerial specifics:

1. The Observatory initiates the annual cycle by inviting ministries to prepare GM Dossiers.
2. Ministries collect data and complete required forms for both GRB and GIA.
3. The GSEHR reviews submissions and provides feedback.
4. Ministries negotiate with financial authorities to secure appropriate resources.
5. The GSEHR evaluates implementation and reports to political leadership.
6. The Ministry of National Economy and Finance presents gender-responsive budgeting results to Parliament.

Implementation in practice

The development of the GMpIC was conducted over an extended period, from April 2024 to January 2025, through an iterative process involving the core project experts, the main beneficiary, and selected pilot ministries. The drafting process required multiple rounds of revision to ensure alignment with institutional requirements and stakeholder expectations. A key challenge was ensuring consistent engagement from all pilot ministries, including the Ministry of National Economy and Finance, where involvement was influenced by the evolving institutional context and the absence of formalised guidance on gender-responsive budgeting. Furthermore, changes in institutional leadership during the development period contributed to the extended process. Despite these challenges, the GMpIC was successfully completed through sustained coordination, technical dialogue, and flexibility in responding to evolving circumstances.

The GMpIC has been successfully drafted, and its proposed approach was introduced to selected ministries under the framework of the project. However, it has not yet been officially approved or implemented, and its full-scale application remains subject to further consultations with the Ministry of National Economy and Finance, particularly in the context of the ongoing transition toward performance-based budgeting.



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Guidance for adaptation

For institutions considering the development of similar implementation tools, several key recommendations emerge from Greece's experience:

- **Legal foundation.** Effective implementation requires a robust legal framework that establishes gender mainstreaming as a legitimate governmental function. This legal basis provides essential leverage for implementation across administrative structures and policy domains.
- **Institutional home.** A dedicated agency with clear authority for gender equality matters, similar to Greece's General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights (GSEHR), provides critical leadership, expertise, and advocacy throughout the implementation process.
- **Coordination mechanism.** Successful gender mainstreaming depends on formal structures for cross-ministerial coordination that facilitate knowledge sharing, standardisation of approaches, and collective problem-solving across diverse policy areas.
- **Technical expertise.** Access to specialised knowledge in gender mainstreaming methodologies and gender-responsive budgeting ensures that implementation tools reflect established best practices while being tailored to national contexts.
- **Monitoring mechanism.** A dedicated infrastructure for collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data is essential for tracking progress and informing policy adjustments. This should be supported by qualified gender experts to ensure accurate interpretation, ongoing evaluation, and integration of findings into future planning cycles.

POTENTIAL ADAPTATIONS FOR DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

The circular's approach demonstrates considerable flexibility for adaptation across governmental structures. Federal systems may require modifications to accommodate multiple governance levels, potentially through tiered implementation strategies that maintain consistency while respecting jurisdictional boundaries.

Smaller administrations can implement streamlined versions that preserve core elements while reducing administrative complexity, acknowledging varying institutional capacities without compromising essential gender mainstreaming principles.

The framework also accommodates different policy priorities, allowing thematic focus areas to be adjusted based on national gender equality priorities, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to specific country contexts and challenges.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

Implementation efforts should anticipate several common challenges. Overly complex procedures can significantly diminish participation and compliance, emphasising the importance of user-friendly tools and clear guidance materials.

Insufficient connection to budgetary processes risks relegating gender considerations to theoretical exercises rather than influencing resource allocation decisions. This connection is vital for translating principles into tangible outcomes.

The absence of accountability mechanisms reduces incentives for meaningful implementation. Effective frameworks require clear responsibilities, reporting requirements, and oversight structures to ensure sustained engagement.

Inadequate data collection systems hinder the measurement of progress and impact. Robust monitoring frameworks with appropriate indicators are essential for demonstrating effectiveness and guiding continuous improvement of gender mainstreaming efforts.

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



Head Office 40, boulevard de Port-Royal - 75005 Paris, France

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