Gender budgeting

Tool 4: Coordination and complementarities between the ESIFs to advance work-life balance

This tool allows Member States to consider how different funds can be used in a complementary manner to advance work-life balance. It aims to promote work-life balance measures within the European Social Fund (ESF+) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)/Cohesion Fund (as multi-funded initiatives combining both funds’ potential). The promotion of work-life balance measures within these two funds goes hand-in-hand with the new Directive on work-life balance, in which the European Commission explicitly encourages funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) to advance the Directive[1].

The tool should be used at the Member State level, by national and sub-national managing authorities involved in ESIF programming and investments. It can also be used as a form of guidance at the EU level to follow-up on the progress and financing of the Directive on work-life balance, and more generally financing for women's and men's equal rights and opportunities for employment in the labour market. It should especially be used when developing Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes, by defining the combined usage of funds at the Partnership Agreement level and by specifying this combination at the Operational Programme level.
The Gender Equality Pact 2011-2020 describes how gender inequalities can be tackled by the ESIFs, including by promoting better work-life balance for women and men. Using the ESIFs to enhance gender equality is championed by the European Parliament, the European Pillar for Social Rights, the Resolution of the European Parliament on the EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men Post-2015 and the framework for Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019. The latter two specifically call on the European Commission to support Member States’ use of the ESIFs for gender sensitive investments.

The tool also focuses on the new Directive on work-life balance, with its call for legislative and non-legislative measures to tackle women’s underrepresentation in the labour market and their over-representation in non-remunerated care work.

"To this end, the Commission will “ensure, together with Member States, that the European Social Fund and other Structural and Investment Funds are supporting adequately work-life balance measures”[2]."

Footnotes
