

*PLUS 2A CHANGE ...?*  
GENDER MAINSTREAMING OF THE  
IRISH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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*PLUS 2A CHANGE ...?*  
GENDER MAINSTREAMING  
OF THE IRISH NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Anne-Marie McGauran

Studies in Public Policy: 15

The Policy Institute is grateful to the Public Policy Research Unit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for generously funding the printing costs for this publication.



2005

First published 2005  
by The Policy Institute  
Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland  
[www.policyinstitute.tcd.ie](http://www.policyinstitute.tcd.ie)

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A catalogue record is available for this book from  
the British Library

ISBN 1-902585-13-5

Cover design by Ed Miliano, Dublin  
Origination by Carole Lynch, Sligo  
Printed by ColourBooks Limited, Dublin

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## Abbreviations

BMW OP	Border, Midland and Western Operational Programme
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CI	Community Initiative (a programme funded solely by the European Union)
CION	European Commission
CSF	Community Support Framework
DG	Directorate Générale (division of the European Commission)
DJELR	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
EMPHRD OP	Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme
EOSICC	Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee
ESI OP	Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GAD	Gender and Development
GIA	Gender Impact Assessment
GMS	Gender mainstream/gender mainstreaming
HPs	Horizontal principles (apply to all programmes in the NDP)
IBs	Implementing bodies
MAs	Managing authorities
MCs	Monitoring committees
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NDP	National Development Plan, 2000 to 2006
NSW	National Strategy for Women
NWCI	National Women's Council of Ireland
OP	Operational Programme
PfA	Beijing Platform for Action
PSOP	Productive Sector Operational Programme
QCS	Quality Customer Service
RPF	Role Profile Form (outlines work duties of civil service staff)
SandE OP	Southern and Eastern Operational Programme

SMI	Strategic Management Initiative (to reform Irish public sector)
Strategy Statements	These outline the work goals of each Irish Government Department
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WID	Women in Development

## Executive summary

This paper examines the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland and the challenges facing it, and recommends a number of mechanisms to overcome these challenges.

### **Implementing gender mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming (GMS) means incorporating a gender equality perspective into mainstream policies as these are developed, implemented and evaluated. It is a new strategy to promote equal opportunities between women and men and its emergence in Ireland is largely attributable to its promotion by the European Commission. In Ireland, gender mainstreaming is required for all policies and programmes funded through the €51bn *National Development Plan 2000 to 2006* (NDP), which is part-funded by the European Union Structural Funds.

Gender mainstreaming in Ireland is implemented in the NDP through nine specific commitments.

- 1 Monitoring committees (which oversee progress in NDP spending) will include a representative for equal opportunities.
- 2 Gender balance will be promoted on all monitoring committees.
- 3 Equal opportunities will be a criterion for project selection in all NDP measures.
- 4 Gender disaggregated indicators to assess the impact of programmes and measures on equal opportunities will be developed, where appropriate and feasible.
- 5 Equal opportunities will be a requirement in all evaluations to be undertaken under the NDP.
- 6 Documents for each Programme in the NDP will contain sectoral analysis addressing and summarising the impact of the policies on equal opportunities.
- 7 A unit will be established in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to monitor and advise on gender mainstreaming.
- 8 A unit in the Department of Education and Science will carry out similar work to that described in point 7 in

relation to the education sector.

- 9 A horizontal co-ordinating committee will be established to promote and co-ordinate equal opportunities.

In addition, Government Guidelines on Gender Impact Assessment of the NDP include a three-step gender impact assessment form to be completed for the majority of the 130 measures funded by the NDP.

### **Progress in implementing gender mainstreaming**

Each of the above commitments has been operationalised since the implementation of the NDP in early 2000. However, the progress in relation to achieving each of them is quite uneven.

- Each of the seven main monitoring committees includes a representative for equal opportunities. However, only one of the seven main monitoring committees has a gender balance of 40:60, as recommended by the Government for state boards.
- 'Equal opportunities' is a criterion for project selection in just 37% of measures and sub-measures in the NDP. In addition, little information is available on how this requirement is operationalised and on the weight given to this criterion when making funding decisions.
- Gender disaggregated indicators are included in only 44% of measures and sub-measures in the NDP.
- 'Equal opportunities' was a criterion in the 2003 Mid-Term Evaluations of the NDP programmes. In two such evaluations, the analysis is comprehensive and followed up by recommendations. However, in two others, the analysis of gender mainstreaming is very weak and a number of the evaluations contain no recommendations to support more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming.
- Documents for each Programme in the NDP do contain a paragraph on equal opportunities, but in most of these the analysis of gender inequalities is very weak.
- Units have been established in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and in the Department of Education and Science to promote and monitor gender mainstreaming.

- A horizontal co-ordinating committee to promote and co-ordinate equal opportunities in the NDP has been established.
- Gender impact assessment forms were completed for all NDP measures where this was required. However, analysis of a sample of the forms indicated that less than one quarter of the measures included commitments to address gender inequalities in their specific policy area.

### **Barriers to the implementation of gender mainstreaming**

This analysis of gender mainstreaming seeks to identify why its implementation within the NDP has occurred in such an uneven way. There are several contributory factors. First, there are difficulties in relation to the level of knowledge pertaining to gender equality within the policy-making system. Knowledge of gender mainstreaming among policy makers is very low. Consultation with external (i.e. external to the civil service) groups in order to increase knowledge on gender equality issues is rare, particularly at policy implementation stage.

The focus and structure of the policy-making system also lead to difficulties. Policy-making is generally economic, rather than 'people' focused, and a strategic evaluation culture that analyses policy impacts, particularly on people, is under-developed. This leaves little space for analysis of policy impacts on gender equality. In addition, policy development and implementation are compartmentalised so that responsibility for issues (e.g. transport, childcare, training) is usually allocated to one body or agency. This means that it is difficult to address and combat issues that crosscut a number of policy areas, such as gender equality.

The priority accorded to gender mainstreaming in the NDP is unclear, with the exact status of the 'horizontal principles' (which include gender mainstreaming) undefined vis-à-vis 'vertical principles' in the NDP (which include its objectives). The lack of sanctions or incentives to encourage implementation of gender mainstreaming exacerbates this, as does the lack of Cabinet or other high-level structures to promote mainstreaming. Accountability for implementation of gender mainstreaming is also very diffuse, with no individual senior managers responsible for its implementation.

Finally, the Gender Equality Unit (established to promote and monitor gender mainstreaming in the NDP overall) has low staff

numbers and is relatively peripheral to the central policy-making processes, which reduces its influence and ability to encourage full implementation of gender mainstreaming.

### **Policy recommendations to advance gender mainstreaming**

This paper makes a number of recommendations to overcome the difficulties identified above. The following are those that are suggested for implementation as soon as possible, due to their feasibility and likely positive impact.

- Increase political awareness of GMS by establishing a Cabinet Committee to progress GMS or adding such a remit to an existing Cabinet Committee.
- Reform of the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordination Committee (EOSICC) to allow for the greater inclusion of political members and to allow more strategic work to be carried out with NDP programme managing authorities.
- Provide financial incentives, possibly via the EOSICC, to encourage implementation of gender mainstreaming in NDP policies.
- Include gender mainstreaming of policies in the strategy statements of NDP-funded Government Departments, possibly through the *National Strategy for Women*.
- Develop goals/indicators for increased gender equality in society generally and link these with the *National Strategy for Women*.
- Link responsibility for the implementation of gender mainstreaming to senior managers by including this in the 'deliverables' listed in their Role Profile Forms.
- Prioritise policy areas to gender mainstream.
- Complete a second round of gender impact assessment forms for NDP measures.
- Increase the number of gender mainstreaming experts available to advise on and guide this work either through their direct employment in Government Departments or the creation of a network of consultants available to advise on gender mainstreaming.
- Communicate information and tools on gender mainstreaming more effectively to policy makers, policy implementers and politicians.

The recommendations prioritised above aim to promote more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in five key ways.

- By promoting strategic political links.
- By identifying goals and accountability and allocating responsibility to specific agencies, and individuals within these, for the implementation of gender mainstreaming.
- By providing incentives to managing authorities and implementing bodies to implement gender mainstreaming.
- By providing more effective communication and information on gender mainstreaming to all those who are in a position to promote gender mainstreaming.
- By increasing the number of staff to support and advise on the implementation of gender mainstreaming.



## Acknowledgements

This paper was written while I was on secondment from the NDP Gender Equality Unit, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to The Policy Institute, Trinity College Dublin from June to December 2003. I am very grateful to The Policy Institute for providing me with this opportunity, and also to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for facilitating it. In particular, I would like to thank the Public Policy Research Unit, Sylva Langford, and John O'Callaghan for their support.

I am very grateful to the staff of the NDP Gender Equality Unit, Brian McMahon, Elaine Greene, Julia Long and Mark Manto, who provided great support and encouragement both during this fellowship and at other times.

In Trinity College, I would like to thank Gemma Carney for many interesting discussions and ideas. In The Policy Institute, I am grateful to Sinead Riordan for her editing assistance, and the two referees of this paper for their useful and thought-provoking comments.

I am also very appreciative of the time and energy given by those I interviewed to discussions on gender mainstreaming, and by those who attended the seminar on this research and provided interesting ideas and comments. Thank you also to those who shared information and ideas through email and in person.

The Policy Institute is grateful to the Public Policy Research Unit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for generously funding the printing costs for this publication.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and The Policy Institute, Trinity College Dublin.



## Introduction and research outline

*[New] norms never enter a normative vacuum. They have to compete with existing values and with bureaucratic inertia ... they are adapted to the organizational context, often diluted, by a negotiation process (Elgstrom, 2000:461).*

### 1.1 The research problem

This paper examines the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the National Development Plan in Ireland, the challenges facing it and recommends a number of mechanisms to overcome these challenges.

Gender mainstreaming (GMS) means incorporating a gender equality perspective into mainstream policies as these are developed, implemented and evaluated. It is a new strategy to promote equal opportunities between women and men, and its emergence in Ireland is largely attributable to its promotion by the European Commission. In Ireland, gender mainstreaming is required for policies and programmes funded by the €51bn *National Development Plan 2000 to 2006* (NDP), a Plan that is part-funded by the European Union Structural Funds. The requirements for gender mainstreaming in the NDP are quite comprehensive. They include targets on equal opportunities as well as provision of support to policy makers to assist them in incorporating gender equality issues into policy development and implementation. Specific engagement with gender equality is required in a number of areas of Irish policy making. For example, memoranda to government must include a section outlining the impact of the relevant policy on women. However, the memoranda are subject to Cabinet confidentiality and these sections cannot be reviewed. In addition, the Cabinet Handbook outlining the contents of the memoranda does not require the attention to gender equality required for NDP policy areas (Department of the Taoiseach, 1998). The Department of Education and Science also has a legal requirement to promote gender equality in all areas of its work, and this has been

incorporated into its most recent Strategy Statement, published in 2003 (Department of Education and Science, 2003). However, this comprehensive requirement is new and thus it is too early to review its application. Finally, in the area of health, the Women's Health Council was set up in 1997 to advise the Minister for Health and Children on all aspects of women's health, and has a remit with regard to gender mainstreaming Irish health policy. An evaluation of this work is nearing completion and will be published in late 2004. Despite this range of initiatives and developments however, gender mainstreaming in the NDP remains the most comprehensive application of gender mainstreaming to a wide range of policy development and implementation in Ireland to date, and accordingly this paper focuses on gender mainstreaming in the NDP as a broad case study of this approach in Ireland.

The NDP Gender Equality Unit ('the Unit') is based in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) and was established to advise NDP policy makers and implementers on how to gender mainstream the NDP policies and programmes.<sup>1</sup> Two types of advice are provided by the Unit:

1. Advice to policy makers on how to meet the technical requirements laid down in the NDP to implement gender mainstreaming.
2. Advice to policy makers on broad gender inequalities in NDP policy areas and ways to address these.

However, the progress to implement gender mainstreaming, both on a technical level and more broadly, has been quite poor. This paper considers the following questions and is structured in the following manner:

- What is gender mainstreaming? (Chapter 2)
- What commitments to gender mainstreaming are incorporated into Irish policies? (Chapter 3)
- What is the progress to date on implementing gender mainstreaming in Irish policies? (Chapters 4 and 5)
- What are the challenges facing the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming? (Chapters 6 and 7)
- What factors might assist more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming? (Chapter 8)

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<sup>1</sup> The author of this paper worked for four years as the head of the NDP Gender Equality Unit in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Research has explored the implementation of gender mainstreaming and related strategies in developing countries. However, in the European context, where gender mainstreaming is a relatively new phenomenon, Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000:438) note that 'on the record of national implementation... little or no data is yet available'. This paper goes some way towards rectifying this gap by providing useful information on the implementation of gender mainstreaming within Ireland.

## **1.2 Research methods and sources of information**

The information outlined in this paper is based on a number of sources. First, literature on gender mainstreaming implementation in various organisations and countries was reviewed. This provides a base for the discussions in Chapters 2, 6, 7 and 8. A broad range of Irish policy documents were read and reviewed, including the *National Development Plan 2000-2006* and related policy documents, as well as the bi-annual progress reports on implementation presented to the various committees operating under the NDP. This review informs the content of Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders in the NDP, including those working on gender equality policy in the NDP, those implementing NDP programmes, representatives of women's groups and a representative of the European Commission. A list of the organisations interviewed, and the interview schedule, is included in the Appendices. These interviews took on average two hours each, and were carried out face to face, with the exception of the interview with the European Commission, which was carried out by telephone. Participant observation was also used as a source of information, although this information is backed up where possible by relevant documentation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Participant observation was used by the author because, in her former capacity as Head of the NDP Gender Equality Unit, she was heavily involved in the activities undertaken by the Unit to gender mainstream the National Development Plan.

## What is gender mainstreaming?

*Mainstreaming as a concept obviously reflects the desire for women to be ... part of the mainstream ... women [would] not only become part of the mainstream, they [would] also reorient the nature of the mainstream (Jahan, 1995:13).*

### 2.1 A definition of gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is defined as the ‘incorporation [of] a gender equality perspective into all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making’ (Council of Europe, 1998). The European Commission notes that this perspective should be incorporated into policies ‘when defining and implementing them’.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.2 The development of equal opportunities strategies

Gender mainstreaming can be seen as the ‘third round’ of strategies to promote gender equality, following on from the first round – legislation to ensure equal opportunity – and the second round – positive action to promote equality of opportunity (Rees, 1998; 1999). Legislation passed by the European Union (EU) and many other states during the 1970s in particular, focused on providing equality of opportunity for women as well as men. It recognised that women and men did not have equal access to the main spheres in society. In particular, women were poorly represented in employment (particularly at senior levels) and in decision-making, and earned less than men. In a number of cases, legislation ensured that women could not be paid the same as men, or even compete for the same jobs. In the EU, the first round of gender equality directives focused on providing equal access for women and men to employment, training and promotion (in 1976)<sup>4</sup> and on providing equal pay for equal work (in 1975).<sup>5</sup> Positive action followed these initiatives

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<sup>3</sup> See: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equ\\_opp/gms\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/gms_en.html)

<sup>4</sup> Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions.

because it was recognised that, once opportunities were open to all, it was difficult for women to compete at the same level as men. Positive action sought to redress gender inequalities arising from mainstream policies through small-scale projects focused particularly on women to allow them to progress. For example, the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) positive action programmes, funded by the EU in the 1990s, funded training for women in areas such as broadcasting, enterprise and rural development – areas in which women’s representation was traditionally low and where it was particularly difficult for women to enter and compete equally with men.

However, both equality legislation and positive action are ‘liberal’ styles of addressing inequality, in that they do not aim to change the existing system to allow the disadvantaged group to be more easily incorporated. Instead, the onus is on the individual to enter and succeed within institutions and organisations that were not drawn up with their needs in mind. The result is that the outcomes for women and men are often not equal, or even equally beneficial. For example, despite the existence of equal opportunity and equal pay legislation for almost three decades, Irish women are paid 80% of what Irish men earn per hour.<sup>6</sup> Women still constitute a very small proportion of those in senior positions in companies for example, only 2% of chief executive officers in large Irish private sector firms are female (NDP Gender Equality Unit databank, 2002). It is argued that one reason for the difficulty that women face in entering senior positions, and so earning higher wages, is a requirement for a high number of working hours. This requirement is often seen as particularly difficult for women to fulfil, because they are more likely than men to be responsible for domestic and/or caring work and responsibilities.<sup>7</sup> The requirement for long working hours is arguably one that a

<sup>5</sup> Council Directive 75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women.

<sup>6</sup> This figure relates to the average gross hourly earnings of women as a percentage of the average gross hourly earnings of men among all paid employees aged 15-64 in paid employment for 15+ hours per week. Source: Eurostat European Community Household Panel survey user database, December 2001, at, [www.ndpgenderequality.ie/statdata/2002](http://www.ndpgenderequality.ie/statdata/2002)

<sup>7</sup> In a 1990 Eurobarometer survey, 84% of Irish men stated that they did no domestic work at all. In the EU as a whole at the time, which had higher female labour force participation rates than Ireland, men were more likely to carry out some domestic work. Nevertheless, 62% of European men stated that they did no domestic work at all. Of the 38% that did, only 25% cooked or did housework. The most popular domestic task carried out by these men was shopping (61% of the 38%), followed by washing up (41% of the 28%) (Insee, 1995: 171).

system largely dominated by males imposes on females working within it. As a result, even though women have access to the system, the outcomes for women are less positive because their needs and daily life patterns are not taken into account in the way in which the (male designed) system gives out rewards.

In contrast, gender mainstreaming as an approach aims to provide more equally beneficial outcomes for women as well as men. It does so by analysing mainstream policies from a gender perspective, and ultimately changing policies if this analysis indicates gender inequalities that need to be addressed in that area. This allows inequalities that are indirectly caused or supported by mainstream institutions to be made visible and addressed, with the goal of altering such inequalities in order to support a more equal society for women and men. This is a more radical approach to equal opportunities, in that it aims to alter the mainstream institutions to ensure that women and men derive equally beneficial outcomes from them.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that gender mainstreaming is a strategy that interacts with positive action and equality legislation to promote gender equality (Council of Europe, 1998; Mazey, 2001). It should not be the only strategy used to promote gender equality. Booth and Bennett (2002) have described this approach as a 'three legged stool', because gender mainstreaming requires all three types of action to succeed in its goal of altering the mainstream. This is particularly important to ensure that issues that primarily affect women are focused on.

However, gender mainstreaming also requires a focus on men, because the strategy is based on altering gendered patterns in society and consequently needs to focus on patterns in policy that institutionalise certain ways of life for men and women. Existing disadvantages for men arising from gendered patterns in society include the fact that men may have less time to spend with their families than women due to work commitments. A perceived pressure to be 'macho' can be linked to higher rates of early school leaving among boys than girls, and to higher rates of crime and drug abuse among males. However, care needs to be taken to ensure, as Macdonald et al (1997:11) have pointed out, that 'gender' does not become a neutral concept that obscures the fact that gender relations in society are hierarchical with men at the top.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on how GMS has developed see: Mazey, 2001, and Council of Europe, 1998.



### 2.3 'Gender mainstreaming' a policy area

A key tool used to 'gender mainstream' a policy area is 'gender impact assessment'. This is defined as 'examining policy proposals to see whether they will affect women and men differently, with a view to adapting these proposals to make sure that any discriminatory effects are neutralised' (European Commission, 1998:29). The Council of Europe report of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming (1998) outlines a number of gender impact assessment tools, most of which contain similar elements. For example, SMART (a Simple Method to Assess the Relevance of policies To gender) which was developed in the Netherlands, asks 'are there differences between women and men in the field of the policy proposal (in terms of rights, resources, positions, representations, values and norms)?' (Council of Europe, 1998:41). The Gender Impact Assessment tool developed in Flanders asks for the following information: 1) the current situation of both sexes in the policy area; 2) the effects of proposals on women and men; and 3) how to intercept negative effects. Finally, the Three R's method used in Sweden asks that the resources, realia (reality of everyday lives), and representation of women and men in the relevant policy area be outlined. All of these tools show that it is necessary to look at the resources, everyday life and representation of women and men in an area, in order to assess the likely impacts of a policy on women and men. If negative impacts are likely to occur, effective GMS must address these impacts. Examples of gender mainstreaming in two different policy areas, namely transport and early school leaving, are outlined below and discussed with respect to their approach to women's and men's resources, everyday lives and representation.

#### 2.3.1 Gender mainstreaming transport policy

With regard to the resources of women and men, Irish survey data show that 46% of women and 63% of men have driving licences (NDP Gender Equality Unit, 2001a). Therefore, adequate funding needs to be provided for both public and private transport, because women rely more on the former and men on the latter.

With reference to the reality of the everyday lives of men and women, Irish survey data show that in an average week, women travel most often to the supermarket, followed by visits to family/friends; while men travel most often to leisure facilities, followed by the work place (NDP Gender Equality Unit, 2001a). In

policy terms this means that women and men need transport to different services. For women, public transport is likely to be particularly useful if it is to local services; while men are more likely to need such transport to work facilities. Women are more likely to need transport provision during the day, while men are more likely to need it at morning rush hour and in the evening.

With regard to male and female representation in decision-making, it is necessary to have a balance of women and men – for example among urban transport planners; among those designing buses, trains, cars etc; among those making decisions on what is to be funded by transport policy; and among those in public transport deciding what routes are selected to run, and at what times – to ensure that the transport needs of both women and men are heard in the relevant decision-making forums.

### *2.3.2 Gender mainstreaming policies to tackle early school leaving*

With regard to the resources of women and men, Irish data show that in 1998, over 60% of early school leavers in Ireland were male (ESRI, 2000). Boys also have poorer school results than girls (Department of Education and Science, 2002). However, girls who leave school early are more likely to be unemployed than their male counterparts (ESRI, 1998).

With reference to the reality of the everyday lives of males and females, research appears to indicate that men/boys and women/girls seem to have different learning styles. Pedagogical and examination methods which combine a number of these learning styles are most likely to lead to successful outcomes for both girls and boys in school, and their use should be encouraged. Boys leaving school early may enter unskilled work and need to be targeted for continued education. This could take place through the workplace, because it is women who predominately access adult education in the community. Girls leaving school early for example, those who leave due to teenage pregnancy, may need particular supports to continue their education such as access to suitable childcare.

With regard to male and female representation in decision-making, there is a recognised need for a more even balance of male and female teachers, particularly at primary level.

## 2.4 What is needed to make GMS work?

The examples outlined above indicate the basic methodology of gender mainstreaming. However, research on its effective implementation indicates that a variety of tools are needed to operationalise it effectively in policy-making systems. The most comprehensive research carried out to date on implementation of gender mainstreaming-type strategies has focused on development aid organisations, where two approaches have been followed to promote gender equality – WID (women in development) and GAD (gender and development) policies. WID is similar to positive action; while GAD is similar to GMS (see for example Jahan, 1995; Macdonald et al, 1997; Geisler et al, 1999). A number of researchers have also looked at the progress of ‘femocrats’ (the name given to feminists working in the state bureaucracy) in Australia, where feminists have been working within the state bureaucracy to promote gender equality in government policies since the early 1970s (see Eisenstein, 1990, 1996; Sawer, 1991). Meanwhile, gender mainstreaming in the EU is comparatively new and the amount of comprehensive research focusing on its effective implementation in Europe is relatively low (as noted by Booth and Bennett, 2002). The body of research is however increasing, and a number of European reports have looked at the prerequisites for GMS (see Council of Europe, 1998; Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000; Woodward, 2003; Mackay and Bilton, 2000). Overall, the various publications outline two main prerequisites for GMS, namely those that are (a) ‘methodological’ and (b) ‘structural’. A number also combine these pre-requisites to look at the best practice procedures/strategies that can be used to comprehensively implement GMS.

### 2.4.1 ‘Methodological’ requirements

‘Methodological’ requirements refer to the ‘tools’ necessary to implement gender mainstreaming. There is basic agreement on what these tools should be among gender mainstreaming researchers. The agreed requirements include:

#### (i) *Statistics disaggregated by gender*

Unless statistics relevant to different policy areas are disaggregated by gender (and also gender relevant, see Chapter 4), it is not possible to display gender inequalities to policy makers. Such

statistics are also important to act as a benchmark and allow targets for improvement to be set. Therefore, most GMS researchers note that work to collect and disseminate gender disaggregated statistics is a key pre-requisite for GMS implementation (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000; Rees, 1999; Council of Europe, 1998; Jahan, 1995; Mazey, 2001; Mackay and Bilton, 2000).

*(ii) Research, manuals and handbooks*

Research is necessary to analyse and explain gender equality issues in various policy areas and particularly to outline mechanisms to address inequalities (Council of Europe, 1998; Jahan, 1995; Mackay and Bilton, 2000). Such work needs to be written up into manuals and handbooks to provide policy makers with written guidance on how to carry out GMS in their work (Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002; Council of Europe, 1998; Jahan, 1995; Mazey, 2001).

*(iii) Training on gender equality*

Training is widely recognised as an essential element of GMS implementation because it enables policy makers to gain knowledge of gender equality issues and how to address inequalities in their area of work (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000; Macdonald et al, 1997; Rees, 1999).

*(iv) Gender impact assessment*

Rigorous gender impact assessment (GIA) of policies as they are developed, implemented and evaluated is vital to ensure that gender inequalities are identified and addressed where possible. This is a core part of actually 'doing' GMS (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000; Council of Europe, 1998; Jahan, 1995).

*(v) Monitoring and evaluation*

To ensure that gender inequalities continue to be identified and addressed in policies, it is necessary to monitor progress towards goals set for greater gender equality, and to include gender equality issues in evaluation of policy development and implementation (Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002; Rees, 1999; Council of Europe, 1998; Macdonald et al, 1997; Jahan, 1995; Mackay and Bilton, 2000).

#### 2.4.2 'Structural' requirements

Macdonald et al (1997) are clear, as are all those who have looked at effective implementation of GMS strategies (for example, Woodward, 2003; Jahan, 1995; Levy, 1999), that both methodological tools and political and organisational change at structural level are necessary. It is impossible to alter the focus, outcomes and budgets of policy making without such change. An important way of changing organisational structures is to include 'new' people in the policy making and implementation arena. In terms of GMS, the following changes are advocated:

##### *i) The appointment of officials responsible for GMS*

This requirement is essentially for two kinds of officials. Firstly, people with gender equality expertise must be employed within policy-making bureaucracies (Council of Europe, 1998; Macdonald et al, 1997; Woodward, 2003; Mackay and Bilton, 2000). Secondly, accountability for the effective implementation of GMS must rest with a particular individual, preferably a senior manager (Council of Europe, 1998; Macdonald et al, 1997).

##### *ii) Consultation and participation*

To ensure that the experiences and realities of women's lives enter into policy making and development, many GMS researchers advise that there should be greater consultation with, and participation of, women's groups in these processes (Rees, 1999; Council of Europe, 1998; Jahan, 1995; Mazey, 2001; Mackay and Bilton, 2000). Some also advocate a greater range of partners in consultation such as researchers and experts, NGOs, the media and supranational institutions (Council of Europe, 1998).

##### *iii) Involvement of women in decision-making*

Another mechanism to ensure that the experiences of women's lives enter into policy-making and development is to increase the proportion of women in decision-making positions (Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002; Council of Europe, 1998; Macdonald et al, 1997; Mazey, 2001; Jahan, 1995).

To ensure that change has a good opportunity to be embedded into organisational structures, the following are also necessary:

*iv) Budgets*

Secure and realistic financial resources must be available to underpin the methodological and structural requirements outlined above to further promote gender mainstreaming (Jahan, 1995; Mackay and Bilton, 2000; Macdonald et al, 1997).

*v) Political will and commitment*

‘Strong and sustained political will is probably the single most important factor for successful implementation’ (Mackay and Bilton, 2000:2) and many other researchers have also highlighted the importance of this for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming (Woodward, 2003; Levy, 1999; Macdonald et al, 1997; Jahan, 1995; and Mazey, 2001). In this context, it is also very useful if grassroots women’s groups pressurise politicians to commit to and implement gender mainstreaming (Sawer, 1991; Jahan, 1995; Levy, 1999).

*vi) Active context specific ways to change*

Macdonald et al state that ‘with regard to gender, profound, transforming change cannot really be achieved in an organisation without changing organisational culture’ (1997:113). Change in the structures and procedures of an organisation, and in the learning and attitude of its members, is key for effective gender mainstreaming. This change must be tailored to and ‘owned’ by the organisation, facilitated by a catalytic change agent, and recognised as a long-term process. The process of change must also involve men.

*vii) Equality machinery*

A number of researchers consider this factor, for example Woodward (2003) notes that the location of the office to promote gender equality determines the extent to which it can influence change. The Council of Europe (1998) report considers that existing ‘equality machinery’ is important for GMS implementation. Mackay and Bilton (2000) include the most comprehensive discussion of these issues in their report on the Commonwealth Gender Management System, which outlines comprehensive structures, mechanisms and processes for an ‘enabling environment’ to promote gender equality in mainstream policies. The structures include:

- a lead agency (such as a Ministry or Office for the Status of Women)

- a gender management team (with representatives of key government ministries, the lead agency and civil society)
- gender 'focal points' (providing advice in each ministry or department)
- an inter-ministerial steering committee (whose members include the gender focal points)
- a parliamentary gender caucus (comprising committed members of the legislature)
- a gender equality commission/council (with representatives of civil society).

Structures such as these have been found to be useful and effective mechanisms to harness political commitment and embed GMS into policy making and delivery.

## **2.5 Procedures/strategies for implementation of GMS**

Both the Council of Europe (1998) and Jahan (1995) outline specific procedural steps, combining tools and structures, which can be taken to implement GMS. These are as follows:

- create the necessary gender equality machinery
- set out agreed objectives for gender mainstreaming work (short- and long-term), with targets
- identify the person or group in charge
- put finance in place to support the work arising from gender mainstreaming activities
- choose the policy area to gender mainstream and analyse this, having decided what tools are needed
- monitor progress.

Meanwhile, at all times, the following are also needed:

- the development of partnerships to strengthen gender expertise in all areas, and to promote women in decision making
- sustained political will at all levels.

These steps can be considered a summary of best practice for effective implementation of GMS.

An outline of the policies and strategies that are in place to implement gender mainstreaming in Ireland will be considered in the next chapter.

## Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Irish policy

*The impact of [gender] mainstreaming depends ... on the specific form which mainstreaming initiatives take within specific contexts* (Beveridge et al, 2000:391).

### 3.1 Gender equality and policy in Ireland

Ireland has long been viewed as one of the more patriarchal countries in the EU (Smyth, 1992; Gardiner, 1997). Mazey (2000) argues that in Ireland the Constitution limits the policy-making role of women's agencies to areas that do not clash with women's perceived role within the family and that this contributes to the weak incorporation of feminism into Irish institutions. The strong influence of Catholicism on Irish institutions is also argued to have contributed to this, especially when combined with low rates of female labour force participation, constitutional bans on abortion and, until recently, divorce (Galligan, 1998). In contrast, in countries such as Australia, the Netherlands, Norway and Denmark, the state is defined as a site of social justice and has the structural capacity to institutionalise new demands for equality. This, allied with reform policies in unions and parties, has assisted centralised feminist agencies to be successful in integrating gender equity principles into various policy areas in these countries (Mazey, 2000).

However, the 1990s were a decade of particular change for women in Ireland. Female labour force participation increased markedly, particularly amongst younger mothers. In 1986, 31% of women were in the labour force, compared to 44% in 1999 (Donnelly et al, 2000:24). Among school students, girls consistently out-performed boys in state examinations, particularly the Leaving Certificate (Department of Education and Science, 2002; 2001). In addition, there was a significant number of changes in legislative and policy frameworks, which served to promote gender equality. Some of these changes were in response to EU legislation (e.g. the directive on parental leave), while others were in response to



pressures from within Irish society. In relation to the latter, many changes arose from the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Commission for the Status of Women report to Government in 1993 (CSW2, 1993). The government-appointed Commission reviewed the position of women in Ireland and made recommendations on action needed to achieve women's rights. By 2000, over 75% of these recommendations had been implemented, including the following:

- the introduction of divorce
- the introduction of employment equality and equal status legislation (outlawing discrimination in employment and provision of services and facilities on the grounds of gender and eight other grounds)
- the establishment of an Equality Authority to oversee compliance with and advise on the employment equality and equal status legislation
- the outlawing of sexual harassment
- changes in family law
- changes in legislation to counter domestic violence (Galligan et al, 2000).

The 1990s and early 2000s also saw:

- the introduction of [unpaid] parental leave
- the introduction of a national minimum wage
- an increase in maternity leave (both paid and unpaid)
- changes in social security laws to ensure gender equality
- the individualisation of income tax for married couples
- the setting of targets to increase the proportion of women nominated by the state onto public boards
- increased state funding to the National Women's Council of Ireland (an umbrella group of women's organisations)
- EU and Irish state funding for positive action for women
- the development of state policy on childcare and funding for childcare provision
- the publication of a *National Plan for Women*
- the defeat, in 2002, of a referendum which would have further restricted the availability of abortion in Ireland.

The Equality Division established in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) in 1997 oversaw many of these

changes. This division is responsible for developing the policy and legal framework to advance equal opportunities, and with regard to gender focuses in particular on equality in the area of employment and family friendly policies.<sup>9</sup> Within the DJELR, special responsibility for equality is given to a Minister of State. The concept of equality is also represented in other arenas of the policymaking process and, in many ways, changes in these arenas in the 1990s allowed a stronger voice for gender equality to emerge. Since 1987, key areas of Irish government policy have been shaped by social partnership agreements. At first, these agreements were negotiated and agreed between government, employer bodies, trade unions and farmers only, but in 1996, social partnership was broadened to include community and voluntary groups. Eight representative bodies were included in the community and voluntary pillar, including the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi). This provided a valuable opportunity for the NWCi to feed into the policy process and the social partnership agreements signed in the late 1990s, *Partnership 2000* and the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*, both contained a number of significant commitments to further gender (and other forms of) equality (Mullally and Smith, 2000; Galligan et al, 2000). Bangura (1997) has argued that women often gain under the corporatist welfare model, due to the existence of strong labour unions and macro-economic discourse that is sensitive to equity issues in bargaining. Judging by the key positive changes for women outlined above, it seems that this may have been the case in Ireland in the 1990s.

In 1995, the Irish government attended the United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women. At this conference, all 189 countries attending signed up to the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA), a voluntary non-binding commitment to a ten-year action agenda for governments, the international community, NGOs and institutions to work towards the advancement of women. It outlines goals in twelve critical areas of concern: women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence

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<sup>9</sup> Areas of work to promote gender equality include the NDP Gender Equality Unit, the positive action measure Equality for Women, work on the male/female wage differential, monitoring gender balance on state boards and international commitments (for example, those arising through Ireland's participation in the EU and UN).

against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, and the rights of the girl child. To implement this commitment, the Department of Equality and Law Reform published a report on the implementation of the PfA in 1996, followed in 2002 by the National Plan for Women. The latter outlined current government commitments to advance the status of women in Irish society under the twelve critical areas of concern (Government of Ireland, 2002). A document entitled *Aspirations of Women* was also produced which compiled the results of a nation-wide consultation process with Irish women on the types of policies that they would like to see introduced to promote the position of women in Irish society (Genesis Europe, 2002). The social partnership agreement for 2003 to 2005, *Sustaining Progress*, also included a commitment to the development of a five-year National Strategy for Women (Government of Ireland, 2003).

### **3.2 Gender mainstreaming and policy in Ireland**

The importance of the EU in promoting gender equality in Irish policy was previously mentioned. The EU has also played an important role in introducing GMS into Irish policy. The Treaty of Amsterdam requires that the European Community 'aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women' in all activities referred to in Article Three of the Treaty, which covers a wide range of policy areas, including employment, economic and social policies (Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997). This introduced the concept of gender mainstreaming in EU policies and this requirement was then more specifically included in the European Union Structural Fund regulations. These require that 'the operations of the Funds are consistent with other Community policies and operations, in particular ... equality between men and women' (EC 1260/99, Article 2). Ireland is a net beneficiary of the Structural Funds for regional development, and has incorporated the Structural Fund monies received from the European Union into the NDP. This provides funding of over €51 billion for regional development over seven years in Ireland. Although only seven per cent of this funding is from the Structural Funds (Government of Ireland, 1999), the requirement of gender mainstreaming was

adopted for all but six of the 130 measures funded through the NDP, not simply those funded by the Structural Funds.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.3 The National Development Plan, 2000 to 2006

The NDP consists of 130 measures organised into six main Operational Programmes (OPs).

- 1 Economic and Social Infrastructure (ESIOP)
- 2 Employment and Human Resource Development (EMPHRD OP)
- 3 Productive Sector (PSOP)
- 4 Two Regional programmes – one for the Border, Midland and West Region (BMW OP), and one for the Southern and Eastern region (SandE OP)
- 5 The PEACE programme, to promote peace and reconciliation between North and South.<sup>11</sup>

The funding allocated to each of the above OPs is outlined in Table 3.1.

*Table 3.1. Funding allocations in the National Development Plan*

<b>Operational Programme</b>	<b>Funding allocation (euro)</b>
Economic and Social Infrastructure	22.4 billion
Employment and Human Resource Development	12.7 billion
Productive Sector	5.8 billion
Southern and Eastern Regional	3.8 billion
Border, Midland and Western Regional	2.7 billion <sup>12</sup>
PEACE Programme (2000-2004)	100 million

*Source:* [www.ndp.ie/newndp/displayer?page=main\\_tmp\\_87441\\_20771](http://www.ndp.ie/newndp/displayer?page=main_tmp_87441_20771)

<sup>10</sup> These are water, wastewater, waste management, energy, coastal protection and roads. The reasons why these are exempt are not very clear, but it is possible that those developing the NDP saw these as measures to which it was difficult at first glance to apply a gender perspective and so exempted them.

<sup>11</sup> For information on the sub-programmes of each OP, see Appendix 1.

<sup>12</sup> The two regional programmes also include additional funding of €4.3 billion received through the CAP Rural Development Programme.

The PEACE programme is run jointly between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and is subject to different policy-making structures and approaches to the other main operational programmes. Therefore, this paper focuses only on gender mainstreaming in the ESIOP, the PSOP, the EMPHRD OP and the two Regional OPs, because these are the main programmes implementing NDP measures in the Republic of Ireland. In addition to these main OPs, there is also a much smaller OP that will be referred to later in this paper, namely the Technical Assistance OP. This provides funding for the Units established to provide for, and co-ordinate, the following supports for NDP implementation: publicity and information, evaluation, IT reporting system, financial control for the ERDF/Cohesion fund and PPP (public-private partnership) functions.

### 3.3.1 *Main documents*

A number of key documents outline the areas on which NDP funding will be spent. The first to be published was the National Development Plan itself (Government of Ireland, 1999), which outlines the economic background to the NDP, the strategies adopted to prioritise spending based on this, the funding allocations for each OP and Community Initiative and arrangements for management and implementation of programmes.<sup>13</sup> It also includes chapters outlining the objectives and spending in relation to equal opportunities, social inclusion, North-South co-operation, and rural development. However, the most important documents in terms of how the NDP is operationalised are the programme complements for each OP (see for example BMW Regional Assembly, 2001). These documents outline a number of issues for each measure in the OP, including the following:

- the conditions under which funding will be allocated
- the criteria for selection of projects under each measure (where relevant), and the composition of project selection boards

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<sup>13</sup> Community Initiatives (CIs) are programmes supported solely by the European Union. There are four in the NDP. These are Equal (which supports mainstreaming of equality), Urban II (to promote urban development in disadvantaged areas), LEADER+ (to promote rural development) and INTERREG (to promote inter-regional co-operation). The four CIs receive a total of €166m in funding.

- the organisations responsible for spending the funding and managing/monitoring spending
- the targets that are to be reached (monitored by indicators).

Of particular relevance to this paper is the fact that the programme complements also contain some analysis and commitments for each measure on its impacts on the five 'horizontal principles', so called because they apply horizontally across all programmes in the NDP. In addition to gender equality, the NDP requires the impact of all measures and programmes on four other horizontal principles to be considered. The five horizontal principles are: environment; equal opportunities;<sup>14</sup> rural development; poverty; and North-South co-operation. These programme complement documents outline the ways in which commitments to gender equality expressed in the NDP (see below) will be implemented.

### 3.3.2 *Main players*

Managing authorities, mainly government departments, manage each OP as well as the NDP as a whole. The Department of Finance has overall responsibility as the managing authority for the NDP and Community Support Framework (CSF)<sup>15</sup> as a whole. Table 3.2 identifies each OPs managing authority. Managing authorities have a variety of responsibilities but of most importance to this paper is their responsibility, as noted in the NDP, that 'the CSF and Operational Programme Monitoring Committees will have ultimate

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<sup>14</sup> The wording 'equal opportunities' in the NDP can lead to some confusion because it is not always clear how many groups equal opportunities applies to, bearing in mind that Irish equal opportunities legislation applies to nine groups. Exactly what 'equal opportunities' refers to in the NDP was clarified at the second meeting of the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee, where the following was outlined: (i) gender equality must be addressed as a statutory requirement of the Structural Fund regulations, and the Irish government decided to extend this requirement to the NDP as a whole; (ii) the equal opportunities requirement in the NDP also extends to three other target groups at which funding is directed – people with disabilities, refugees, and Travellers. This applies only to the EMPHRD OP; and (iii) the ESIOP encourages overall general efforts where possible and feasible in the equal opportunities area (see EOSICC, 2001).

<sup>15</sup> The CSF is the document agreed between the European Commission and the Irish government on spending of the EU Structural Funds. The amounts to be provided by the Funds under the Community Initiatives and by the Cohesion Fund are not covered by the CSF.

responsibility for securing the maximum application of these horizontal principles [including gender mainstreaming] within their remit' (Section 13.38: 224). Funding is passed from the managing authorities to the implementing bodies (which include government departments, state-sponsored bodies, local authorities and other organisations) and the latter implement the relevant measures of each OP.

*Table 3.2. Managing Authorities of NDP Operational Programmes*

<b>Operational Programme</b>	<b>Managing Authority</b>
NDP/CSF	Department of Finance
Economic and Social Infrastructure	Department of Environment and Local Government
Employment and Human Resource Development	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Productive Sector	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
BMW Regional	Border, Midlands and Western Regional Assembly
SandE Regional	Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly

*Source:* Government of Ireland, 1999

### 3.3.3 Main events

Twice yearly monitoring committee meetings are held for each OP at which bi-annual reports on the financial and physical progress of each measure are presented. These reports include progress on equal opportunities and the other horizontal principles, where relevant. The members of the monitoring committee are varied, and their power and number of interventions differ. Each managing authority establishes the relevant monitoring committee and various organisations are represented on the committee, including: the managing authority; the Department of Finance; government departments responsible for the implementation of the specific OP

in question; the Special EU Programmes Body (which manages the PEACE OP); regional assemblies; representatives from the four social partner pillars; appropriate statutory bodies to represent the interests of equal opportunities, the environment, poverty and rural development; the European Commission (in an advisory capacity); and the NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, the NDP Gender Equality Unit, and the NDP/CSF Information Office (the latter three bodies attend in an advisory capacity only). A representative from the European Investment Bank (EIB) may also be included. There is also a number of less key monitoring committee meetings. These include those held to co-ordinate the four horizontal principles (Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee; Rural Development Co-ordinating Committee; Environment Co-ordinating Committee) and to co-ordinate employment policies across the different OPs (the Employment Co-ordinating Committee).<sup>16</sup>

### 3.4 The NDP and gender mainstreaming

The NDP clearly states that gender mainstreaming applies to all measures in the Plan. It is widely accepted however that the foregrounding of GMS within the NDP arises primarily from the need to satisfy EU requirements, because GMS is required for all measures funded by the Structural Funds (which account for approximately 7% of all NDP measures). However, the Irish government extended this requirement to all measures within the Plan (see Appendix 2 for more details). As the discussion in Chapter 2 indicated, GMS is a broad-ranging strategy that aims to address gender inequalities in public policies. The NDP statements on gender mainstreaming are also extremely broad. However, the NDP does lay down nine specific commitments to implement the GMS requirement.

- 1 'All monitoring committees will include representatives from appropriate bodies responsible for ... equal opportunities' (Section 13.37: 224).
- 2 'Gender balance will be promoted on all monitoring committees' (Section 12.8: 211).
- 3 'Where appropriate and feasible, specific indicators to assess impact on [equal opportunities] will be

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<sup>16</sup> The latter committee no longer meets, possibly because a number of other mechanisms allow such co-ordination, e.g. the process whereby the National Employment Action Plan is put together.



- developed at programme and measure level' (Section 13.37: 224) – and 'where the nature of the assistance permits, the [monitoring] statistics will be broken down by gender' (Section 12.12: 211).
- 4 'It will be mandatory to include ... equal opportunities... among the project selection criteria for all measures' (Section 13.37: 224).
  - 5 '[Equal opportunities] will feature as [a] requirement in all evaluations to be undertaken under the Plan' (Section 13.37: 224).
  - 6 'Each of the relevant chapters in the Plan on the Operational Programmes and the two Regional Operational Programmes [is to] contain sectoral analysis addressing ... [equal opportunities]. They [will] also contain summaries of how the various policy interventions provided for in the Plan will impact on ... equal opportunities' (Section 13.20: p. 220).
  - 7 'A monitoring unit is [to be] established under the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to monitor gender mainstreaming generally and to advise on the development of appropriate indicators in this regard' (Section 13.37: 224).
  - 8 'A dedicated unit in the Department of Education and Science will in co-operation with the main unit in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform carry out similar work in relation to the education sector' (Section 13.37: 224).
  - 9 'Horizontal co-ordinating committees representative of all the management authorities for the programmes, the main implementing bodies and the appropriate bodies with overall policy responsibility for these areas will be established to promote and co-ordinate [equal opportunities]' (Section 13.37: 224).

The second, third, fourth and fifth requirements listed above mirror those of the EU Structural Funds regulations.

Furthermore, in March 2000, the Irish government approved *Guidelines on Gender Impact Assessment to Mainstream Equal Opportunities between Women and Men across all Areas of the National Development Plan 2000-2006* (Government Decision S132/25/05/002). These reinforce and operationalise the nine NDP commitments on

GMS, in two further ways.

- 1 By requiring programme complement documents to contain 'a brief description of the baseline position in relation to equal opportunities between women and men at sub-programme and measure level and, where appropriate, targets for the anticipated impact'.
- 2 By providing a gender impact assessment form to be completed for all non-exempt measures at the programming complement stage (and subject to discussion with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in relation to the Productive Sector OP). This form contains three questions:
  - a Outline the current position of men and women in the area, which this expenditure activity will address.
  - b What factors lead to women and men being affected differentially in the area being addressed by this expenditure activity?
  - c How can the factors that lead to women or men being affected differentially be addressed and changed?

Many of these commitments, particularly the Government Guidelines, are based on the report *Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds: Outline Guidelines* (Mullally, 1999) commissioned by the DJELR to identify best practice support for GMS that could be incorporated into the NDP planning process.

#### *3.4.1 Additional commitments to promote gender equality and/or mainstreaming in the NDP*

The NDP contains a number of additional commitments to promote gender equality. Specifically, under the Regional Operational Programmes, funding of €29.5m is provided for the positive action Equality for Women measure administered by the DJELR. This measure funds groups and organisations to promote equality for women, under five main strands: access to employment, education and training; career development; entrepreneurship; innovative projects for disadvantaged women aged over fifty years; and promoting gender balance in decision making. The outcomes of this positive action measure are to be mainstreamed and the DJELR is

currently considering ways in which this could most effectively be carried out. In 1999, the NDP also allocated €317.4m of funding for childcare under the two Regional OPs. This funding is divided among three sub-measures – the Capital Grant Scheme for Childcare Facilities, Support for Staffing Costs, and the Quality Improvement Programme (for staff training and development). This funding is available to both market-based and community-based childcare facilities, with a particular emphasis on the latter in disadvantaged areas. This childcare funding is seen as key to promoting equal opportunities, particularly for women, because lack of suitable childcare is consistently cited as a key barrier to female participation in education, training and employment opportunities. The Equal Community Initiative also supports a number of equality-focused projects whose outcomes are to be mainstreamed. This initiative, which is solely funded by the European Union, promotes equality and social inclusion through a variety of projects. A Mainstreaming Working Group has been set up with representatives from relevant government departments and agencies and the projects in order to share the learning identified from these projects. Because the Group first met in June 2003, the outcomes from these projects are not yet clear. Finally, at the beginning of the NDP period, Area Development Management was awarded funding from the DJELR to produce a manual on how to gender mainstream the Local Development Social Inclusion measure of the NDP. This manual (ADM, 2000) is a further tool for the gender mainstreaming part of the NDP. It provides comprehensive guidance on how to carry out gender impact assessment; the data necessary to do so; and monitoring and evaluation to ensure commitments are implemented. It was distributed to all those developing and implementing measures under the Local Development measures in the NDP.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Considering the pre-requisites for effective GMS outlined in Chapter 2, it is clear that the GMS commitments in the NDP cover or meet each of the methodological requirements. The commitments include gender-disaggregated indicators/statistics, a unit that can provide necessary gender equality expertise on how to implement GMS in different policy areas, gender impact assessment guidelines, and monitoring and evaluation.

With regard to structural pre-requisites, the picture is more mixed. The NDP provides expertise on GMS within the state bureaucracy, and a budget to support the work of this Unit. Ireland also has existing equality machinery. However, the following chapters will show that the extent of political will and commitment to GMS is ambiguous. For example, while policies to promote gender balance in decision-making both generally in government and also within the NDP exist, the results are poor. Official guidelines to encourage 40% representation of women on state boards have been in place since 1991 and while the level of representation has risen in recent years, it is still far short of achieving this target (by 2000, there was only 28% representation of women on state boards – NWCI, 2002). While consultation did take place with women's groups in relation to the NDP, this occurred mainly at a macro-level. This allows gender equality issues to be incorporated into the development of policy, but is not as useful to gender mainstream implementation of policy, where more micro-level consultation is needed. These issues will be considered in more detail in the remaining chapters.

## How specific NDP commitments on gender mainstreaming are met

*It would be erroneous to equate the existence of institutional procedures with the actual institutionalisation of WID/gender concerns (Razavi and Miller, 1995: 4).*

### 4.1 Introduction

To what extent have the National Development Plan's commitments on gender mainstreaming been met since the implementation of the Plan and the establishment of the NDP Gender Equality Unit? This chapter outlines the extent to which seven of the commitments to implement GMS in the NDP are being met. Overall, however, the review indicates a complex and mixed picture. The commitments considered in this chapter relate to indicators, project selection, gender impact assessment forms, monitoring, the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee, gender balance on monitoring committees and gender equality in evaluations. The two remaining commitments, to establish Units to advise on gender mainstreaming, are considered in more depth in Chapter 5. However, because the work of one of these Units, the NDP Gender Equality Unit, contributes to the implementation of several NDP commitments on gender mainstreaming, it will be referred to where relevant in this chapter.

### 4.2 Indicators

A key commitment to support gender mainstreaming in the NDP is the requirement that indicators for each measure be gender disaggregated where possible. Each measure in the NDP has financial indicators (which show the proportion of money spent in a given year), in addition to indicators to measure the outcomes of spending. The latter can be one of three types: (i) output (e.g. number of women and men trained); (ii) result (e.g. number of women and men gaining certification from training); and (iii)

impact (e.g. number of women and men in the labour force with qualifications). To include a gender disaggregated indicator, baseline data on the position of women and men in the area funded must be identified, targets for the proportion of women and men to benefit from the funding must be set and progress towards these gender disaggregated targets must be reported on twice yearly in the progress reports presented to the monitoring committees. The indicators were set in early 2000 when the programme complements of each OP were finalised. As a result of this work and the engagement of the managing authorities and implementing bodies, commitments to collect gender disaggregated indicators exist under various NDP measures. These commitments are outlined in the programme complements of each measure and sub-measure. Table 4.1 outlines the numbers of measures and sub-measures by OP and the extent to which they contain gender disaggregated indicators.<sup>17</sup>

Table 4.1 shows that 44% of all NDP measures and sub-measures commit to collecting at least one gender disaggregated indicator. Overall, the number of gender disaggregated indicators is however, quite low, considering that there are 177 measures and sub-measures in the NDP, many of which could disaggregate result, output and impact indicators. A key barrier to achieving this however is that a 'real' indicator requires both a baseline value and a target to allow one to measure the starting point and progress towards the target in the area. However, a number of areas have no baseline data available with a gender breakdown (e.g. business start-ups), rendering it impossible to have a target and, accordingly, a gender disaggregated indicator. In 19% of measures and sub-measures, this disadvantage was addressed through commitments by the implementing body to collecting and reporting gender disaggregated data. A further 6% have committed to developing the necessary baseline data as a first step towards developing the indicators. In the meantime, such data also indicate if there are gender inequalities in the numbers benefiting from the funding and this can then be used to argue for mechanisms to address this.

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<sup>17</sup> A number of NDP measures are split into sub-measures, and these have their own indicators. For example, the Cultural, Recreational and Sports facilities measure in the Regional OPs is split into six sub-measures, each with its own set of indicators. In order to adequately outline the extent to which gender disaggregated indicators are incorporated into the measures, Table 4.1 therefore outlines gender disaggregation of indicators in all measures and sub-measures in each OP.

However, 24% of measures and sub-measures do not commit to collecting or developing any gender disaggregated indicators. In some areas, although gender disaggregated baseline data existed, implementing bodies were loath to set targets for male and female participation in an area. As one interviewee for this research suggested, gender disaggregated targets may be avoided because they mean that one gender – usually the male – has to lose out. This is another reason for the lack of such indicators.

*Table 4.1. Inclusion of Gender Disaggregated Indicators (GDI) by Operational Programme*

<b>OP</b>	<b>Measures and sub-measures</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
ESI	Exempt from collecting GDI	7	39
	Have no GDI	11	61
	Have GDI	0	0
PS	Have no GDI	13	26
	Have no GDI but collect GD data	18	35
	Have no GDI but commit to developing GDI	6	12
	Have GDI	14	27
EMPHRD	Have no indicators	1	2
	Have no GDI	8	16
	Have GDI	42	82
Regional	Exempt from collecting GDI	5	9
	Have no GDI	11	19
	Have no GDI but collect GD data	15	26
	Have no GDI but commit to developing GDI	4	7
	Have GDI	22	39

*Note:* Some measures contain more than one gender disaggregated indicator.

Managing authorities played a key role in ensuring that gender disaggregated indicators were set. Acting as the point-of-contact between the implementing body and the NDP Gender Equality Unit

(which advised on gender disaggregated indicators), they were able to strongly encourage implementing bodies to set such indicators. In those OPs with proactive managing authorities, a high number of gender disaggregated indicators were committed to. However, in other OPs, this pressure was not as strongly brought to bear on the implementing bodies by the managing authority, and there are less gender disaggregated indicators. There are key gaps in a number of OPs. For example, the ESIOP has no gender disaggregated indicators at all, although the sub-programmes covered by this programme include transport, housing and health infrastructure, all of which are key for gender (and other types of) equality. Some implementing bodies in this area argued that gender disaggregated indicators are not relevant because the goal of the funding is for example to construct a road or build a health centre, not to see how many people use it. The thinking underpinning this argument is traceable to the emphasis on financial indicators in the NDP and the corresponding lesser emphasis on 'people' indicators in the monitoring process (see Chapter 6).<sup>18</sup> However, to achieve effective gender mainstreaming, policy makers must be able to measure the effects of public spending on women and men. An underlying goal of gender mainstreaming is to show where institutions in society contribute to gender inequality and to tackle these inequalities by making them visible and ultimately putting in place policies to address them. To do this, it is vital that policy makers collect gender disaggregated data to see *who* benefits from funding, even if this is seen as less important than progressing spending. There is also a tendency for many of the gender disaggregated indicators collected to take the form of output or result, rather than impact, indicators. This means that the impact of the policy funding on women and men in wider society is not as visible.<sup>19</sup> A further problem is that while indicators are required to be gender disaggregated, they are not required to be gender relevant. In some areas a gender relevant indicator is more appropriate than a gender disaggregated indicator. For example, the unemployment rate is commonly used to

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<sup>18</sup> Indicative of this is the fact that the computer reporting system which is to allow government, public and EU access to information on NDP progress has no facility for entry of gender disaggregated indicators four years after the NDP began.

<sup>19</sup> The lack of impact indicators is noted in a number of Mid Term Evaluations (see for example, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003).



measure the numbers in the labour force who are not employed. This provides a good indicator of economic inactivity for men, but less so for women because, in order to receive unemployment benefit, a person must have been in the labour force in the last two years (SW 65, 2003). This is less likely to apply to women because they are more likely than men to have been out of the labour force due to caring responsibilities. To receive unemployment benefit a person also must be available to undertake full-time work (even though the payment can be made to those who are employed part-time!) (SW65, 2003). Again, women are less likely to fulfil this requirement, because caring responsibilities often mean that they look for part-time rather than full-time work. These factors reduce the incentive for women to register as unemployed or to seek work, so the unemployment rate under-estimates their economic inactivity. In order to measure female economic inactivity, it is useful to have indicators based on, for example, the female underemployment rate, the potential female labour supply, or lone parents not in paid employment.

#### 4.3 Project selection

Equal opportunities in project selection is a key commitment within the NDP to help promote gender mainstreaming because this enables policy funds to be targeted to support equal outcomes for women and men. Table 4.2 outlines the numbers of measures and sub-measures by OP and the commitments in the programme complement documents to include equal opportunities in project selection criteria.

*Table 4.2. Inclusion of Gender Equality in Project Selection Criteria (GE in PSC), by Operational Programme*

OP	Measures and sub-measures	Number	%
ESI	Exempt from GE in PSC	7	39
	Have no GE in PSC	8	44
	Do not specify whether there is GE in PSC	3	17
	Have GE in PSC	0	0

PS	Not applicable	1	2
	Have no GE in PSC	21	41
	Have no GE in PSC but commit to gender balance on project selection committees	4	8
	Have GE in PSC	25	49
EMPHRD	Have no PSC	10	20
	PSC not decided	1	2
	Have no GE in PSC	30	59
	Have GE in PSC	10	20
Regional	Exempt from GE in PSC	5	9
	Have no GE in PSC	21	37
	Have GE in PSC	31	55

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Thirty-seven per cent of all measures and sub-measures include gender equality in their project selection criteria: 47% do not include it. In some cases, gender equality is not incorporated into project selection criteria, but gender balance is promoted on project selection committees, which may help the issue of gender equality to be raised in project selection. Even where gender equality is incorporated into project selection criteria there is often very little information available on how exactly this is done (and a source one might expect to provide this, namely the Mid-Term Evaluations, does not provide any extra information). There is no requirement to report on project selection procedures in the bi-annual implementation reports to the monitoring committees. The Unit has, on occasion, asked at monitoring committee meetings how an implementing body is incorporating this requirement into project selection procedures, but the meetings do not provide enough time to gain information on how this operates for all measures. The Guidelines on gender impact assessment of the NDP reinforce the requirement to include gender impact as a mandatory criterion in project selection for all measures. They ask that 'at minimum, the following table should be completed for every project or scheme under each measure and inform the selection process for the measure'.

*Impact of expenditure activity on equal opportunities*

	<b>Positive relating to existing situation</b>	<b>Negative relating to existing situation</b>	<b>Neutral relating to existing situation</b>
Women			
Men			

In practice, this table was not completed because the Unit considered that it was more useful for bodies to complete the gender impact assessment forms as the information incorporated in these could better inform the process of project selection than completion of the above table. When completed, the gender impact assessment forms provide not only gender disaggregated data but also analysis of reasons for gender inequalities and thus the types of intervention necessary to promote gender equality. In some measures and sub-measures of the ESIOP and the EMPHRD, projects were not selected. For example the division of funding between various organisations for public transport measures in the ESIOP was decided prior to the publication of the NDP; in the EMPHRD OP, levels of funding to specific organisations to deal with specific groups had already been decided in a number of cases (e.g. the National Employment Services measure which funds Employment Services Offices for the long-term unemployed and socially excluded throughout the country). Because project selection did not always apply, an opportunity to incorporate equal opportunities into funding was therefore missed. However, in such cases equal opportunities could become a criterion in targeting of the funding. This happens in a number of cases (e.g. those receiving lone parent family payment are targeted under the Active Measures for Long Term Unemployed and Socially Excluded in the EMPHRD OP), but unfortunately this was not a requirement in the Structural Funds regulations or in the NDP.

#### **4.4 GIA forms/paragraphs on gender equality in Programme Complements**

A commitment operationalised most strongly at the beginning of the NDP period is the requirement to include a paragraph with 'a brief description of the baseline position in relation to equal

opportunities between women and men' in the programme complements and to complete the gender impact assessment (GIA) forms. The paragraphs could be put together using the information contained in a completed gender impact assessment form. In the EMPHRD OP this approach was adopted – the three questions asked on the GIA form were incorporated into the programme complement for the OP. In the Regional and ESI OPs, paragraphs on gender equality were completed for the programme complements of all measures/sub-measures, but the forms remained separate documents. Meanwhile, the application of the Gender Impact Assessment Guidelines to the Productive Sector Operational Programme was subject to discussion between the Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Enterprise, Trade and Employment. It was decided that GIAs would not be completed for the measures in the Productive Sector OP, although paragraphs on gender equality were included in the programme complement documents for this OP.

By 2001, the GIA forms were completed for most measures and sub-measures in the other OPs as outlined in Table 4.3.

*Table 4.3. Completion of GIA forms by Operational Programme*

<b>Operational Programme</b>	<b>Measures/sub-measures for which a GIA would be completed</b>	<b>Measures/sub-measures for which a GIA was completed</b>
ESI	10	10
EHRD	33	32
BMW	55	36
SandE	57	38

*Source:* McGauran, 2002

In total, GIAs were completed for 75% of the measures or sub-measures where required. Unfortunately, in many cases these forms were completed in an unsatisfactory manner. An analysis carried out for the first 2002 meeting of the EOSICC committee looked at the forms of the twenty-two non-agricultural measures/sub-measures of the regional operational programmes, which cover a broad range of areas and are relatively representative of the entire NDP. It found that:

- 1 In answer to the first question (Outline the current position of men and women in the area which this expenditure activity will address), eleven of the twenty-two GIAs provided data in this area (50%).
- 2 In answer to the second question (What factors lead to women and men being affected differentially in the area being addressed by this expenditure activity?), six of the twenty-two GIAs provided some analysis in this respect (27%).
- 3 In answer to the final question (How can the factors which lead to women or men being affected differentially be addressed and changed?), five of the twenty-two GIAs stated that they would undertake an action to actively promote gender equality in the measures (23%) (McGauran, 2002).

Each GIA form clearly states that the Unit is available to assist in identifying relevant data sources and the Unit's contact details are provided. However, only a small number of organisations contacted the Unit looking for information and assistance while completing these forms.

The paragraphs on gender equality included in the programme complements for each OP were, with some notable exceptions, also generally weak in statistical data, analysis and commitments to tackle gender inequalities (ESRI, 2003). In fact, some merely stated 'This sub-measure has no direct effect on gender equality' (e.g. the Gaeltacht – Finance for Industry measure of the PSOP). In some cases this is true, but from the perspective of gender mainstreaming such an assertion misses the point that many gender inequalities in society are *indirectly* supported through existing policies and institutions. It is possible for the measures to put in place mechanisms to address indirect gender inequalities that influence the outcomes of the measure for women and men, even if the measure does not directly cause these inequalities. Such statements indicate that the implementing body does not think it is relevant for it to tackle the indirect inequalities existing in a policy area, rendering action in support of gender mainstreaming very difficult. Some implementing bodies are proactive in this regard, for example Integrate Ireland put in place (successful) measures to increase the number of women on its courses (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003: 165), and CERT provides flexible delivery

hours in its tourism training courses (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003: 166). However, as the analysis above indicates, in general implementing bodies do not locate gender disaggregated statistics and their ability to analyse gender inequalities indicated by the data, and to suggest mechanisms to address them, is very poor. In some cases, junior staff completed the forms, which would have compounded the problems, because they are less likely than senior staff to be familiar with the policy problems and are not in a position to make commitments. In a number of cases, the ways in which the forms were completed were reminiscent of Geisler et al's finding that the requirement to include gender issues in project selection 'caused ritualistic and meaningless insertion of gender paragraphs which have no consequence on actual project performance' (1999: 4). Furthermore, the process of informing mainstream policy makers about the gender impacts of their policy areas had only just begun in 2000 and this may have hampered the effective completion of the GIAs. However, many publications are now available outlining gender inequalities and mechanisms to tackle these in most of the main NDP policy areas. In addition, a statistician was available within the Unit to advise on sources of data. Accordingly, at the EOSICC meeting of Spring 2002, the Unit proposed that the GIA forms should be re-completed after the Mid Term Review of the NDP in order to allow implementing bodies the opportunity to make stronger commitments to promote gender equality. Given that they have had a number of years to avail of training on gender equality, improved availability of gender disaggregated data and information on gender equality issues and means to address inequalities, the implementing bodies should be able to make stronger commitments to promote gender equality (EOSICC, 2002). All managing authorities agreed that re-completion would be possible and this is to be revisited following the Mid Term Evaluations. The Unit intends to provide one-to-one face-to-face support to all implementing bodies to re-complete the forms.

#### **4.5 Equal opportunities representatives on the monitoring committees, and the process of monitoring**

Progress reports for each measure are discussed at the twice-yearly monitoring committee meetings. These reports (circulated a number of weeks before the meeting) outline financial and other progress

made plus updates on indicators collected and specific commitments made (e.g. those to promote gender equality). As a member of the committees, the Unit receives all of these progress reports, allowing it to check whether:

- gender disaggregated indicators or data are being collected
- commitments outlined in the GIA form or programme complement are met
- equal opportunities are part of the project selection criteria for measures
- what other work is being undertaken by various measures to promote gender equality?

The meetings themselves provide a forum wherein the Unit may:

- publicly question those who are not meeting the commitments they have made to promote gender equality. Organisations are obliged to reply to questions posed by the Unit in relation to GMS, either at the meeting, or in writing at a later date
- praise 'good performers'
- offer support to non-compliant bodies
- normalise GMS, that is implementing bodies are now used to being questioned on the gender equality commitments, and seem to have moved from seeing such concerns as irrelevant to current work to accepting that they will be asked about them<sup>20</sup>
- reiterate the gender equality issues in a measure in the presence of a variety of senior policy makers who may have more power to act on these.

The meetings are minuted and the minutes are publicly available: this feature is useful to encourage implementing bodies to implement the commitments made.

As outlined in Chapter 3, social partners including community and voluntary (C&V) groups, the Equality Authority and the European Commission sit on the monitoring committees. These

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<sup>20</sup> For example, for the first time an official at the Productive Sector monitoring committee meeting of April 2003 said *before* being asked by the Unit that they wished to apologise for not having a gender breakdown of data in their measure report (PSOP, 2003).

groups can be useful allies in monitoring implementation of the horizontal principles, for example in providing ‘back-up’ to comments made by the Unit or raising issues about which the Unit is also concerned. Overall, the EMPHRD MTE reports that a positive finding in relation to the monitoring committee process is that it ‘ensures Horizontal Principles are not forgotten’ (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003:93).<sup>21</sup> However, some problems do arise in connection with the monitoring process or, more precisely, with the reporting. There is a tendency for some implementing bodies to repeat commitments made in the programme complement in their reports, and not report on progress made towards implementing the commitments (EOSICC, 2001). The Mid Term Evaluation of the EMPHRD OP provides some useful data in this regard as outlined in Table 4.4.<sup>22</sup>

*Table 4.4. Type of commentary on gender in progress reports, EMPHRD OP*

<b>Type of comment</b>	<b>No. of Measures</b>
Specific comment on mainstreaming action under the Measure	21
Generic comment on equal opportunities and the Measure	12
Description of uptake/throughput/placement using gender disaggregated data	32
Not relevant to Measure	0
None	2

*Source:* Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003

*Note:* The Measure numbers show the number of Measures that provide a particular commentary. Because a number of Measures mentioned more than one type of commentary the total number adds to more than 47. Technical Assistance and Infrastructure Measures are not included in the above totals.

<sup>21</sup> Geisler et al (1999) also identify good monitoring and evaluation systems as key in helping to implement gender mainstreaming, while noting that lack of these held up implementation of GMS in UN bodies.

<sup>22</sup> No other MTE provided such detailed analysis of reporting on gender grounds.



Generic comments on progress towards gender equality in EMPHRD measures include those that state that 'courses are open to men and women'. As the evaluators note, this provides little, if any, useful information on progress towards equal opportunities. They show that most measures are not reporting specifically on GMS. The evaluation notes that 'reported actions are much less common than intended actions and 26 Measures do not report any actions' (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003:165). This may be due to the fact that no progress is being made, and/or to the fact that some measures are very large. An example of the latter is the Action Programme for the Unemployed that provides funding to many local FÁS offices. It is difficult for the bi-annual report to provide detail on the micro-level initiatives taken to improve access for women or men under such a large measure. Another issue concerns those implementing bodies that have agreed to collect gender disaggregated data in a policy area where previously no data on male and female participation existed. Frequently, once the data is collected it shows a gender inequality. At the same time as congratulating these 'good performers' in this public fora, they then have to be badgered further to analyse why there is such an inequality, and to put in place mechanisms to address the inequality. Also, very little information on capacity building or communication in relation to GMS in the measures has been gathered through the reporting process. This is not a requirement for the bi-annual reports, but would be useful to indicate how GMS is being normalised within implementing bodies.

A final challenge is that the Unit is not a full member of the monitoring committee, but sits on it in an advisory capacity. This means it has no voting rights on decisions. However, in practice there is no difference in the Unit's status on the committee and that of the full members. When the monitoring committee makes a decision, formal counting of votes does not occur. Instead, a decision is considered adopted if there is no wide-ranging dissenting discussion on it. It has been noted in a number of MTEs that a problem arising within the operation of the MCs is that members are inclined to defend their own interests, resulting in a lack of wider debate at committee meetings (BMW Regional Assembly, 2003; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003). The result is that, in a slight role reversal of the theoretical

position, it is actually the advisory members who have, at times, generated dissenting discussion on decisions to be taken.<sup>23</sup>

#### **4.6 Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee (EOSICC)**

This committee was set up to promote and co-ordinate adherence to the NDP commitments on gender mainstreaming, wider equal opportunities and social inclusion. It first met in 2001 and is chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, with co-chairing by the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Equality Authority. Members include all implementing bodies and managing authorities, including the Department of Finance, as well as the specialist units/organisations monitoring equal opportunities and social inclusion in the NDP (the NDP Gender Equality Unit, Education Equality Unit, Equality Authority Equality Studies Centre and Combat Poverty Agency). The committee meets twice annually, with one meeting focusing on a theme (e.g. evaluations) and the other focusing on the equal opportunities reports for each OP for the previous year. The reports of the meeting are then presented to the NDP/CSF monitoring committee. At the meetings focusing on a theme, presentations are given by the specialist units/organisations monitoring equal opportunities and social inclusion in the NDP. At the second meeting, the equal opportunities reports from each OP are discussed. These reports, assembled by the managing authorities, collate the sections on gender equality, wider equal opportunities and social inclusion from each measure's full year report to the relevant monitoring committee.<sup>24</sup> At first, only the Southern and Eastern Regional OP report specifically listed those who were not meeting the commitments but now more managing authorities provide similar analysis of how the commitments are being met.

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<sup>23</sup> An example is evident in the attempts of the Department of Communications, Natural Resources and Marine to alter the indicators for the E-commerce measure, an alteration that must be approved by the monitoring committee. None of the proposed new indicators are gender disaggregated, although one of the original indicators was. At each meeting where the new indicators were presented to be approved, the Unit queried the lack of gender disaggregation, and in each case the decision was held over pending discussion with the Department on this (see minutes of BMW monitoring committee meetings, 2002/2003, at [www.bmwregassembly.ie](http://www.bmwregassembly.ie)).

<sup>24</sup> At the spring meeting of each monitoring committee, the progress for the previous calendar year is usually presented for each measure.

These committee meetings are, in effect, a forum in which strategic issues can be raised to ensure more effective implementation of GMS. Accordingly, at the second meeting in 2001, the Unit suggested that the performance reserve be allocated, taking into account adherence to gender equality issues in order to emphasise the fact that gender mainstreaming requires, in part, a reconsideration of how public funding is spent.<sup>25</sup> However, when the suggestion was reported to the NDP/CSF monitoring committee, it was clarified that the EOSICC could not make suggestions that would affect the OPs without the consent of the OP monitoring committees. The procedure now adopted is that the suggestions of the EOSICC go to each OPs monitoring committee for consideration before being passed to the NDP/CSF monitoring committee for consideration (EOSICC, 2002). In theory this makes it more difficult for the suggestions of the EOSICC to be agreed, although in reality it is unlikely that the opinion of the NDP/CSF monitoring committee will vary from that of each OP monitoring committee, because the NDP/CSF monitoring committee has members from each OP monitoring committee.<sup>26</sup> However, it does underline that the EOSICC is a co-ordinating committee, and has less power than a full monitoring committee.

A more serious problem for the work of the committee is that the seniority of those attending the committee has declined (as found on committees to promote GMS in other organisations, see Geisler et al, 1999). This indicates that the committee is not viewed as important by the implementing bodies and managing authorities. Discussion at the committee is very limited, which is not surprising considering that those attending are often too junior to be aware of the larger strategic issues and are not in a position to suggest changes. This level of attendance indicates that the mainstream

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<sup>25</sup> The performance reserve is a reserve of funding, equal to 4% of the Structural Funding total to each country, which is allocated to certain measures on the basis of good performance following the Mid Term Review of the Structural Funds programmes.

<sup>26</sup> The suggestion that the criterion used for allocation of the performance reserve include adherence to gender equality commitments was not agreed by any of the relevant monitoring committees. It was stated by the Department of Finance at the EOSICC meeting of 17.9.2002 that this could not be implemented because the framework for the use of the reserve had already been agreed with the European Commission (see minutes of EOSICC meeting of 17.9.2002, available from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform).

organisations are not engaging with the committee. To address this, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform issued a questionnaire to members in 2003 asking them to suggest more effective ways in which the committee could operate. These suggestions are currently being considered.

#### 4.7 Gender balance on monitoring committees

This commitment aims to ensure that the views of women and men are more fully represented in decision-making, but it is difficult to realise. Members of monitoring committees are usually required to be relatively senior members of staff, and in most of the bodies that they represent senior staff are predominantly male. For example, most of those representing Government Departments are of at least Assistant Principal grade and only 23% of those at Assistant Principal grade and higher are women (Civil Service Equality Unit, 2000a). Table 4.5 outlines the gender balance on the main OP committees.

*Table 4.5: Gender balance on NDP Monitoring Committees  
(% women)*

<b>Operational Programme</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>
ESI	29	24
Productive Sector	20	31
Employment and HR	38	38
BMW	26	23
SandE	24	30
NDP/CSF	22	25

*Source:* McGauran, 2002

*Note:* The figures for 2000 are based on male/female membership as listed at the first Monitoring Committee meeting of each OP and of the NDP/CSF; 2002 figures valid in February 2002.

In 2000, the European Commission wrote to each managing authority outlining the requirement to promote gender balance on the monitoring committees. Following this, the managing authority for the Productive Sector OP, the Department of Enterprise, Trade

and Employment, undertook a targeted strategy to improve the gender balance on this monitoring committee. It found, following its first meeting in November 2000, that while social partner representation was fairly equally balanced between women and men, the representation from the civil service and state bodies was overwhelmingly dominated by men (twenty-eight men and seven women). The managing authority accordingly set itself a target to achieve 40% female representation by 2003 (an increase in 'real' numbers to seventeen). To achieve this, it wrote to each nominating Department in April 2001, and again in June 2001, reminding them of the requirement for gender balance on the committee. It reviewed its own representation (originally six men), reducing this to four representatives (two men, two women – thus ensuring a gender balance). It raised the issue at the Spring 2001 monitoring committee meeting and, in situations where departmental representatives changed, requested nominating bodies to consider the issue of balanced representation. It found that departments responded positively to a proactive strategy of this nature, leading to an 11-percentage point increase in the proportion of women serving on it between 2000 and 2002 (NWCI, 2002). Other such initiatives include for example the work of the BMW Regional Assembly. In 2003, it reported that it was investigating support for transport and childcare facilities to facilitate members' attendance at the meetings, because it was considering ways to improve attendance by members from groups, such as women, which are often under-represented at these meetings (EOSICC, 2003). Unfortunately, other managing authorities have not adopted these approaches and, as the figures above outline, in most cases the proportion of women on the monitoring committees has declined since 2000.

#### **4.8 Evaluation**

Evaluation is an integral element of the NDP process and there are three 'major' types of evaluation (some individual measures and projects are also evaluated, particularly if they are innovative initiatives, or are encountering problems). The first of these is the *ex-ante* evaluation conducted in 1999 to provide a basis for the structure and objectives of the NDP. Evaluations are also carried out of the performance of each OP and of the NDP/CSF overall both at the mid-term stage (in 2003) and following completion of the NDP

(in 2006/7) (the *ex-post* evaluation). Gender equality is a criterion in all types of evaluation.

The 1999 *ex-ante* evaluation included a section on gender equality issues, but it was felt that more focused guidance would be useful to ensure a good evaluation of progress on gender equality in the mid-term and final evaluations. Accordingly, in 2001, the Unit commissioned a guide on how to incorporate gender equality issues into NDP evaluations. Copies of the guide were issued to all managing authorities and to all large evaluation companies likely to tender for the mid-term evaluation (MTE). The guide was also included as a reference document in the requests for tender for the MTEs. The Terms of Reference for each evaluation included a comprehensive list of requirements to be evaluated in relation to gender equality (and indeed all horizontal principles) in each OP. These were essentially as follows:

- 1 assess how equal opportunities (gender and the wider equality grounds) are reported on across all Measures/Sub-Measures
- 2 assess how the Measures/Sub-Measures chosen for examination under a particular horizontal principle<sup>27</sup> have to date addressed equal opportunity considerations, taking as a point of departure the relevant text in the OP and Programme Complement
- 3 assess the extent to which, where relevant and feasible, the horizontal effects relating to equal opportunities (gender and the wider equality grounds) are captured
- 4 provide a view, based on the sample of Measures/Sub-Measures examined, as to the likely impact of the Programme/Priority/Measure/Sub-Measure (as appropriate) in relation to the NDP/CSF horizontal principles and conclusions on the extent to which these principles have informed and influenced the management and delivery of the programme (abstracted from Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003:155).

These Terms of Reference excluded examination of the NDP/Structural Funds requirement for gender balance on

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<sup>27</sup> It was decided that for each OP a sample of measures would be examined in detail to assess how the horizontal principles had been implemented.

monitoring committees, and of the gender impact assessment forms. However, including the four items above in the Terms of Reference for each OP evaluation did provide a good opportunity to assess the application of GMS and problems encountered with its application, and to suggest mechanisms to address problems. In practice, the issues of reporting on gender equality, providing gender disaggregated indicators and incorporating gender equality into project selection were considered when related to the above four items in the MTEs.

The MTEs faced a number of challenges in relation to the evaluation of gender equality. First, as outlined by the NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit at the Spring 2002 meeting of the EOSICC (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003b), there were few gender disaggregated indicators and data, weak reporting and weak initial analysis of gender issues which, therefore, limited targeting to improve gender equality. This meant there were few concrete results for evaluators to report on in terms of gender equality. Although unfortunate, it is arguable that it is difficult to expect much more than this at the early stage of implementation of a strategy as comprehensive as GMS. However, although there were variations in the quality of evaluation of GMS in various MTEs, a number (e.g. BMW, EMPHRD, NDP/CSF overall – see Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003; BMW Regional Assembly, 2003; ESRI, 2003) provided good assessments of the extent to which GMS requirements were met and of the type of challenges that GMS faced. Others were much weaker on this and the quality of the assessment often reflected the extent to which GMS was incorporated into the OP in the first place. In some cases the quality of the assessment could be related to the gender expertise of the evaluators. Gender expertise was not a criterion for the awarding of tenders although some managing authorities did consider this expertise when awarding the contracts. However, from the point of view of assessing effective implementation of GMS at this very early stage of the process, gender expertise was nearly less important than an ability to assess the effectiveness of procedures to implement GMS in the NDP. For example, the BMW MTE does not contain an assessment of the gender equality issues in the various policy areas. However, it does state that without dedicated financial and staff support from the managing authority, implementation of the horizontal principles will continue to face many challenges

(BMW Regional Assembly, 2003). Such a finding is at least as useful – if not more so – as an assessment of the relevant gender equality issues in each policy area, in terms of how it can progress effective implementation of GMS at this stage. Good gender and ‘procedural’ expertise in the assessment of GMS in the OPs is however weakened if the recommendations of the MTE do not follow through on these. It is arguable that this is the case in the EMPHRD MTE, where challenges to GMS such as lack of sanctions, lack of gender disaggregated impact indicators and lack of positive actions to support gender equality by mainstream bodies are all identified but, however, are not strongly followed through in the recommendations on the horizontal principle of gender equality (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003). There is also a difference between the recommendations published in the MTEs and those adopted by each OP’s monitoring committee. The evaluators’ recommendations stand, but do not have to be adopted by the monitoring committees. The Unit, along with the other committee members with an interest in the implementation of the horizontal principles will, however, be at the monitoring committee meetings that discuss adoption of the recommendations.

The *Guide to Incorporate Gender Equality into NDP Evaluations* notes that it is key to evaluate the actors involved and actions undertaken from a gender point of view at the following stages of policy: programme development and project design; programme documentation; project selection; implementation; monitoring; and evaluation. A review of the MTEs suggests that evaluators focused most on programme documentation, project selection and monitoring procedures and actions undertaken, rather than on actors involved. To a large extent this reflects the Terms of Reference (which did not require a focus on the other issues identified in the Guide), but it also reflects the high turnover of staff in certain government bodies and the corresponding loss of corporate knowledge. However, it would be useful in the future to focus to a greater extent on programme development and project design and to be able to comment in more detail on the actors involved in all six stages outlined above.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

Overall, this chapter concludes that implementation of the commitments on gender mainstreaming in the NDP has been



mixed. A number of commitments have been implemented, such as completion of the gender impact assessment forms and insertion of paragraphs on gender equality in NDP programme complement documentation, the setting up of the EOSICC, and attendance by the NDP Gender Equality Unit at monitoring committee meetings. However, more structural changes such as increasing gender balance on monitoring committees, collecting gender disaggregated indicators and including equal opportunities in project selection criteria, are more weakly implemented. Suggested reasons for this are outlined in more depth in Chapters 6 and 7. First, however, the work of the Units established to advise on gender mainstreaming is considered in Chapter 5.

## The work of the Units to support gender mainstreaming

*Gender staff bear the responsibility for promoting organisation-wide attention to ... gender concerns through advocacy work ... staff training, the provision of guidelines and checklists ... and monitoring functions. Such responsibilities tend to crowd out the important work of research, policy and strategy development (Razavi and Miller, 1995: 3).*

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the process by which the implementation of the two remaining commitments in the NDP to promote gender mainstreaming was completed. This relates to the establishment and work of two units to support gender mainstreaming, namely the NDP Gender Equality Unit and the Education Equality Unit. The chapter largely focuses on the NDP Gender Equality Unit because this has the main and most strategic role in relation to implementation of gender mainstreaming in the NDP. It has specific responsibility for monitoring implementation of gender mainstreaming in the NDP and, as part of this remit, is represented on all NDP monitoring committees and three co-ordinating committees. It was also involved in the development of the *Guidelines on Gender Impact Assessment of the NDP* and provides guidance on gender disaggregated indicators and equal opportunities in project selection and evaluations for the entire NDP. The Education Equality Unit has a much narrower remit, confined to providing advice and guidance on the Department of Education and Science measures and sub-measures in the NDP (twenty-five out of one hundred and seventy-seven).

### 5.2 The NDP Gender Equality Unit

The NDP Gender Equality Unit ('the Unit') was set up in late 1999, supported through the equivalent of €300,000 of ESF funding made

available from the Technical Assistance OP of the 1994-99 round of Structural Funds to Ireland. It was allocated €5.36m under the EMPHRD OP of the NDP (half European Social Fund and half Exchequer funding) to fund its work during the period from 2000 to 2006. Originally called the NDP Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Unit, the name was changed to the NDP Gender Equality Unit in 2000. As of the latter half of 2003, the Unit had five staff – a head of Unit, a gender equality expert, a statistician, an executive officer (office manager) and a clerical officer (administrative support). This full complement of staff has been in place since September 2002. The Unit has several areas of work, as outlined in its programme complement. These are as follows:

- provide an advisory, training and information service on issues relating to gender mainstreaming the NDP
- advise on and develop appropriate indicators in support of gender mainstreaming the NDP
- engage in data collection and data analysis in support of mainstreaming gender equality
- engage in a research programme to assess and support progress in realising equality of opportunity between women and men arising from the mainstreaming of gender equality
- advise on Gender Impact Assessment of policy proposals drawn up in the context of the NDP
- provide expert inputs to the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee and to the mid term review of the Structural Funds
- support participation by community and voluntary groups in the gender mainstreaming process.

The ways in which the programme complement work tasks are addressed have been partly outlined in Chapter 4 and are further outlined in this Chapter.<sup>28</sup>

### *5.2.1 Advisory, training and information service on GMS*

The provision of advice, training and information on gender mainstreaming is an important area of work because gender

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<sup>28</sup> A comprehensive evaluation of the Unit's work has not been carried out; consequently the effectiveness of this work has not yet been evaluated.

mainstreaming is to be implemented 'by the actors normally involved in policy making' (Council of Europe, 1998).

The Unit has trained over 800 NDP policy makers and implementers. A number of phases of training have occurred. Initially, during 2000, five 'general' training days were given, outlining what gender mainstreaming is, how it is adopted into the NDP, the NDP requirements on GMS and how those requirements can be met. However, the evaluation sheets completed by those attending the training indicated that they wanted to know how GMS applied to their policy area in particular. As a result, in 2001, 2002 and 2003, training was given on GMS and gender equality issues in particular policy areas.<sup>29</sup> The Unit also carried out training and briefing on gender equality issues with the Central Statistics Office and with County Development Boards (CDB).<sup>30</sup> These training days seem to be particularly well received, possibly because they are organisation specific, and possibly due to the fact that senior staff within the organisation sought them. In 2000, the Unit also held a half-day briefing for the Secretaries General and Assistant Secretaries of government departments at which the Taoiseach addressed the attendees.

Attendance at the training days is not compulsory and very often the senior policy makers invited delegate a junior person to attend, which can be problematic for senior-level understanding of and follow-through on GMS. The policy specific training days had a high level of attendance in the early years (e.g. the agriculture and rural development training course was run several times due to a high demand for it), but the numbers signing up for the training are now declining. There was an initial momentum associated with publicising GMS in the NDP, and a need for policy makers to include gender disaggregated indicators and completed GIAs in the programme complements. However, now that these commitments are set up, policy makers and implementers may feel that the requirements in relation to GMS are met and may see no need to attend training. Others seem to find it frustrating that training on such a large requirement is covered in just one day (although training which was funded by the Unit to run over two days had

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<sup>29</sup> These were industry, training, agriculture and rural development, housing, transport, urban development, sports and leisure, tourism, and youth services.

<sup>30</sup> These boards were established in 1999 to prepare and oversee strategies for the economic, social and cultural development of local authority areas.

great difficulties in maintaining numbers, see Crawley and O'Meara, 2001). Another possible explanation is that the first policy-specific training days were on the largest policy areas funded by the NDP. Those now being run, such as that on gender equality in film/media and arts/culture, are applicable to a much smaller number of bodies and a smaller pool of people is available to attend. It is also possible that many of those needing training have already attended one of the training days. However, considering that approximately two-thirds of those invited to training days do not attend, it would seem that there is still a large pool of people who could usefully avail of the training. Because it is still necessary for policy makers to keep abreast of the gender equality issues in their area, the Unit began to proactively approach and meet with implementing bodies during 2003 to explain how the gender equality commitments in the NDP apply to their area of work and to try to progress commitments to sustain gender equality. This appears to be an effective mechanism of communicating GMS and answering people's queries and this part of the Unit's work will be continued. However, the long-term impact of the training days is difficult to assess in the absence of an overall evaluation of the work of the Unit. Jahan (1995) noted that in a number of organisations studied there is the impression that training is more successful in raising awareness than in imparting expertise. This may be the case in Ireland also. Those trained are obviously more aware of gender equality issues in the relevant policy area, but concrete changes in policy implementation in order to promote greater gender equality are few. This may however, be related more to lack of incentives to implement GMS than to lack of expertise.

In addition to training, the Unit has provided advice on various other GMS requirements at several stages throughout the NDP life cycle. One key area is advice on how equal opportunities can be incorporated into project selection. In 2000, the Unit was asked to give presentations at a number of briefing days on the programme complement documents held by the various managing authorities. At these, and at other briefing and training days focusing on gender mainstreaming only, examples were provided of how to incorporate equal opportunities into project selection (the Unit later published much of this material in guidance sheets).<sup>31</sup> Specifically, the Unit

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<sup>31</sup> The Unit produced a more comprehensive 'how-to' sheet on incorporating gender equality into project selection criteria in 2003.

acted as an advisor on project selection for two parts of the NDP – the Equality for Women measure and the Ireland-Wales Interreg programme. In the former measure, all projects obviously considered gender equality, while in the latter, advising on gender equality in project selection was influenced by the Welsh input into the project application forms (which include a section on equal opportunities impact). This work is very labour intensive because in some cases hundreds of applications have to be reviewed for selection. Accordingly, most of the Unit's work in this area has focused on the provision of generic advice on this requirement. However, in late 2003, the Unit commissioned Hibernian Consulting to provide guidance on gender equality requirements in each measure of the Regional and Economic and Social Infrastructure OPs. These guidance sheets will outline issues relevant to gender equality in project selection for each measure.

#### *5.2.2 Gender disaggregated indicators*

As outlined in Chapter 4, gender disaggregated indicators are a GMS requirement in the NDP and measure-specific advice on gender disaggregated indicators was provided by the Unit from the beginning of the NDP process. When NDP indicators were first set in early 2000, the Unit sent lists of appropriate gender-disaggregated indicators for each measure to each OP's managing authority for use by the implementing bodies as they set indicators. The Unit also included examples of such indicators in its presentations at briefing days organised by the various managing authorities for their implementing bodies in 2000. These actions, as well as the training days on gender mainstreaming, helped to publicise and put weight behind the requirements at a time when gender equality commitments could be made and when indicators to measure progress of NDP spending were set. Since 2000, the Unit has advised mid-term evaluators on the gender disaggregation possible in existing indicators and on new indicators that could be gender disaggregated. The work of Hibernian Consulting will result in suggestions on gender disaggregated indicators for the relevant measures.

#### *5.2.3. Gender disaggregated data collection and analysis*

This is a key area of work for the Unit because gender disaggregated statistics unequivocally demonstrate gender differences. Analysis to

ascertain if gender inequalities exist can only take place once it has been shown that there are differences in the extent to which women and men benefit from, or are involved in, various arenas. However, in a number of key policy areas there are no gender disaggregated data (and sometimes no data at all) available. The Unit now focuses much of its work in this regard on six main NDP areas identified through research as lacking gender disaggregated data, namely:

- 1 local authority housing
- 2 usage of transport infrastructure
- 3 enterprise start-ups
- 4 training for people in employment
- 5 flexible working arrangements and family friendly policies
- 6 information relating to job seniority levels, job functional areas and jobs by sector.

Poor gender disaggregated statistics were also found in relation to access to infrastructure and programmes; progression of individuals over time; and time use (Fitzpatrick's Associates, 2000). Since then, the Unit has updated and expanded the initial databank of gender disaggregated statistics. It has commissioned and published a statistical survey on women's and men's use of transport (NDP Gender Equality Unit, 2001a) and on housing conditions (NDP Gender Equality Unit, 2001b). This was followed by a research report outlining existing statistics and gaps in information available on accommodation of disadvantaged groups (Threshold, 2003). A further area of work was a survey of female and male managers and entrepreneurs (NDP Gender Equality Unit, 2003a). The Unit also commissioned research on gaps in information on the role of women in agriculture. The completed report contained a comprehensive assessment of gender gaps in national statistical data on agriculture (NDP Gender Equality Unit, 2003b). A follow-on survey looking at attitudes towards the role of women in agriculture was commissioned in late 2003. The Unit published a report compiling statistics on women and men in Ireland in early 2004. The Unit has also signed a contract for the production of research into indicators to measure progress on gender equality for the National Strategy for Women (see Chapter 8).

#### 5.2.4 *Research programme to support GMS*

The Unit has commissioned research on a variety of topics to support gender mainstreaming. For example, many policy makers at the initial training days stated that they wanted to know more about how gender equality issues applied to their area of work. Accordingly, the Unit asked their contracted trainers to produce short fact sheets outlining the main gender equality issues in particular policy areas with relevant statistics and examples of ways in which gender inequalities had been addressed by policy makers in Ireland and/or other countries. To date, nineteen such fact sheets have been produced.<sup>32</sup> These are available on the Unit's website and have been widely circulated to implementing bodies and other organisations which have expressed an interest in them, or to whom they may be relevant.

The Unit also provided funding to a consortium of six county development boards to carry out training with board members on gender equality issues. This led to the development of a handbook entitled *The Gender Proofing Handbook* (Crawley and O'Meara, 2002) on gender equality issues and how to run training on these issues, which is the Unit's most sought after publication. It contains information on why gender proofing is needed, what it is about, how it fits into the policy context and how to plan a gender proofing training programme. It also contains a gender proofing template (similar to the GIA form for the NDP), as well as six examples of a completed template. These templates were completed by those taking part in the training, clearly indicating that it is entirely possible for policy makers to identify gender inequalities and mechanisms to address these in different policy areas.

The Unit has funded production of reports on gender equality issues in a variety of areas. These include the *Guide to Incorporate Gender Equality into NDP Evaluations* (see below), *Accommodation Disadvantage: A Study to Identify Women's Accommodation Experiences, Useful Data Sources and Major Research Gaps* (Threshold, 2003) and *A Woman's Model for Social Welfare Reform* (NWCI, 2003b). In 2002, the Unit was approached by the National Women's Council of Ireland to

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<sup>32</sup> On gender equality issues in industry, training, agriculture and rural development, housing, transport, urban development, sports and leisure, tourism, arts and culture, film and media, research and development, community development, crime prevention, IT and e-commerce, infrastructure, environment and waste management, refugee issues, youth services, and application to the Peace II programme.



fund a research report and an accompanying photographic exhibition on the representation of women in decision-making in Ireland, which the Unit duly funded because gender balance in decision-making is a requirement of the NDP. The resulting photo exhibition, which shows clearly that the overwhelming number of those in decision-making positions in Ireland are male, is currently being toured around local authorities by the Unit (NWCI, 2002). In 2003, the Unit began to pilot gender budgeting in bodies funded through the NDP. Gender budgeting means assessing mainstream budgets in order to determine how much funding benefits women and men. To date the Unit has agreed to fund a pilot of gender budgeting in a local area partnership and a county development board. The results of these pilots will be used to design a template to guide other organisations that wish to conduct a gender audit of their budget.

#### *5.2.5 Advising on Gender Impact Assessment*

As outlined in Section 4.4, this area of work was particularly important in 2000 because this marked the first time GIA forms were completed by the implementing bodies.<sup>33</sup> At the training and briefing days held in 2000, the Unit provided examples of how to complete the GIA forms. It also provided direct written guidance to implementing bodies, via the managing authorities, on issues relevant to 'the baseline position in relation to equal opportunities between women and men' to assist these bodies in completing the required paragraph and the GIA form. As outlined in Chapter 4, it is hoped that the GIAs will be re-completed in 2004 following the Mid Term Review. This will require considerable input from the Unit.

#### *5.2.6 Providing expert inputs to EOSICC, and to the MTE*

As outlined in Section 4.6, the EOSICC meets twice yearly and the Unit is required to give a presentation at each such meeting. This is not a very onerous time commitment and, more importantly, provides an opportunity to assess how GMS is progressing and to suggest ways to ensure its more effective implementation. The Unit also carried out work to support incorporation of equal opportunities into the NDP evaluations. As outlined in Section 4.8,

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<sup>33</sup> The final GIA form emerged from a process in which a draft form prepared by the Equality Division (DJELR), in consultation with the Unit, was presented in a memorandum to Cabinet.

in 2001, the Unit commissioned the production of a Guide on how to incorporate gender equality issues into NDP evaluations. A Steering Group oversaw production of the Guide and the methodology in the Guide was piloted in the evaluation of the childcare measures in late 2002 (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003a). Copies of the Guide were issued to all managing authorities and all evaluation companies likely to tender for the MTEs. It was also included as a reference document in the requests for tender for the MTEs. Later, a two-page summary of the Guide was produced.

Although the NDP requires that gender equality is a criterion in all evaluations, it is not required that a body representing gender equality be included on the steering committees overseeing production of each MTE and the Unit was not represented on these committees. However, requirements in relation to gender mainstreaming were included in the evaluation criteria by the steering groups. Once the tenders had been awarded to companies to carry out the MTEs, the Unit met with each company and outlined the NDP/Structural Funds requirements in relation to gender equality and covered project selection, indicators, the GIA forms and decision-making. The Unit also asked the evaluators to evaluate the *process* of gender mainstreaming, particularly where lack of gender disaggregated indicators precluded assessment of the impacts of gender mainstreaming. In addition, the Unit asked the evaluators to assess the role of the managing authorities in supporting gender mainstreaming, and to consider the supports which implementing bodies would like available to assist them in GMS. The Unit provided the evaluators with all the necessary documentation (e.g. copies of completed GIA forms, fact sheets etc) to support and inform this work. Despite its non-membership of the evaluation committees, the Unit was able to see drafts of most MTE reports, and provide comments on these.<sup>34</sup> The Unit is also willing to actively assist progression of some of the recommendations of the completed MTEs, such as those that recommend that the managing authorities of the BMW and EMPHRD OPs have greater access to in-house expertise in relation to the horizontal principles.

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<sup>34</sup> The Unit received a copy of the EMPHRD MTE as a matter of course, because it is one of the measures funded under this OP. It also received copies of the two regional OP MTEs, because these OPs fund measures in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Unit was circulated with these two MTEs as a member of the NDP co-ordination committee within the Department. The Unit also obtained a copy of the ESIOP MTE on request from the managing authority.

### *5.2.7 Supporting participation by community and voluntary groups in the GMS process*

This work began in late 2002 following the recruitment of a second gender equality expert to the Unit owing to the fact that this development allowed the Unit to devote one member of staff to developing this area of work. The Unit organised a 'brainstorming' day in early 2003 to which over 200 community and voluntary (C&V) organisations were invited. The purpose of the day was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the sector on GMS, and to pinpoint supports that could be provided by the Unit to C&V groups to assist them in the GMS process. Forty-five C&V groups attended the day and the following issues were identified.

- 1 Increasing the number of women in decision-making.
- 2 Training and development in a number of areas.
- 3 Using an integrated equality-proofing tool within C&V organisations.
- 4 Promoting the involvement of men.
- 5 Developing an interface between the C&V and statutory sectors.
- 6 Developing and promoting an analysis of gender.
- 7 Disseminating good practice on gender equality.

The first four areas of work are being progressed through tenders placed with consultants, while the fifth is being progressed internally by the Unit. A training course to support women into management of C&V groups has been run in Clare, while a guide on how to develop a gender equality policy for C&V groups is nearing completion. The Unit is also organising a large conference for both C&V and statutory workers, to provide an opportunity for the two sectors to interact.

### **5.3 Further areas of strategic work**

In addition to the areas of work specifically outlined in the programme complement, the Unit has a number of other work tasks that are particularly strategic. These include: supporting a network of those working on equal opportunities in the Structural Funds; advising on gender mainstreaming of policy programmes which are related to/co-funded by the NDP, such as the National Employment Action Plan and the Helsinki Group Women in Science initiative; and representing the Unit on relevant committees, for example the

*Partnership 2000* Working Group on Equality Proofing and the Steering Group of the National Plan for Women.

### 5.3.1 *Networking*

In 2002, the NDP Gender Equality Unit and the Welsh European Funding Office co-funded a conference organised by the European Commission on gender mainstreaming in the UK and Irish Structural Funds. It became apparent at this that many of those working on gender mainstreaming were working in isolation and, for example, were often unaware of the work previously done by other gender mainstreamers that could contribute to their own work and also often felt isolated and unsupported within their wider organisations (Make it happen, 2002). To help address these issues, the Unit funded the development of a virtual network of UK and Irish gender mainstreamers, co-ordinated by Chwarae Teg, an NGO promoting equal opportunities in Wales (where it advises on gender mainstreaming in the Welsh Structural Funds programmes). A network co-ordinator has recently been appointed and has begun work. The Unit is increasingly involved in networking both in Ireland and Europe, for example by giving presentations to government departments, women's networks, local authorities, conferences and gender equality units. This work is useful to share experience and promote GMS more widely, although it is time-consuming.

### 5.3.2 *Advising on NDP related policy programmes*

A number of key policy programmes are linked to the NDP but are in separate policy documents and are devised through formally separate policy processes. Among them are the following:

#### *National Employment Action Plan*

This policy document outlines how the European Employment Strategy is implemented in Ireland and is the basis for the EMPHRD OP. Policy measures to promote employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equality in Ireland for each year are detailed within it. Because this policy document is to be gender mainstreamed, it is circulated to the Unit for contributions and comments at its various draft stages.

*NAPS/NAPSIincl*

The NAPS (National Anti-Poverty Strategy) is a plan to combat poverty and social exclusion in Ireland and was developed based on social partnership agreements in 1997 and updated in 2001. Since then, the European Union has adopted a similar process, requiring each Member State to produce the NAPSIncl (National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion). It is to be gender mainstreamed (the NAPS also incorporated a principle to combat gender inequalities in poverty). The first NAPSIncl was due in 2001 and a review was held in 2003. The Unit provided inputs and advice to each of these, and commented on drafts. It is difficult, however, for the Unit's advice on gender mainstreaming to be included in these action plans, because most of the policies which are outlined in them are not decided on as part of the NDP process. Chapter 6 provides a further discussion of this issue.

*Helsinki Group on Women in Science*

This group was set up by the European Commission to progress implementation of the EU Women in Science strategy. Its members are drawn from EU Member States and a number of other countries signed up to the European Commission's Framework Programme in November 1999. The Unit provides information to the Irish representative on GMS and gender disaggregated statistics in the areas of the NDP that fund scientific research. Although these policy areas are included in the NDP, the usefulness of the Unit in reviewing and supporting compilation of the above documents is questionable. It is useful for the policy makers to have relevant gender equality issues highlighted, but compilation of these documents does not occur at the time at which decisions are made on financial allocations to support the implementation of the various policies (see Section 6.5.3). It would be more useful for GMS implementation if the Unit was involved in advising at the stage when financial allocations are being made, i.e. making submissions to the national budget process. This would provide more scope for financial allocations to include any additional cost that GMS implementation might require.

*5.3.3 Representation on relevant committees*

The Unit is also represented on a number of committees relevant to its work. Overall, the Unit's representation on these committees is

very useful in strategic terms, although it is frequently time consuming. The Unit's representation ensures that it is aware of other work currently being carried out to promote gender equality and/or mainstreaming; and also ensures that the Unit is aware of, and contributes to, strategy development to promote gender equality.

*Partnership 2000 Equality Proofing Working Group*

This Working Group was set up under the national social partnership agreement, *Partnership 2000*, to provide an on-going focus for equality proofing issues by, for example, monitoring pilot projects on equality proofing and outlining steps whereby the learning from these could be more broadly implemented (Mullally and Smith, 2000). The Unit is represented on this Group because gender proofing is part of equality proofing, allowing the Unit to both contribute to the work of the Group and learn from the work of the other member organisations (which are representative of the social partners and various equality organisations). Currently, the Group is funding a pilot project to develop a template for integrated proofing (comprising gender, equality and poverty proofing).

*Steering Group of the National Plan for Women*

This Plan was developed to meet the requirements agreed to by the Irish government at the UN Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The Plan outlines the measures in place to promote greater equality for women in twelve critical areas of concern. Because it outlines key commitments by the Irish government to promote gender equality, it was useful for the Unit to be represented on this committee.

*Equality Authority's Equality Studies Management*

The Equality Studies Unit is funded through the EMPHRD OP to look at how measures in this OP can address the needs of four groups covered under the equality legislation (i.e. older people, refugees, travellers and people with disabilities). This Committee also yields information on other research projects run by the Equality Authority and the Unit's membership ensures, in part, that there is no overlap in research carried out by the two organisations.<sup>35</sup> The Unit also has an informal network with the

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<sup>35</sup> Part of the work of this committee involves commenting on all reports produced by the Equality Studies Unit.

development workers in the Equality Authority, some of whom work on best practice for equality proofing of civil service and other public sector policies and services.

#### *Equality for Women Steering Group*

The Equality for Women measure is the positive action measure funded by the NDP to promote gender equality, and its work is complementary to the NDP Gender Equality Unit funding. The Steering Group initially met a number of times to decide what groups should be awarded funding and now meets a number of times each year to review progress and develop future strategies.

#### *Council of Europe Informal Network on Gender Mainstreaming*

This network meets once a year and its membership is drawn from those working on gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe states. It provides a valuable networking opportunity to learn about the work of others, what works, what doesn't work, et cetera.

#### *Steering Group on Social and Equality Statistics (SGSES)*

This Steering Group was set up in 2002 to undertake a scoping study of what is needed to develop Irish social and equality statistics to ensure they meet current and impending policy needs. There were two particular emphases in the Steering Group's work: (i) identifying data within existing administrative records that could be used to build social statistics; and (ii) asking those directly involved in policy making in government departments and agencies to identify their precise data needs in the context of the growing importance of evidence-based policy making. As the Group had an equality remit, the Unit's statistician was represented on it and attended the meetings held in that year. He also advised on the questionnaire used to collect the information required, acted as point of contact with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and read drafts of the SEGSES report, *Developing Irish Social and Equality Statistics to Meet Policy Needs* (2003).

### **5.4 Other areas of work**

The work outlined above gives rise to a number of other areas of work for the Unit. For example, the Unit is frequently requested to brief ministers giving speeches on areas related to gender mainstreaming, or meeting those working on related areas. Briefing

is also required to provide updates on government commitments in relation to gender equality, e.g. for the Sustaining Progress social partnership update report or for reports to the UN or EU on gender equality in Ireland. Parliamentary questions and Freedom of Information requests also regularly require an input from the Unit (see NESc, 2002).<sup>36</sup>

The Unit's yearly work plan is passed by a Management Committee chaired by the DJELR with representatives from the Departments of Finance; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Education and Science; the European Commission; the NWCI; and the Equality Authority. The Committee meets twice yearly and the work plan is developed throughout the year, particularly in the second half. The Unit's budget, although committed to in the NDP, has to be requested from the Vote of the DJELR as part of the annual estimates process. Indicative spending on each area of Unit work for the following year needs to be put together for this request.<sup>37</sup> The Unit's spending to date has been below its allocation (this will be considered in more detail in Chapter 7). In line with NDP requirements, a major part of this work is related to setting up and maintaining the Unit's accounts system. The accounts are checked monthly and collated bi-annually for the EMPHRD OP monitoring committee progress reports. Other routine tasks include the issuing of calls for tenders for the completion of research, the dissemination of such research and general publicising of the Unit's work. Such work as cannot be carried out 'in-house' i.e. within the Unit, is put to tender in accordance with EU regulations on public procurement. Management of the ensuing work often takes place through the mechanism of a Steering Group (established by the Unit) composed of key stakeholders whose role is to guide and advise the relevant project. The Unit's website is a vital tool through which information

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<sup>36</sup> A related and quite time-consuming aspect of the work for the three Unit staff members who are not civil servants is learning the operational procedures of work in the civil service.

<sup>37</sup> The programme complement for the Unit outlines the expected NDP spending per year. However, in the programme complement the budget was 'front loaded' because it was felt that spending needed to be high early in the NDP process, in order to ensure commitments on GMS were made. Because the Unit at the time had few staff, it spent less than expected in the earlier years and is now spending more. Therefore, the amount it requests each year from the Irish budget estimates process is not the amount originally projected in the NDP programme complement.



on GMS and relevant research can be disseminated ([www.ndpgenderequality.ie](http://www.ndpgenderequality.ie)). All the Unit's publications are included as tools to gender mainstream, in addition to a number of gender disaggregated statistical databanks, and information on new work projects being carried out by the Unit. During 2002, the number of hits on this website were recorded and averaged 3,000 per month.

The above areas of work are similar to those carried out by other NDP organisations. However, it is important to consider the amount of time these areas of work consume because they frequently eat into the time available to promote gender mainstreaming.

### **5.5 Overview of the Unit's work**

Clearly, the Unit provides a wide range of services to promote gender mainstreaming. Over 800 policy makers have been trained to date; several new databases of gender disaggregated statistics have been produced; and thousands of fact sheets, handbooks and guidance sheets have been produced and circulated to those on the Unit's mailing list.<sup>38</sup> Information on how to GMS NDP policies is now widely available for those who wish to procure and use this information. However, no evaluation of the Unit's work, or of the tools that it has produced has been undertaken. The extent to which the tools are being used, and how effective their users find them, is not known and clearly there is a danger that the Unit's tools could stand on their own with little connection to, and impact on, mainstream organisations (Geisler et al, 1999). For example Chapter 4 clearly showed that not all NDP bodies are meeting the technical requirements on GMS. Suggested reasons for this will be outlined in Chapters 6 and 7.

The depth and breadth of the Unit's workload also raises concerns that those advising on GMS have to do so much work reading proposals and representing gender equality issues in official meetings that the gender mainstreaming activities are in danger of becoming tasks over and above the officers' 'normal' workload. The outline above shows that the Unit spends a considerable amount of time not working directly on GMS implementation in the NDP, which is problematic for its effective implementation. Razavi and Miller (1995) also note that monitoring, technical support, training

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<sup>38</sup> This mailing list of over 3,000 persons includes all monitoring committee members, all those invited to Unit training days, and those in key positions in hundreds of governmental, non-governmental and social partner organisations.

and advocacy 'crowded out' the important work of research, policy and strategy development for GMS advisers in a number of international organisations.

### **5.6 The Education Equality Unit**

The EMPHRD OP of the NDP provides funding of €9.27 million to the Department of Education and Science (DES) to promote equal opportunities between women and men in the education sector. The programme complement for this Unit outlines three areas of work, only the first of which relates directly to promoting GMS in the Education measures of the NDP.

- 1) The establishment of an Education Equality Unit located in the Department of Education and Science to co-ordinate and monitor the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all areas of the educational system.
- 2) The establishment of a computerised management information system for further education programmes not embraced at present by the post-primary pupil database.
- 3) The creation and support of Higher Education Networks for the development of strategies to encourage equality of access, benefit and outcome for participants at third level.

The Education Equality Unit's work has to date included a number of activities to support GMS, including research, training and positive-action type measures. These include:

- training on gender mainstreaming with school inspectors, Educational Support Services and those working on the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI)
- gender proofing of documents on school development and school evaluation
- a call for research on areas of interest to the Unit, e.g. among the projects to be funded will be an assessment of progress on gender mainstreaming within schools
- statistical work on males and females in education
- positive action type measures to support women into

- science and technology; to outline the situation regarding men in primary school teaching; and to consider women in educational management
- further work on guidelines/manuals on gender equality (e.g. evaluation of the Exploring Masculinities programme for post-primary students, updating the Gender Matters guidelines for primary schools)
- direct work with a number of schools, e.g. those that are amalgamating.

From the perspective of promoting GMS, the training of school inspectors and the provision of briefings to school principals is clearly useful but the training it carries out with the SDPI is particularly useful because this group is responsible for assisting schools to develop their school development plan (a legal requirement for all schools). In addition, some of the research and positive action work carried out feeds directly into policy development and implementation and this is useful to ensure the mainstreaming of learning from these gender-equality focused projects. The location of the Unit within the Central Policy Division is also helpful in promoting gender mainstreaming of key policy documents issued by the Department.

The Unit does not have a large staff – one inspector working half time, one higher executive officer, one half-time executive officer and one clerical officer position which is job shared. However, it set up a number of committees to oversee the positive action work it is carrying out, and a staff member from the School Inspectorate currently chairs one of these. It is intended to involve as many staff from the Inspectorate as possible in the work of the Unit, particularly in the mainstreaming process. The involvement of mainstream staff in this work is very useful to progress gender mainstreaming. Unfortunately, the Unit's spending has been low. As of the end of 2002, only 9% of its funding allocation under the NDP was spent and no performance indicators to monitor its progress had been set up. In recognition of the under-spend, which could lead to a loss of EU funding, in 2001 the DES transferred a portion of its funding to the DJELR to assist it in funding the Equality for Women positive action measure.

The NDP Gender Equality Unit and the Education Equality Unit liaise and keep each other informed as to their various areas of work. However, they are working to different remits. The former

unit supports and promotes GMS in the whole NDP, while the latter unit focuses on specific supports to promote GMS in the education sector. Such Units could be very useful for individual policy areas of the NDP, an issue that will be considered in Chapter 8. Some reference will be made to the Education Equality Unit's work in the remainder of this research. However, because it does not advise on or monitor GMS for the whole NDP and, therefore, many of the wider policy areas funded by the Irish government, it will not be a focus of the assessment of the challenges to GMS in Chapters 6 and 7.

## Underlying challenges

*The most fundamental roadblock of all was the reality of operating with feminist goals within a patriarchal structure whose main function was the protection of the status quo (Eisenstein, 1996:183).*

### 6.1 Introduction

A number of underlying challenges to the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming are evident in the Irish context. These challenges are not unique to Ireland; many of them have been previously encountered by those charged with implementing gender mainstreaming in other countries and organisations. This chapter argues that the challenges to successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland arise from four main issues:

- a) knowledge of gender mainstreaming in the policy making system
- b) the focus of this system
- c) the structure of it
- d) the priority given to gender mainstreaming in the policy making system.

Issue (d) is of particular importance to this discussion and it seems that the underlying reasons for non-effective implementation of gender mainstreaming are related to the issue of power to change processes: who holds this power, how it has structured institutions and procedures and how this determines the payoff for change. Particularly relevant for gender mainstreaming is the fact that these power dynamics incorporate patriarchal power and this chapter will argue that the patriarchal nature of power within wider society and the policy making system strongly influences the extent to which gender mainstreaming can be effectively implemented.

## 6.2 Broader context

Chapter 3 outlined the positive changes adopted to support gender equality in Irish policy and legislation in the 1990s. However, the broader policy context has become less positive since then. In 1997, the new centre-right government merged the Department of Equality and Law Reform with the Department of Justice to create the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This meant that equality lost its full ministerial representation at cabinet level and is now very much the junior partner within one of the most demanding ministerial portfolios (Donnelly, Mullally and Smith, 2000). At the same time, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights was reconstituted as the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality and Women's Rights, again reducing the focus on gender equality issues at governmental level.

More significant hiccups on the road to gender equality have occurred since 2001, linked in part to a decline in economic growth. This has coincided with the re-election of the centre-right government which, judging by the cutbacks made to deal with falling returns to the public exchequer, seems to be moving in a more neo-liberal direction.<sup>39</sup> It is vital to bear this wider context in mind when considering the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland. For example, Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) noted that acceptance and implementation of gender mainstreaming in EU institutions depends on the resonance between gender mainstreaming and the dominant policy frame in the institutions, which can be on a continuum between a neo-liberal frame emphasising individualism and free markets, or a more interventionist frame to support social justice. Eisenstein (1996) and Chappell (2002) outlined how the rise of neo-liberalism in Australia hampered the pursuit of gender equality in government policies.<sup>40</sup> Eisenstein notes that the goals of efficiency and productivity, as well as equity and transparency, were emphasised in the boom era, but when economic decline began, efficiency and productivity were

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<sup>39</sup> The government elected in 2002 also appointed a member of the more neo-liberal Progressive Democrat party as Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

<sup>40</sup> Bangura (1997:i) also argued that in the technocratic neo-liberal model, outcomes are more uneven for women, 'neo-liberal discourse... remains fundamentally hostile to initiatives for gender equity'. She considers that this discourse does not allow for questioning of the fundamentals of the policy framework and opposing parties can only negotiate changes at the margins.

emphasised at the expense of equity and transparency. An examination of the national social partnership agreements since the early 1990s suggests that this may also be the case in Ireland. Recent cutbacks by the government have led to dissatisfaction among some social partners. In particular, two of the groups representing the community and voluntary pillar, Community Platform<sup>41</sup> and, significantly in this case, the National Women's Council of Ireland, did not endorse the 2002 social partnership agreement, *Sustaining Progress*.<sup>42</sup> Before the rejection of *Sustaining Progress* by these two groups, seven groups with a focus on women's issues were involved in the social partnership process.<sup>43</sup> At present, no women's groups are involved in the social partnership process and, accordingly, none is authorised to sit on NDP monitoring committees (which the NWCI formerly did), a point which will be returned to later.

A number of interviewees for this research also indicated that gender mainstreaming was adopted during the heyday of economic growth and incorporation of equality issues into policy making. However, they felt that this period had passed and as a result, gender equality, never particularly high on the political agenda in the first place, was becoming less of a priority issue. With Ireland's tentative movement towards a more neo-liberal policy framework, this suggests one reason why the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland is less effective than it might be.

### **6.3 Knowledge in the policy-making system and gender mainstreaming**

It is arguable that a number of the key problems arising in relation to the implementation of gender mainstreaming are related to gaps in

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<sup>41</sup> This represents twenty-six community and voluntary groups and is one of the eight organisations that formed part of the community and voluntary pillar that negotiates with government, employers, trade unions and farmers on the national agreements.

<sup>42</sup> The NWCI press release in relation to this stated 'the Board of the NWCI... has taken this unanimous decision because the new agreement does not in any way progress equality for women... it makes no genuine attempt to address the needs of the marginalised or socially excluded – those whose voices are outside of the employed and employing classes' (NWCI, 2003a).

<sup>43</sup> These were: the Gay and Lesbian Network, National Network of Women's Refuges and Support Services, National Traveller Women's Forum, National Women's Council of Ireland, One Parent Exchange and Network, Rape Crisis Network Ireland and Women's Aid.

knowledge about gender mainstreaming. Issues surrounding this include communicating the concept of gender mainstreaming, the knowledge which policy makers have of gender equality issues, and consultation with 'outsiders' in order to gain knowledge on equality issues.

### *6.3.1 Communication about gender mainstreaming*

There are difficulties in communicating the concept of gender mainstreaming for a number of reasons. Gender mainstreaming is currently an inaccessible phrase (Carney, 2003), it is not easily understood and is a very new term. Changing this phrase to, for example, gender proofing could help address these difficulties. Gender proofing means checking a policy proposal to ensure that any potential gender discriminatory effects arising from that policy have been avoided, and that gender equality is promoted (European Commission, 1998). The concept of proofing is well understood in Ireland because poverty proofing has been ongoing in the Irish context for a number of years and understanding of what this means and the process it requires is well integrated into the system at this stage. A number of policy makers interviewed for this research stated that the change in terminology from gender proofing to gender mainstreaming was confusing for them, particularly as the work required by policy makers to implement GMS or gender proofing was essentially similar.

Another important reason for this lack of understanding is that GMS can be threatening. Although it is a relatively simple concept to grasp and understand, to do so people need to accept that gender inequality and patriarchy exist. This may be the key problem in its communication (Macdonald et al, 1997). GMS requires that patriarchal institutions are changed and often male policy makers feel that, as well as being asked to change the institutions they uphold, they themselves are being asked to change and, by default, are being personally criticised. In one training session where it was outlined that women have less access to private transport than men, one male trainee interrupted to state: 'my wife can drive the car whenever she wants'. Engaging with gender equality issues can result in men feeling that they are personally chauvinistic. Equally, some women may not want to challenge gender roles because they, as well as many men, feel secure in their current roles. This was also evident at training sessions, with one woman stating that she did not think that women and men should be equal in everything.



Gender mainstreaming can mean that the political becomes personal. Gender is not normally questioned in society (Kimmel, 1996) and so it is very likely that male and female policy makers beginning to engage in gender mainstreaming will feel challenged in their normal gender roles, and feelings of personal insecurity or inadequacy may arise (Macdonald, 1997). They are therefore likely to avoid such a discussion, and this clearly does not assist the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Communication can also be difficult due to the fact that gender mainstreaming is different and more wide-ranging than earlier approaches to gender equality. For example, it clearly recognises both difference *and* sameness in women's lives, e.g. it can be used to argue for support both for women in the home (such as payments for child-rearing) and for women in the labour force (such as provision of childcare). In this way, gender mainstreaming can provide supports for women to lead lives that are similar or different to men's. Equally, GMS can provide supports for men to lead different lives – an issue not focused on particularly strongly in earlier gender equality approaches. In fact, gender mainstreaming requires a different understanding of gender equality than previous strategies, which is particularly confusing for those who are ambiguous about gender equality to start with.

The language of gender mainstreaming, which is essentially social justice based (Mackay and Bilton, 2000; Bangura, 1997), is not well correlated with the language of neo-liberalism, which seems to be increasingly important in Irish government discourse. This again causes difficulty in communication or in reasons to accept the information communicated. Gender disaggregated data also play an important role in communicating on gender mainstreaming. Statistics are part of the accepted language of policy makers. In this context, the lack of such data inhibits development of indicators and also renders it difficult to demonstrate empirically the existence of gender inequalities. Related to this is the use of tools for gender mainstreaming. Some have argued that there are not enough such tools (MacKay and Bilton, 2000). However, a myriad of tools, concepts and checklists exist but are rarely used by policy makers. The discussion presented in this chapter outlines a number of factors likely to contribute to this, but it is likely that a fundamental mismatch between the language of the tools and that of policymaking may be an important reason. A tool which asks for

assessment of, for example, 'norms and values' of women's and men's lives in a policy area, does not sit easily within a policy making system focused more on economic than people issues. On a more practical level, communication is also difficult due to the high number of organisations involved in implementing NDP programmes and measures. Not only are there many organisations to communicate to, there are also many to communicate to in each policy area. For example, communicating the relevance of gender mainstreaming to transport policy requires that one engages with not only the Department of Transport and the two Regional Assemblies, but also with the National Roads Authority, CIE, Iarnród Éireann, Bus Atha Cliath, Bus Éireann, the Railway Procurement Agency, the Dublin Transportation Office, some private transport operators, community and voluntary groups and all local authorities, because each of these bodies receives funding from the NDP to provide transport.

### *6.3.2 Knowledge in the policy-making system*

The Irish civil service recruits for a number of technical and professional grades (e.g. solicitors in the Attorney General's office, departmental grades dedicated to specific work in specific departments). However, the majority of those working in the Irish civil service are recruited into general service grades (Chubb, 1992; Co-ordinating Group of Secretaries, 1996).<sup>44</sup> General service grades are not recruited for skills in a particular policy area but rather for their transferable verbal, numerical and organisational skills. They may be allocated to any government department on the basis of these skills rather than on the basis of their knowledge of a particular policy area. Within the general service grades there is no mechanism to, for example, allocate a civil servant with training as a teacher to the Department of Education and Science. On promotion, civil servants are frequently transferred to a new department or section about which they may have little or no knowledge. This practice creates difficulties when policy makers or implementers are asked to identify the gender equality issues in their area of work. First, the policy maker/implementer may not have a high level of knowledge of the main (non-gendered) issues in that policy area, never mind

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<sup>44</sup> In December 2002, there were 21,289 persons working in the civil service in general service grades, with 13,479 employees in other grades (Department of Finance, 2002).

knowledge of the gender issues in an area (Mackay and Bilton, 2000). Therefore it can be particularly difficult for them to 'incorporate a gender equality perspective into mainstream policies as these are developed, implemented and evaluated' as is required under GMS.

*Delivering Better Government* (Co-ordinating Group of Secretaries, 1996), which outlined the process by which the modernisation programme of the Strategic Management Initiative is to be implemented, notes that 'insufficient emphasis is placed on identifying and making placement decisions based on the skills and qualifications of recruits'. It recommends that government departments become more involved in staff recruitment in order to overcome this and other problematic issues. PA Consulting (2002) in its evaluation of the implementation of the SMI noted that the evolution of human resource management strategies at department level is still at an early stage. However, when this process is addressed, this could lead to the recruiting of more specifically skilled staff to various posts, which is likely to help overcome some of the difficulties outlined above with regard to lack of knowledge on policy issues by civil service staff.

### 6.3.3 Consultation

Consultation, particularly with women's groups, is an important mechanism whereby gender inequalities can be identified and addressed in the policy-making system. Ireland's system of social partnership allows for consultation on government programmes between government, employer bodies, trade union and farming representatives and, latterly, representatives of the community and voluntary pillar. However, it is argued that the employer bodies are particularly strong in this partnership while the community and voluntary bodies are particularly weak (Donnelly et al, 2000). This, when combined with the recent non-acceptance by the NWCI and other C&V groups of the recent social partnership agreement, suggests that it is difficult for the knowledge of the community and voluntary bodies to permeate the policy subsystem.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the

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<sup>45</sup> Anderson (1994) notes that policy subsystems can be arranged along a continuum of openness. At one end are closed and structured policy subsystems like 'iron triangles', with limited participation, resistance to external influences and preoccupation with material interest. There is usually a single community of policy actors. At the opposite end are subsystems that are like an issue network, amorphous, with wide and changing participation, issues experts and lack of clarity about who is in control. Different policy communities can come together in this.

policy subsystem in Ireland could be seen as relatively closed. The experience arising from the use of the Evaluation Guide (produced by the Unit) by the NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit appears to corroborate this. For example, it found that few people were involved in the process of specific policy development and that few policy makers were able to remember the actors involved in the original policy development. This was partly due to the rapid turnover of staff, and partly due to the fact that very small numbers of senior staff were involved in such developments. This, in turn, means that it is possible that the policies developed might not address issues which other groups consider particularly important.

Women's groups were consulted at a relatively general level when the NDP was drafted. An overview of the draft NDP was circulated to the social partners for comment, allowing the NWCI an opportunity to comment on it. As part of this process, the NWCI would also have been represented at ministerial level meetings between government departments, social partners and regional bodies to discuss the draft. The NDP emphasises that these meetings aimed to achieve consensus on the priorities of the NDP, so it is not clear what weight would have been given to the comments of the NWCI, or of the other social partner groups, in this process. Nonetheless, the Plan clearly notes that the community and voluntary pillar wished to see mainstreaming of equality and transparent gender proofing applied across the Plan, which indeed it is. Therefore consultation at macro-level policy development stage was effective for GMS. However, at the current implementation stage there is no group representing women's issues sitting on NDP monitoring committees. The NWCI no longer receives the NDP progress reports that would allow the Council to identify areas where gender inequalities are arising in implementation of the NDP. It also means that the NWCI is not able to raise such issues in the public fora of the monitoring committee meetings. Currently, when the NDP Gender Equality Unit raises such issues at the meetings it can no longer rely on support from an NWCI representative, which in turn reduces the focus and level of debate occurring in relation to gender inequalities. Furthermore it appears that consultation with women's groups is not systematically carried out (ESRI, 2003). Only a small number of measures (e.g. urban and village renewal) report that consultation occurs. Such consultation for policy makers may mean admitting that their grasp of knowledge on the policy issue is

poor and can also mean relinquishing power in decision-making. In practical terms, time pressure and low resources to carry out work does not leave much time for policy makers to consult with outsider groups. This is unfortunate because consultation with women's (or men's) groups working on the ground is advocated for successful gender mainstreaming so that policy makers can identify gender inequalities and mechanisms to address these in policy implementation. Lack of consultation clearly inhibits the process by which those at grassroots level can inform policymakers of gender inequalities and assist in identifying mechanisms to address these at policy implementation level.

A Quality Customer Service (QCS) initiative was introduced under the Strategic Management Initiative. The QCS is to be implemented through the development of customer action plans and customer charters for public bodies, the second round of which should be in place by the end of 2004 (Public Service Modernisation Division, 2002). These documents are to be informed by the twelve principles of QCS, one of which states: 'in their dealings with the public, Civil Service Departments and Public Service offices will provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services'. The customer charter guidelines note that this should be done with all those groups named under the equality legislation, which includes those affected by gender inequalities; as well as a wide variety of other groups and organisations affected by the public body's policies and practices (Public Service Modernisation Division, 2002). If effectively implemented this consultation process could clearly be of use in identifying gender equality issues that need to be addressed in policy implementation. Under QCS, the treatment of the 'internal customer' should also be addressed in order to ensure best possible service to the external customer (Public Service Modernisation Division, 2002). Such consultation with the 'internal customer' could also improve awareness of equality issues. For example, training by the NDP Gender Equality Unit with policy implementers showed that they are often very aware of the gender equality issues in their area but this knowledge does not always feed up to those devising policy. Macdonald et al also found a need for 'improved information flows between levels of the system' to ensure that gender equality issues were incorporated into

organisational systems (1997:106). Implementation of the QCS is likely to facilitate consultation between policy makers, policy implementers and 'policy takers', but currently this process is not well developed, providing problems for GMS implementation.

#### **6.4 Focus of the policy-making system**

The focus of policy making in Ireland renders it difficult to incorporate gender issues, because policy focuses mainly on the provision of things: it does not consider in detail how people will use the things provided – for example, the performance indicators for the Public Transport measures of the NDP record the number of buses and trains purchased and the amount of rail track laid. They do not, for example, record who uses them, or improvements in service. NESC (2002) also noted the strong emphasis in the Irish system on financial inputs rather than outputs in terms of costs and benefits. In the NDP, this may be reinforced by the emphasis on capital projects such as roads, rail and sports facilities. However, not all NDP funding goes to capital projects and the difficulty still remains. Some OPs (e.g. PSOP) which do not have a strong direct 'people focus' have developed gender disaggregated indicators and considered how equal opportunities can be incorporated into project selection – in other words they are recognising the indirect impacts of their policies on people. Gender mainstreaming means putting equality issues for women and men into policy making, but it seems in the case of the NDP that often there is first a need for *people* to be put into policy making, particularly where the effect of policies on people is indirect.

An ability to spend money is the key focus for government departments, which may be related to (male) conceptions of power. In order to command funding, a department must spend that which it is allocated. In the rush to ensure funding is spent it seems that it is time-consuming to focus on developing policies/programmes in a participative manner, and in analysing the needs of various groups in the policy's implementation (Government of Canada, 1996). This again provides difficulties for effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. The fact that gender mainstreaming is viewed by some policy makers as requiring higher spending is often given as a reason for not engaging with it. At this stage it is not known how much more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming might cost, or if it would indeed cost more money.

Providing, for example, childcare and transport as standard in many government services may increase costs in the short-term while yielding long-term benefits and cost-savings to society by providing better services for all. This is, however, symptomatic of general Irish policy – it has been noted that there is little cost-benefit expenditure analysis (NESC, 2002). However, in the first instance, gender mainstreaming needs to be implemented by the relatively cost-free mechanism of rethinking the processes of budget allocation and service delivery to ensure better outcomes for all. But the pressure to spend money quickly means that there is very little analysis of processes and this again becomes a reason why gender mainstreaming is not engaged with, as a number of interviewees for this research pointed out.

### **6.5 Structure of policy-making system**

The NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit presentation to the EOSICC in Spring 2003 referred to the ‘capacity of the management and implementation system’ as a problem in effective implementation of gender mainstreaming (2003b). The ways in which the civil service/ policy-making system is currently organised raises difficulties for the introduction of effective gender mainstreaming (and other types of proofing).

#### *6.5.1 Methods of policy making*

Gender mainstreaming assumes the existence of an organised, rational system of policy making where gender equality concerns can be inserted at the various stages of policy making, specifically development, implementation and evaluation. In reality, policy-making is much more chaotic than this schema would suggest. Lindblom (1959) outlines two possible mechanisms by which policies can be developed, the ‘rational-comprehensive’ or root approach, and the ‘successive limited comparisons’ or branch approach (often called ‘incrementalism’). Their characteristics are outlined in Table 5.1.

*Table 6.1. Characteristics of two policy-making approaches***Rational-comprehensive/root**

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- 1a Clarification of objectives usually prerequisite to and distinct from analysis of needed action
  - 1b Policy formulation approached through isolating the 'ends' and seeking the 'means' to achieve these
  - 1c Good policy is the most appropriate means to reach desired ends
  - 1d Analysis is comprehensive
  - 1e Theory is often heavily relied on

**Incrementalism/branch**

- 2a Objectives of the policy and analysis of needed action not distinct from but usually closely intertwined with each other
  - 2b As means and ends are not distinct, means-end analysis is often inappropriate or limited
  - 2c Good policy is that which is agreed on by various analysts (without them agreeing that it is the most appropriate means to achieve an agreed objective)
  - 2d Analysis is drastically limited, so that
    - important possible outcomes are neglected
    - important alternative potential policies are neglected
    - important affected values are neglected
  - 2e A succession of comparisons greatly reduces or eliminates reliance on theory
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*Source:* Lindblom, 1959: 81

Gender mainstreaming (particularly gender impact assessment forms) can be easily integrated with the 'root' approach, but Lindblom argues that the root approach 'cannot' be practised except for relatively simple problems and is 'absurd' when the time and money that can be allocated to a policy problem is limited, which he notes it always is (1959:80). The Irish policy making system, and many others (see for example Andersen, 1994), appears to follow the 'branch' approach, and this provides difficulties for the requirements of gender mainstreaming outlined in Chapter 2 (e.g. gender impact assessment). The branch approach can be viewed as 'irrational' in seeking to implement gender mainstreaming in that it



may not seek or incorporate the views of all affected bodies (e.g. women) when a policy is being developed or implemented and policies are therefore less likely to effectively address the needs of all groups. However, from the point of view of actors who currently have more power in the system (e.g. men) and how the system currently operates, this approach can be viewed as rational or practical but it is rarely egalitarian (Staudt, 1990 cited in Moser, 1993:110; Goetz, 1997).<sup>46</sup> Whether rational or not, Irish policy is often made in an incremental rather than branch way and this provides difficulties for the incorporation of gender mainstreaming.

Another factor connected to the extent to which gender mainstreaming is implemented is the role of ministers and politicians in the policy making process in Ireland. The Cabinet determines the overall policy programme and aims of government and takes all major policy decisions. All policy innovations require prior approval from the Cabinet and this is particularly the case when politically sensitive issues or those requiring co-ordination among government departments are introduced (Connolly and O'Halpin, 1999). Ministers need to be able to present a strong and persuasive argument to ensure that policy innovations, which they and their department desire, are adopted. These processes are problematic for gender mainstreaming in a number of ways. First, gender mainstreaming is undoubtedly politically sensitive and its successful implementation involves working across departments. Secondly, as outlined earlier, Equality and Law Reform no longer has direct ministerial representation in the Cabinet. This is complicated by the fact that the current Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell, publicly argues against equality,<sup>47</sup> raising one's suspicions that gender mainstreaming is unlikely to be vigorously promoted by him within government negotiations. However, no Irish minister has yet

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<sup>46</sup> For example in order to qualify for unemployment payments, a person must be available for full-time work (SW65, 2003). However, unemployment payments are paid to those who work part-time. Allowing unemployed people to register for part-time work would be more rational in that it would make the two policies less contradictory – and it would also allow for greater gender equality, because more women than men are available for part-time rather than full-time work.

<sup>47</sup> Mr McDowell stated in an interview with the *Irish Catholic* that 'a dynamic liberal economy like ours demands flexibility and inequality in some respects to function ... It [is] such inequality which provides incentives' (McGarry, 2004).

provided strong public support for gender mainstreaming although this may be related to its origination within the EU, an issue that will be considered in Chapter 7. Politicians are involved in a number of ways with gender mainstreaming. The most constant role is played by county councillors, a number of whom are on the monitoring committees of the two regional operational programmes. They are therefore familiar with the debates about the relevance of gender equality to various policies that occur at these meetings. They are also circulated with the Unit's publications and invited to attend its training days. No county councillors have attended thus far. In 2002 and 2003, the Unit wrote to all county councils to invite them to host the photographic exhibition on the representation of women in decision-making in Ireland (see Section 5.2.4), and to ask if the Unit could make a presentation on women in decision making to a county council meeting. Although many local authorities did host the exhibition, only three agreed that the Unit could address the county council on the issue. This was very helpful in introducing the concept of gender equality and gender mainstreaming to local politicians, but the small number interested hampers this process and contributes once again to poor implementation of gender mainstreaming in the NDP.

#### *6.5.2 Strategic evaluation culture*

A strategic evaluation culture is new and relatively under-developed in Irish policymaking (NESC, 2002). 'Fire fighting' or reactive rather than pro-active approaches to policy implementation are frequent, as underlined by all policy makers interviewed as part of this research. It is arguable that one reason for the extension of the administrative structure of the EU Structural Funds process through the NDP to government departments and agencies that receive no Structural Funds (and so are not obliged to meet EU requirements) is to instil the EU-led evaluation and monitoring culture in these departments and agencies. An evaluation of the SMI noted the need for more developed debate around policy formation and strategy design and concluded that there is greater scope for alignment between political intent, strategy development, business planning and service delivery (PA Consulting, 2002). Meanwhile the NESC (2002) notes that more effective management of public expenditure depends on the emergence of a culture of evaluation. It notes that the up-skilling of policymakers with a particular focus on developing

policy analysis and evaluation skills is key to achieving this. New training courses, such as that on policy analysis skills by the Department of Finance's Centre for Management and Organisational Development, should contribute to this. The NESO report also calls for a central evaluation unit to support this work. Nonetheless, the current process of *ex-ante* evaluation of policy proposals is under-developed in Ireland, which is unfortunate because this is a key moment in the policy making process where gender issues could be identified and commitments to address gender inequalities could be made.<sup>48</sup>

A further difficulty relating to this is the 'lack of causal link' between gender mainstreaming and policies (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003). Gender mainstreaming is to be carried out by those normally engaged in the policymaking and implementation process. However, when asked to assess the gender relevance of a policy, NDP policy makers show a marked tendency to consider that if gender issues are not *directly* relevant then instead of being *indirectly* relevant, they are *irrelevant*. If a policy maker considers that a policy does not directly cause an inequality, then s/he assumes that the policy cannot – and perhaps more importantly, should not – have mechanisms in place to alter or address that inequality. This is evident in the number of mid-term evaluations noting that many policy makers question the relevance of gender mainstreaming to the various measures (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003) and can also be seen in the programme complement for some of the measures of the PSOP.<sup>49</sup> A number of mid-term evaluations also remark on the territorial tendency among government departments and agencies to justify their own interests and not to analyse broader structural issues at monitoring committee meetings (BMW Regional Assembly, 2003; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003). These factors are key stumbling blocks to the effective implementation of GMS, as GMS aims to identify and counter the indirect gender inequalities that exist across a range of inter-related public policy areas. This problem is compounded by the fact that Irish policy

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<sup>48</sup> As outlined in Chapter 4, the *ex-ante* evaluation of the NDP did include a section on gender equality issues. However, this was written before gender equality experts were employed within the policy-making system.

<sup>49</sup> For example, the Gaeltacht-Finance for Industry measure of the PSOP stated, 'This sub-measure has no direct effect on gender equality'.

making is very compartmentalised (Laffan, 2000; NESC, 2002). For example, the Department of Transport is responsible for transport provision and receives the necessary funding from the Exchequer to fulfil this, but provision of transport is also necessary to allow people (particularly women) to access e.g. state training or services. Bodies which provide state training (for example FÁS) or services (e.g. social welfare offices) do not receive a budget for transport even though many of those wishing to use their services may find it difficult to travel to their centres, particularly in rural areas where there is very little public transport. In theory, service providers could ring fence some of their own funding to provide childcare (as FÁS currently does) and transport. However, this rarely occurs. Accordingly, difficulties faced by women in particular in accessing services, such as lack of childcare and transport, remain largely unaddressed by mainstream agencies in the development and implementation of their service provision. Gender mainstreaming requires such issues to be addressed either by agencies individually or perhaps through systematic co-ordination with other agencies providing services. There is little or no incentive however for departments and agencies to co-ordinate or plan these supports together and each continues to be territorial about the distribution of, and control over, resources (Boyle, 1999; Eisenstein, 1996).

Ireland has implemented a number of initiatives to promote 'joined-up policy making'. The NDP itself is an example of such joined-up policymaking because it is run by a number of government departments. However, the evaluation of the SMI stresses that more work is still needed to promote co-ordination on crosscutting issues. This must consist of more than just co-ordination of activities and policies (Government of Canada, 1996). In this context, 'joined up policy implementation' and 'joined-up budgets' would greatly aid the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland. This would allow bodies such as local FÁS, social welfare offices and transport providers, to liaise in order to increase access by different groups to the services of the former. Some of the factors that would allow women or men greater access to services, e.g. changing eligibility criteria or hours of service delivery, can usually be dealt with within one organisation. However, other supports which would allow this, including transport and childcare provision, need to be addressed in the current system either by bodies working together, or by altering the

budget lines of service providers in order to provide them with the funding to install transport and childcare provision for those wishing to avail of their services. Change in policy making is often incremental, meaning that it takes time for many of the broader changes necessary for effective gender mainstreaming (e.g. childcare, transport and flexible hours as standard) to be implemented, thereby slowing down effective implementation of gender mainstreaming (Lindblom, 1959).

### *6.5.3 Levels of influence/action*

The problems of compartmentalisation in policy making also relate to the question: at what level can change occur? – and to the ability of NDP implementers to effect change at this level. For effective gender mainstreaming, changes in mainstream budgets and policies are often necessary. However, most NDP policy makers and implementers can only change at the level of administrative adherence to gender mainstreaming commitments (see also Chapter 8). For example, implementing bodies may need to provide childcare. The NDP does provide funding for childcare, but each implementing body does not have a budget for this. If an implementing body did not decide to ring fence part of their budget for this at the beginning of the NDP, if now they decide it is essential to provide this in order to move towards more effective gender mainstreaming in their measures, they find their hands tied because they cannot easily fund this.

Compilation of the National Employment Action Plan suffers from the same problems in terms of gender mainstreaming. The NEAP is a list of commitments to promote employment in Ireland arising from the European Employment Strategy, which have to date been organised under four ‘pillars’ – employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equality of opportunity between women and men. The Unit is asked to comment on draft versions of the NEAP as it is assembled each year, primarily because gender mainstreaming is a requirement under the equal opportunity pillar. However, a number of the issues which would ensure gender mainstreaming of employment and training, such as childcare provision and flexible hours of delivery in all agencies and wider certification and support for service-type industries, cannot be inserted into the document at the stage at which comments are sought because the decisions to fund particular programmes have

already been made, based on the annual national budget allocations. The Unit is not involved in this process, because it is not directly part of the NDP. This is an overall problem with the NEAP – it was noted in a 2002 evaluation of the process that ‘the fact that the NEAP process was not linked to the budgetary process was seen to place serious limitations on the extent to which the NEAP could be seen as a vehicle for pursuing policy changes or for introducing new initiatives’ (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2002:114).

#### *6.5.4 Male-female representation in decision making*

A further issue affecting implementation of gender mainstreaming is that the top levels of the Irish civil service are male dominated – men account for 91 per cent of secretaries-general (NWCI, 2002, and see Millar and McKeivitt, 2000). More women in decision-making positions is one of the requirements for effective gender mainstreaming implementation (Mackay and Bilton, 2000; Council of Europe, 1998; Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002) even though a substantial presence of women in top management is not an absolute guarantee of gender equality throughout an organisation (Macdonald et al, 1997). A strong social justice base to policymaking (as in France or Sweden) is also very important in ensuring that equality issues are taken on board in policy making. In the Irish context, a key mechanism of promoting gender mainstreaming is through a ‘champion’ arguing the case. Such a champion would generally be a man in a senior position, sympathetic to the process of gender mainstreaming. His word seems to be accepted more easily because he is a man and is viewed as ‘normal’ by other men (even though he also would be queried on this – see Chapter 7). However, such ‘champions’ are rare and, collectively, men seem to be better than women at defending their interests, particularly in relation to employment and market access (Goetz, 1997). The UN has noted that the type of decisions made can be altered if a critical mass of decision makers are female (30-35%), particularly if they are committed to gender equality (Macdonald et al, 1997:88). Therefore, male domination of the civil service is likely to be another factor inhibiting the adoption of effective GMS.

A policy with targets to increase the number of women in management positions in the civil service is sometimes argued to be a mechanism to modernise the civil service (Eisenstein, 1996;

Yeatman, 1990). It is true that the civil service has introduced facilities such as term-time working, job-sharing, career breaks and flexi-time, all of which are particularly useful for those with childcare responsibilities and which undoubtedly do benefit many women (and men). The SMI process also specifically focuses on increasing the number of women in management grades in the civil service (Co-ordinating Group of Secretaries, 1996). The government and trade unions have committed to filling one third of Assistant Principal grades with women by 2005 (Civil Service Equality Unit, 2000b). This commitment has featured in the Strategy Statements of Government Departments, with a number, such as the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, setting specific departmental targets to reach this goal. The increase in the proportion of women in decision-making grades is likely to help promote more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. The existence of such policies is important because it indicates a strong willingness to consider gender equality issues. It must not be forgotten that the proportion of women in very senior positions in the public sector is higher than in the private sector. Women accounted for only three per cent of managing directors in 1998 compared to nine per cent of secretaries-general in the civil service (NWCI, 2002) – although in neither sector is there anything approaching an even balance of women and men in decision-making positions. It must also be remembered that many of the civil service equality policies were introduced as part of ‘win-win’ bargaining processes. For example, it is often considered that career breaks were introduced as a mechanism of reducing staff numbers and costs in the civil service because many of those availing of breaks do not return. Parental leave was introduced due to EU legislation.

Overall the picture emerging is somewhat conflicting. On the one hand, the civil service and public sector have many flexible working policies that greatly assist the reconciliation of working and family life. However, the sector is a male dominated organisation (particularly in decision-making positions) that is answerable to politicians, 87% of whom are male (NWCI, 2002). Certainly, some senior male policy makers were not open to promoting gender mainstreaming. One such policy maker interrupted a training session given by the Unit to say ‘you’re interfering in politics’. Such a comment is indicative of the views of some senior male bureaucrats on the validity of introducing gender

issues into policy decisions and indicates a lack of senior level support for gender mainstreaming implementation.

### **6.6 Priority/support in the system for gender mainstreaming**

The 'degree of priority (to be accorded to horizontal principles) is unclear' in the NDP (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003b). Horizontal principles (namely poverty/social inclusion, rural issues, environmental issues, North/South co-operation as well as gender mainstreaming) are not NDP objectives, which weakens their application.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the relative weight to be given to them has never been officially defined. Meanwhile the workload of many policy makers is heavy and no extra resources, either in personnel or funding, are provided for the implementation of gender mainstreaming or the other horizontal principles (HPs). In this context, the number of HPs that need to be considered in the NDP provides more difficulties. To effectively implement each of these would require a considerable amount of work, particularly given that most of these require analysis and re-focusing of many policies. A number of policy makers engage with gender mainstreaming due to personal interest and/or due to seeing it as part of an effective strategy for more accountable and effective use of public resources. However, these policy makers are relatively rare:<sup>51</sup> most policy makers appear to view gender mainstreaming (and the other HPs) as an imposition. For example, a policy maker in one government department was passed a letter from the NDP Gender Equality Unit by his superior, which requested a meeting with his section to discuss the implementation of GMS. He telephoned the Unit a number of months later to know what exactly needed to be done with this letter, and his main question was 'can I just file it away?'. This encapsulates well the attitude of many policy makers to gender mainstreaming. The low number of measures that collect gender disaggregated data, and the number that have committed to do so

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<sup>50</sup> For example, the indicators for the NDP and its individual measures are to measure progress towards meeting the overall NDP and individual measure objectives. It is therefore possible to argue that because gender equality is not an objective of most measures, the indicators do not have to measure progress towards this.

<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, most of these were in relatively powerful positions and in a position to ensure that GMS can be progressed and to avoid censure for engaging with it.



but have still not done this also indicates this attitude of unwillingness.

On a very basic level, the payback to policy makers to engage with gender mainstreaming is very poor. It is extra work for which no extra resources (apart from the tools and advice provided by the NDP Gender Equality Unit) are provided. It yields little or no glory or acceptance from superiors. Equality is not something in which most policy makers, particularly male policy makers, will make their name (Geisler et al, 1999). The process of gender mainstreaming, with its frequent emphasis on social justice, is also at odds with the process of Irish policy making, which focuses strongly on economic issues.

### 6.6.1 *Patriarchy*

Walby defines patriarchy (1990:20) as 'a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women'.<sup>52</sup> Of particular interest to this work is the operation of patriarchy in the state. Walby considers that the state is not a monolithic entity and so there are struggles to promote gender equality within it. Nevertheless, she argues that the state has a systematic bias towards patriarchal interests in its policies and actions. As the state engages with gendered political forces, its actions have gender differentiated effects, and its structure is highly gendered. For example, very few women engage directly with the state. Few women are parliamentarians or policy makers. Women are more inclined to be 'policy takers'. Walby outlines how the state can limit women's access to paid work and criminalise forms of fertility control, and regulate marriage in patriarchal ways. The effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in Irish policymaking and the resistance encountered to it certainly suggests the operation of patriarchy in this system. As Jahan (1995) notes in her analysis of GAD in CIDA, agencies and governments argued that it was lack of

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<sup>52</sup> Walby argues that it exists in both the public and private domains, and is composed of six structures – the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, in the state, in sexuality and in cultural institutions and through male violence. The operation of patriarchy in these six structures determines the variation in gender relations in society. Its operation can change over time, but although patriarchy changes its form in these two sites and six structures, the system of social structures and practices in which men as a group dominate, oppress and exploit women remains.

understanding and expertise that contributed to them not achieving the GMS goals – but they underplayed how the disparities in resources and power, and the conflict of interest, could obstruct achievement of gender mainstreaming goals.

### 6.6.2 *Sanctions*

For ‘intractable’ crosscutting issues there is a ‘particular role for financial incentives to promote co-ordination’ (Boyle, 1999:45). As outlined above, no extra resources, either financial or personnel, are made available to implementing bodies for gender mainstreaming. In addition, effective sanctions for non-implementation of gender mainstreaming are not applied. The Structural Funds regulations require that gender mainstreaming be applied, with the ultimate sanction, one assumes, that funding can be reduced for those who do not comply. However, at this stage it would have to be asked what exactly does compliance mean? Gender mainstreaming often means different things in different contexts. From the point of view of the Structural Funds, meeting four of the NDP requirements (as listed in Section 3.4.1) would equal compliance. Who is responsible for ensuring that this level of compliance is reached? Accountability for implementation of the commitments is very diffuse. As outlined in Chapter 3, the managing authorities, particularly the Department of Finance as managing authority of the NDP/CSF overall, have ultimate responsibility for implementation of the horizontal principles. However, how is this supposed to operate in practice? Targets for gender mainstreaming are not included in the Role Profile Forms (these forms outline the main work objectives and targets of each person working in the civil service) of those responsible for implementing the NDP. There is a strong inclination to view the Unit as the organisation that is to ‘do’ gender equality in the NDP. The fact that it is up to each implementing body to do the work can be difficult to get across.<sup>53</sup> It also has to be asked how interested the European Commission is in defining and monitoring such compliance. At the moment, the Commission relies on soft

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<sup>53</sup> Boyle (1999) notes a similar problem in New Zealand with management of crosscutting issues.

<sup>54</sup> In the Irish context some interviewees noted that the Commission is a weaker player than it was in the 1994-1999 round of Structural Funds. For example, in line with the Structural Funds regulations for 2000-2006, it now no longer chairs all monitoring committee meetings.

rather than hard law (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000). Gender mainstreaming is implemented through the open method of co-ordination – but its effectiveness in this context can be queried (Rubery, 2003).<sup>54</sup> Defining and requiring compliance may require more specific legislation at a later stage once policy makers and legislators are more familiar with the concept and see its validity to a greater extent. At this stage, gender mainstreaming could be compared to the clause on equal pay for women and men in the Treaty of Rome even though this clause was in place from 1957; it took almost twenty years before legislation to clarify what this meant was introduced. Gender mainstreaming may need to progress to such a stage before the Commission would consider implementing the sanction of reducing funding. However, for its effective implementation, financial incentives and sanctions are likely to be necessary.

## 6.7 Conclusion

The analysis above indicates a number of factors that inhibit effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in the NDP. These are:

- knowledge of gender mainstreaming in the policy making system
- the focus of this system
- the structure of it
- the priority given to gender mainstreaming in the policy making system.

Overall, there are tensions caused by the juxtaposition of a rational-comprehensive, equality-based method of policymaking and a policy-making system that operates through incrementalism, with an underlying basis of capitalism and patriarchy. These factors are key in explaining why policy makers use so few gender mainstreaming tools and why gender mainstreaming is not comprehensively implemented in Ireland.

The next chapter outlines issues inhibiting the NDP Gender Equality Unit in its work to effectively promote implementation of gender mainstreaming in the NDP.

## Underlying challenges for the NDP Gender Equality Unit

*The organisation is required – by some external or internal force – to take on board a programme that it basically perceives as unnecessary, stupid, wasteful of resources, or subversive. It hires the person who will preside over the programme, and then proceeds to marginalise and disempower that person by placing the responsibility and blame for the idea of the programme on the poor soul who has agreed to run it (Eisenstein, 1990:92).*

The NDP Gender Equality Unit was, as noted in the previous chapter, set up to promote and monitor gender mainstreaming rather than ensure its implementation. However, some of the challenges that the Unit as a structure faces hamper the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

### 7.1 Structures

Weak structures exist to support the NDP Gender Equality Unit in advising on and monitoring gender mainstreaming. The EOSICC reports on implementation of gender mainstreaming and the NDP/CSF monitoring committee is ultimately responsible for its implementation. However, gender mainstreaming lacks the high-level structures that exist for other crosscutting issues and which are likely to facilitate its more effective implementation. Given the centrality of Cabinet in determining and supporting implementation of policy, it is not surprising that, as Boyle (1999) notes, Cabinet sub-committees are needed to push issues requiring integrated policies, and that for intractable issues the Taoiseach needs to be involved at a political level. Boyle outlines the range of high-level structures used to promote the National Drugs Strategy. These include a ministerial task force which identifies the necessary structural arrangements; a Cabinet sub-committee which provides political leadership, assesses progress and resolves policy or

organisational problems; the National Drugs Strategy team which reflects on policy issues, advises on allocation of resources, supports and monitors local drugs task forces; and the local Drugs Task Forces which prepare development plans for their areas.<sup>55</sup> During this research, a number of policy makers stressed that underlying political will is key to ensuring that structures such as Cabinet committees and senior official groups are effective, rather than their existence in themselves. Meanwhile, the NDP Gender Equality Unit seems to lack political support, and clearly lacks the weighty structures (such as those enjoyed by the NAPS) necessary to help enforce effective implementation of gender mainstreaming.

## 7.2 Ownership by civil service

Groups external to the civil service effectively decided many of the work tasks of the Unit and indeed the question of the Unit's existence itself. The strong involvement of external bodies may mean less 'ownership' of the Unit in the civil service than if these decisions were taken by the service itself. As outlined in Chapter 3, a number of the commitments for GMS in the NDP mirror the requirements in the Structural Funds regulations. These regulations were not determined solely by Ireland.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, much of the Unit's work programme arises from the recommendations in an external report *Gender Proofing and the European Structural Funds: Outline Guidelines* commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform from the Law Faculty of NUI (Cork) in 1999 (Mullally, 1999). This report's findings were based on the outcomes of a Working Group whose membership included the Combat Poverty Agency, the Employment Equality Agency and the

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<sup>55</sup> The National Anti-Poverty Strategy has similar structures including both a Cabinet committee (chaired by the Taoiseach whose membership includes ministers) and a senior officials group on social inclusion (composed of high level civil servants who prepare the agenda and recommendations for the Cabinet committee) and an inter-departmental policy committee (which includes senior civil servants in addition to agency representatives who are responsible for ensuring NAPS provisions in their Department are implemented) (NESC, 2001). In addition, there is a NAPS Unit (similar to the NDP Gender Equality Unit), as well as NAPS liaison officers in different government departments.

<sup>56</sup> The requirements in the Structural Funds regulations that affect the Unit's work are disaggregation of indicators by gender, and inclusion of gender equality as a criterion in project selection and evaluation.

four social partner pillars. However, only one government department, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform sat on this Group (in the role of Chair).<sup>57</sup> This report recommended the establishment of a Structural Funds Equality Unit and an Equality Co-ordinating Committee. It recommended that the Unit carry out the following work:

- provide technical assistance and advice on the methodology of gender proofing
- provide training on gender proofing and assist in the design of gender proofing training materials
- provide consultative inputs into Plan/Programme/project design and Gender Impact Assessments
- liaise with organisations/agencies working in the field of gender equality and advise on data and resources available on gender equality issues
- contribute to 'knowledge development' in the field of gender equality within the context of the Structural Funds by engaging in data collection, data analysis and primary research where necessary.

Today, these are key areas of the Unit's work as outlined in its programme complement. Overall the only areas of the Unit's work which are not explicitly related to the Structural Fund regulations, or to this report, are that the Unit sit on the NDP monitoring committees and that it support participation by community and voluntary groups in the gender mainstreaming process.

Although the commitments exist on paper, it is important to question whether the previous stage of development – i.e. their acceptance as a good idea among those who will have to implement them – has been reached (Macdonald et al, 1997). To what extent would the Irish civil service have adopted these commitments without the pressure of the EU and of community and voluntary groups within the social partnership process? Earlier EU-led initiatives, such as equal pay for women, were strongly resisted by the Irish bureaucracy (Curtin, 1989) while others, such as parental leave, were minimally applied (Donnelly et al, 2000). Although the Unit's existence and much of its work were determined by an Irish

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<sup>57</sup> One interviewee outlined that this committee met as the NDP was being put together, and it was considered that developing a workplan for a GMS unit could most effectively be carried out in this way.

organisation, it is not clear how many of these areas of work would have been decided on by the civil service independently. Additionally, understanding of and communication about gender mainstreaming is limited to the bureaucracy and those specialising in gender equality issues. Politicians and the wider public do not have a high awareness of gender mainstreaming. There was little Irish grass roots political motivation behind its introduction (Mackay and Bilton (2000) also identify this as a problem). The Unit exists due to a top-down decision, co-funded by an external body, and this may hamper its effectiveness. In contrast, Australian femocrats have had considerable success in gender proofing government policies but the impetus for the feminist machinery in government was strongly electoral, i.e. linked to grass-roots pressure. This provides a reason for the Australian policy-making system to engage with gender mainstreaming and the lack of such a base in Ireland may hamper its effective implementation.

### 7.3 Location

The location of gender equality units may indicate a government's commitment to gender issues (Gordan (1984) cited in Moser, 1993:118). The power and legitimacy of such units is indicated by their access to the planning, policy formulation and funding sectors of the government. The NDP Gender Equality Unit is logically located in the DJELR because this department has responsibility for equality in the Irish government. The DJELR also provides a supportive base for the Unit staff as they are located among others working on the same issues. One interviewee for this research pointed out that it is also key for its work that it is located in a government department, which allows it to be seen by civil servants as an insider *supportive* body rather than an outsider critical body. However, with reference to the NDP, the DJELR is not the most powerful body within this structure. The most powerful bodies are the Department of Finance, which oversees the overall NDP process, and the Departments of Transport and of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, which receive most funding (approximately €25.5bn and €24.5bn respectively). In comparison, the DJELR was allocated approximately only €460m (Government of Ireland, 1999) under the NDP and is not a managing authority of any programme. It is arguable that the Unit might be more effective if it were located in one of these larger departments. For example, Boyle (1999) has

pointed out that the role of 'the centre' is crucial as a facilitator of change for crosscutting issues where there is little pre-existing agreement among those involved on the best ways forward. The Unit could have had more opportunity to build networks and bargain with the more powerful players in the NDP if located in one of the more powerful departments. It could also be better placed to influence key issues for GMS that are beyond the remit of the NDP, such as the national budget, which is produced by the Department of Finance. Alternatively, it could be argued that the Unit could be more marginalised in such central departments, if they were not willing to support its equality work.

A related problem is that gender equality units are often linked to employment issues (see Woodward, 2003). Gender mainstreaming is much larger than employment issues because it is about the gender impacts of *all* policies. However, many policy makers persist in seeing it as relevant to employment issues only. Such a perspective is visible within the NDP context because the funding allocation for the Unit falls under the EMPHRD OP. Each of the other NDP 'technical' supports (namely, the Evaluation, IT and Information Units) is funded through the Technical Assistance OP, as was the Unit for its first year.<sup>58</sup> It is arguable that this fund should have continued to serve as the source of the Unit's finance in the 2000-2006 NDP because it could have served to heighten awareness of the Unit's work at a central level. At present, the Technical Assistance OP contains a small number of measures and there is considerable verbal reporting and discussion of each one at its monitoring committee meetings (chaired by the Department of Finance). In contrast, the Unit's work is noted as part of the thirty-one measures funded by the EMPHRD OP, whose meetings are chaired by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

#### 7.4 Staff numbers

The Unit currently has five members of staff. However, staff numbers have varied over time as Table 7.1 outlines.

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<sup>58</sup> The first gender equality expert was funded by the 1994-99 Technical Assistance fund in 1999/2000 to advise on incorporating gender equality issues into the NDP programmes as they were developed. However, she was not employed until December 1999, after the NDP had been published in November 1999, and so was only able to advise on gender equality issues in the NDP OP and programme complement documents written in 2000.



*Table 7.1. NDP Gender Equality Unit staff numbers, 1999-2003*

<b>Time period</b>	<b>No of staff</b>	<b>Type of staff</b>
Dec 1999 – Mar 2000	2	1 gender equality expert/Unit head, 1 EO
Mar 2000 – July 2001	3	1 gender equality expert/Unit head, 1 EO, 1 CO
July 2001 – Mar 2002	4	1 gender equality expert/Unit head, 1 EO, 1 CO, 1 statistician
Mar 2002 – Sept 2002	3	1 gender equality expert/Unit head, 1 CO, 1 statistician
Sept 2002 – Dec 2003	5	2 gender equality experts/1 Unit head, 1 EO, 1 CO, 1 statistician

For almost three years the Unit employed only one gender equality expert (the current head of Unit is also a gender equality expert) and was without a statistician for approximately eighteen months, even though the need for these specific skills is the main reason for the Unit's existence. It is also clear from Chapter 5 that the number of tasks to be carried out by the Unit is very high for the number of staff employed, which could lead to difficulties in implementing its work programme. However, the Unit can only employ the number of staff that is sanctioned by the Department of Finance (this equals five for the Unit).<sup>59</sup> The government is keen to keep the costs of public sector staff to a minimum (see NESCS, 2002), and prefers government departments to contract out work rather than employ staff in-house.

Although this may be an effective mechanism to control public spending it is not a particularly effective way of supporting the

<sup>59</sup> Other policy makers have cited the separation of the personnel and expenditure divisions in the Department of Finance as problematic. They find it frustrating that two sets of negotiations are required with this department – one with the Public Expenditure Division to approve a programme budget and a separate second set of negotiations with the Personnel Division to approve the staff needed to oversee new programmes (NESCS, 2002).

implementation of gender mainstreaming.<sup>60</sup> Two factors are key to this. First, the number of suitably qualified/experienced contractors available to train, facilitate and research on gender equality, particularly in non-employment areas, is low. Second, effective implementation of gender mainstreaming requires changes in policymaking and requires those promoting it to have an excellent knowledge of (a) how the policy-making system works and (b) how to influence it (Council of Europe, 1998). This is most effective if the gender mainstreaming promoters have good relationships with those in the policymaking system, and something to 'bargain' with in order to gain gender equality commitments. To date, the most effective mechanism which secures concrete commitments to promote gender equality seems to be one-to-one dialogue between those who have the power to alter their policies or practices in order to promote gender equality in the NDP (i.e. the implementing bodies/ managing authorities) and those who can agree that what is proposed will promote gender mainstreaming as outlined by the NDP and who have a relationship with those in the policy-making system by virtue of their own location within it (that is, the Unit staff). Some consultants have quite good knowledge of the policy-making system and of the complex NDP administrative system, while those who do not can be briefed on it. However, the latter takes a considerable amount of time and, in both cases, consultants on gender equality are not particularly likely to have working relationships with policy makers, or something to 'bargain' with, in order to encourage them to adopt GMS practices and policies.

A related issue is the fact that consultants who have, or who gain, good knowledge of the above, cannot be automatically awarded contracts for subsequent work in the area. All new contracts must be advertised publicly for tender, and the contract awarded to the most economically advantageous. Although the most economically advantageous is not always the least expensive in practice it is usually the least expensive, and the consultant who previously carried out good gender equality work may cost more than another 'untested' consultant who also tenders. It is of course possible to tender for a consultant to carry out a large piece of work that will continue over a number of years, but if this work costs in excess of €162,293 it must be advertised in the *Official Journal* of the European

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<sup>60</sup> For example, it is often less expensive to employ such expertise in-house than to contract out (to, for example, private consultants) for it.

Union to allow consultants from all EU Member States to apply (OJEC, 2001). This process is time consuming because the tender must be advertised in the *Journal* for at least fifty-two days and requires very detailed information. In addition, the process is even less likely to provide consultants with an excellent knowledge of how the Irish policy-making system works and how to influence it, as well as good relationships and bargaining power with Irish policy makers. Another problem is that experienced consultants are not always available to carry out the work when required. On a number of occasions the Unit has had to re-tender work because it received no tenders to carry the work out at first call for tender. Ironically in some cases the Unit had enough expertise on gender equality in-house to carry out the work, but due to its high workload had to contract the work out. A final problem related to the above practices is that, as Razavi and Miller (1995) note, the use of consultants means that gender expertise has a tendency to remain outside rather than inside the organisation, which again hampers its effective implementation within the policy-making system.

### **7.5 Focus on spending**

Overall, the Unit receives relatively good funding for an advisory and information supplying body, particularly one dedicated to gender. However, the importance of spending budget allocations in the Irish civil service, coupled with the Unit's lack of authority to employ more than five staff directly, causes difficulties. Gathering of statistics to demonstrate gender inequalities and analysis of reasons for gender inequalities are key areas of work to promote gender mainstreaming. In the Unit, commissioning the production of research and statistics often fulfils this work. The second key area of work to promote gender mainstreaming is persuading policy makers to adjust mechanisms of implementing their policy in order to promote gender equality and monitoring these changes. This process consumes a considerable amount of staff time within the Unit but costs relatively little (see Moser, 1993). Because the Unit must demonstrate that it can spend its financial allocation, and is constrained in the number of staff it can employ directly, it frequently spends less time working to persuade people to alter their policies and more time commissioning research and statistics in order to spend its financial allocation. Unfortunately, although the research and statistics are important tools for gender

mainstreaming, they will not be used unless policy makers are persuaded of their usefulness. However, the strong focus on financial performance means that the latter area of work becomes secondary to the former, thereby hampering the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

### 7.6 Staff status

Another issue that can inhibit implementation of gender mainstreaming is the status of staff in the Unit. As outlined in Chapter 6, civil servants are usually recruited as generalists at non-management 'entry grade' level, and promotion to management positions is almost exclusively from the pool of existing staff. However, because the Unit required management staff with knowledge and experience of working with equality issues, it was decided (unusually) to recruit for these posts externally, i.e. both civil servants and non-civil servants could apply for the post. This had a number of advantages – for example widening the pool of those who could be recruited meant that it was more likely that the person recruited would have considerable gender equality expertise. However, there were also disadvantages. First, the person recruited did not have full knowledge of the processes by which the civil service operates and had minimal internal support networks to draw on. Consequently, this person was not in a particularly strong position at the start (when it was most important to obtain commitments on gender equality in the implementation of the NDP measures) to bargain effectively with other policy makers. Also, because the appointed gender equality experts are not permanent civil servants, they only represent the Unit or the Unit's work at meetings where policy or strategy decisions can be made, and very rarely represent their country at such meetings. For example, the Unit does not represent Ireland at the EU High-Level Group on gender mainstreaming. A permanent civil servant represents the country at these meetings instead.<sup>61</sup> It is possible that the gender equality experts are seen as having conflicting loyalties. Haas (1992) has noted that experts are often ethically associated with their area

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<sup>61</sup> The Unit's temporary staff sit on the Council of Europe Ad Hoc Group on Gender Mainstreaming, which has very little, if any, power. The Unit's temporary staff are not on the more powerful Council of Europe Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men; instead, this function is fulfilled by permanent staff in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

of specialisation and so are viewed as having conflicting loyalties. Certainly some policy makers did seem to hold this view, for example telling the gender equality experts that they were 'paranoid'. Where the Unit staff were seen as having conflicting loyalties, it was difficult to work with these policy makers to promote effective gender mainstreaming. Also, the temporary contract status of the gender equality experts appointed to the Unit may perhaps be taken as an indicator of less than absolute commitment to the posts on the part of those deciding its rewards and conditions.<sup>62</sup> This has caused motivational difficulties for some staff members and was identified as a contributory factor to the eventual resignation of one gender equality expert from the post. Clearly, the loss of staff that are qualified and experienced in GMS does not contribute to its effective implementation.

### 7.7 Personal issues

As outlined in Chapter 6, the implementation of gender mainstreaming can lead to people feeling personally insecure or attacked, and this is an issue that inhibits its successful implementation (Macdonald et al, 1997:48). However, gender mainstreaming experts, as well as policy makers, can experience such insecurities. Because the gender mainstreaming experts are the people challenging the system and the gender roles of policy makers, they are in the role of outsider, both as workers in the policy-making system and also (in this case) as females within the system. In informal conversation at lunch following a monitoring committee meeting, when trying to explain the relevance of gender equality to a policy area, one gender equality expert was told that she was paranoid. Interestingly, the male NDP policy makers who promoted gender mainstreaming suffered similar experiences. For his pains, one was teased as 'turning into a woman', being 'obsessed with sex' and likely to 'go straight to Heaven' (Eisenstein, 1996).

The practice of recruiting generalists to work in the civil service also meant that a number of those working in the Equality Division of DJELR, where the Unit was located, did not endorse gender equality. As feminists, this meant that the gender mainstreaming experts at times felt isolated even within the Equality Division. At

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<sup>62</sup> The temporary contract status also means that staff do not receive increments or benchmarking awards, which arguably resulted in the seniority of the position, and its rewards, declining in real terms.

the same time, the gender mainstreaming experts were also quite removed from the grassroots of feminism. This was due both to the lack of experience of working on the ground in this area (as one came from an academic research background and one from the UK) and also owing to their inability due to low staff levels to focus on the provision of support for C&V groups in the beginning of the NDP process. This contributed to the feeling of isolation. In some ways the consultants who carried out much of the research and training work for the Unit were important as a source of support for the gender mainstreaming experts because they were usually also committed feminists and academics. However, it was difficult to develop a good support network with them because they were tendering to carry out much of the Unit's work with the accompanying ethical difficulties that this raised in developing close relationships between the commissioners of research and those who are tendering for research.

In addition, the amount of work that the Unit is required to carry out is very high and often yields few concrete results. Adapting to the realisation that gender mainstreaming could take up to thirty years to follow through on implementation was very de-motivating for most of the Unit's staff, both those trained in gender equality issues and those not. Macdonald et al also note that the slowness of change is seen as 'both frustrating and inevitable' (1997:40). For the gender equality experts, it was also necessary to adjust to the fact that although gender mainstreaming carries the possibility of change on a radical feminist scale, the real outcomes of providing advice and support for the implementation of gender mainstreaming were liberal feminist outcomes of very small adjustments in the mainstream. Eisenstein (1996: 76/77) finds the same, quoting an Australian gender mainstreaming expert who stated that she 'expected, somewhat naively, that everything would happen within a short time, and of course it didn't ... I ... felt very disappointed'.

## 7.8 Conclusion

In the bureaucratic politics model, action occurs due to the result of bargaining between the hierarchically placed actors in an organisation. Success depends on bargaining advantages, skill and power – the latter including expertise, control over material resources, structural location and internal alliance building (Moser, 1993). From this point of view, the Unit is quite peripheral and not

in a strong position to advance gender mainstreaming. External bodies have heavily structured its existence and work programme; it is relatively isolated from powerful structures; and it is a temporary structure only with no commitment to its long-term funding or staffing. These factors reduce its power and ability to build internal alliances, and so weaken its ability to support implementation of gender mainstreaming.

## Recommendations

*If mainstreaming is to be effective it must spearhead a radical reform of policymaking procedures and a radical reconfiguration of power relationships. Beveridge et al (2000:386).*

### 8.1 How can we know when gender mainstreaming is implemented?

This chapter discusses what ‘implemented’ gender mainstreaming would involve, followed by recommendations to help such levels of implementation to be reached in Ireland. Because gender mainstreaming means incorporating a gender equality perspective into all policies this means changing the focus, outcomes and budgets of policy making, which is very difficult to do (Mazey, 2001). Compounding this, many commentators do not spell out in detail what full implementation of gender mainstreaming would actually be – a clear set of objectives for gender mainstreaming was never established (Carney, 2002). However, a number of commentators, particularly those looking at gender mainstreaming in third world countries and organisations, have moved closer to considering what implementation of gender mainstreaming might look like. Jahan (1995) makes the important point that the distinction between ends (gender equality) and means (gender mainstreaming) are usually not clarified. However, both are necessary, and therefore ideally two types of indicators are needed to measure gender mainstreaming implementation – one to assess achievement of results in terms of wider gender equality, and a second type to establish qualitative process and results on consultation, participation and empowerment.

Unfortunately, agencies usually measure adoption of procedures rather than effects (Jahan, 1995). In Ireland the indicators to measure gender mainstreaming are limited to the NDP indicators for the NDP Gender Equality Unit. These indicators are currently focused on ‘means’ and procedures. Three of the four indicators are: the number of persons trained on GMS; the number of research reports



written on gender mainstreaming; and the number of gender disaggregated statistical databases generated. Only the fourth indicator begins to focus on the 'ends' or effects: this indicator measures the number of gender disaggregated indicators collected over the whole NDP. Because the implementing bodies and managing authorities decide on the indicators to be collected, this indicator indicates the extent to which these two mainstream groups have decided to focus on gender equality issues. However, this is a limited measure of the extent to which gender equality issues are fully incorporated into the implementation of a measure. Indicators focusing on the 'ends' of gender equality in wider Irish society, that is looking beyond the NDP, have not yet been developed. The *National Plan for Women* (Ireland, 2002) noted the need for such indicators, which would measure progress on gender equality in a wide variety of policy areas, such as the twelve critical areas of concern for gender equality as outlined by the UN.<sup>63</sup>

In the absence of precise indicators to measure progress towards the ends of gender mainstreaming, more qualitative criteria are needed to consider the possible stages of its implementation in Ireland. Macdonald et al (1997:30) outline that the usual progression which an organisation makes in adopting gender mainstreaming into its procedures can be summarised as: 1) gender is a good idea, accepted in theory; 2) gender is taken on board as policy and 3) gender is fully integrated into structures and practice. However, this paper considers that these can be broadened out into more than three stages. In the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland, several levels are apparent.

#### *a) Put commitments in place*

This entails inserting commitments to gender mainstreaming in policy documents. In Ireland this has occurred through the nine

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<sup>63</sup> As outlined in Chapters 5 and 8, in late 2003, the NDP Gender Equality Unit placed a contract with Fitzpatrick Associates to advise on three suitable indicators for each critical area of concern, using the indicators recommended in Galligan et al (2000) as a basis for this work. By April 2004, it was decided that for each critical area of concern, one indicator would outline the position of women in decision making, one would outline the general situation of women and men in the area and one would outline the main gender inequality in that area. It is expected that the final list of suggested indicators could be used as indicators for the National Strategy for Women. The final report was completed in June 2004 and is available at [http://www.ndpgenderequality.ie/publications/reports/publications\\_22.html](http://www.ndpgenderequality.ie/publications/reports/publications_22.html).

commitments made to support and/or operationalise gender mainstreaming in the NDP.

*b) Provide support*

In Ireland the NDP Gender Equality Unit and the Education Equality Unit support the agencies and managing authorities charged with implementing gender mainstreaming.

*c) Administrative adherence to commitments*

This entails adherence to the commitments outlined in the NDP. This includes the collection of gender disaggregated indicators, the incorporation of equal opportunities into project selection procedures, and promotion of gender balance on MCs. However, adherence to the commitments is not strong. Such adherence also runs the risk of becoming a formality to be observed, in danger of collapsing without comprehensive monitoring.

*d) Mainstream engagement with the commitments*

At this level, mainstream bodies would be more proactive with commitments to promote gender equality. Within the broader NDP context, this could entail a number of different strategies for those bodies charged with implementing gender mainstreaming, for example analysis of reasons for poor take-up of measures by women or men and putting in place mechanisms to address the issue. Similarly, pro-active attempts by managing authorities to increase the proportion of women on monitoring committees are an example of mainstream engagement with the commitments.<sup>64</sup> However, such engagement is relatively rare.

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<sup>64</sup> For example, Integrate Ireland analysed why so few women were attending their training courses, and put in place a number of practices which have significantly increased the proportion of women attending these (see [http://www.esf.ie/ehrd/meetings/20030429/17\\_IILT.doc](http://www.esf.ie/ehrd/meetings/20030429/17_IILT.doc)). The reports of Enterprise Ireland and the IDA to the PSOP monitoring committee show that both organisations have significantly increased the amount of gender disaggregated data that they collect and report on for their measures. A number of organisations have also proactively requested meetings with the Unit in order to see what kind of practices or policies they could put in place to increase gender equality in their measures (e.g. National Roads Authority, Marine Institute, COFORD, CIE and constituent companies).

*e) Changes in mainstream budgets and policies*

Addressing gender inequalities at this level would require a movement beyond the nine precise NDP commitments to much wider analysis of structural gender inequalities and subsequent change in central policies and associated budget lines by government departments. At a broad level, changes might include childcare costs and transport provision as standard in service provision, in addition to flexible hours of delivery (beneficial for both women and men), and revisiting eligibility criteria for access to some services. On a more specific level, this could mean re-assessment of comparative levels of support provided to for example service and manufacturing businesses by mainstream business development agencies. Indicators would need to be worked out very specifically for each area of government policy. Such changes would indicate that gender equality issues had been incorporated into the development, implementation and evaluation of mainstream policies and programmes, in other words that gender mainstreaming had been implemented.

*f) Changes in wider society*

It is likely as a result of changes in mainstream policies and budgets that changes will be evident in the representation of women *and* men in some of the main arenas in wider society. For example, greater provision of childcare and more flexible hours of delivery are likely to support more women to enter business, politics and decision-making positions. Changes in women's roles could contribute to more fathers taking up parental leave, and/or working part-time. At present in Irish society such changes seem quite distant but can be seen as an ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming.

These stages of implementation are summarised in Table 8.1.

*Table 8.1. Stages in implementation of gender mainstreaming*

1) Put commitments in place	4) Mainstream engages with commitments
2) Provide support	5) Changes in mainstream budgets and policies
3) Administrative adherence to commitments	6) Changes in wider society

The challenges to implement gender mainstreaming exist on all of these levels.<sup>65</sup> Of course, gender mainstreaming in the NDP is very much limited to the first three levels. However, gender mainstreaming is ultimately introduced as a strategy to promote gender equality in society, and therefore its goal should be level six. In addition, although these stages present consecutive steps on the road to a gender equal society, in reality changes occur at all times on every level. For example, mechanisms to promote women in decision-making, and to encourage fathers to work part-time co-exist with administrative adherence to the gender mainstreaming commitments in the NDP, and are both equally important to pursue in order to see a more gender equal society. This schema outlines the long road ahead to a gender equal society. To provide a sense of perspective, it is useful to compare this process to the progress towards equal pay for women and men (which had the advantage in comparison to gender mainstreaming that it was clearly defined). First outlined in the Treaty of Rome (1957) it took nearly twenty years before the precise implementation of this principle was clarified in an EU directive and even thirty years after its implementation pay is still not equal for women and men, although progress towards it increases over time. Gender mainstreaming is likely to need a much longer time span for its implementation due not only to its lack of precise definition, but also to the scale of change that it requires.

## 8.2 Outcomes

What has been the overall progress to date in Ireland? Using the above schema, it is clear that various commitments have been put in place to institutionalise gender mainstreaming (level one) and supports have also been provided for this through the two Units and the EOSICC (level two). At these two levels, gender mainstreaming in the NDP is operationalised on a regular and ongoing basis.

In relation to level three (administrative adherence to the NDP commitments) progress is more ambiguous, as outlined in Chapter 4. In a number of cases these commitments are being met and progress is evident since 2000, but progress on this level is not

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<sup>65</sup> This indicates some possibilities for GMS to encompass both liberal and radical feminism. Stages one to four are liberal feminist while stage six suggests strong changes in existing social structures and moves towards radical feminism.

constant. Monitoring committees do have representatives responsible for equal opportunities but few have gender balance in membership. Indicators do exist which are broken down by gender but for less than half of all measures and sub-measures, and for some measures the gender disaggregated indicators committed to are not collected. Equal opportunities is a criterion for project selection in less than half of all measures and sub-measures and where it is a criterion it is not clear how this is operationalised or if it is well operationalised. Equal opportunities are part of the criteria in all evaluations undertaken under the Plan but some of the evaluations do not effectively assess how this has been addressed. In relation to level four, some implementing bodies have put in place actions to promote gender equality, for example the work of Integrate Ireland and CERT. County Enterprise Boards, funded through the Regional OPs, are actively promoting women in business. However, in general, there is very little reported activity on level four or five. In relation to level six, it is difficult to see how the gender mainstreaming commitments in the NDP currently contribute to a more gender equal society, particularly in the absence of indicators to measure this.

It is possible that the structural changes necessary for the full implementation of level three, and of levels four and five, are resisted (the experiences around the performance reserve suggestion to the EOSICC support this). Overall, the outcomes suggest that gender mainstreaming as implemented in the NDP could be seen as positive action, which means that its potential to challenge patriarchal structures is limited at the current time (Mazey, 2001). However, the current level of progress does suggest that there is more understanding and acceptance of gender mainstreaming and less active resistance to it. Although there remains disquiet about gender mainstreaming in some areas, active verbalised resistance is less common (as per Chapter 7). In addition, an evaluation of gender mainstreaming for the European Commission's DG Employment and Social Affairs found that those interviewed in Ireland had a good understanding of gender mainstreaming compared to those in other EU countries (Optem, 2002). Jahan's (1995) study of the outcomes of GAD had similar findings, highlighting greater awareness of the relevance and significance of gender issues due to the programmes put in place to promote it. However, Jahan also found that mechanisms that

demanded structural changes to transform social and gender relations and create a just and equal world are elusive. Agency and state policies responded to the argument that it was more efficient and anti-poverty to invest in women but in areas where redistribution of power was required, e.g. decision making, equality in land and property rights etc, agencies and states were less responsive. Empowering women means that men must concede some power and privilege as well as the reallocation of existing resources or the finding of additional sources of revenue. With women demonstrating little political power as a constituency the national and international bureaucracies are under no pressure to choose the above options. Previous research suggests that agencies adopt policies and measures that emphasised instrumental (or methodological) objectives such as integration, rather than substantive (or structural) objectives such as equality and empowerment. To some extent instrumental changes were achieved (which did help gender mainstreaming get on the agenda of institutions), but the main goal, substantive changes, was often lost sight of in an effort to secure instrumental changes (Jahan, 1995). This would appear to be the case in Ireland also at this stage.

### **8.3 Suggestions for improvement in Ireland**

The previous chapters have demonstrated that although progress to date is limited, there has been some positive change since the process started in 1999. Furthermore, the problems facing those who promote the implementation of gender mainstreaming are similar in Ireland to those experienced in other countries. However, although similar problems are faced, progress has been stronger in some organisations and/or countries than others. For example, Geisler et al's (1999) assessment of gender mainstreaming in various UN organisations indicates that implementation was more effective in some organisations than others. Pollack and Hafner-Burton's (2000) analysis of gender mainstreaming implementation in various European Commission DGs also found some areas more advanced than others. Consideration of their work and that of others therefore suggests a number of areas in which changes could be made to allow more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland.

Chapter 6 outlined the main issues affecting implementation of gender mainstreaming in the NDP, namely knowledge of gender

mainstreaming in the policy making system; the focus of this system; the system structure; and the priority given to gender mainstreaming in a patriarchal policy-making system which has an increasingly neo-liberal stance. Chapter 7 argued that the NDP Gender Equality Unit's relative isolation from the most powerful bodies in the NDP inhibits implementation of gender mainstreaming. Because broad factors such as patriarchy and a neo-liberal emphasis in policy making are unlikely to change, this Chapter suggests a number of changes that could improve the implementation of gender mainstreaming with reference to the other issues identified, and categorises these changes as follows.

- 1 'High level' changes, in particular to the structures in place to support gender mainstreaming.
- 2 'Medium level' changes focusing on procedural changes in work to support gender mainstreaming.
- 3 'Low level' changes, which cover the tools currently in place to support gender mainstreaming.

#### **8.4 High level structures**

'High level' changes are focused on changes to the structures in place to support gender mainstreaming.

##### *8.4.1 Co-ordination pressure – a high-level committee*

In order for GMS to be successfully implemented, senior level 'buy-in' (for example the appointment of a Cabinet Committee, involvement of the Taoiseach) and political will are essential. This is particularly the case for issues requiring integrated practice and/or crosscutting initiatives and practices (Boyle, 1999). The Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee (EOSICC) is the co-ordinating and promoting committee for GMS but its ability to further its implementation is limited because it has no executive powers. A Cabinet level committee could be set up to overcome this (particularly if gender mainstreaming was to extend beyond the NDP). Such a high-level committee, with links to the politicians who determine overall policy programmes, could provide policy makers with greater motivation to implement gender mainstreaming. In addition as such a committee would be cross-departmental, it could address the problems of compartmentalisation in policy implementation. However, a

number of those interviewed were not sure if such a committee would achieve this task. Three respondents pointed out that it is not the existence of the committee, but rather political will, which yields results. Two were also of the opinion that forming 'another committee' could dilute effort rather than concentrating it and instead proposed adding gender equality to the remit of other Cabinet committees, e.g. the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion.

If a Cabinet level committee was not set up specifically for gender mainstreaming or an existing one expanded to cover this remit, a number of options could be considered to allow the EOSICC to more effectively steer implementation of gender mainstreaming. These are as follows:

- i The EOSICC could seek more high-level political connections, which would be likely to encourage more senior civil servants to attend the committee meetings. For example, a politician (such as a member of the Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality and Women's Rights) might feasibly sit on the committee or, similarly, local politicians currently sitting on regional monitoring committees could be approached. Such a system exists in Norway, where a committee of politicians and senior civil servants meets at least once a year to promote gender mainstreaming (With, 2002).
- ii In order to co-ordinate and promote GMS, the EOSICC could carry out more strategic work with managing authorities and implementing bodies to promote gender mainstreaming. Such work could include the following:
  - Managing authorities and/or implementing bodies could develop a strategy of implementation for gender mainstreaming in their area, and provide an annual update on this to the EOSICC.
  - It might be useful for the committee to develop peer review of gender mainstreaming by the different NDP organisations. For example, in the UK the Local Government Centre at Warwick University together with the Local Government Information Unit organises peer review of strategies for social inclusion in local authorities (Geddes and Newman, 2002).
  - A gender mainstreaming/equality mark could be



developed and awarded to the managing authority or implementing body who has made most progress in implementing gender mainstreaming in a year. Such an award would allow those making progress from a low base to be equally eligible with those making progress from a high base. Similar benchmarking standards have been developed, for example for social inclusion in local authorities in the UK (see Harlow District Council, undated). These standards measure whether levels are 'emerging', 'established' or 'advanced' in nine essential mechanisms for tackling social exclusion. Such an approach could be adapted for gender mainstreaming.

- Financial incentives could be provided by the EOSICC for interested managing authorities or implementing bodies to actively promote gender mainstreaming in their area. Such incentives could be allocated on the basis of competition as is proposed for new and innovative mechanisms to co-ordinate social inclusion measures in the NDP (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit, 2003c). A focus on financial allocations may also have the effect of increasing the 'seriousness' of the committee.
- The committee could link into the development of the *National Strategy for Women* (see below).

A further possibility is that the EOSICC could set up a smaller sub-committee to focus on more effective implementation of GMS. This committee could include representatives from the Unit, those in managing authorities who have 'championed' gender mainstreaming and some members of the Unit's management committee. This committee could develop focused strategy to present to the EOSICC to promote more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. The members of the sub-committee could also promote GMS more strongly within their organisations, with the support of this sub-committee behind them.

**What would this tackle?** Strengthening the EOSICC and re-focusing its work could tackle the following problems facing gender

mainstreaming – prioritisation of it within the NDP, its lack of status, the isolation of the Unit and, to some extent, compartmentalisation in policy implementation.

**Key drivers:** The Department of the Taoiseach would lead the process by which additional terms of reference were set up or added to the remit of the particular Cabinet Committees. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (which chairs the EOSICC) would lead the implementation of the necessary changes to the EOSICC.

**Financial implications:** the financial implications of setting up a Cabinet Committee, or expanding the EOSICC, would be low. A Cabinet Committee would require part-time secretariat services, at the approximate cost of €15,000 per annum. Peer review work and establishing an equality mark could cost €40,000 each. Financial incentives of up to €100,000 could be provided. These costs could be met from the Technical Assistance budget that supports the costs of the EOSICC, perhaps with some contribution from the NDP Gender Equality Unit budget.

#### *8.4.2 Tie GMS into other key policies*

*Sustaining Progress* commits the government to developing a five-year National Strategy for Women (NSW) (Government of Ireland, 2003). The scope and shape of this Strategy has yet to be determined, but it is likely to be a key document for the future development of gender equality in Ireland. The Strategy Statement of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2003:67) states that the NSW will be developed as ‘a cross cutting policy development with other relevant Departments and Agencies’ and lists these as the Departments of Finance; Social and Family Affairs; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Environment and Local Government; Health and Children; Education and Science; Taoiseach; and Foreign Affairs. With the exception of the latter two, all the named departments receive funding from the NDP, in addition to the Departments of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Arts, Tourism and Sport; Transport; Marine, Communications and Natural Resources; and Justice, Equality and Law Reform itself. Therefore, all of these departments are required to gender

mainstream at least a proportion of their policies. It would be useful if the NSW asked each of these departments to include a commitment in their new Departmental Strategy Statements to gender mainstream their policies. Such a commitment now exists in the new Strategy Statement for the Department of Education and Science.<sup>66</sup>

The introduction of such a commitment into each department's Strategy Statement would ensure that responsibility for its implementation was built into the Business Plan of one or more divisions within the department. This responsibility would be tied to goals and performance indicators.<sup>67</sup> An evaluation of Gender and Development initiatives in the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) also recommended that various sections could set targets on this (Geisler et al, 1999). Such goals in the Irish context could allow 'single-organisation' issues that affect access to services, such as definition of eligibility criteria and hours of service delivery, to be addressed. They could also provide an opportunity for issues which need to be tackled by a number of organisations together to be considered, e.g. provision of transport and childcare, in order to allow greater access to services. Equally there might be an opportunity for some of the good practice arising from the Equality for Women measure projects to be mainstreamed in the work of various departments. This practice would facilitate gender mainstreaming to progress to levels four and five of implementation.

A number of other policy documents could also be used to support more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. For example, all memoranda to Cabinet (the end point of policy proposal preparation) currently contain a section where the impact of the proposed new policy on women is to be outlined (Department of the Taoiseach, 1998). Currently there are no guidelines available on how policy makers should complete this section but the GIA form questions could usefully provide a basis for completing it. This would ensure that an opportunity existed to include in the memoranda and the policymaking process information on the

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<sup>66</sup> Objective 2.6 states: 'we will promote gender equality in services, actions, programmes and measures for children and adults at all levels of education'. This is under the strategy heading of 'promote the development of gender mainstreaming in schools' (Department of Education and Science, 2003: 33).

<sup>67</sup> Ultimately, this could allow more gender responsive budgeting within departments, which would also help progress GMS.

statistical differences in women and men benefiting from the proposal, an analysis of this, and options to address inequalities. Finally, a key issue for successful implementation of gender mainstreaming is gender-responsive budgeting. The Irish national budget is currently not gender proofed, although the NWCI makes submissions to this process. It would be very useful for gender mainstreaming to develop the gender proofing of the national budget as is currently done in South Africa.

**What would this tackle?** Linking into the NSW and other key government policy documents could help tackle the following problems facing gender mainstreaming: prioritisation of gender mainstreaming; isolation of the Unit; compartmentalisation in policy development and implementation; lack of input at some levels of influence; and the ‘non-people’ focus of policy making.

**Key drivers:** Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, NDP Gender Equality Unit, NDP funded government departments, Department of the Taoiseach, Department of Finance.

**Financial implications:** the costs of inserting commitments to gender mainstreaming in departmental strategy statements would be minimal. Providing guidelines for the memoranda would also be minimal, because such guidelines already exist within the NDP process. Developing a template to gender proof the national budget is likely to cost €70,000. These costs could be met within the Unit’s budget.

#### *8.4.3 Use of incentives and sanctions*

As outlined in Chapter 6, the lack of sanctions and incentives hampers the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland. One interviewee for this research was of the opinion that policy makers had to be forced to implement gender mainstreaming. In this regard the Structural Funds regulations are technically legally binding but, as discussed earlier, the commitments in these to promote gender mainstreaming are not being enforced at the current time by the European Commission. This is likely to be related to the ambiguous attitudes of many policy-makers towards gender mainstreaming and in such circumstances it might be counter-active to impose sanctions for non-compliance. Another

interviewee pointed out that it would be very difficult in practice to impose sanctions. For example, if funding were reduced, under what circumstances would this occur? Who would enforce this? At present there is no mechanism for sanctioning government departments funded through the NDP for non-compliance with other requirements, such as collecting indicator data. Managing authorities are government departments and it is neither feasible nor politically acceptable for them to withdraw funds from other government departments, with whom they are technically and politically equal, despite their managing authority status. In fact, one interviewee suggested that rather than being managing or even co-ordinating authorities their role was that of 'reporting authorities'. It was suggested that sanctions for non-compliance with other requirements in the NDP should be set up before sanctions for compliance with more contentious requirements such as those on gender mainstreaming.

Taking this into account, incentives are likely to be more useful in encouraging compliance with gender mainstreaming requirements, as was suggested by some interviewees. For intractable issues there is a 'particular role for financial incentives to promote co-ordination' (Boyle, 1999:45). Such an approach was used for the Homeless Initiative in order to implement innovative actions with a variety of bodies able to compete for a percentage of overall resources for the homeless (Boyle, 1999). A similar approach could be used for the managing authorities and implementing bodies, possibly co-ordinated by the EOSICC as suggested above. The European Commission may also be in a position to more directly provide financial incentives to managing authorities and implementing bodies to comply with the commitments, rather than, or as well as, financing advice on how to comply with them. Geisler et al (1999) note the existence of an 'incentive sanction' within the UN organisation which had most successfully implemented gender mainstreaming, namely the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Forty per cent of country UNDP budgets are given out only when it is demonstrated that certain capabilities to deliver exist. At least twenty per cent of total country allocation must be shown to support gender equality mainstreaming. They do note that this twenty per cent has never been withheld on grounds of insufficient attention to gender equality, but it is likely that clear criteria by which the funding would be allocated could ensure that

accountable mechanisms are used. Although the UNDP and the countries which receive its funding are not equal partners, while the European Commission and the EU member states to which it distributes funding are, this UNDP approach suggests some possibilities within EU structures. For example, the European Commission could consider including adherence to gender equality commitments as part of the criteria used to allocate the Structural Funds performance reserve. This would allow a proportion of the funding to be paid once compliance with requirements had been shown.

**What would this tackle?** Sanctions and incentives would help to tackle the prioritisation problems faced by gender mainstreaming.

**Key drivers:** Department of Finance, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, European Commission.

**Financial implications:** these would be minimal, because this recommendation involves a different mechanism of distributing the same budget.

#### *8.4.4 Mobilisation of people pressure*

People pressure is needed at several levels. Firstly, there is a need for more gender mainstreaming experts, specifically those with qualifications and/or significant experience in gender equality issues, in order to advise policy makers on gender mainstreaming of policies. In some countries, organisations that promote inclusion of gender equality issues in policy have very high staff numbers, for example Status of Women Canada has one hundred staff (Mackay and Bilton, 2000). Although the population of Ireland is lower, there are only two gender equality experts. Macdonald et al (1997) concluded that the best staffing approach for gender mainstreaming experts is centralised gender focal points which facilitate access to and learning about innovative practices, and decentralised focal points concentrating mainly on facilitating the operation and implementation of gender mainstreaming into the routine practice of the organisation. This model has been particularly effective in Australia. The Australian 'wheel' model of gender mainstreaming staffing included a 'hub' of gender equality experts working in the Prime Minister's Office, with smaller 'spokes' of gender equality

experts in other government departments (Eisenstein, 1996). There have also been moves towards the provision of gender mainstreaming experts in a number of divisions or departments in other locations. Geisler et al (1999) outline how the UNDP started with one gender advisor in 1977, followed by a Division of Women in Development in 1987. It now has a Gender Programme Team that works at different levels to ensure organisation-wide alignment of the implementation of gender goals (UNDP, 2002). In the Irish system, there are some calls for similar structures, for example the MTE of the BMW OP and of the EMPHRD OP both recommended the provision of more expertise within the managing authority to help implement the horizontal principles (BMW Regional Assembly, 2003; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003). The relevant managing authorities and/or the NDP Gender Equality Unit could provide financial support for this.

It would be important however to ensure that if staff in managing authorities or government departments are given responsibility for advising on and co-ordinating GMS they are not in the same position as gender focal points in the past in UNDP i.e. junior, temporary, isolated, and with gender issues as an add-on to their existing work load (Geisler et al, 1999). According to one interviewee, similar problems arose for the Departmental NAPS liaison officers fulfilling this role under the National Anti-Poverty Strategy in Ireland. Recruiting staff trained in gender equality issues and using the support of the 'wheel' model would help to avoid this. In the Irish system, it may not be immediately possible to employ more gender mainstreaming experts in different NDP organisations, given the need for sanction from the Department of Finance to recruit staff. However, other options are possible. In Malawi, a Gender Training Team of twenty-one staff from different sectors of government, academia and NGOs train trainers on how policy planners can mainstream gender and implement gender concerns in projects and programmes (Geisler et al, 1999). In Sweden, 'flying experts' are employed to advise organisations on how to GMS, as required (Mackay and Bilton, 2000). The NDP Gender Equality Unit could hire a group of various consultants, specialised in gender equality issues in different policy areas, to advise NDP organisations on gender mainstreaming, as part of the supports to re-complete the Gender Impact Assessment forms.

**What would this tackle?** Clearly, more gender mainstreaming experts would alleviate the problem of lack of gender equality staff. It could also assist in developing knowledge and in communicating gender mainstreaming more effectively.

**Key drivers:** The NDP Gender Equality Unit, the Department of Finance (to sanction more staff) and various other NDP-funded departments and bodies.

**Financial implications:** employing a gender equality expert within a government department would cost approximately €50,000 per annum. Alternatively, setting up a network of consultants could cost €10,000 per annum per consultant.

*Establishment of networks of support*

The NDP Gender Equality Unit is funding a virtual network of gender mainstreaming experts working in the UK and Irish Structural Funds. This is important to provide geographically or organisationally isolated gender mainstreaming experts with peer support, and to allow the sharing of good practice and learning regarding methods of overcoming challenges. The European Commission is also currently setting up a network of those working on gender mainstreaming in the Structural Funds (COM, 2002). This could provide a very useful support for the GMS units throughout the Member States, as outlined above. These networks could develop into one similar to the Global Gender Network run by the UNDP, which includes over 400 colleagues, the 134 gender focal points in country offices, and 20 gender specialists. It also provides a virtual forum to exchange ideas and share information (UNDP, 2003).

**What would this tackle?** Networks of support could tackle the problems of isolation of gender mainstreaming experts; lack of knowledge; and the, at times, negative personal effects for gender mainstreaming experts of working in this role.

**Key drivers:** NDP Gender Equality Unit, European Commission.

**Financial implications:** support for the Unit's virtual network currently costs €20,000 per year.



*Promoting the development and use of 'champions'*

People pressure is also needed with those who are not trained gender mainstreaming experts but who provide vital support to help gender mainstreaming implementation. Strides towards effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in the NDP have been strongly related to the presence of male champions at senior levels who have promoted this within their organisations. These people are 'norm entrepreneurs' (Elgstrom, 2000) in that they help to persuade other individuals of the value of carrying out this work. 'Finding the open doors' is a successful strategy for promoting the implementation of gender mainstreaming (Moser, 1993: 131). It could be useful for the Unit to provide more support to the male champions, for example by networking with them periodically to see what strategies they find useful in promoting gender mainstreaming. (Such work could be part of the proposed subcommittee of the EOSICC.) One interviewee in this research noted that such 'champions', as well as being key for implementation of gender mainstreaming, are interested in exactly how to do the proofing work. It would be useful and supportive to them to find out what support and tools they seek (see communication discussion below).

**What would this tackle?** Supporting the gender mainstreaming champions would diminish Unit isolation, increase communication to and ownership of gender mainstreaming in the public sector and help to overcome prioritisation issues.

**Key drivers:** NDP Gender Equality Unit.

**Financial implications:** these would be minimal, because the NDP Gender Equality Unit could do this work within its existing budget.

**8.5 Medium level procedures**

'Medium level' changes focus on procedural changes in work to support gender mainstreaming.

*8.5.1 Work from 'outside in'*

One of the interviewees in this research noted that in order to incorporate gender mainstreaming it was easier to alter the practices

of smaller bodies working directly to implement policies. Government departments were considered to be the most negative with regard to implementing changes. This was considered to be due to the power dynamics between these smaller organisations and the managing authorities. It was more difficult for the managing authorities to encourage other government departments to alter their practices, because the two organisations had equal power. Smaller organisations, particularly newer ones, may suffer less from bureaucratic inertia, and may be more amenable to change. In this regard, it may be more productive for the Unit to work with smaller bodies, in order to provide examples of implemented GMS to larger bodies. Macdonald et al (1997) outline a 'pie' of organisations, ranging from those who are very negative, through to negative, slightly negative, slightly positive, positive and very positive. They argue that is not very productive to work with the 'very negative' organisations because they are unlikely to change and working with them uses up significant amounts of energy and time. Instead, it is more productive to work with organisations that are slightly negative and slightly positive, because the work is much more likely to yield positive results. In the Irish context, this may mean working more with smaller organisations. Such organisations may themselves be also able to pressurise larger, central organisations to change.

**What would this tackle?** This could assist in communication, and dealing with workload.

**Key drivers:** NDP Gender Equality Unit.

**Financial implications:** these would be minimal because the work primarily involves re-focusing current work programmes.

### *8.5.2 Focus/prioritise the Unit's work*

Considering the low staff numbers in the Unit and the amount of work tasks which it is required to undertake, a number of interviewees suggested that it would be most useful for it to focus on gender mainstreaming a small number of policy areas each year. This advice echoes that of the report of the Council of Europe (1998) group of experts on gender mainstreaming, which also suggested starting in a limited policy area before further developing gender mainstreaming work.

Work could be carried out with policy areas prioritised for gender mainstreaming implementation to collect gender disaggregated data and indicators in addition to analysing and later evaluating gender equality issues within the policy's remit. Work would need to start before the policy is designed rather than after. In order for a prioritisation approach to be effective, it would also be important that as many agencies as possible working in the policy area chosen would be supportive of the process. Opportunities for this work may arise from the Mid Term Review because a number of MTEs called for prioritisation of the measures to which the horizontal principles apply (e.g. BMW Regional Assembly, 2003; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2003). The Unit also could focus on a particular policy area, such as the National Action Plan on Travellers, or the National Strategy for Women.

**What would this tackle?** This would help tackle difficulties arising from the high workload and low staff numbers within the Unit and may help expand the level of policy making that the Unit can influence.

**Key drivers:** NDP Gender Equality Unit and other bodies in relevant policy areas.

**Financial implications:** these would be minimal because this recommendation involves re-focusing existing work.

### *8.5.3 Establish goals and time frames for GMS*

Geisler et al (1999) note that it is important to establish goals and time frames for gender mainstreaming because this allows the measurement of progress attained. Currently the goals for gender mainstreaming in the NDP are administrative (the requirements on gender balance, project selection and indicators) and at level three in the schema outlined earlier in this chapter. However, this does not measure the ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming, which is change in the position of women and men in wider society (level six in the schema for implementation of GMS). It would be useful to have goals on both implementation of procedures (level 3) and impact of interventions on women (level 6).

Reporting on meeting the goals of gender mainstreaming in the NDP (level three) is currently poor for most measures. It would be

useful for the Unit to develop a reporting template for completion by each measure under the twice-yearly progress reports to the monitoring committees. For example, each measure could be asked to report on the main commitments in the NDP to gender mainstreaming. Managing authorities could report on gender balance on the monitoring committees. Currently only a small number of implementing bodies and managing authorities report on all of the above. Alternatively a broader form of reporting could be followed. In the Irish context, it might be useful for each measure to report on the three issues required in the GIA forms. Broader reporting could also be adopted if the GIA forms were re-completed and yielded new commitments to be met. If the approval to re-complete the GIA forms during 2004 is forthcoming from the NDP/CSF monitoring committee, then the Unit will hire consultants to provide one-to-one support to implementing body personnel to complete the forms. Finally, it is proposed that agreement be reached between the consultants and the implementing bodies on what mechanisms are possible to adopt to redress the inequalities. If the forms are re-completed and mechanisms adopted to tackle gender inequalities then these can become goals for gender mainstreaming in that policy area to be reported on.

A further alternative is that implementing bodies report on the number of male/female beneficiaries and on the provision of factors that may support more gender balanced participation. The EU may also be able to play a role here, because it could require certain issues to be reported on under Structural Funds regulations. Setting broader goals to level six, i.e. wider changes in society, would require a considerable amount of work because the goals for each policy area would differ. In this regard it might be possible for the National Strategy for Women to set goals with a small number of high level goals for each government department, for example increases in support to service industries, or reduction in the gender pay gap. Progress on such indicators could then be reported in each department's annual report.

#### *8.5.4 Determine where accountability for the implementation of GMS rests*

The NDP notes that 'the CSF and Operational Programme Monitoring Committees will have ultimate responsibility for securing the maximum application of these horizontal principles

[including gender mainstreaming] within their remit' (13.38). However, this level of accountability is too diffuse because it is not part of the work plan of any individual to ensure that this takes place. In this regard, it could be possible for implementation of gender mainstreaming to become part of the business plans for the relevant divisions in each department receiving NDP funding. (This could be done as part of the NDP requirement to gender mainstream and/or could tie into the National Strategy for Women proposal above.) A number of interviewees pointed out that gender mainstreaming at the moment was too reliant on committed individuals and not built into civil service structures. By building implementation of gender mainstreaming into the relevant division's business plan, it would become part of each senior manager's Role Profile Form.<sup>68</sup> This would help gender issues to become something that all managers take account of routinely and regularly, which is a sign of institutionalisation of gender issues.

**What would this tackle?** Tying down goals and accountability for gender mainstreaming would tackle the issues of low prioritisation and the focus and compartmentalisation of policy making.

**Key drivers:** NDP Gender Equality Unit, European Commission, managing authorities, various departments.

**Financial implications:** including gender mainstreaming in the goals of individual RPFs would have minimal financial costs. Meanwhile, providing one to one supports to managing authorities could cost €100,000, which could be met from the NDP Gender Equality Unit's budget.

## 8.6 Low level tools

This refers to 'low level' changes, which cover the tools currently in place to support gender mainstreaming.

### 8.6.1 *Use the right language and tools*

When long-term change is hoped for, the process of change is also long term and this can only be achieved through a combination of

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<sup>68</sup> One attendee at the seminar on this research suggested linking accountability for GMS implementation to the benchmarking process.

education and lobbying that will build change through many small steps (Macdonald et al, 1997). A key factor here is communication. Literature suggests three types of argument key to communicating the importance of gender mainstreaming – using facts, appealing to morals/ideology, and using efficiency and pragmatism as arguments (Macdonald et al, 1997:53). There is a clear ‘strategic value in tailoring your argument to your interlocutor and his or her known concerns’ (ibid, 54). Clearly, building on this, more publicity is needed for gender mainstreaming – it needs to become more widely known, in order to promote political interest in it. The Unit therefore needs to more precisely target the people on whom it should focus its communication and provision of appropriate information on gender mainstreaming.

### *Policy makers*

It is important to tailor arguments to the needs of policy makers. Because Irish policymaking tends towards the neo-liberal it is likely to be useful to employ efficiency arguments. Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) point out that the Structural Funds promote economic development, so in this context efficiency arguments are particularly likely to be useful. Experience in the Unit to date has also indicated that using statistical information is very useful, because it is a tool frequently used by policy makers. Accordingly, the use of statistics to bolster an argument ensures that the argument is presented in a way that is meaningful to policy makers. It would also be useful to demystify the concept of gender mainstreaming, perhaps by using the term gender proofing, which is understood by more Irish policy makers due to their familiarity with the process of poverty proofing.

It may also be useful to showcase those organisations that are already promoting good practice equality policy in some areas. Although gender mainstreaming requires some new work, it is simpler than it first looks. It is essential that its simplicity is put across, as well as information on precisely how it is to be implemented in each policy area. Case studies of areas where gender mainstreaming has worked in Ireland would also be useful to show policy makers that it can be done – this was suggested by a number of interviewees. The issue of how threatened people can feel by gender mainstreaming, or more precisely by changes in gender roles, also needs to be tackled. In this regard it is important for the Unit to point out that gender mainstreaming provides

benefits for men as well as women. One interviewee felt that this could assist the Unit to develop more credibility. It is also essential for the future progress of gender equality that men are involved.

### *Non-policy makers*

As well as those who are directly involved in implementing the NDP, it would also be useful to network with others outside the direct NDP remit that may influence it or the development of policy making. In particular, it is useful to communicate to social partners. Clearly, women's community and voluntary groups are interested in pushing GMS forward, but trade unions and employer groups are also likely to have a stake in increasing gender equality in terms of women's greater participation in the labour force. Increased information to and networking with these organisations could help maximise awareness and possibly implementation of gender mainstreaming. The Unit also currently networks with bodies such as the Equality Authority, which is useful for peer support and gaining information on effective strategies.

It would also be useful for the Unit to link to politicians who might be able to influence implementation of gender mainstreaming. For example, it could give presentations on this work to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality and Women's Rights, and to other Oireachtas committees, such as that on Social and Family Affairs, or on Finance and Public Service. Equally, political parties or their equality officers could be briefed, as could the advisors of certain politicians. Finally, Geisler et al (1999) note that gender mainstreaming implementation and development in the UNDP is specifically part of the processes of change within that organisation. In this regard, there is likely to be some benefit for the Unit from communicating with those implementing the Strategic Management Initiative for public sector modernisation in Ireland.

**What would this tackle?** Tailored communication would tackle the problems of lack of knowledge of gender mainstreaming, some of the problems associated with male domination of policymaking and some of the fears around gender mainstreaming.

**Key drivers:** NDP Gender Equality Unit and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

**Financial implications:** it would be most useful to devise a communications strategy for the Unit, and employ a staff member to oversee this. It is likely to cost €40,000 to devise such a strategy, and €50,000 to employ a staff member to oversee this. These costs could be met out of the Unit's current budget.

### *8.6.2 Expansion of outreach work by the NDP Gender Unit*

As outlined earlier, one interviewee for this research noted that providing the precise tools actively sought by policy makers to implement gender mainstreaming is very important. Such tools should be produced using participatory approaches, which should also involve senior management. Policy makers are often not at ease with policies requiring a 'self-critical analysis of existing methods and structures of policy making' and many would prefer a simple mechanism of implementing gender mainstreaming, such as a checklist (Carney, 2003:53). Although a checklist may be too simplistic to ensure effective implementation of gender mainstreaming, the provision of more tools tailored for individual organisations/policy divisions, which build on the methods through which they work, is likely to be more useful and more easily communicated.

It is important to note and consider why attendance at Unit training days is falling. This suggests that policy makers are not finding the training useful. Interestingly, Geisler et al (1999) reported that policy makers in the FAO found training on gender mainstreaming frustrating, because it was too general and not specific enough on implementation. These policy makers called for non-mandatory, sector-specific training. The Unit has provided training on gender mainstreaming on this basis, but the numbers attending continue to decline. More interestingly, Geisler et al (1999) reported that in the UNDP, training was eventually discontinued, because it was found not to be particularly useful for actually getting gender mainstreaming done. In the Irish context it might therefore be useful if induction training in civil service departments could include a module on gender equality issues in that policy area. It would also be useful for the Unit to commission a survey of what implementing body personnel understand by gender mainstreaming, to find out which supports for its implementation they are aware of and what supports they would find useful. Such a survey could also ascertain the concerns of implementing body personnel with regard to gender mainstreaming and its



implementation. For example, do they think it is relevant to their area of work? Would they like GMS to continue to be a strategy to promote equal opportunities? Would they like GMS to continue in a different format? Such a survey could also ascertain other equality initiatives within their organisation to support gender equality. The responses to this survey could then be used as a basis for providing technical support on gender mainstreaming implementation.

**What would this tackle?** More outreach to policy makers could assist in increasing ownership of gender mainstreaming by the civil service, increasing knowledge about it and overcoming resistance to it.

**Key driver:** NDP Gender Equality Unit.

**Financial implications:** the costs in relation to training would be minimal, while each survey is likely to cost up to €80,000.

## 8.7 Conclusion

Table 8.2 summarises the recommendations for change, and indicates (in italics with an asterisk) those that should be implemented as soon as possible, due to their feasibility and likely positive impact.

A wide variety of tools and resources have been provided to support implementation of gender mainstreaming in Ireland. However, full implementation of gender mainstreaming is extremely slow in its progress. This is due to the economic and patriarchal focus of the policy-making system, its compartmentalised structure, the low priority given to gender mainstreaming in this system and poor knowledge of gender equality issues among policy makers. The recommendations prioritised in Table 8.2 seek to combat this by:

- 1 promoting strategic links
- 2 identifying goals and tying down accountability for implementation of gender mainstreaming
- 3 providing incentives to managing authorities and implementing bodies to implement gender mainstreaming
- 4 providing more effective communication about gender mainstreaming to all those who can promote it

- 5 increasing the number of staff to support and advise on its implementation.

Of these five areas, work on the first three is most urgent and would be most helpful in promoting implementation of gender mainstreaming. To promote strategic links, focusing a Cabinet Committee on gender mainstreaming and/or involving politicians in the EOSICC would assist the development of political attention to it – an attention that is currently lacking. Identifying goals and associated accountability for gender mainstreaming implementation is also vital. The inclusion of commitments to gender mainstreaming in the strategy statements of departments funded by the NDP would aid this, particularly as these commitments would translate down into goals on gender mainstreaming in the business plans of various divisions and accountability for delivering on these goals would be included in the Role Profile Forms of individual managers. Re-completion of the GIA forms, with precise commitments on gender mainstreaming for various NDP measure implementers to meet would also assist in this process. Finally, providing incentives to managing authorities and implementing bodies, either through direct financial incentives or through work to develop peer review of progress on gender mainstreaming would provide interested bodies with the support they need to spend some time developing mechanisms to assist the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the NDP.

These steps would allow more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming, an approach to policy development and implementation that ultimately aims to equalise the positive benefits of policy for both women and men.

Table 8.2. Summary of recommendations to promote effective implementation of GMS, with priority actions indicated (italics)

Type	Action	Who can lead	Costs (€)
<b>HIGH LEVEL</b>			
Cabinet Committee	New Committee on GMS only Add GMS to an existing Committee	Dept of Taoiseach Dept of Taoiseach	15,000 p.a. Minimal
Reform EOSICC	Gain political connections <i>*Carry out strategic work with managing authorities</i> Set up smaller sub-committee	D/JELR D/JELR/Unit D/JELR/Unit	Minimal 40,000 Minimal
National Strategy For Women	<i>*Include GMS in strategy statements of NDP funded Government Departments</i>	D/JELR Departments	Minimal
Government Memoranda	Use GIA forms as template for 'impact on women' section	Dept of Taoiseach Unit /D /JELR	Minimal
Budget	Gender proof budget	Dept of Finance /Unit	70,000
Sanctions	Introduce sanctions	Dept of Finance/ European Commission	Minimal 100,000
Incentives	<i>*Provide finance via EOSICC</i> Connect allocation of mainstream funding to GMS	/JELR/Unit /Finance, European Commission	Minimal
More GMSers	<i>*More GMSers, using 'wheel' model</i>  <i>*Network of GMS consultants</i> Support network of GMSers Support GMS champions	D /Finance/Unit, Manag- Authorities  nit Unit Unit	50,000 each p.a. 10,000 each p.a. Minimal Minimal

Type	Action	Who can lead	Costs (€)
<b>MEDIUM LEVEL</b>			
Prioritise work of Unit	Work with smaller organisations <i>*Focus work of Unit on key policy areas</i>	Unit Unit, Departments, Implementing Bodies	Minimal
Goals	Precise reporting on NDP commitments <i>*Re-complete GIA forms</i> Report on positive action type measures <i>*Develop NSW goals/indicators</i>	Managing Authorities/Unit Unit/Implement. Bodies Managing Authorities/Unit D/JELR/Departments	Minimal 100,000 (support) Minimal Minimal
Accountability	<i>*Tie responsibility for GMS implementation to RPFs of senior managers</i>	D Taoiseach, Departments, D/JELR	Minimal
Type	Action	Who can lead	Costs (€)
<b>LOW LEVEL</b>			
Communication	To policy makers To social partners <i>*To politicians</i> To SMI teams	Unit Unit Unit Unit	100,000 for strategy and communications manager
Outreach	Tie into civil service induction Survey implementing bodies	Unit/Depts Unit	Minimal 100,000

## Appendix 1

### Sub-programmes of the NDP Operational Programmes

The following table outlines the various sub-programmes of the NDP Operational Programmes.

*Table A.1. Sub-programmes of the NDP Operational Programmes*

<b>Economic and Social Infrastructure OP</b>	<b>Employment and Human Resources OP</b>
National roads	Employability
Public transport	Adaptability
Water and waste water	Entrepreneurship
Coastal protection	Equality
Energy	
Social and affordable housing	
Health capital	

  

<b>Productive Sector</b>	<b>Regional Programmes</b>
Research RTDI	Local infrastructure
Industry	Local enterprise
Marketing	Agriculture and rural development
Fisheries	Social inclusion and childcare
Agriculture	

*Source:* Government of Ireland, 1999.

## Appendix 2

### **Commitments to GMS in the NDP: definitions and scope**

The precise commitments made on equal opportunity are contained in Chapter 13 of the NDP, which is entitled 'Compliance with [European] Community and National Policies'. It is noted in the Chapter that

as the [European] Commission's guidelines indicate equality for men and women is a basic democratic principle underpinned by the Treaty of Amsterdam, its incorporation into all policies is therefore no longer an option but an obligation. Mainstreaming equal opportunities must therefore be introduced into all Structural Funds programming. This involves both efforts to promote equality and specific measures to help women and the mobilisation of all general policies by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situation of women and men (13.29).

This commitment is then more precisely identified as gender mainstreaming:

'the Plan provides for a number of specific actions designed to ensure that men and women share the benefits of the Plan. It contributes to the achievement of a more equal society for men and women through the mainstreaming of equal opportunities across all sectors' (13.27) and 'the emphasis in the proposed equality expenditure will, in particular, be on activities to monitor and document progress on gender mainstreaming' (13.15).

The requirement for the Structural Funds spending to be gender mainstreamed is extended to all measures in the NDP, whether funded by the Structural Funds or not, as subsection 13.20 of the Plan outlines:

Poverty and rural proofing are two national horizontal principles in addition to the principles of sustainable development and equal opportunities which are shared [by Ireland] with the European Community.

The role of the European Commission and the community and voluntary pillar in NDP discussions was important in ensuring that GMS was adopted. The European Commission promoted it at monitoring committees of the 1994-1999 NDP that it chaired. One interviewee for this research stated that at a high level meeting, a member of the CandV pillar asked that GMS be extended to the whole NDP, and a senior government minister at the meeting agreed to this.

## Appendix 3

### List of organisations interviewed

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform: two policy makers involved in the initial NDP discussions and set-up of GMS.
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment: one representative from a managing authority.
- Department of Education and Science: one policy maker involved in gender equality policy in the NDP.
- NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit: two evaluators of NDP programmes and policies.
- National Women's Council of Ireland: one representative.
- Combat Poverty Agency: one representative.
- European Commission: one representative.



## Appendix 4

### Interview schedule

- What did you think of GMS in the beginning?
- How do you think GMS in the NDP is progressing so far?
- What do you think are the problems?

#### *Prompt*

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Knowledge	– GMS is new, different and difficult – and means acknowledging patriarchy – threatening
	– Civil servants are generalists
	– Consultation low
Focus of system	– Focus on financial turnaround
	– Strategic evaluation culture is new
	– People issues are new
Structure of system	– Compartmentalisation of policy
	– NDP separate from other initiatives
	– Male domination
Priority in system	– EOSICC is weak
	– Priority is unclear
	– No sanctions, no incentives
Supports	– Too few, too isolated
	– Not properly linked to/owned by civil service
	– Etc

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- What do you think is working? What assists it?

*Prompt*

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Structures	– Unit
	– Commission
	– EOSICC
People	– Champions
	– Networking
Structural tools	– The GIA guidelines
	– Monitoring
	– The other NDP commitments (indicators, project selection, evaluation)
Unit tools	– Publicity, training
	– New tools – data, research

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- What would help to make it more effective?

*Prompt*

HIGH LEVEL

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Structures	– A different high-level committee, with political involvement
	– Crosscutting teams from different departments
	– European Commission pressure
	– Sanctions and incentives (possibly legislation later)
People	– Champions
	– More GMSers
	– Networks of GMS allies
	– Networks of GMSers
	– Improve consultation, feedback
Other	– Links to key policy areas (budget, National Strategy for Women)
	– Develop stronger evaluation culture

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## MEDIUM

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- Work from outside in – use peripheral organisations to GMS first
  - Focus/prioritise Unit's work – provide more supports
  - Goals – decide on these for each section/Dept – possibly do an equality plan for each one
  - Targets – set these
  - Accountability – set these up for GMS in managers' work
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## SMALL

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- Communicate GMS better (stats, non-threatening explanation etc)
  - Outreach – be participative. Survey the implementing bodies
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- The Unit in particular – what do you think it could do?
- What do you think the future of GMS is?

### *Questions to policy makers involved in setting up GMS in the NDP*

- How was GMS set up in the beginning?
- What problems arose then?
- What kind of problems did you envisage at that time?
  
- How was the Unit set up in the beginning?
- What problems arose then?
- What kind of problems did you envisage in the future?
- How pleased are you with the work of the Unit?
  
- What kind of consultation took place with women's groups for NDP?
  
- How did the UCC report get written? How was that committee? Are you happy with its outcomes?
  
- How successful do you think GMS has been?
  
- How do you think the National Strategy for Women will develop GMS?

- How do you think the Equality for Women measure will develop GMS?
- How is the Equality for Women measure to be mainstreamed?

*Questions to representatives of women's groups*

- How was GMS set up in the beginning?
- What kind of consultation took place with women's groups for NDP?
  
- How did the UCC report get written? How was that committee? Are you happy with its outcomes?
- What problems arose then?
- What kind of problems did you envisage in the future?
  
- How successful do you think GMS has been?
  
- How do you think the National Strategy for Women will develop GMS?
- How do you think the Equality for Women measure will develop GMS?

*Questions to those working on equality in the Department of Education and Science*

- How was GMS set up in the beginning?
- What problems arose then?
- What kind of problems did you envisage in the future?
  
- How was the Dept of Education Equality Unit set up in the beginning?
- What problems arose then?
- What kind of problems were envisaged in the future?
- How pleased are you with the work of this Unit?
  
- What kind of consultation took place with women's groups for the NDP?
  
- How successful do you think GMS has been?

- How do you think the National Strategy for Women will develop GMS?
- How do you think the Equality for Women measure will develop GMS?

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