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PARTICIPATION OF SAXONY-ANHALT IN THE GENDER FLAGSHIP PROJECT

2022-2025



**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).



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:

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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

EF Expertise France

EIGE European Institute for Gender Equality

EU European Union

EUI European University Institute

GAP Gender Action Plan

GFMK Konferenz der Gleichstellungs- und Frauenministerinnen und -minister, -senatorinnen und -senatoren der Länder (Conference of Ministers for Gender Equality and Women's Affairs of the German Federal States)

GGO LSA Gemeinsame Geschäftsordnung der Landesregierung Sachsen-Anhalt (Joint Rules of Procedure of the State Government of Saxony-Anhalt)

IMAG Interministerielle Arbeitsgruppe Gleichstellung (Interministerial Working Group on Equality)

LFG Leitstelle für Frauen- und Gleichstellungspolitik (Gender Equality Coordination Unit)

SG REFORM Reform and Investment Task Force of the European Commission

TSI Technical Support Instrument

Executive summary

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Gender Equality of Saxony-Anhalt participated in the Gender Flagship Project to address long-standing implementation challenges in gender equality policy. Despite a firm commitment to gender mainstreaming, efforts had been hampered by fragmented practices, limited interministerial coordination, and underutilised data systems. Through this project, Saxony-Anhalt aimed to strengthen institutional capacity, improve strategic impact-oriented planning, and establish a more coherent, measurable approach to advancing gender equality.

The technical support focused on two main areas: the development of a customised framework of gender equality indicators, and the introduction of a structured Reporting Module to monitor the implementation of the State Gender Action Plan (GAP). These tools should enhance the measurability and accountability of equality measures, support evidence-based policymaking, and foster a culture of impact-oriented planning within the administration.

A notable product of the project was the Handbook for Gender Equality Programs and Indicators¹, a methodological document that consolidates Saxony-Anhalt's experience into a structured and transferable framework. It offers practical tools for developing context-sensitive indicators, linking objectives to results chains, and embedding monitoring processes into administrative routines.

In Saxony-Anhalt, implementing cross-ministerial gender equality objectives requires continuous coordination and consensus-building. The iterative approach helped familiarise ministries with new tools and practices over time. The experience of the Gender Flagship Project provides useful insights for other regions aiming to institutionalise gender equality through data-informed, coordinated, and impact-oriented approaches.

¹https://leitstelle-frauen-geschlechtergleichstellung.sachsen-anhalt.de/fileadmin/Bibliothek/Politik_und_Verwaltung/MS/LFGG_-_Leitstelle_Frauen/gleichstellung/GFLAG_HANDBUCH_09052025.pdf

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. Irene Pimminger, with technical guidance and input from Rezart Xhelo, key expert.

1.1 Beneficiary Authority (BA)

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Gender Equality of Saxony-Anhalt² is the principal authority benefiting from the Gender Flagship Project. It holds the overall coordination mandate for gender equality and women's policy in the state government. The State Commissioner for Women and Equality³, based within this Ministry, leads the Gender Equality Coordination Unit⁴ (LFG), which is responsible for guiding strategic initiatives, supporting interministerial coordination, advising on gender mainstreaming implementation, and cooperating with civil society, academia, and federal or EU-level partners. The LFG also manages the Interministerial Working Group on Equality⁵ (IMAG), ensuring cross-sectoral engagement in implementing gender equality goals across state administration.

1.2. Context when joining the project

Saxony-Anhalt, a federal state in eastern Germany, functions within both national and state constitutional framework mandating gender equality. However, gender equality has not yet been fully realised and the region faces longstanding demographic and socio-economic challenges like significant out-migration, especially of young women, an ageing population, and lower-than-average income levels. While the employment rate of women is high compared to the national average and the gender pay gap is comparatively low, the part-time rate of women is significant and sectoral segregation is high. Unequal caregiving responsibilities and a low political participation of women, especially at the municipal level, remain notable challenges.

The absence of systematic gender statistics and formal monitoring systems weakens policy effectiveness. Although gender mainstreaming has advanced since 2000, persistent inequalities highlight the need for stronger institutional support and more consistent implementation.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL SETUP

The approach of implementing gender equality in the Saxony-Anhalt state administration as a cross-sectional task makes all ministries responsible for its implementation. At the same time, the Gender Equality Coordination Unit (LFG) is responsible for the coordination of women's and gender equality policy within the state government and state administration. For an effective implementation of gender equality as a cross-sectional task, coordination and steering generally play a decisive role. However, this task of the LFG comes up against the strong limits of the German principle of ministerial responsibility. This means that the individual ministries decide and act solely on their own responsibility. Thus, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Gender Equality, let alone the LFG, cannot prescribe goals, measures and implementation steps to other ministries, but can only propose and agree on them, whereby the decision is always the responsibility of the respective ministry.

² *Ministerium für Arbeit, Soziales, Gesundheit und Gleichstellung des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt*

³ *Landesbeauftragte für Frauen und Gleichstellung*

⁴ *Landesfrauen- und Gleichstellungsstelle (LFG)*

⁵ *Interministerielle Arbeitsgruppe Gleichstellung (IMAG)*

The Interministerial Working Group on Equality (IMAG) includes representatives from all ministries and supports the design and coordination of the State Gender Action Plan (GAP)⁶. Civil society is involved through the GAP Advisory Board. Each ministry is also required to appoint a full-time Equal Opportunities Officer, tasked with advancing internal equality and reviewing policy proposals. However, the influence of these roles varies, and engagement often depends on individual departments' priorities. Resource limitations - both human and financial - further hinder the sustainability of coordination and capacity-building efforts.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The legal basis for gender equality in Saxony-Anhalt stems from Article 34 of the State Constitution⁷, which obliges public authorities to actively promote equality between women and men. The Joint Rules of Procedure⁸ (GGO LSA) require a gender policy assessment for cabinet proposals. Gender mainstreaming was formally introduced in 2000 through cabinet decision and has since been further structured through two State Gender Action Plans (2014–2019 and 2020–2026).

The challenges lie in the practical implementation of these legal obligations. This ranges from operationalising the state's key gender equality objectives and steering their implementation, to applying gender mainstreaming instruments.

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

The participation of Saxony-Anhalt in the Gender Flagship Project was driven by a combination of long-standing structural challenges and a strategic desire to improve gender equality policies. Despite more than two decades of gender mainstreaming efforts, implementation remained fragmented and constrained by entrenched institutional practices and a lack of systematic gender statistics due to insufficient resources. A limited steering capacity across ministries has further impeded the systemic adoption of gender equality as a cross-cutting principle.

The decision to participate in the Gender Flagship Project reflected the state's commitment to overcoming these obstacles. Saxony-Anhalt aimed to use the technical support provided by the project to build a more coherent, data-driven, and impact-oriented gender equality strategy - particularly through the enhancement of the State Gender Action Plan as the main steering instrument.



When the Gender Flagship project was introduced, it came at exactly the right moment for us. We had just received a government mandate to define gender equality goals with quantifiable indicators, aiming to build a more results-oriented approach. The project offered a valuable opportunity to support this shift - especially by helping us strengthen the evidence base of our programme and learn how to work more systematically with indicators.



Project beneficiary

⁶ Landesprogramm für ein geschlechtergerechtes Sachsen-Anhalt

⁷ Artikel 34 der Verfassung des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt

⁸ Gemeinsame Geschäftsordnung der Landesregierung Sachsen-Anhalt (GGO LSA)

1.4. Project objectives and aims

The technical support provided through the Gender Flagship Project aimed to help Saxony-Anhalt strengthen its capacity to embed gender equality as a cross-cutting policy across all ministries. The main objectives were:

- To institutionalise a structured reporting and monitoring system;
- To establish a context-sensitive indicator framework;
- To strengthen interministerial coordination through shared planning tools;
- To enhance public administration capacity for impact-oriented gender planning;
- To consolidate knowledge into a transferable model for wider use.

Through these objectives, the project aimed to foster a more strategic, data-informed, and coordinated approach to advancing gender equality in Saxony-Anhalt.



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Section 2

GENDER
MAINSTREAMING
SUPPORT
PROVIDED

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Gender Equality of Saxony-Anhalt received tailored gender mainstreaming support under the EU-funded Gender Flagship Project as part of its broader commitment to strengthening gender-responsive governance. The technical assistance focused on two strategic levers for systemic change: the development of a coherent, context-sensitive framework of gender equality indicators, and the institutionalisation of programme indicators through a formalised reporting mechanism for the State Gender Action Plan (GAP).

These complementary strands of support aimed not only to enhance the analytical foundations of gender policy but also to embed impact-oriented planning and accountability into the operational routines of public administration. Taken together, these actions represented a shift toward a more structured, data-driven, and results-focused approach to gender equality. The following sections detail the core activities undertaken, the progress achieved, and the key lessons that emerged throughout the process.



The support from the TSI and external experts provided a sense of recognition and alignment with broader European priorities. It reinforced the relevance of our efforts and encouraged stronger commitment within our administration to move forward with developing and applying indicators.



Project beneficiary

2.1. Tailored support and results achieved

2.1.1. GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS: CUSTOMISED FRAMEWORK ESTABLISHED FOR STRATEGIC POLICYMAKING

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The first key activity aimed to develop a robust set of gender equality indicators aligned with Saxony-Anhalt's overarching gender equality objectives. The initiative started with in-depth gender analyses and data research, which served as a continuously updated internal document rather than a static report. This flexible format enabled the expert team and the Gender Equality Coordination Unit (LFG) to iteratively refine their approach in response to emerging findings, data limitations, and evolving policy contexts.

The analysis indicated that existing indicators from international, EU, and national sources only partially aligned with Saxony-Anhalt's specific policy and data needs. They lacked regional granularity, policy relevance, or conceptual clarity. In response, the project developed new, context-specific indicators based on criteria **such as relevance, need for action, comprehensibility, and feasibility**. The development process included interviews with statistical offices and research bodies, enabling a deeper understanding of data periodicity and reliability.

A Guide to Gender Equality Indicators for the Saxony-Anhalt GAP was produced to support ministries in interpreting, updating, and applying the indicators independently in the future. Proposed indicator set and the accompanying guide were presented to stakeholders, including the Interministerial Working Group on Equality (IMAG), the GAP Advisory Board, and the Conference of Ministers for Gender Equality and Women's Affairs of the German Federal States (GFMK), within the framework of the national Gender Equality Atlas update.⁹

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The activity delivered a comprehensive set of tailored gender equality indicators accompanied by detailed metadata, including data sources, calculation methods, and updating procedures. The Guide to Gender Equality Indicators for the Saxony-Anhalt GAP served as both a technical and institutional capacity-building tool, ensuring ministries are equipped to use the indicators autonomously going forward.

Consultation and validation with both IMAG and the GAP Advisory Board helped to establish broad-based political and civil society ownership. In December 2024, the IMAG endorsed the proposed indicators, marking a key milestone. Final approval is expected to follow via a cabinet decision.

The indicators also helped sharpen the understanding of specific policy needs. These findings helped define policy priorities and contributed to the design of more targeted equality measures.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

A key challenge identified was the limited alignment of existing indicators from international, EU, and national sources with the specific policy and data needs of Saxony-Anhalt. As a result, it was necessary to develop a tailored framework, which required considerable resources and sustained coordination between the LFG and the respective ministries, including iterative consultation, to agree feasible indicators. The analysis also revealed significant variation in data availability and quality, indicating that existing data sources in Germany remain underutilised.

The federated structure of governance, particularly the principle of ministerial autonomy, meant that coordination depended on continuous interministerial consultation and agreement, as ministries retained full discretion over how or whether to adopt the new indicators.

Despite these obstacles, several key lessons emerged. Firstly, gender indicator development must be embedded in policy dialogue, not treated as a purely technical task. Secondly, sustained engagement with stakeholders - from ministries to civil society - was essential to build legitimacy and future buy-in. Thirdly, the process revealed that data sources across Germany are significantly underused in gender policy, highlighting the need for stronger institutional awareness and data literacy.

Through its participatory and iterative methodology, the activity laid the foundation for a learning-oriented, data-informed approach to gender equality policymaking in Saxony-Anhalt, with potential relevance far beyond the region.

⁹ *The Gender Equality Atlas (Atlas zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in Deutschland) is a federal-level monitoring tool coordinated by the Conference of Ministers for Gender Equality and Women's Affairs of the German Federal States (GFMK), providing comparative gender-disaggregated indicators across German Länder to inform equality policy.*

2.1.2. REPORTING MODULE FOR PROGRAMME INDICATORS: INSTITUTIONALISED TOOL FOR IMPACT-ORIENTED PLANNING

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

To strengthen the measurability and accountability of the State Gender Action Plan (GAP), Saxony-Anhalt developed and institutionalised a comprehensive Reporting Module throughout the Gender Flagship Project - a structured toolkit for planning, documenting, and reporting gender equality measures. The need for such a tool arose from earlier challenges: ministries lacked a shared methodology, and many officials had limited experience with results-based planning. This often led to inconsistent, vague, and non-measurable programme descriptions, making it difficult to monitor progress or ensure policy alignment across departments.

Described as a “controlling tool,” the Reporting Module was developed in direct response to requests from ministries for a more structured and transparent way to communicate gender-related actions and achievements. It represents a significant improvement over previous, largely inconsistent reporting practices.

The Reporting Module consists of four parts, each fulfilling a specific function in the GAP implementation cycle:

- Part 1 (Description of measures) - a structured template to initiate, define and negotiate individual measures aligned with gender equality goals. Ministries are prompted to identify disparities, align with strategic objectives, and outline activities and expected results.
- Part 2a (Documentation form) builds on Part 1 and serves to update and refine the agreed measures for reporting purposes. It ensures consistency and links indicators and timelines to initial plans.
- Part 2b (Accompanying explanation of the documentation form) - a practical manual providing instructions and examples on how to complete Part 2a. It includes guidance on identifying target groups, distinguishing outputs from outcomes, developing impact chains, and defining output and outcome indicators.
- Part 3 (Report form) a final reporting form used to document actual implementation. It collects evidence on outputs delivered, outcomes achieved, and contributions to policy goals, and requires ministries to submit relevant supporting documents such as reports or implementation clauses. It draws directly on information previously entered in Parts 1 and 2a, thus ensuring continuity and comparability across planning and reporting cycle.

This structured and iterative system strengthened internal capacities for impact-oriented planning and defining indicators and enabled the Gender Equality Coordination Unit to more systematically review and support ministry efforts. Ministries received written feedback on their indicator logic and participated in bilateral discussions with the ministries to improve their submissions. The Reporting Module is already in active use and does not require a formal cabinet decision, reflecting early institutional buy-in.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The finalisation and coordinated use of the Reporting Module represented an important advancement in structuring the implementation of the State Gender Action Plan in Saxony-Anhalt. During the reporting cycle, ministries completed the preparatory forms (Part 2a), which were subsequently reviewed and discussed with the Gender Equality Coordination Unit. They then submitted the documentation forms (Part 3), providing overviews of the implementation status, outputs delivered, and results achieved, including relevant sources and evidence. This process provided the Gender Equality Coordination Unit with a systemic and verifiable information base.



The Reporting Module has already been implemented and is proving highly effective. Previously, it was difficult to clearly understand what ministries were doing and what outcomes they were achieving. Now, thanks to the Reporting Module, we have much greater transparency and can track activities and results across ministries more clearly.



Project beneficiary

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The implementation process highlighted areas for further development in results-based management. Some public officials were still becoming familiar with the language and logic of impact orientation, which posed challenges for formulating coherent and measurable programme indicators. Concepts such as distinguishing between outputs and outcomes, or applying a logic model to demonstrate impact, offered opportunities for capacity building.

The decentralised governance structure of the Saxony-Anhalt state administration required executive coordination and consensus-building across ministries, which made the introduction of new tools and processes a gradual undertaking.

However, the challenges also yielded valuable insights. The Reporting Module proved to be a vehicle not only for technical reform but also for administrative learning. Its iterative use provided ministries with hands-on experience in planning and evaluation, gradually building internal capacity. The active engagement of the Gender Equality Coordination Unit - through feedback, capacity support, and persistent follow-up - was crucial in moving the process forward.



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2.1.3. HANDBOOK FOR GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMS AND INDICATORS: TRANSFERABLE FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The development of the “Handbook for Gender Equality Programs and Indicators”¹⁰ was undertaken as part of the Gender Flagship Project, with the aim of consolidating and transferring knowledge gained through the implementation of State Gender Action Plan (GAP). The handbook was conceptualised not only as a local tool but also as a transfer product for broader use across Germany.

The handbook presents a conceptual and methodological framework for designing institutionalised, participatory, impact-oriented, and verifiable gender equality action plans. It includes sections on defining gender equality objectives, developing and institutionalising indicators, creating target structures and impact chains, and implementing systematic reporting.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

The handbook provides a coherent structure for public authorities at national, regional, and local levels to plan and implement gender equality action plans with clear strategic logic and measurable outcomes. It introduces tools such as logic models, impact chains, and implementation indicators aligned with quality criteria. The handbook has been finalised for use beyond Saxony-Anhalt, with plans for translation and dissemination among Gender Flagship Project participants. It supports both conceptual understanding and practical application, addressing key elements such as indicator development, programme monitoring, and reporting.

For further details, see Annex. Spotlight Practice: Handbook for Gender Equality Programs and Indicators.

2.2. Capacity-building activities

As part of the Gender Flagship Project, Saxony-Anhalt carried out a series of targeted capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening institutional knowledge and use of the developed tools. This included two in-person workshops on programme indicators for the State Gender Action Plan, as well as multiple sessions dedicated to the Reporting Module - presented during two IMAG (Interministerial Working Group on Equality) meetings with ministry representatives, and two Advisory Board meetings involving civil society stakeholders. Additional capacity-building was provided through online consultations with a ministry on toolkit application, and through presentations on gender equality indicators in both IMAG and Advisory Board formats. These activities ensured that both government and non-governmental actors were equipped to apply the tools developed, reinforcing ownership and understanding across key stakeholders.

¹⁰https://leitstelle-frauen-geschlechtergleichstellung.sachsen-anhalt.de/fileadmin/Bibliothek/Politik_und_Verwaltung/MS/LFGG_-_Leitstelle_Frauen/gleichstellung/GFLAG_HANDBUCH_09052025.pdf

Section 3

FUTURE
DIRECTIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS



Section 3. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The initiatives developed under the Gender Flagship Project - particularly the Reporting Module, gender equality indicators, Guide to Gender Equality Indicators for the Saxony-Anhalt GAP and Handbook for Gender Equality Programs and Indicators - are expected to continue shaping Saxony-Anhalt's gender equality policy landscape.

Full institutionalisation of the indicator set developed during the project is anticipated through a cabinet decision, which would formalise the use of the indicators across ministries. Continued dialogue with ministries will also be essential to clarify data collection responsibilities and to resolve indicators that are not yet fully operational, for example, indicators that are policy-relevant but cannot yet be populated regularly because data is missing, not disaggregated, not accessible, or because responsibility for maintaining the data has not been agreed.



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Annex

ANNEX. SPOTLIGHT
PRACTICE:
HANDBOOK FOR
GENDER EQUALITY
PROGRAMS AND
INDICATORS

Purpose and added value

The Handbook for Gender Equality Programs and Indicators was developed within the framework of the Gender Flagship Project. Its purpose was to equip public administrations—particularly at the federal, state, and municipal levels—with a systematic, practical framework for designing, implementing, and monitoring gender equality action plans that are institutionalised, participatory, impact-oriented, and verifiable.

This guide addresses a long-standing gap in gender equality planning: while many governments have adopted gender action plans or gender equality programs, few have had the tools to design them with clear, measurable outcomes and effective monitoring mechanisms. The added value of the handbook lies in its ability to translate conceptual understanding into a structured methodology, offering a step-by-step approach to building logical frameworks, target structures, impact chains and tailored indicators. Unlike previous fragmented or overly abstract resources, this handbook bridges theory and practice and serves both as a reference for conceptual understanding and a toolkit for real-world application.

Crucially, the handbook is rooted in the practical experience of Saxony-Anhalt, meaning its recommendations have already been tested and adjusted to fit the complexities of ministerial coordination and federal governance structures.

Novelty

The handbook introduces a range of innovative elements, both conceptually and methodologically. First, it redefines what constitutes a ‘gender equality action plan’ by clearly distinguishing between gender mainstreaming institutionalisation plans, equal opportunities personnel plans and gender equality action plans. This differentiation is critical, as it enables public authorities to better structure their gender equality work and align responsibilities with the areas they directly influence. Institutionalisation plans and personnel plans are directed inwards, on the one hand to the institutional structures and processes of an administration and on the other hand to the employees and the human resources management of an administration. Action plans are directed outwards towards the policy fields and areas of activity of public authorities at national, regional, or local level.

Second, the handbook’s approach to **target structure and impact modelling** stands out as a unique contribution. It operationalises the idea of linking national and international equality objectives (e.g., CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, EU Gender Equality Strategy) with actionable, measurable goals at the level of departments and ministries. The logic model and impact chain methodology—borrowed from evaluation science but rarely applied systematically in gender policy—provides a transparent roadmap from input to impact.

A third novelty lies in the process of **indicator development**. Rather than relying on pre-existing indicators alone, the handbook offers a structured method for developing context-specific indicators exploiting available data sources. This includes operationalisation techniques, selection criteria (e.g., relevance, comprehensibility, feasibility), and the institutionalisation of data collection and updating mechanisms.

Finally, the embedded Reporting Module, which includes templates for measure descriptions, indicator definitions and final reporting, offers a complete and replicable monitoring system that supports not only accountability but also internal steering and programme learning.

Implementation in practice

The development of the Handbook for Gender Equality Programs and Indicators followed a structured, content-driven process grounded in both conceptual clarity and tested practices. The handbook combines insights from gender policy frameworks, evaluation methodology, and the specific institutional context of Saxony-Anhalt to create a tool that is both theoretically sound and practically applicable.

The handbook's foundation lies in clear conceptual distinction between types of equality programmes, which allowed to define the scope of the handbook as focusing on specialist programmes - those addressing the external policy responsibilities of public administrations. This strategic focus shaped the rest of the document, ensuring that all tools and frameworks were tailored to the planning, coordination, and evaluation of cross-departmental gender equality measures that aim to produce measurable results contributing to change in society.

The development of content progressed along a logical structure. Initial chapters define the purpose of gender equality action plans and the role of indicators (Chapter 1 and 2). These conceptual foundations were then translated into actionable frameworks through the introduction of:

- Key equality objectives drawn from European and international obligations (Chapter 2.1),
- A step-by-step method for developing and institutionalising gender equality indicators (Chapter 2.2),
- A comprehensive set of equality criteria and structural elements for effective gender equality action plans (Chapter 3),
- A detailed explanation of impact models, including target structures and results chains (Chapter 4).

The handbook used Saxony-Anhalt's equality programme as a reference point for the formulation and refinement of these elements. For instance, Chapter 2.2 includes examples of how indicators were derived from Saxony-Anhalt's eight equality objectives, along with a clear explanation of selection criteria (e.g., relevance, feasibility, comprehensibility).

A central focus was on ensuring that each planning element could be made measurable and verifiable. Chapter 5 introduced clear guidance on how to design indicators at different levels (target indicators, output and outcome indicators) and how to apply them within monitoring and reporting system. These technical aspects culminate in a practical reporting module (Appendix) which includes:

- Templates for describing measures using results chain logic,
- A monitoring sheet with output and outcome indicators,
- And a Reporting Module to track implementation and achievements across all ministries.

The handbook also allows ministries and public actors to adopt elements flexibly, depending on their readiness and capacity. In this way, the handbook was implemented not only as a publication, but as a **living tool** designed for integration into public sector planning processes.

Guidance for adaptation

The handbook is highly adaptable to other regional or national contexts, particularly those facing similar challenges in coordination, indicator development, and capacity gaps. For successful adaptation, several enabling factors should be considered:

- **Political mandate.** The handbook's implementation benefits from a clear cabinet decision or similar high-level mandate to ensure institutionalisation across departments.
- **Dedicated coordination unit.** A central entity (e.g. gender equality unit) must be empowered to coordinate contributions and monitor implementation.
- **Capacity building.** Ministries and departments often need support to internalise concepts like logic models or indicator development. This can be addressed through training and participatory planning processes.
- **Accessible data infrastructure.** While the handbook provides methods to develop indicators, their feasibility depends on access to reliable, disaggregated data. Adaptation should include an assessment of data availability and capacity to maintain indicators.

Potential barriers to its use include resistance to impact-oriented planning due to lack of familiarity or perceived complexity, as well as siloed responsibilities within government structure. However, the handbook offers solutions through its modular design, which allows phased implementation and iterative learning.

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



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