

The image features several blue silhouettes of people in business attire, including suits and ties, arranged in a line that recedes into the background. The silhouettes are in various shades of blue, from light to dark. The text is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page.

Working with
Gender Equality
within the Baltic Sea Project

Gender mainstreaming is the strategy adopted by the EU, to ensure equal opportunities for women and men. It implies that gender equality is to be integrated into all activities instead of being a separate question on the sidelines. The strategy of gender mainstreaming also includes the Interreg programs and other uses of EU funds.

This publication has been produced by the Sida Baltic Sea Unit for the purpose of promoting gender equality in the Baltic Sea Region countries.

Text: Karin S. Lindelöf.

Editor: Mats Sundgren.

Graphic design: Helena Duveborg.

Print: Snabba Tryck, Visby, 2011.

Gender equality is about efficiency, democracy and justice. Projects where there is gender equality make better use of the skills and capabilities of both women and men, and their results also become more correct when the conditions and experiences of the two sexes are taken into account. Society consists of women and men and both categories must have the same opportunities to influence its development. EU guidelines for integrating gender equality into the Structural Funds are formulated in the following terms.

The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of implementation of the Funds¹.



The striving for gender equality is also highlighted in the Baltic Sea Region Programme.

1. Council Regulation (EC) no 1083/2006 “Equality between men and women and non-discrimination”, Article 16, page 40.

The striving for gender equality is also highlighted in the Baltic Sea Region Programme. Promoting equal opportunities is assessed positively in project selection and all applicants are asked to integrate gender equality into their projects.

Despite this, work on gender and equality issues in Interreg projects seems to be sluggish. The purpose of this publication, and the related workshops, is to promote and facilitate such efforts.

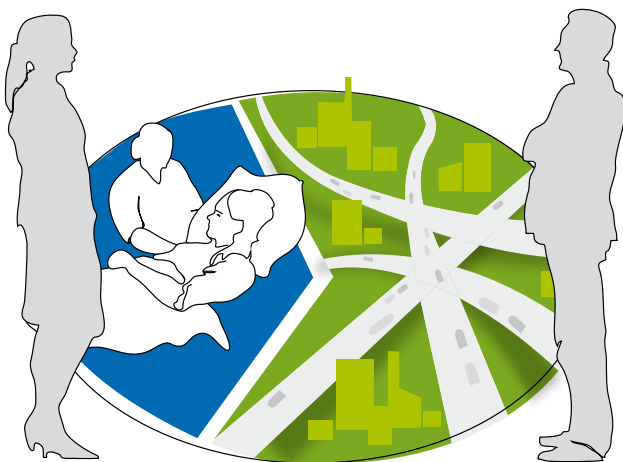
Gender equality in the Baltic Sea cooperation

In 2009, the Sida Baltic Sea Unit undertook the study *Gender Equality within the Baltic Sea Region Cooperation*.² The background to this was that Interreg and other cooperative ventures in the Baltic Sea Region are dominated by men, especially in issues of major regional and economic importance, such as transport, infrastructure and the environment. Women are found primarily in social and cultural areas, which account for a relatively small part of the Interreg budget.

The study consists of a survey of the gender structure within the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013, as well as interviews with seven women leaders within five projects in traditionally male-dominated fields. The material was analysed by means of what is termed the 3R method (see p. 13 of this brochure).

The study shows a predominance of men in leading positions in the partner organisations, and thus also in the steering committees, while the gender distribution is more even in terms of the project leadership of sub-projects. This thus allows women relatively great influence over the actual project cooperation, but less over the imprint of the projects within the participating organisations, which is crucial for lasting results after the project period ends. The study also shows that the consideration of gender equality that is mentioned in the “gender box” in the application form (equal opportunities) primarily appertains to the number of women and men within the

2. Sida, 2010, *Gender Equality within the Baltic Sea Region Cooperation. A study of projects within the EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013*, the Sida Baltic Sea Unit.



Men predominate in matters of great economic importance.

projects. Only one of the projects examined describes gender aspects linked to what the Interreg project actually does.

The interviewed project managers consider that the Interreg projects function in a relatively gender-equal manner. At the same time it appears that women are often secretaries and assistants, who deal with practical and administrative matters, while men are specialists, experts and chairmen, who sign papers and represent the project in different contexts. The interviewees also tend to trivialise their own experiences of discrimination and shortcomings in gender equality, and deciding to “shrug this off” is a common strategy. Some, however, describe various instances of discrimination, which they have experienced themselves and have also observed around them, e.g., male master suppression techniques, sexist and homophobic jokes and the maintenance of men as the norm within the Baltic Sea cooperation.

The interviews reveal, however, that there are other things than sex that may be important for influence within Interreg, such as, e.g., age, experience, expertise, formal responsibility and a knowledge of English. Another trend is that the interviewed project managers have difficulties with a more integrated gender equality approach: the number of women and men is highlighted, while issues of power and



Women are often secretaries and assistants, while men are experts.

project content are ignored. The unequal relationship between East and West, where the Nordic countries are viewed as “better” than Poland and the Baltic Sea Region countries, is re-created to some degree in the projects, in spite of the Baltic Sea Region Programme aiming for the opposite effect.

There is thus great potential for improvements in the promotion of both gender and general equality. It is particularly important that the instructions and the requirements of the European Commission are made clearer and more detailed. This requires the “gender box” in the application form to be perceived as relevant and normative, and that there are expectations that what it describes should be visible also in other parts of the application. In addition, there are concrete examples of how projects can work in a more equal way, both internally and externally, in order to contribute in the long run to greater gender equality throughout the entire Baltic Sea Region.

Sex is the term for the biological categories of women and men, respectively. **Gender** is the social and cultural interpretations of sex, what we according to powerful cultural patterns and norms perceive as “feminine” and “masculine”.

GUIDE

to gender equality

What is the challenge?

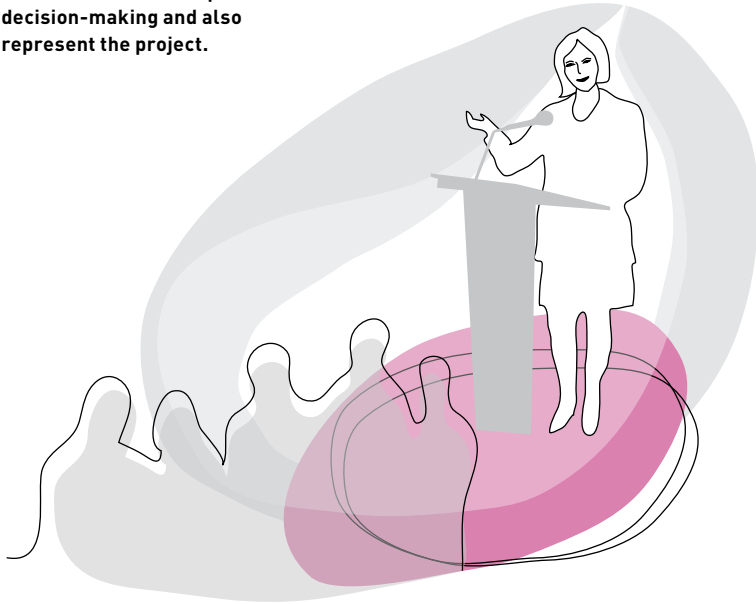
- Women and men shall have equal opportunities, rights, duties and the power to shape society and their own lives.
- Men have more power than women over money, problem formulations, decision-making and development processes in the Baltic Sea Region.
- There is a division between “hard” issues, with high status, a large budget and a strong male dominance and "soft" issues with a greater percentage of women, lower status and a smaller budget, in various projects and ventures in the Baltic Sea Region.
- Reasons for gender equality include *democracy, legitimacy, social cohesion, creativity, innovation* and *efficient resource utilisation*. It is both a question of fairness and of making full use of women's and men's capacities and skills. Furthermore, it is about responsible utilisation of common financial resources.
- Women and men share responsibility for the development of the Baltic Sea Region in a more equal direction, while the EU also demands equality and non-discrimination in the use of its funds.

How to proceed?

Overarching equality measures

- Appoint someone with particular responsibility for gender equality issues. However, overall responsibility lies with the project manager.
- Do recruit a gender equality expert to the project group. They can be found in all the Baltic Sea Region countries and possess expertise in a range of fields (politics, economics, urban planning, transport, health, etc.) related to gender and equality.
- Treat gender equality and equal conditions as a prerequisite for high quality and good resource utilisation throughout the project.
- Allocate resources and undertake basic gender equality training of all project participants, but especially project and sub-project managers as well as a gender equality officer.
- Draw up an action plan for gender equality within the project, which includes the organisation, content and performance, and be sure to follow it up!
- Use the 3R method to ensure gender equality in representation, resources and realia (see p. 13), from the project idea to final reporting and implementation, both within the project organisation as well as the project content and results.
- If the project has already started, use the 3R method to analyse how it works today and see where there is scope for improvement. Is it possible to improve gender equality within any of the three Rs?

Both women will take part in decision-making and also represent the project.



Gender-equal project organisation

- Bear in mind gender equality in all recruitment and strive for gender-mixed project teams, steering groups, reference groups, committees, lists of speakers at conferences, etc.
- Bear in mind equality in pay, assignment of responsibilities, etc.
- Ensure that the working conditions within the project enable both women and men to combine work and family life in a satisfactory manner.
- Counteract all forms of discrimination and harassment in the project. Introduce zero tolerance for sexist statements, pictures and documents.
- Ensure that both women and men take part in all decision-making, as well as in all discussions and processes leading up to it.

Gender-equal project content and results

- Bring in gender equality and gender issues from the outset, irrespective of the project topic or focus! If you do not know how to do this, get help from a gender equality expert (see p. 15).
 - How does the project affect women and men, and girls and boys, respectively, as well as the relationship between them?
 - What do you do to make use of the experience, knowledge and views of both women and men throughout the entire project period?



Be aware of differences within the groups of men and women!

- If you consider that the project is not important to women and men, or for equality between them, this should also be motivated.
- The overall responsibility for taking gender equality into consideration lies with the project leader, but all project participants are involved in integrating gender equality into their portion of the project work.
- Make sure to have *both* a general gender equality awareness in all project activities (e.g., consultation meetings with the public) and decisions *and also* undertake specific activities and analyses focusing on gender equality (such as special meetings for women, if this relates to a male-dominated field).
- Use gender-disaggregated statistics to make gender analyses of target groups and users, set goals for the project, implement measures and project activities and follow these up.
- Gender equality issues can be both organized as a particular work package and comprise a task in one or more (all) work packages.
- Gender equality aspects should, of course, be integrated into regular project reporting, but should preferably also be highlighted and enlarged upon in separate reports.
- Use gender-specific terms such as “women”, “girls”, “men” and “boys” as much as possible, to avoid gender-neutral terms leading to gender-blindness (e.g., if you talk about patients, politicians, travellers, parents of young children, etc., which sex do you think they are?).
- Be also aware of differences within groups of women and men, e.g., in terms of age, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and class.
- Ensure that both women and men participate in meetings with target groups and potential end users, and that their views are dealt with in a uniform manner.

Questions to ask/the 3R method

- In which positions within the project, and as target groups and end users of the results, are women and men, respectively, found? (*Representation*)
- How are project resources, e.g., in the form of salaries, operating funds, offices, titles, status, power and influence, allocated to women and men, respectively? (*Resources*)
- How are gender equality aspects taken into account in the actual project efforts, for example, ideas, issues, problem formulations, documents, reports, theories, methods, analyses, results, plans, guidelines, implementation, information and dissemination of results? (*Realia*)
- What is the nature of the work culture within the project? (*Realia*)
 - Is gender discrimination, sexual harassment or so-called master suppression techniques (such as making invisible, ridiculing, withholding of information) present?
 - What are the common narratives and ideas about the operations and do they have any gender label (for example, are women or men the unspoken norm in any context)?
 - What common behavioural norms or unwritten rules are there? For example, are there sexist or homophobic jokes? Who can say and do what?
 - Are there certain duties or other tasks associated with project work that are primarily done by women or men? What is the status of these duties?
 - Are there opportunities for both women and men to combine working successfully within a project and parenthood?
 - What conditions exist for women and men as project/sub-project managers and project participants? Is it equally possible for women and men to manage the project effectively or to have influence over decisions, work processes and outcomes?
- In brief. Who decides? Who implements? Who is the user? On what/whose terms?

The 3R method is a tool with which to survey and analyse gender (power) structures within organisations, in order to then effect their subsequent change in a more gender-equal direction. The three Rs stand for **Representation**, where the women and men are represented, **Resources**, how the resources are allocated between women and men, and **Realia**, how gender issues are taken into account in the actual content of the activities, in what is actually being done.

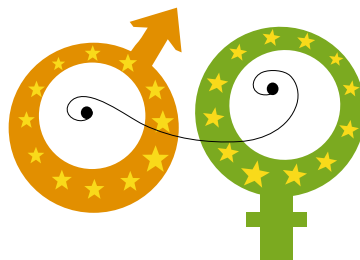
Representation

– where are women and men represented?



Resurser – how are the resources allocated between women and men?

Realia – how are gender issues taken into account in the actual content of the activities, what is actually being done?



Pitfalls

- A one-sided focus on the number of women and men within a project may give a false picture of gender equality. Focus also on such things as project content, resources, influence and power.
- Bear in mind that what is described as “gender neutral” may often be gender-blind (e.g., technology is often viewed as gender-neutral, although it might, often unconsciously, be based on male norms, since technology often is developed by men, on the basis of men's experiences and with men's needs in mind).
- Do not think that it is only “soft” issues that concern gender equality. If the project concerns people in any way (directly or indirectly), you must ask yourselves whether it concerns everyone equally or whether there may be differences in how it affects women and men.
- Do not think that gender equality is synonymous with women. It is about the fact that everyone regardless of gender should have the same opportunities to influence all areas of society.
- Beware of empty platitudes and clichés. What do the formulations in the “gender box” actually mean? How do you implement this in the project activities?



Gender equality is about the fact that everyone should have the same opportunities to influence all areas of society.

Want to know more?

GENDER EQUALITY IN PRACTICE is a manual from Sida on gender mainstreaming of aid work. Several of the tips are useful in other collaborative contexts (Sida, 2009, *Gender Equality in Practice. A Manual for Sida*, the Gender Equality Team).

GENDER MAINSTREAMING is a report on gender mainstreaming by the Council of Europe (CoE, 1998, *Gender mainstreaming: Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices*. Final Report of Activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming).

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT is a themed issue of the magazine *InfoRegio Panorama*, published by the European Commission (*InfoRegio Panorama*, No 22, June 2007, "Gender mainstreaming and regional development", European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy).

TOOLKIT GENDER IN EU-FUNDED RESEARCH is a toolbox from the European Commission on gender mainstreaming of research funded by the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The toolbox is useful also in other EU projects, such as Interreg (European Commission, 2009, *Toolkit Gender in EU-funded Research*, Directorate-General for Research, EUR 23857 EN).

Should you wish to continue working with gender equality in your project? Sida's Baltic Sea Unit offers workshops in gender equality training and guidance for individual projects. The experiences gained at these workshops will provide the basis for a revised edition of the guidance manual. Please let us have your views and suggestions for improvements!

Feel free to contact at
ostersjoenheten@sida.se.

Sida's Baltic Sea Unit develops cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. We have a special assignment from the Government based on Swedish interests to support activities in the fields of the Environment & Energy, Social and Health issues and Civil Security. Our projects and activities aim at facilitating the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.