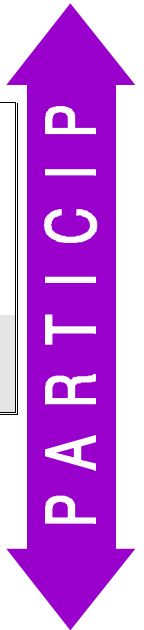




European Commission

**THEMATIC EVALUATION OF THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER IN EC
DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES**

March 2003



VOLUME 1 - FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

Dr. Mary Braithwaite (GB, Team Leader)

European Consultants:

Dr. Jane Hailé (GB)
Claudy Vouhe (F)
Julian Walker (GB)
Dirk Van Esbroeck (B)

Consultants of EC Partner Countries:

Wasan Hijazi (Jordan)
Adama Moussa (Mali)
Dr. Carolyn Sobritchea (Philippines)
Dr. Diana Urioste (Bolivia)

Backstopper:

Martin Steinmeyer (D, PARTICIP GmbH)

Consortium composed by

PARTICIP GmbH
CIDEAL
ECDPM
IDC
SEPIA

For the

Lead Company:

PARTICIP GmbH
Consultants for development & environment
Hildastr. 66
D - 79102 Freiburg
Germany
www.particip.de

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACP	Africa Caribbean Pacific
AGTP	Africa Gender Training Programme
AIDCO	EuropeAid Co-operation Office
ALA	Asia and Latin America countries
APEMIN	Apoyo a la Pequeña Explotación Minera (programme to support the small-scale mining sector)
Asia URBS	Programme promoting decentralised (city-to-city) co-operation between the European Union and Asia
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation Programme (Balkan countries)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DG DEV	Directorate-General for Development
EC	European Commission
EDF	European Development Fund
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
FED	Fonds Européen de Développement (= EDF)
FORMFED	Cell created by the EC Delegation in Madagascar and FED to monitor training projects financed by EDF
GAD	Gender and development
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GIGED	cfr IGED, in Guinea Conakry
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IGED	Initiative Genre et Développement
iQSG	interservice Quality Support Group
KIT	Royal Tropical Institute (NL)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MED	Mediterranean countries (non-members of EU)
MEDA	Indicative programmes concerning financial and technical measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership
NAO	National Authorising Officer
NIP	National Indicative Programme
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
PCM	Project Cycle Management

PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RELEX	Directorate General for External Relations
RIP	Regional Indicative Programme
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TACIS	(Programme for) Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
URB-AL	Decentralised cooperation programme aimed at towns, urban areas and other regions in the European Union and Latin America.
WID	Women in development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

a. Objectives and scope of the evaluation (page 7)

The aim of the evaluation is to help improve strategies for integrating gender across sectors and policies within EC development co-operation. The evaluation was called for by the Board of the EuropeAid Co-operation Office at its meeting in November 2001, and responds in part to a commitment made in the 1998 EC Regulation on *integrating gender issues in development co-operation*.

The scope of the evaluation is broad, covering EC development co-operation with the ACP, ALA, MED, TACIS and CARDS regions. The period covered by the evaluation is 1995 to early 2002. Late 2002 and 2003 are *not* covered. However, the report mentions selected developments in 2002 and 2003.

The evaluation tackled seven questions (page 8):

1. *How strongly have synergies between gender and other goals of EC development co-operation, including other cross-cutting issues, been created?*
2. *To what extent have policy commitments on gender in EC development co-operation been operationalised?*
3. *To what extent have resources, capacity and institutional culture changed to meet the requirements on gender mainstreaming?*
4. *To what extent is gender integrated into procedures and instruments for managing EC development co-operation?*
5. *To what extent has gender been taken up as a truly cross-cutting issue in Country Strategy Papers and in the processes, including political dialogue, to formulate and agree them?*
6. *How far has the EC focus on gender issues, including specific actions for women, increased women's and men's participation in and influence on EC development interventions in different sectors, and in particular increased women's participation in decision-making and their access to and control over resources?*
7. *How far have actions or measures financed by the EC contributed to redress inequalities and improve the gender balance?*

b. Evaluation methodology (page 11)

A preparatory "structuring" phase of the evaluation took place between April and early June 2002. During this phase the scope of the evaluation, the judgement criteria for the evaluative questions and the general methodological approach and budget were agreed.

The main phase of the evaluation started in July 2002, and was undertaken in six steps:

1. A five-day participatory workshop to undertake some preliminary analyses of documents and to elaborate the detailed methodology for the evaluation. This involved all members of the evaluation team, including the experts from Bolivia, Mali and the Philippines (but not from Jordan);
2. A desk assessment of documents and material, undertaken during August;
3. Four country missions - to Bolivia, Jordan, Mali and the Philippines - between August and October. Each mission included a gender assessment of two projects;
4. A questionnaire survey amongst third country Delegations, conducted during September and October;
5. Interviews and focus group discussions with key actors in Brussels, undertaken between September and November;

6. A four-day participatory workshop to assess the findings and elaborate conclusions and recommendations. This took place at the beginning of November and involved the EU members of the evaluation team.

Given the very broad regional and thematic scope of the evaluation, resources and timeframe were limited. Only four countries and eight projects could be studied in any depth. In addition, the evaluation faced a number of other constraints, most particularly difficulties in obtaining relevant data and documents.

Staff of the Evaluation Unit in the EuropeAid Co-operation Office managed the evaluation and provided constant guidance and support. A Steering Committee, composed of EC staff involved in gender mainstreaming, provided advice on the Terms of Reference and on the field mission and final reports. They also provided substantial information during the course of the evaluation.

c. The policy and institutional context of the evaluation (page 1)

The policy background (page 2, 3)

The evaluation primarily concerns the implementation of two EC policy statements on gender in development co-operation. The first - the Council Resolution of 20 December 1995 on "Integrating Gender Issues in Development Co-operation" - was inspired by the European Union's preparations for the 4th United Nations World Conference in Beijing. Subsequently, the Council Regulation on Integration of Gender Issues in Development Co-operation of 22 December 1998 was enacted, primarily to provide a legal base for use of the gender budget line.

In 2001 a Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament presented a "Programme of Action for the mainstreaming of gender equality in Community Development Co-operation". This Action Programme builds on the 1995 and 1998 texts, and establishes a concrete strategy for implementation of gender mainstreaming in the six priority areas of EC development co-operation for the period 2001-2006. As the period covered by this evaluation is 1995 to early 2002, only the very early stages of the Programme of Action are included. While reference is made to the Programme of Action, this evaluation does not make any assessment of its current implementation.

The policy statements on gender in EC development co-operation sit within a broader policy framework at European level, including commitments by the European Union to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between women and men in all Community activities, and a strategy to mainstream gender in all EC policies and programmes. Within the Commission as a whole, the gender mainstreaming strategy is supported through institutional mechanisms of co-ordination, annual work programmes and monitoring.

Institutional changes (page 1)

Concerning the institutional context, it is important to note that two phases of restructuring of the Commission services responsible for development co-operation took place during the period 1995-2001. The consequent re-location of staff, dispersion and loss of archives, as well as the redefinition of priorities and re-organisation of procedures, has had a significant impact on the capacity of the Commission services to address gender issues in a sustained way.

d. The main findings (page 15) and conclusions (page 48) of the evaluation

1. Policy commitments on gender in EC development co-operation (page 18)

Strong policies on gender equality

The 1995, 1998 and 2001 policy commitments on gender in EC development co-operation – as well as the general EU commitments to eliminate gender inequalities, promote gender equality and mainstream gender in all EC policy and programmes - constitute a sound basis for the integration of gender in EC development co-operation. The elimination of gender

inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men of gender is not an option; it is an obligation, established in law by the Amsterdam Treaty.

While the commitments to promote gender equality in all Community support are strong, they have not yet been disseminated in a form that is easily understandable and accessible to staff and co-operation partners. As a consequence, knowledge of the objectives and strategy of the EC concerning gender in development is very low amongst many Commission staff and co-operation partners. There is a tendency to confuse gender mainstreaming (the strategy) with gender equality (the objective), and to talk merely of “integrating gender in” development rather than ensuring that it contributes to the promotion of gender equality. In many cases “gender” is still equated with women only, while gender equality is interpreted as ensuring a gender balance in staff. The EC’s dual approach to gender mainstreaming – involving systematic attention to gender equality across all instruments and interventions and at all phases of the cycle, as well as the use of specific actions where required – is not yet sufficiently understood.

Mixed attention to gender in other EC development policies

Some important EC policies on development co-operation contain commitments to gender mainstreaming that are consistent with EC policy, most notably those concerning social development in the framework of poverty reduction and the co-operation frameworks with ACP and Latin American regions. Moreover, synergies between gender and the other cross-cutting issues of democracy and human rights and environment are relatively well developed.

However, other policies only partially take into account the commitments on gender, thus giving inconsistent messages about gender equality and mainstreaming. Gender equality as a goal in itself does not appear in the EC’s 2000 Communication on development co-operation policy, which takes a utilitarian approach, whereby the reason for gender mainstreaming is to support the main policy objective of poverty reduction. While the policy frameworks for regional co-operation with Asia, TACIS and CARDS regions contain some very limited references to women’s rights and equal opportunities, they do not address gender equality or gender mainstreaming.

2. Putting the policy commitments into effect (page 18)

The 1995 and 1998 policy commitments on gender in EC development co-operation have been acted upon, but have not yet been made operational. Some of the key commitments in the 2001 Communication will only start to be implemented in 2003.

Actions coherent with the policy commitments have been taken by the Gender Desks, particularly in the former DG VIII and IB and now in DG DEV and AIDCO, as well as by some individual staff in Brussels and in Delegations. However, the restructuring of the management of EC development co-operation and the inconstant staffing of the Gender Desks during the period 1995-2001 have inhibited continuity of action on gender mainstreaming.¹ Moreover, it has not been possible to capitalise on these actions, and on the undoubted examples of good practice that exist from this period, because of this loss of continuity and institutional memory.

Actions insufficiently integrated and few sustained effects

At headquarters, a range of activities – primarily studies, training and country missions carried out for ACP and to a lesser extent ALA/MED co-operation – were commissioned from external consultants in the years immediately following the 1995 Resolution. As is often the risk with externally-led activities, the results were poorly integrated into mainstream EC development co-operation, and many of the recommendations of the studies and missions were not followed up. Support to third countries has been sporadic and highly varied in approach, due in part to available resources and to the absence of a consistent strategy to

¹ Since the Autumn of 2002 – thus outside the scope of this evaluation – a more stable staffing arrangement concerning gender mainstreaming has been established in DG DEV and AIDCO, particularly with the appointment of a grade A civil servant as Gender Desk in AIDCO F/4.

guide the work of external consultants. Indeed, some of the previous mechanisms for supporting the integration of gender (manuals and gender monitoring of projects) fell into misuse during the period 1995-2001, indicating regression rather than progress in some key areas.

Capacity-building actions at headquarters and in some third countries have been carried out, but these have been insufficient to produce a sustained improvement in knowledge and skills of staff and partners, most of whom feel substantially ill-equipped to address gender issues in their work.

3. Limited financial resources to support gender mainstreaming (page 24)

Rather than increasing the financial resources to meet the new challenges set by the gender mainstreaming policy, the money available to support the integration of gender in EC development co-operation has been halved since 1998. Financial support for gender mainstreaming at institutional level has come almost entirely from a budget line, which is negotiated annually with the European Parliament and has seen substantial reductions since 1998. Other budget lines and financing instruments can in principle be used to support gender mainstreaming, particularly in sector support and in projects and programmes, but no data are available on their use for this purpose. Compared to budget allocations available to other horizontal issues, the financial resources specifically allocated to support the integration of gender in development co-operation are negligible.

4. Weak capacity to support gender mainstreaming (page 26)

Some limited capacity to support gender mainstreaming has been maintained at headquarters over the period 1995-2001, largely through the staffing of Gender Desks by national experts and a very limited number of civil servants. Gender Focal Points (GFPs) exist in a number of Units and Delegations in the Relex structure, although the exact number and names are unknown. Most spend very little working time on gender issues, have no Terms of Reference or job description for their gender work and are not trained or provided with support. Discontinuous and insufficient staffing of Gender Desks and the absence of support to Gender Focal Points have been major constraints on the effectiveness and sustainability of initiatives on gender mainstreaming during the period under study. Some improvements in capacity, most notably in DG DEV and AIDCO, have been made since 2002.

5. Institutional culture insufficiently supportive of gender equality (page 30)

The institution gives few messages in active support of gender equality. The extreme gender imbalance amongst the top management responsible for development co-operation does not present an image of an equality-oriented institution. There has been a lack of encouraging statements from top management on the importance of the integration of gender. Staff members believe that gender is very low on the list of priorities of the institution. While there is widespread awareness of the necessity of making formal references to "gender as a cross-cutting issue" in texts, there are no incentives or encouragement to address gender substantively in the management of EC development co-operation.

6. Varied approaches to integrating gender in procedures and instruments (page 31)

Some efforts have been made to integrate gender into certain procedures and instruments for managing EC development co-operation. The two-volume guidelines on forestry sector development stand out as a relatively good example of the treatment of gender as a cross-cutting issue, due in part to the strong focus on participation within the methodologies proposed. The revised PCM manual has also made some efforts to ensure that gender issues are addressed during project identification and formulation, although significant weaknesses remain.

Some guidelines – most notably for country strategies, some sector programming and interventions, and some budget lines – make references to gender as a cross-cutting principle but provide no practical guidance on how to take gender issues into account.

Approaches to gender – conceptually and methodologically - are varied and not always coherent either with EC policy on gender in development co-operation or with commonly accepted concepts on gender in development.

The absence of clear guidelines that explain how to translate EC policy on gender mainstreaming into practice in the management of EC development co-operation and the lack of co-ordinated and coherent support for the integration of gender during the revision of procedures and instruments are important reasons for this mixed picture.

7. Monitoring and reporting on gender equality: a critical weakness (page 31)

A very serious weakness in the management of EC development co-operation is the near total absence of information and data, and no systematic monitoring or evaluation, concerning the relative situations of women and men amongst target groups and beneficiary populations. With some specific exceptions (primarily certain aspects of health and education), this weakness is evident at the level of projects and programmes as well as country and sector support.

The once obligatory Gender Impact Assessment Form - attached as an Annex to Financing Proposals and intended to allow monitoring and reporting to the DAC - was not revised to take into account the new DAC requirements post-1995, and has fallen out of systematic use. It is unclear within the institution if or how the information contained in the Forms is used, and reporting to the OECD/DAC on the cross-cutting issue of gender appears not to have taken place in recent years.

An opportunity for improvement

The establishment of a new management information system on projects and programmes offers an important opportunity to remedy this problem and to reinstate the collection of information on gender, enabling monitoring and reporting on the integration of gender in projects and programmes in the future.

8. The treatment of gender in country strategies (page 38)

Women rather than gender

Many Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) contain some limited references to specific gender issues, such as women's participation in political life and decision-making, participation of girls and boys in primary education, women's rights and maternal health. Moreover, there are commitments in many CSPs to the need to pay attention to specific issues affecting women or girls, mainly in programmes - and occasionally in targets and indicators - concerning social sectors (education, health) and in local development, democracy, human rights and NGO initiatives. While many identify specific issues affecting women, or children, there is almost no attention to men.

The promotion of gender equality in dialogue and strategies remains a challenge

In general, however, gender has been treated in a formalistic and limited way in CSPs and in the processes of their formulation.

Standard references to 'gender as a cross-cutting issue' can be found in most CSPs. However, these references are primarily found in the analysis or policy background sections of the CSP, and are very rarely translated into any strategy. Objectives concerning gender equality at country level or for focal sectors, backed up by actions and resources, are widely absent. Infrastructure, productive and economic sectors are largely 'gender blind', although they offer significant opportunities for reducing gender inequalities and promoting gender equality.

In the cases analysed for this evaluation, dialogue with country partners on gender during the formulation of country strategies was very limited. Even where analyses and consultation with country partners on gender have taken place, the results were mostly not integrated into the country strategies.

9. Few visible effects and impacts of EC development co-operation on gender equality (page 40)

Data and information are a critical weakness

One of the major difficulties confronting the evaluation of gender in EC development co-operation is a near total absence of data emerging from projects and programmes to identify positive or negative effects on women's and men's relative situations, and no indicators or monitoring to measure effects at country or sector levels. Where there is attention to 'gender' the focus is predominantly on women and girls; gender analyses and sex-disaggregated data are rarely used as tools for planning. These weaknesses place a severe constraint on informed policy-making and the formulation of appropriate strategies and interventions to reduce gender inequalities.

Some evidence of positive effects on women and girls

From the available evidence - which comes from examples of individual projects and from the observations of actors and beneficiaries on the ground - it appears that some EC supported development interventions are contributing to the increased participation of women in decision-making at national and local levels. Some EC supported projects are also meeting certain needs of girls and women, particularly concerning health and education and access to resources.

But the failure to address gender issues can produce negative effects

Nonetheless, in the case of three of the eight projects assessed by the country missions, there were indications that these EC supported projects may be marginalising women from decision-making and from access to important resources and opportunities, with negative effects on gender equality. While such effects are not intentional, they arise from a failure to challenge traditional stereotypes and to address existing inequalities in the situations of women and men. The lack of specific objectives concerning gender equality, and the absence of gender analyses and of gender-sensitive monitoring as tools for project management, also contribute to this serious situation.

Positive responses by some project staff

Where positive effects can be identified, these appear to result not from specific initiatives taken by the EC, but from local approaches and local staff, often supported by initiatives of other donors and development institutions. While this poses a problem for the visibility of the EC's contribution to gender mainstreaming and for the coherency of approaches to gender, the use of resources of other development institutions is a practical response by project and programme staff, and is an important starting point for ensuring a more coherent approach within EC development co-operation.

10. Reaffirming the relevance of EC commitments to gender equality (page 45)

The policy shift to gender mainstreaming was very relevant to EC development co-operation, and remains so today. There are significant gender inequalities in third countries that must be overcome, and there are major EU and international commitments to improve the status of women and promote gender equality. EC development co-operation can make a significant and specific contribution to these objectives.

A challenge to the EC: make the most of its comparative advantage

The EC's comparative advantage – particularly in economic and infrastructure domains – makes it a potentially major player in reducing gender inequalities. Moreover, greater gender equality in access to and control over resources can contribute substantially to aid effectiveness and the achievement of overarching and other development objectives. However, these require that the institution acknowledges and supports – in a more explicit, stronger and more integrated way – the relevance of gender to its objectives and interventions.

11. The effectiveness and efficiency of gender mainstreaming (page 46)

The effectiveness and efficiency of initiatives on gender mainstreaming during the period 1995-2001 suffered substantially, both from the reorganisation and restructuring and from insufficient capacity and resources to manage the gender mainstreaming efforts. However, an assessment of effectiveness is difficult because of the lack of clear operational objectives for the integration of gender in EC development co-operation during this period.

Effectiveness harmed by insufficient resources

The lack of a sustained process of gender mainstreaming across sectors and programmes, or through the cycle, and the scattered and isolated nature of the initiatives taken during the period 1995-2001, have certainly limited the effectiveness of the efforts made. The insufficiency of human and financial resources to manage the integration of gender in EC development co-operation is a major factor in the relative ineffectiveness of efforts to mainstream gender during the period 1995-2001.

Moreover, the failure to ensure sufficient knowledge and skills on gender and development amongst staff members responsible for integrating gender into the management of EC development co-operation operations is not an efficient use of human resources. Not matching human and financial resources with the challenges set by the 1995 Council Regulation meant that the conditions for effectiveness and efficiency were not ensured.

Implementation of the Programme of Action requires more resources and support

The 2001-2006 Programme of Action gives a clearer set of operational objectives, against which future progress can be measured. The lessons of the period 1995-2001 are that, for the Programme of Action to be effective, there must be significantly strengthened and sustained human and financial resources, and considerably more institutional support.

12. The impact of gender mainstreaming actions (page 47)

Many of the actions taken to support gender mainstreaming during the period 1995-2001 – studies, assessments, country missions, training – have not produced any sustained effects, either at headquarters or country level. There is no quantifiable evidence of impact at the level of projects and programmes, merely some indications of positive – but also some potentially negative – impacts. Examples of good practice have not been disseminated, so there has been no learning or multiplier effect. The absence of data and information on gender in project monitoring and reporting, and in the management information systems in general, is a critical constraint. This is compounded by the lack of capacity and institutional support for gender mainstreaming, and a weak strategy for learning and dissemination.

Structures and mechanisms needed to capitalise on good practices

The few successes of gender mainstreaming that can be identified from the period 1995-2001 will only have the chance of being sustained if they are provided with institutional support and mainstream resources, and if structures and mechanisms are established to capitalise on and transfer the good experiences.

e. Recommendations for achieving sustained improvements in the integration of gender in EC development co-operation (page 54)

Nine principal recommendations are made for achieving a sustained improvement in the integration of gender in EC development co-operation. Some of these recommendations – capacity-building, integration of gender in management procedures and instruments, information resources - are already foreseen in the 2001-2006 Action Programme. However, other improvements are also required, so as to provide a sufficiently strong basis for implementing policy commitments. These include much greater attention to the promotion of gender equality (and not merely to “integrating gender”), firm “anchoring” of gender mainstreaming within the institution, and the provision of sufficient institutional support and resources.

The evaluation has identified two fundamental constraints on the integration of gender in EC development co-operation: the poor understanding and knowledge of policy and strategy at all levels, and the lack of institutional support. Policy texts exist, but their format and language do not provide a sufficiently clear explanation of why gender equality is important and of how gender mainstreaming should be put into effect within EC development co-operation. The absence of an adequate level of institutional support, backed up by sufficient resources, has been a critical weakness in recent years. The first three recommendations aim to overcome these constraints and to provide the necessary conditions for integrating gender in EC development co-operation:

RECOMMENDATION 1: An important first step is to **formulate and disseminate a coherent and clearly-understandable statement on Community objectives concerning gender equality and on the approach to integrating gender in Community development co-operation**. Strong and clear messages on the importance of gender equality and of the need for improved and sustained efforts to integrate gender in country and sector dialogue, strategies and programmes should be communicated to all key stakeholders by the top-most levels of the Commission. A clear indication should be given of the responsibilities of the various actors in the implementation of the strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Hand in hand with the first step, there is an urgent need to **create awareness and understanding at the topmost levels of management of EC development co-operation at headquarters and in Delegations about the objectives, rationale and strategy of gender equality in development co-operation**. The aim of this recommendation is to secure commitment by top management to the challenges of gender mainstreaming and to enable these to be communicated convincingly to staff and co-operation partners.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The third recommendation is vital for any effective and sustained integration of gender equality across the various policy domains, sectors and regions of Community development co-operation with third countries. The **creation of one strong, visible and adequately resourced structure for gender mainstreaming, located in a stable and high-level position within the Commission services responsible for development co-operation** is a prerequisite for moving forward. This structure should be responsible for guiding and co-ordinating strategy, capable of acting as an advocate for gender at high-level and able to act as an “animator” and “networker” across the institution, between headquarters and in-country and between the EC and other actors. This structure should not preclude, and indeed may need to be supported by, more operational structures within each of the Commission services (DG Relex, AIDCO, DG DEV). These are required to manage the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy within the specific areas of responsibility of each service.

Six additional recommendations are made, which aim to set in place the necessary building blocks for gender mainstreaming at key levels and phases of the management of EC development co-operation. These aim to build on existing strengths and overcome key weaknesses in the integration of gender in EC development co-operation. It should be emphasised that the evaluation considers it vital that measures are taken, and resources are allocated, both in third countries (in Delegations, amongst country partners and at the level of sector strategies, projects and programmes) and at headquarters in Brussels. Deconcentration in particular makes it important that greater attention is paid to strengthening capacities within third countries, and to providing effective support and guidance to partners and actors on the ground.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The **establishment of stable mechanisms at country level for supporting the integration of gender in country and sector support and in programmes and projects** is a particular priority. This could take the form of a permanent network or forum at country level. While being capable of drawing on the experiences of other donors and actors in the country, it should focus on the integration of gender in Community development co-operation. An important task is to create, and sustain, a pool of knowledge and resources able to address gender issues at sector, programme and project levels. The

IGED approach, developed most notably in Madagascar and referred to in the 2001 Communication, is an example of one type of mechanism.

RECOMMENDATION 5: An important element of the 2001-2006 Programme of Action is the **creation of a sustained level of knowledge and skills within the Commission services in Brussels and in Delegations, and at the level of programme/project management in third countries, on the integration of gender in country and sector strategies and programmes.** The evaluation reaffirms the importance of these proposed actions. A basic knowledge of gender issues in third regions and countries and in the main sectors and instruments of co-operation is required, as well as skills in assessing and integrating gender in programming and project instruments and in guiding staff and consultants on the integration of gender at different phases of programme and project cycle. To ensure full integration of gender into mainstream practices, it is strongly recommended to **integrate gender issues – as appropriate - into other training**, for example on sectoral, procedural or methodological topics, and to link, as closely as possible, any specific training courses on gender with key tasks within the management of EC development co-operation. Moreover, the value of **skills and knowledge concerning the integration of gender in development must be recognised in job descriptions and Terms of Reference, and in the recruitment and promotion of staff.**

RECOMMENDATION 6: The sixth recommendation is also prominent in the Programme of Action. This concerns the more systematic, and coherent, **integration of gender into key management procedures and instruments at critical points in the cycle of strategies, programmes and projects, so as to prompt appropriate responses when assessments and decisions are being made.** The country strategy and programming processes are particularly important, as well as guidelines for sector programmes and projects and for managing the major budget lines. The integration of gender should ensure that appropriate information on gender issues is obtained at all points in the cycle (formulation, assessment, approval, monitoring, evaluation), and that gender equality is taken into account as one criteria in decision-making, for example in the approval of strategies or financing of initiatives. This will require high-level technical inputs on gender issues in the relevant processes and domains, most probably out-sourced from external experts, and strong and consistent guidance from within the institution (ideally by the gender mainstreaming structure – see recommendation 3) to ensure relevance to EC development co-operation and coherency of approach across procedures and instruments.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Closely related to recommendation 6, is the need for **systematic integration of gender into key indicators and in monitoring and reporting systems at all levels of EC development co-operation.** This is presented as a separate recommendation because of its importance in ensuring that gender equality is effectively taken into account, and also to the visibility of the EC's efforts on gender mainstreaming (including its external reporting responsibilities). The task here is to establish systems and guidance to ensure the systematic disaggregation by sex of indicators wherever relevant and the elaboration of specific indicators to measure the contribution of EC development co-operation to gender equality, especially at sector, country and project/programme levels. Indicators and monitoring to assess progress in gender mainstreaming within the institution and in the management of EC development co-operation would also be useful, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the gender mainstreaming strategy. As for recommendation 6, this may require the use of specialist inputs from external experts on appropriate indicators and data-collection requirements for specific sectors and aspects of EC development co-operation, guided by the internal gender mainstreaming structure to ensure coherency of approach.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Improved and up-to-date information and reference materials are mentioned in the Programme of Action. These are required urgently, but should be part of a more comprehensive strategy aimed at making EC actions on gender in development more visible and providing easy access to appropriate information and data. The **creation and maintenance of a central and visible source of “information and resources” to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation** is therefore recommended. This

should be easily accessible to development partners at country level and to those involved in managing programmes and projects (i.e. available in print, on CD-ROM and by Internet in several languages). It should include – as a priority - convincing data and information, and concrete examples of practice, that demonstrate the relevance of gender to EC development co-operation and the contribution of EC development co-operation to improved gender equality, especially in key sectors and interventions, such as transport, institutional strengthening and economic development, and at key phases, such as in policy dialogue and programming.

RECOMMENDATION 9: The effective integration of gender in EC development co-operation requires **a substantial increase of financial resources specifically allocated for gender mainstreaming, particularly in sector strategies and country programmes.** A two-pronged strategy is required here. Firstly, every effort should be made to ensure that specific allocations to support gender mainstreaming are made within all mainstream resources (training budgets, budget lines, regional programmes, country/sector support, etc.). Sufficient capacity and skills to effectively manage these allocations must also be put in place. Secondly, the gender budget line, with its very limited resources, must play – as the Programme of Action indicates – a catalytic role, pump-priming pilot initiatives and developing and disseminating good practice. However, it is crucial to avoid the risks of marginalisation and lack of sustainability of actions that have characterised many previous actions on gender mainstreaming supported by the gender budget line. Longer-term financial sustainability – and ownership of any pilot initiative by mainstream actors – must be amongst the criteria for allocating gender budget line resources, to achieve a maximum impact on mainstream EC development co-operation.

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Note: This is Volume 1 of three volumes on the thematic evaluation of the integration of gender in EC development co-operation. The other volumes are:

Volume 2: Field Phase Report (report of the four country missions)

Volume 3: Collection of Annexes of Final Report and Field Phase Report

1 THE CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

1.1 Institutional context of EC development co-operation

One of the significant features of the period 1995-2001 (and one which weighs heavily on the integration of gender in EC development co-operation, particularly during the latter part of the period) is the restructuring of the EC services responsible for managing external relations and development co-operation with third countries. Until 1998, EC development co-operation was managed by several Directorates-General, with responsibilities divided on geographical grounds: DG VIII, responsible for co-operation with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, including South Africa; DG I responsible for China, DG IA, responsible for co-operation with TACIS, PHARE and Balkan countries; and DGIB, responsible for co-operation with Asian, Latin America and Mediterranean (ALA/MED) countries. In addition, there also existed the Humanitarian Office (ECHO, responsible for Humanitarian Aid) and DG II, which was responsible for macro-financial assistance. The external aspects of some co-operation programmes in fields such as Research and Education have at various stages fallen under the responsibility of specific services, such as DG Research (the former DG XII) and others.

The first restructuring of the Commission services took place in 1998, with a separation of responsibilities between policy and programming up to the Financing Phase (remaining in the hands of DGs Development and Relex) and management of project implementation (i.e. procurement), which was placed in the hands of the newly-created Common Service for External Relations (SCR).

In 2000, this structure was further reorganised, with the creation of the "Relex family" of DGs and services, comprising: the SCR, responsible for management of project implementation; DG Development (DG DEV), responsible for development co-operation policy and programming in general and with specific responsibility for ACP countries, plus project preparation; DG External Relations (DG Relex), responsible for programming and project preparation (covering ALA, MED, TACIS, CARDS); the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO); DG Trade and DG Enlargement responsible for PHARE countries.

Also in 2000, a further phase of reform took place with the creation of the EuropeAid Co-operation Office (AIDCO), replacing the former SCR and giving responsibility for the entire project cycle (except programming) to EuropeAid. The year 2000 also marked the start of a substantial process of deconcentration to, and reinforcement of, EC Delegations in third countries. The newly created AIDCO became part of the so-called "Relex Family", made up of six DGs: AIDCO, ECHO, Enlargement, DEV, Relex, TRADE².

In terms of gender mainstreaming the restructuring led to a re-organisation of tasks and responsibilities: From having had responsibility over both the production and implementation of legal, policy and financial framework e.g. the Council Regulation incl. the budget line for gender, DG DEV is in its present form responsible for the preparation and processing of such legal and policy framework but not for its actual implementation that rests with AIDCO. DG DEV is furthermore responsible for the annual programming of the gender budgetline and interactions with the Council and the European Parliament. AIDCO, on the other hand is responsible for the implementation of the budget line (calls for proposal, bid for tenders, contracting of consultants etc).

Parallel to these reforms, which aimed to improve the quality and management of aid programmes, there have been substantial changes in procedures and systems, particularly to achieve harmonisation across the regions and instruments of EC development co-operation, and with other development partners (particularly the EU Member States and the World Bank).

² The reader should be aware of the distinction to be made between the «Relex Family» and the DG RELEX (which itself forms part of the Relex Family).

1.2 The EC's policy on gender in development co-operation

The first major EC policy statements on gender equality in development co-operation were adopted in 1995 in the wake of the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing. These took the form of a Communication to the Council and the European Parliament on integrating gender issues in development co-operation (COM(1995)423 of 18 September 1995) and the subsequent Council Resolution of 20 December 1995 on "Integrating Gender Issues in Development Co-operation".³

The 1995 Resolution stated the rationale for addressing gender equality in development: "Redressing existing gender disparities is a crucial issue in development in terms of aid effectiveness and social justice, as women are as indispensable partners as men in achieving the objectives for development co-operation". The principles of the gender and development approach adopted in the 1995 Resolution are:

- Integration of gender analysis at macro, meso and micro levels, throughout the project cycle: identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Equality of participation by women and men in the development process and equality in terms of the benefits obtained;
- Reduction of gender disparities is a social priority;
- Analysis of the differences and disparities between women and men is a key criteria for the assessment of the objectives and results of development policy and interventions;
- Development co-operation should encourage and support changes in the attitudes, structures and procedures in relation to policy and legislation, and at both community and household levels, in order to reduce inequalities between women and men.

Subsequently, the Council Regulation on Integration of Gender Issues in Development Co-operation of 22 December 1998 (EC No 2836/98) was enacted primarily to provide a legal base for use of the gender budget line, and in particular to better enable the budget line to be used appropriately and flexibly to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation.

The 2001 Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament presented a "Programme of Action for the mainstreaming of gender equality in community development intervention" (COM(2001) 295). This built on the 1995 and 1998 texts, and establishes a concrete strategy for implementation of the previous policy commitments for the period 2001-2006. The Programme of Action commits the Commission to meeting three main objectives, and to implementing, monitoring and reporting on a detailed series of actions to achieve these objectives.⁴ The three objectives are:

1. to integrate gender issues into the six priority areas of EC development co-operation as defined in the EC's Development Policy (COM(2000) 212), namely: support to macroeconomic policies, poverty reduction strategies, and social sector programmes in health and education; food security and sustainable rural development; transport; institutional capacity building, good governance and the rule of law; trade and development; regional integration and capacity building;
2. to mainstream gender within projects and programmes at country and regional level;
3. to strengthen the Commission's internal gender capacity, tools and methods.

³ The 1995 Beijing conference was key in disseminating the « Gender and Development » approach (GAD), replacing the earlier « Women in Development » approach, which had been found to be inadequate as a strategy to address persistent and institutionalised gender inequalities. Signatories to the Declaration and Platform of Action agreed at Beijing gave their clear commitment to the principle and strategy of mainstreaming of gender equality. For an explanation of key terms, see Annex 3 Glossary of terms and concepts.

⁴ See Volume 3 Annex 4 for summary of the EC policy commitments on the integration of gender in development co-operation contained in the 1995 Resolution, 1998 Regulation and 2001 Communication.

1.3 International policy and commitments on gender and development

In addition to the EC's own policy commitments on the integration of gender in development co-operation, many partner countries have their own national policies on women or gender equality. Moreover, many of them are signatories to international agreements on the reduction of gender inequalities and promotion of women's rights, which provide an important base for supporting actions in these areas.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which set the overall goals of achieving gender equality, development and peace, identified 12 critical areas for priority action to achieve the advancement and empowerment of women: women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence 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; the girl-child. In 2000, signatories to the Declaration and Platform for Action – including the Governments of most of the third countries with whom the EC co-operates in its development policy – came together to review progress and to reaffirm the goals and objectives set in 1995.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and forms an international bill of rights for women. It defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The Convention provides the basis for realising equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to public life – including the right to vote and to stand for election – as well as education, health and employment. As of June 2002, 170 countries are party to the Convention and an additional three had signed the treaty, binding them to do nothing in contravention of its terms.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG), agreed at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, include important commitments to “promote gender equality and empower women” (Goal 3 of the eight Goals) and specify a series of targets and indicators for measuring achievement of this goal. The MDGs are significant to EC development co-operation, as the work on developing indicators to measure country performance shows (see section 3.1.4).

Finally, as a member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) since 1961, the European Commission is expected to respect certain objectives and guidelines concerning the conduct of its aid programmes, including monitoring and reporting on gender. DAC guidelines on gender equality published in 1998 provide very useful guidance on policy and good practice in the mainstreaming of gender in the management of development co-operation.⁵

1.4 Gender equality and gender mainstreaming: the European policy context

The EC policy commitments on gender in development co-operation are supported by, and are coherent with, more general EU policy initiatives on gender mainstreaming. A Commission Communication on “Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities” was adopted in 1996.⁶ This Communication states that:

“Gender mainstreaming involves not restricting efforts to promote equality in the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into

⁵ The OECD DAC also conducts “peer reviews” of the efforts of its Members. A Peer Review of the European Community's development policies and strategies published in 2002, while noting progress since the previous peer review in 1998, recommended, among other things, improvements with regard to the implementation of gender equality as a cross-cutting objectives (“DAC Aid Peer Review of the European Community”, available on www.oecd.org)

⁶ COM(96)67 final of 21 February 1996.

account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situation of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them.” The Communication also states that gender mainstreaming “does not mean simply making Community programmes or resources more accessible to women, but rather the simultaneous mobilisation of legal instruments, financial resources and the Community’s analytical and organisational capacities.”

The legal base for European Community action in favour of gender equality was considerably strengthened by the ratification of the Treaty of Amsterdam. Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty formalised the European Community commitment to gender mainstreaming, by establishing equality between men and women as a specific task of the Community as well as a horizontal objective affecting all Community tasks. Article 3 states that “In all its activities the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between women and men”.

The European Commission’s method for the achievement of gender mainstreaming involves a dual approach, combining the integration of the gender dimension in all policies and programmes and throughout their cycle, including in all instruments, such as data, monitoring and evaluation, with specific actions targeted at eliminating biases and reducing inequalities.

The key components of the EC’s strategy for integrating gender into all EC policy and programmes are:

- The systematic use of gender impact assessments and gender proofing;
- Mobilising all Commission services in support of gender mainstreaming;
- Anchoring responsibility for gender within the institution;
- Training and awareness-raising among key personnel;
- Monitoring, benchmarking and breakdown of data and statistics by sex;
- The establishment of co-ordination structures at various levels: the Group of Commissioners on Equal Opportunities; the Inter-service Group on Gender Equality; and the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for women and men.

In 2000 a “Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005)”⁷ was adopted, which *inter alia* commits the European Commission, as well as each of the Commission services, to defining and implementing an annual work programme.⁸

Within the European Commission, the DG Employment and Social Affairs (DG EMPL) is responsible for overseeing the gender mainstreaming strategy and for co-ordinating between the other Directorates-General, as well as for co-ordination and monitoring of the annual work programme. DG EMPL has an operational unit - the Equal Opportunities Unit – to support implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy.

1.5 Gender inequalities in third countries

These European and international policy commitments on gender equality arise because of the continued – and often severe - gender inequalities that exist world-wide, especially in the third countries with whom the EC co-operates. Some key data from six sample countries illustrate a few of the gender inequalities that must be tackled.

⁷ COM(2000)335 final of 7 June 2000.

⁸ The Work programme of each Commission service is available on www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/

Table 1: Key data on the situation of women from sample countries⁹

Indicator	Bangladesh	Bolivia	Egypt	Moldova	Philippines	Ukraine
Ratio of estimated female to male earned income	0.57	0.45	0.38	0.65	0.59	0.53
Female professional and technical workers (as % of total)	35%	40%	31%	67%	66%	63%
Female legislators, senior officials and managers (as % of total)	5%	36%	10%	33%	35%	36%
Seats in parliament held by women (as % of total)	2,0%	10,2%	2,4%	12,9%	17,2%	7,8%
Adult literacy rate (female as % of male)	57%	86%	66%	99%	100%	100%
Tertiary education enrolment ratio (female as % of male)	51%	n.k.	n.k.	n.k.	128%	114%

n.k = not known

As the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly of the UN of June 2000 noted, in its assessment of the achievements and obstacles of the Beijing Platform of Action, “even though significant positive developments can be identified, barriers remain”.¹⁰ The report of the session notes, for example, the “widening economic inequality between women and men including income inequality, unemployment and deepening of poverty levels of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups” and problems in education and training in many countries, including “gender discrimination and bias including in teacher training” and persistent gender-based biases and stereotyping in educational materials and institutions. Vocational training often further entrenches gender-based inequalities in skills and qualifications. While there is increased participation of women in the labour market, many women survive in the informal economy with low levels of income and security. In the formal sector, most women with comparable skills and experience to men lag behind men in income and career mobility. Equal pay for work of equal value has not yet been realised in most countries.

While some specific progress has been made in certain areas of health, there continue to be persistent gender inequalities in access to health services and women and girls remain particularly vulnerable to serious health problems in some countries. Women and girls continue to be victims of various forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including in the home and at the workplace. But insufficient data impede informed policy-making, and the legislative and judicial systems often provide very inadequate protection. In situations of armed conflict and foreign occupation, the human rights of women and girls have been extensively violated. The frequent targeting of women and girls in these situations exacerbates the high level of female-headed households, who are often amongst the poorest and most vulnerable of groups. In decision-making, a major gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality persists.

Some more specific examples of the situation in the four countries visited during the evaluation are provided in Volume 2 of the evaluation reports; the findings of the four country

⁹ Source of data: Human Development Indicators 2002 (<http://hdr.undp.org/reports>). Most data are for 2000. The choice of countries was made purely on the basis of availability of data; many ACP countries, for example, have no data for many of the indicators. Note that gender equality in literacy and education does not always translate into equality of participation in economic and political life.

¹⁰ Unedited final outcome document as adopted by the plenary of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled « Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century », 10 June 2000.

missions to Bolivia, Jordan, Mali and the Philippines are each preceded by a short profile of gender issues in the country.

While these inequalities justify action within themselves, the costs of gender inequality on productivity and growth provide another justification for giving priority to the issue within development co-operation. The link between the objectives of development co-operation (i.e. aid effectiveness) and gender equality has been convincingly proven, in particular by studies undertaken by The World Bank.¹¹ For example, it is estimated that countries such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Kenya could raise the current output of smallholder agriculture by 20% if there was more equal control of inputs and farm incomes by women and men. In South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa per capita income could have grown by 0.5-0.9% higher per year if countries had started to close gender gaps in schooling at the rate achieved by East Asia between 1960 and 1992. Even middle- and high-income countries with higher initial education levels could achieve an increase in per capita income of 0.3% if they increased the share of women with secondary education by only 1%.

¹¹ Important arguments and evidence demonstrating the importance of gender equality to development are presented in "Engendering Development", the World Bank's strategy for integrating gender into its development support, published in 2001 (see www.worldbank.org)

2 OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

2.1 Objective of the evaluation

During its meeting of 29 November 2001, the Board of the EuropeAid Co-operation Office requested the Evaluation Unit to undertake an evaluation of gender equality in order to “*verify/test the logic and consistency of individual actions with the stated objectives and expected impacts*”. The request for such an evaluation is also based on Article 11 of EC Regulation of 22 December 1998 on *integrating gender issues in development co-operation*.¹² The evaluation aims to address the principal concerns of the Board of Commissioners of the Relex family, as well as answering questions concerning the External Relations Directorate Generals (AidCo, Dev, Relex) of the European Commission.

The objective of the present evaluation is to provide the Commission with an independent source of expertise in order to draw out key findings and lessons from the integration of gender within EC co-operation programmes. The evaluation report is designed to provide the Commission’s policy-makers with an indispensable aid in view of improving strategies for integration of gender across sectors and policies (in particular in the framework of Country and Regional Strategy papers).

The study should provide a valuable input for a deeper understanding of the concrete meaning of key concepts (such as mainstreaming), and of the strategic and/or practical changes induced by, and required for, the integration of gender in EC development co-operation. It should also aim at enhancing coherence between promoting gender equality and the Commission’s other objectives, as well as a more rational strategic decision-making (including within Country Strategy Papers).

2.2 Scope of the evaluation

The geographical scope of the evaluation broadly covers ACP, ALA, MED, TACIS and CARDS regions. There is, however, a stronger focus on ACP, ALA and MED regions in the evaluation than on TACIS and CARDS. This is partly due to the very differing frameworks that have governed co-operation with the latter countries and their relative “newness” within the EC’s development co-operation institutional set-up and system, as well as to the weakness of gender in the specific policies and programmes of TACIS and CARDS regions (see section 3.1.1). Restricted to four country case studies, the evaluation chose countries from Africa, Latin America, the Mediterranean and Asia.

The aim was to evaluate the EC’s actions to integrate gender issues in EC external co-operation programmes and policies from 1995 to 2001 and the impacts of these actions in the beneficiary countries. While it has been possible to reconstruct elements of this historical dimension, some of the weaknesses noted by the evaluation – concerning poor management information systems, fragmented institutional memory and a virtual absence of relevant data from projects and programmes – have made it very difficult to trace the evolution of actions through time and across the regions and to identify any impacts that these actions may have had in beneficiary countries.

As will be seen from the evaluative questions, the evaluation’s scope covers: the policy framework; institutional set-up, culture, capacity and resources; procedures and instruments

¹² Article 11 of the 1998 Regulation states that “Three years after this Regulation enters into force, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and to the Council an overall assessment of the operations financed by the Community under this Regulation”. To provide a suitably strong basis for any future improvements of policy and strategy, the Commission chose to focus this current evaluation on a longer time-scale (1995 to 2001) and a broader policy and thematic scope (also taking into account the 1995 Communication and the overall strategy of gender mainstreaming). The evaluation provides an overall assessment of operations to integrate gender into EC development co-operation, but does not provide a specific assessment of the projects financed under the 1998 Regulation.

for managing development co-operation (country strategies, sector programmes and projects, budget lines); country strategy papers and dialogue in partner countries; programmes and projects (mainstream as well as positive actions). The evaluation addresses the situation at headquarters and in third countries. It is concerned both with the integration of gender issues into EC development co-operation and the impact of EC development co-operation on gender inequalities and equality in third countries. In addition, the evaluation has also assessed how the obligation to “integrate gender in EC development co-operation” is understood and approached by those responsible for managing EC development co-operation at different levels, from top levels of the institution to projects on the ground.

2.3 The evaluative questions

Seven evaluative questions were selected by the Commission following the structuring phase of the evaluation¹³:

1. *How strongly have synergies between gender and other goals of EC development co-operation, including other cross-cutting issues, been created?*
2. *To what extent have policy commitments on gender in EC development co-operation been operationalised?*
3. *To what extent have resources, capacity and institutional culture changed to meet the requirements on gender mainstreaming ?*
4. *To what extent is gender integrated into procedures and instruments for managing EC development co-operation ?*
5. *To what extent has gender been taken up as a truly cross-cutting issue in Country Strategy Papers and in the processes, including political dialogue, to formulate and agree them?*
6. *How far has the EC focus on gender issues, including specific actions for women, increased women’s and men’s participation in and influence on EC development interventions in different sectors, and in particular increased women’s participation in decision-making and their access to and control over resources ?*
7. *How far have actions or measures financed by the EC contributed to redress inequalities and improve the gender balance?*

2.4 Judgement criteria

The judgement criteria for each of the seven evaluative questions are summarised below.

1. *How strongly have synergies between gender and other goals of EC development co-operation, including other cross-cutting issues¹⁴, been created?*

The main judgement criteria for question 1 are:

- a. The coherency in the approach taken to gender in the stated objectives of the different issues and goals of EC development co-operation;
- b. The similarities and differences, and synergies, between the approaches adopted to integrate gender and the other cross-cutting issues into EC development co-operation.

¹³ The original Terms of Reference of the evaluation, which is contained in Annex 1, proposed ten evaluative questions. These were assessed during the structuring phase of the evaluation and a final list of seven questions – considered to be the most relevant and feasible to address within the time and budget available - was agreed by the European Commission.

¹⁴ Together, the cross-cutting issues and goal that are proposed to be examined here correspond to the main relevant strategic areas and guiding principles deriving from the Treaty and the 2000 Commission Communication on the EC’s Development Policy.

This question is interpreted as addressing two aspects. The first aspect considers “gender” in its mainstreaming sense (i.e. taking into account gender issues at all levels and phases of development co-operation). Since a number of “cross-cutting” issues and other aspects have been identified as important to achieving sustainable human development, the purpose is to examine how gender is addressed in the approaches taken to some of these issues. The synergy between gender and two other issues are assessed in this evaluation¹⁵:

- Democracy and human rights
- Environment.

The second aspect considers “gender” as an objective of development co-operation. The purpose is to examine the links that have been made between the objective of reduced gender disparities and improved gender equality and the over-arching goal of development co-operation: poverty reduction.

2. *To what extent have policy commitments on gender in EC development co-operation been operationalised ?*

The main judgement criterion for this question is:

- a. the extent to which the commitments on the integration of gender in EC development co-operation - as contained in policy documents, strategies and action plans - have been translated into concrete actions. This includes actions financed by the gender budget line.

The assessment explores the reasons for any differences between intended and actual actions, as well as the relevance and feasibility of the planned actions and the effectiveness of translating commitments into practice. The actions that are the subject of this question concern developments at all levels of EC development co-operation, including actions that have been taken by “headquarters” (the current Relex family and previous DGs VIII, IA and IB) and those taken in third countries.

3. *To what extent have resources, capacity and institutional culture changed to meet the requirements on gender mainstreaming?*

EC policy on gender mainstreaming in development co-operation indicates a range of measures that should be taken to ensure sufficient resources and capacity (financial, human, technical) to support the integration of gender, and to ensure that the institution and its staff are supportive of gender mainstreaming in the management of development co-operation.

The main judgement criteria for this question are:

- a. The human resources made available to steer and support gender mainstreaming, in particular gender desk staff.
- b. The capacity (numbers of staff and their qualifications and knowledge) to address gender issues at key levels and phases of the management of EC development co-operation.
- c. The financial resources made available to support gender mainstreaming. This includes the gender budget line, but may include other resources (e.g. training budget).
- d. The institutional culture with respect to gender. Topics to be assessed could include the messages given by senior management about the importance and treatment of the issue, the moral and practical support given to staff who raise gender issues in the course of their work, the importance accorded to gender equality within personnel policy, etc.

4. *To what extent is gender integrated into procedures and instruments for managing EC development co-operation?*

This question assesses the extent to which the gender dimension (both gender equality as an objective and gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting principle) is taken into account - wherever it is relevant – in the procedures and instruments guiding the management of EC

¹⁵ The ToR of the evaluation specified a third cross-cutting issue, institution/capacity-building, but no relevant documents on this specific aspect were found.

development co-operation, especially in the supporting documents for procedures (for example, vademecum, manuals, guidelines, checklists, training materials, standard Terms of Reference, outputs of technical support such as checklists or advice.

The judgement criteria include:

- a.** the extent to which the messages contained in these documents and materials concerning the integration of gender are coherent with the objectives and approach expressed in EC policy;
- b.** the extent to which practical guidance is given in the documents and materials on how to take gender issues into account.

The following procedures and instruments are assessed:

- General procedures and guidelines for programming, in particular for regional and country strategies
 - General procedures and guidelines for managing budget lines, in particular for human rights and democracy and decentralised co-operation..
 - Sector-specific guidelines, manual and instruments, aiming at those for key sectors which address poverty reduction on the one hand and economic development on the other.
 - Methodological manuals, guidelines and instruments for the various phases of the cycle, with a particular focus on Project Cycle Management (PCM).
5. *To what extent has gender been taken up as a truly cross-cutting issue in Country Strategy Papers and in the processes, including political dialogue, to formulate and agree them?*

The following judgement criteria are used to answer this question:

- a.** The extent to which the situation analyses (economic, social and political) take into account gender. This includes the disaggregation of data by sex as well as data and information on the situation of women and men, including analyses of gender disparities and obstacles to the promotion of gender equality.
- b.** The extent to which Government machinery and civil society organisations representing women's and gender equality interests were consulted during the analyses and formulation of the country strategy papers.
- c.** The extent to which the choice of policy mix, focal sectors and programmes takes into account gender disparities and gender issues in the populations/areas concerned.
- d.** The extent to which gender issues are raised and discussed in political dialogue during the formulation of the country strategy. This could examine both who raises the issue of gender, as well as how it is raised (in which context, concerning which issue of development) and the responses or follow-up made.
- e.** The attention given to the treatment of gender in the country strategy papers during their assessment by the IQSG and Committees.
- f.** The extent to which gender is addressed in monitoring of the country strategies, for example in the indicators and monitoring mechanisms.

6. *How far has the EC focus on gender issues, including specific actions for women, increased women's and men's participation in and influence on EC development interventions in different sectors, and in particular increased women's participation in decision-making and their access to and control over resources?*

This question is interpreted as concerning the immediate effects of EC development interventions on (direct) female and male actors and beneficiaries. EC development interventions are interpreted to include both mainstream programmes / projects and specific actions. The question aims to explore the links between any positive effects and the ways in

which gender issues have been addressed by EC development co-operation. There are two levels to this question.

1. The first level concerns female and male actors, and their participation in and influence on EC development co-operation. The judgement criteria used to assess this aspect of the question include:

- a. the participation of women and men in the management of EC development interventions, for example in Delegations and in Government partner institutions (NAO, line Ministries, Government agencies), particularly in decision-making, and any changes over time leading to more balanced participation of women and men;
- b. the participation of women and men in the implementation of EC development interventions, including in the Government, private or civil society organisations managing programmes and projects and in technical assistance teams, particularly in decision-making positions, and any changes over time leading to more balanced participation of women and men.

2. The second level concerns female and male beneficiaries. The main judgement criterion here is:

- a. the access to and control over resources by female and male beneficiaries, and any changes over time leading to more equal access and control between women and men. The resources will differ according to sector of intervention, and might include knowledge and qualifications (education and training), productive resources (equipment and inputs), financial resources (credit), etc.

An important task of question 6 is not only to identify if changes concerning gender equality are taking place within the context of EC development interventions, but also why these changes have occurred.

7. *How far have actions or measures financed by the EC contributed to redress inequalities and improve the gender balance?*

This question is understood to concern the longer-term impacts of EC development interventions on gender inequalities in the beneficiary populations. Actions or measures are interpreted to include both mainstream programmes and projects as well as specific actions, for example those financed by the gender or NGO budget lines.

The two main judgement criteria of this question are:

- a. The extent to which EC development interventions have led to reduced inequalities in access to and control of the benefits among the ultimate beneficiary populations (women and men, girls and boys). The types of benefits will vary from sector to sector, but might include reduced gender disparities in education, mobility, productivity, etc.
- b. The extent to which EC development interventions have contributed to improved gender balance in decision-making in social, political and economic life, for example in national forum, associations, governments and parliaments.

2.5 Data and information collection

The data and information required to answer the evaluative questions were obtained from four main sources:

1. Documents on EC development co-operation policies, strategies, instruments, programmes and projects, primarily produced by the European Commission, but also including some key documents from other EU and international institutions, e.g. European Parliament, Court of Auditors, OECD/DAC;
2. Four country missions - to Bolivia, Jordan, Mali and the Philippines - each of which covered two specific projects or programmes;

3. A questionnaire survey of third country Delegations¹⁶;
4. Interviews and focus group discussions in Brussels.

The documents collected on EC development co-operation included material produced by the European Commission for dissemination to external partners and collaborators – for example policy texts, reports, manuals and guidelines – as well as internal documents for dissemination within the “Relex family”, or within the European Commission more generally, such as briefing notes and working papers. The documents were obtained from three principal sources: the EC’s Web sites (DG Development, EuropeAid and DG Relex) which are accessible externally; the IntraNet site to which access was provided by the EuropeAid Evaluation Unit; and directly from staff of the Relex family. A significant number of documents, particularly concerning past work on the integration of gender in EC development co-operation, was also provided by the evaluation experts; this proved valuable in view of the difficulties of obtaining certain documents from the Commission services (see 2.7 below).

The four country missions provided valuable information on EC development co-operation in specific third countries, relating to evaluative questions 2 to 7. Each mission lasted two weeks and was undertaken by one European and one national expert. As well as country-level information, obtained from the Delegation and from co-operation partners (Government, donors, civil society), each mission collected information from two programmes or projects. The data and information came in all cases from documentary sources and first-hand interviews and discussions with key stakeholders, including beneficiaries. Further details of the country missions are provided in Volume 2 of this report.

Supplementary country-level information was obtained from the responses of Delegations to a questionnaire survey sent to Heads of Delegations in third countries. 59 countries (just over 40% of all third countries) responded to the questionnaire, which requested information under eight headings, covering policy, institutional and procedural arrangements for dealing with gender, formulation of country strategy papers, co-ordination, contribution of EC development co-operation to gender equality and barriers to the integration of gender.

In addition, an extensive series of interviews in Brussels - primarily with staff in the Relex DGs and in EuropeAid, but also including key individuals from other European Commission services and the European Parliament - provided important information, both documentary and on the experiences and views of staff. Two focus group discussions, one in English, one in French, enabled these experiences and views to be explored in greater depth.¹⁷

2.6 Methods of analysis and judgement

The assessment of the data and information collected during the evaluation proceeded in six steps:

1. During the structuring phase of the evaluation, between April and June 2002, the policy documents were read and assessed by a team of five experts. Participatory meetings were organised to discuss and assess the findings. The analysis focused initially on establishing the logical hierarchy of objectives at different levels (overall and specific objectives, strategic approach, activities) concerning gender mainstreaming in three types of policies: specific policies on the integration of gender in EC development co-operation; general and regional policies on EC development co-operation; and policies for other cross-cutting issues. Then, comparisons were made between the objectives and approach on the integration of gender in EC development co-operation and those expressed in other policies. The vertical and horizontal “logics” were assessed, and judgements reached about the coherency of policy objectives and approaches in major EC development co-operation policies.

¹⁶ The questionnaire and the list of Delegations that responded are included in Annex 6 and 7 in Volume 3.

¹⁷ Annex 5 lists the individuals interviewed and focus group participants.

2. A five-day participatory workshop at the beginning of the evaluation phase (August 5-9 2002) provided a first opportunity to explore the evaluative questions and judgement criteria and to elaborate a detailed methodology for the country missions and other evaluation tasks. During this workshop, some key documents were read and assessed by the experts as a first step of analysis of the policy context. In addition, the experiences of those experts who had worked previously as consultants with the EC's development co-operation (in ACP, ALA and MED countries) were presented and discussed.
3. The first step of analysis during the main evaluation phase was the desk assessment of documents, which was undertaken in August 2002 by one expert, using the judgement criteria elaborated for each of the evaluative questions. In addition, for evaluative question 2 (operationalisation of policy commitments), an assessment tool for gender mainstreaming was used to structure and analyse the information. The findings of the desk assessment were written up as an internal working paper. This working paper was made available to the experts undertaking the country missions, both to provide them with an understanding of the preliminary findings (and thus of the emerging issues) and to enable them to assess the validity of the preliminary findings as seen and experienced in third countries.
4. The four country missions were carried out between August and October 2002. The findings, assessment and conclusions of each mission were briefly summarised in an "aide memoire", which was commented on by Delegation staff and key partners, and then written up in full in a country mission report (see Volume 2 field mission report).
5. The findings of the interviews and focus group discussions, which were mainly carried out during September and October 2002, were integrated into the internal working paper produced by the desk study, thus allowing the desk study findings to be checked and validated. In some cases, interviewees were asked to read and comment on the written assessment as a further means of verifying and validating the findings and assessment.
6. As a final, and important, step in the analysis, a four-day participatory workshop was organised with the European experts. Staff from the EuropeAid Evaluation Unit participated in selected sessions of this workshop, thus enabling observations and assessments to be further discussed and verified. The workshop aimed firstly to identify the main findings of the various evaluation activities, then to make an assessment of these findings (in the process checking these against the evidence) and finally to draw conclusions and draft recommendations. The main tool of analysis and judgement used was the "web of institutionalisation", a rigorous tool for assessing gender mainstreaming in development co-operation.¹⁸

2.7 Difficulties encountered

The evaluation faced a number of constraints. In the first place, compared to the very substantial scope of the evaluation – covering all regions, sectors and programmes of co-operation (with the exception of PHARE), from policy and institutional levels to the effects and impacts of projects on the ground, and a seven-year time-scale – resources were extremely limited. This meant, for example, that only four countries and eight projects could be studied in the field. As a consequence, while some common characteristics and trends emerge across the four countries and eight projects, the findings of the field missions cannot be considered to be necessarily representative of all third countries and EC co-operation projects. The country-level findings were completed to some extent by the findings of the questionnaire survey of Delegations, although here too there is likely to be a bias in the

¹⁸ C. Levy, *The Web of Institutionalisation*, DPU Working Paper N°74, 1996

evidence, since those who responded are likely to be most attentive to and informed about gender issues.

The timing and duration of the evaluation also created some difficulties for the collection of information. The collection of documents and the desk study were undertaken when many Relex staff members were on holiday, while two of the country missions (Mali and Jordan) coincided respectively with summer holidays and a major regional conference involving the EC and other donors. Moreover, two experts carried out each country mission during a two-week period, which was exceptionally demanding given the scope of the evaluative questions and the need to assess both the national context and two projects.

A persistent difficulty encountered throughout the evaluation was the lack of data, documentation and institutional memory on the treatment of gender in EC development co-operation, both in Brussels and in the field. As a result of staff changes, the evaluation team found it very difficult to identify and contact staff who had been directly involved in gender mainstreaming activities prior to 2001. In addition, organisational restructuring and gaps in staffing of Gender Desks since 1995 – as well as the weaknesses of management information systems in general¹⁹ - has led to a severe loss of institutional memory and information.

The lack of evidence applies particularly to past activities within the co-operation with the ALA, TACIS and CARDS regions. It was not easy for the evaluation team to assess to what extent the availability of information is a good indicator of the extent of activity on gender. The hypothesis of the evaluation is that the lack of information on activities to support gender mainstreaming in TACIS and CARDS regions reflects the lack of activity, while more activities may have been carried out within the co-operation with ALA countries than are revealed by the available information.

The country missions also faced a number of specific difficulties, which are discussed in more detail in Volume 2: Field Phase Report. The absence of data and information on gender issues in EC development co-operation in the four countries is noted as a severe constraint by all missions. Changes in staffing, especially in the Delegations, leading to loss of institutional memory, are other significant constraints. The Bolivia mission took place one month after a change of Government and just following the departure of the Head of Co-operation. The Jordan mission suffered from the absence of key staff, who were participating at a major conference, and the very recent arrival of the person responsible for gender mainstreaming. The Mali mission was also constrained by the recent arrival or absence (on holiday or vacant posts) of many staff in the Delegation. Concerning the projects, one project in Mali and one in Jordan were too recent to observe any effects. Although not recent, one of the two projects studied in Bolivia was closing down, but because the infrastructures installed by the project were not yet working, here too the effects could not be observed.²⁰

¹⁹ A persistent finding of evaluations of EC development co-operation, reported by the Evaluation Unit in EuropeAid, is the weak management information system and the consequent paucity of data and information.

²⁰ Although the criteria for the selection of the case study projects included a specification that the projects should have been ongoing for at least two or three phases, this was not always possible to ensure and other criteria took precedence. For example, the Relex Desks and Delegation staff was consulted about the choice and were concerned in most cases to select projects where the evaluation results could help to improve the integration of gender. In spite of the difficulties of obtaining data and information, it is not considered that the choice of countries and projects was incorrect, but rather that the difficulties (of obtaining relevant data and information) are typical, especially given the ongoing processes of restructuring (especially deconcentration) and the timing of the missions.

3 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

3.1 Evaluative Question 1: **How strongly have synergies between gender and other goals of EC development co-operation, including other cross-cutting issues, been created?**

EC policies on the integration of gender in development co-operation provide a relatively complete and concrete framework for action. Other important policies on development co-operation – most notably for co-operation with ACP and Latin American countries – are clear about the importance of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, while the 2000 Communication on EC development policy presents gender mainstreaming as a significant tool for poverty reduction. Other policies, especially those on human rights and democracy, refer to women's issues and rights, but precise objectives on gender equality and the integration of a gender approach are yet to be developed in many policy frameworks, particularly those guiding co-operation with MED, Asian, Tacis and Cards countries.

3.1.1 Community policy on gender in development²¹

The objectives of EC development co-operation concerning gender are most clearly expressed in the 1995 Council Resolution on Integrating Gender Issues in Development Co-operation and the 1998 Council Regulation on Integration of Gender Issues in Development Co-operation. These are:

- Strengthening of economic empowerment and equal access to and control over economic resources;
- Equal access to social development opportunities;
- Policy power-sharing and full and equal participation in decision-making must be promoted at all levels;
- Women and men should participate in and benefit from the development process on an equal basis;
- And changes in attitudes, structures and mechanisms at political, legal, community and household level in order to reduce gender inequalities.

Mainstreaming and positive actions are presented as complementary strategies, to achieve these objectives. Operational objectives, approaches and actions to mainstream a gender perspective in EC development co-operation are presented in the 1995 Council Resolution and the 1998 Council Regulation, but are most explicit and detailed in the 2001 Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on a Programme of Action for the mainstreaming of gender equality in Community Development Intervention.²²

The rationale underlying the approach is that mainstreaming actions should allow the trickling down of gender to all policies, programmes and projects at all levels and throughout the cycle. Key elements of the strategy are the creation of a pool of competence in headquarters as well as in the field and the elaboration of instruments to guide mainstreaming, leading to the full integration of gender in procedures and instruments, particularly for programming. Concerning financial resources, there is an indication that gender mainstreaming should increasingly be implemented with mainstream funds (though there are no targets associated with this objective).

At country level, the proposition to incorporate partners, particularly civil society and women's organisations and networks, in policy dialogue is put forward as a key approach in the 2001

²¹ Evaluative Question 1 does not require an assessment of EC policy on gender in development co-operation. However, such an assessment was made during the preparatory "structuring" phase of the evaluation and it has been considered useful to include this assessment in the final evaluation report.

²² A summary of the operational commitments contained in the 1995, 1998 and 2001 texts is presented in Annex 4 of Volume 3.

Communication, as it is in the Cotonou agreement for co-operation with ACP countries. However, much more attention is given to actions at headquarters - that indirectly impact on the situation on the ground - than to actions that taken directly at country level. Overall, the approach and actions have an instrumentalist emphasis, the strongest focus being on the production of competence and instruments to mainstream gender.

Responsibility and accountability for implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy at EC level is not specified in the policy documents. Monitoring is placed at "senior" level but is not further specified. Overall monitoring responsibility rests with the Council and the Parliament.

3.1.2 Gender equality and the overarching goal of Community development policy

In 2000, a Commission Communication was agreed, which set out the overall objectives and strategy of the Community's development policy. This important document states that "the main objective of Community development policy must be to reduce and, eventually, to eradicate poverty."²³ "This objective entails support for sustainable economic and social and environmental development, promotion of the gradual integration of the developing countries into the world economy and a determination to combat inequality." The policy "is grounded on the principle of sustainable, equitable and participatory human and social development. Promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance are an integral part of it." With the aim of combating poverty in mind, Community development policy must *inter alia* "respect... equality between men and women". References are also made to gender in relation to the six priority areas for development co-operation, indicating that "gender equality will apply and be mainstreamed".

There is recognition in the Community's development policy that gender inequality and poverty reduction are linked, i.e. that "gender inequality hinders growth, poverty reduction and progress in health and education." Gender equality as a development objective in its own right is not stated, nor that gender inequality is an infringement of women's rights. Nonetheless, gender equality is treated as part and parcel of the effort to promote "economic and social and environmental development".

3.1.3 Gender equality and regional co-operation policy

EC co-operation with third countries is guided by a series of regional co-operation agreements, which reveal a very varied treatment of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

The 2000 Cotonou Agreement for ACP countries and the 1999 Rio Declaration for Latin American countries reflect the greatest coherence with the EC's policy commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Only in these two policy frameworks are there commitments to the equal rights of men and women and, in the Rio Declaration, to "full gender equality". Moreover, there are not only global objectives concerning the impact of development co-operation on gender equality, but also specific objectives concerning the participation of women in development in social, economic and political spheres, as well as operational objectives concerning gender mainstreaming in co-operation programmes.

The policy framework for development co-operation with the Mediterranean countries²⁴ states as objectives the enhancement of women's economic and social roles and their participation in economic and social life. However, it does not contain any commitments to reduce gender inequalities or promote gender equality, and its objectives are more consistent with the "women in development" (WID) approach taken prior to the 1995 Council Resolution.

²³ Commission Communication on the EC's Development Policy, COM(2000) 212 final, 26.4.2000

²⁴ The MEDA Regulation of 1996, the Barcelona Declaration of 27-28 November 1995 and the Regional Strategy Paper for Mediterranean countries 2000-2006.

The commitments in the framework for EU-Asia co-operation are very limited; they state the importance of “promoting the welfare of women and children” and make specific commitments to combating trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children.²⁵ There are no references to equal rights or to reducing gender inequalities in economic, social and political life.

The co-operation frameworks for TACIS and CARDS countries are almost totally silent on the issue of gender.²⁶ They contain no commitments to reducing gender inequalities or to promote gender equality. For TACIS there is an operational commitment to take “the promotion of equal opportunities for women” into account in measures and, as for Asia, there is a concern – expressed only in the regional analysis – about trafficking in women and children for the purposes of sexual exploitation. For CARDS, there is no reference to any gender issue, but merely a general concern to combat trafficking in human beings.

3.1.4 Gender, democracy and human rights

Concerning the cross-cutting issue of human rights and democracy, EC policy documents on these issues within development co-operation contain clear commitments and references to the rights of women and children. They uphold the Beijing principle that the human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable part of universal human rights, and include specific objectives concerning the participation of women in the electoral process and the equal participation of women and men in civil society, economic life and politics.²⁷ Specific concern is also expressed about honour crimes and harmful traditional practices, trafficking in women and denial of women’s economic, social and cultural rights.

The strategy for ensuring that gender is addressed in human rights and democracy initiatives focuses principally on the inclusion of the rights of women in dialogue with third countries, the targeting of some operations on women and the adaptation of certain procedures. There are commitments concerning the integration of gender in the methodology used for evaluating the impact of policies and interventions on human rights and democracy, and a gender perspective is among the criteria for assessing proposals.

Although the documents indicate considerable concern about women’s rights, especially by DG Relex, objectives and approaches that link gender equality and human rights, and gender equality and democracy (and that address men’s needs and interests as well as those of women), have yet to be developed.

3.1.5 Gender and environment

Policy documents on the environment as a crosscutting issue in EC development co-operation, while not specifically mentioning the objective to promote gender equality, are coherent with EC policy on gender mainstreaming approaches. They specify, for instance, the need for activities throughout the project cycle to reflect the roles, knowledge perspectives and contributions of women and men and boys and girls, as well as specifying the need to integrate environment in gender training and using indicators on gender equality.

²⁵ Asia-EU Co-operation Framework 2000 and ASEM Process December 2000.

²⁶ CARDS Regional Strategy Paper 2002-2006 ; TACIS Regional Co-operation : Strategic Considerations 2002-2006 ; Council Regulation of 29 December 1999 concerning assistance to Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

²⁷ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament concerning the EU’s role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratisation in Third Countries, COM (2001) 252 Final, 8 May 2001 ; EuropeAid F3, Integration of Gender into the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights 2001-2002 – Memorandum; Council Regulations on democracy and human rights, n°975/1999 and n°976/1999, 29 April 1999.

3.2 Evaluative Question 2: To what extent have policy commitments on gender in EC development co-operation been operationalised?²⁸

EC policy commitments have been partially implemented during the period 1995-2001. Various activities in line with the 1995 and 1998 policy commitments were undertaken and considerable efforts were made by the Gender Desks during this period to support key policy commitments. Studies were undertaken, training courses run, work was undertaken on “engendering” PCM and technical advice provided during the revision of some instruments and manuals. However, these did not lead to any improved or sustained institutional capacity to address gender, nor to any real mainstreaming of gender in key procedures for managing EC development co-operation.

Without doubt, the restructuring of the management of EC development co-operation during this period is one reason for these weaknesses. Another factor is the very poor internal and external visibility of EC policy on gender in development co-operation, and the resulting low levels of knowledge of the policy commitments amongst staff and partners.

Perhaps the two most significant factors have been that the necessary resources - human and financial - to implement the policy commitments were not foreseen and made available, and that responsibility for gender mainstreaming strategy is not at a sufficiently high level to effectively influence policy and programmes.

These experiences provide important lessons for the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action, which faces a significant challenge. While the Programme can make use of previous actions and outputs, it starts from a low base in terms of existing capacity and resources to mainstream gender in EC development co-operation. Past experiences demonstrate that strong institutional support, sufficient resources and sustained follow-up of the planned capacity building and other actions are required for any real mainstreaming to be effective²⁹.

3.2.1 Policy dialogue and formulation

There is evidence, from answers to the questionnaire survey, that in some third countries policy dialogue is taking place on gender. 37% of the 59 Delegations responding to the survey indicate that there was dialogue with line Ministries concerning gender in key sectors during formulation of the Country Strategy Paper, and 32% indicate that there was at the same time consultation with national gender bodies, including civil society organisations.³⁰

The respondent from the Guyana Delegation notes that “the real work concerning gender issues is done through policy dialogue with national counterparts (ministerial and technical)”. And in Uganda, where the EC is giving much support through sector-wide approaches or general budget support, the respondent notes that “Government policy when it comes to gender issues is what needs to be, and is being, influenced. This is the case in the health and education sector... which have in particular been sensitised to the importance of improved access to resources and services.”

These initiatives suggest a positive trend, as the desk study found no evidence of any specific actions taken at headquarters level during the period 1995-2001 to build capacity in Delegations for policy dialogue on gender with Government and civil society. Nor has any evidence been found of an explicit approach to ensuring the integration of gender issues into

²⁸ To address this question, the policy commitments on the integration of gender in EC development co-operation expressed in the 1995 Resolution, 1998 Regulation and 2001 Communication were first analysed and then categorised (Annex 4 contains a summary table of the policy commitments). The assessment of their “operationalisation” is presented in this section under 10 headings. An 11th heading was “resources”, but as this is addressed by evaluative question 4, this has been omitted from this section. As some of the commitments are addressed by other evaluative questions, reference will be made as relevant to other relevant sections of the report.

²⁹ It is important to note that the evaluation – which covers the period 1995 to early 2002 - only partly covers the 2001 Communication, which presents a Programme of Action for the period 2001-2006. Mid-Term and final evaluations are envisaged in the 2001 Communication.

³⁰ See Annex 6 of Volume 3 for the questionnaire and list of countries that responded.

policy formulation and decision-making at other levels, although gender staff (Gender Desks and sometimes Gender Focal Points) have certainly been consulted in the processes of formulating policies.

At country level there have been some initiatives, such as the IGED/GIGED approach developed in Guinea Conakry and Madagascar (see Box 1, section 3.1.3.2.3), which is an example of how support can be provided to Delegations to engage in policy dialogue on gender.³¹

3.2.2 Content and impact of policies and strategies

At headquarters level, there have been some activities to review the extent to which gender is integrated into interventions and to help inform the choice of areas of intervention. In 1998, DG VIII commissioned reports on the integration of gender into key sectors to external consultants³², and in 2001 DG DEV undertook a gender assessment of 40 Country Strategy Papers (see also Evaluative Question 5, section 3.5).³³ At country level a number of gender missions has been undertaken since 1995 to support the integration of gender into country strategies and projects and programmes.³⁴

However, the specific target set in 1995, demanding that “[b]y 2003 a substantially increased % of Community interventions satisfy OECD DAC criteria for gender integration or positive action” cannot be met, since there has apparently been no monitoring or reporting of Community interventions using the DAC criteria (see Evaluative Question 4).

3.2.3 Procedures

A number of actions have been carried out within the framework of contracts with external consultants to ensure that procedures are gender-sensitive. These actions included studies on the monitoring of gender in EC development co-operation with ACP countries and, specifically, on the use of the DAC Women in Development questionnaire for monitoring and reporting on the integration of gender in projects. However, the findings and recommendations of these studies were not acted on.

Other actions commissioned by the Gender Desk in DG VIII from external experts included a substantial review and “engendering” of PCM instruments during 1998-1999, including proposals for gender-integrated standard formats (Financing Proposals, Terms of Reference) and a gender assessment instrument for Financing Proposals. Pilot “gender-integrated PCM” training courses were carried out in Guinea, Ethiopia and Brussels to test and refine the improved instruments; training manuals explaining the links between PCM and gender and including gender-integrated tools were produced in French and English. Attempts were made to influence the revision of PCM with these engendered instruments, but an assessment undertaken in 2000 by a gender expert engaged by the Commission observed that the PCM instruments and training remained largely “gender-blind”. Since then the PCM manual has been revised (see Evaluative Question 4 for an assessment of the extent to which gender is currently integrated into PCM).

³¹ However, the existence of a support structure such as IGED in Madagascar and its involvement in consultation on the CSP, does not always guarantee that “gender issues are manifest in policy output” (the target/indicator stated in the 2001 Communication), as the assessment of the CSP for Madagascar shows (see Question 5, section 3.1.5).

³² This was part of a substantial contract involving gender country missions and studies, signed between the Commission and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), and financed through the gender budget line.

³³ The Gender HelpDesk is part of a substantial framework contract, signed between the Commission and a consortium led by SORCA, and financed through the gender budget line.

³⁴ These include: a gender mission to Malawi in 1995; the hiring of gender consultants between 1996 and 1998 to help integrate gender into co-operation with ALA/MED countries and to report on progress with gender mainstreaming; desk reviews of National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) and Financing Proposals from ACP countries and gender missions to ten countries (Guinea, Mali, Togo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Haiti, Barbados, Madagascar, Solomon Islands and Fiji) between 1997 and 1999. The only recent gender mission, carried out within the SORCA framework contract, was to Tanzania in 2000 to provide support to the integration of gender into the Country Strategy Paper.

Technical inputs have also been provided to help integrate gender into the evaluation guidelines, the revised PCM manual, documents for the Food Security Unit including Terms of Reference for field missions and guidelines on water and sanitation. However, the quality of some of these inputs on gender is poor.

At country level, there is limited evidence of the development of procedures to support the integration of gender into EC development co-operation. 13% of the 59 Delegations responding to the survey say that guidelines or instruments have been developed to assist in integrating gender and 18% have a routine procedure for assessing whether projects require a gender analysis. The IGED project in Madagascar, for example, has elaborated "contextualised" instruments for integrating local gender issues into projects and programmes.

3.2.4 Capacity building in the EC

Capacity-building activities – in the form of gender training courses, focused mainly on ACP co-operation - have been undertaken for Commission staff and country partners during the period 1995-2001. In 1994, consultants were hired by DG VIII to propose a training strategy for integrating gender into EC development co-operation in ACP countries. Pilot training courses were carried out in Brussels and at least one African country in 1995 and 1996. In 1997-1998 gender training courses were run for Commission staff and country partners in ten African countries (see 3.1.2.5 below). Pilot training courses in "gender-integrated PCM", which were organised in 1998-1999 in Guinea Conakry, Ethiopia and Brussels included EC staff. Some of the training organised in recent years in MEDA countries by the MEDATEAM 8 technical assistance included Delegation staff.

The organisation of gender training for EC staff appears to have faced a number of constraints. An ALA/MED staff working paper dated 1997 notes that it was intended to develop a systematic training programme with external consultancy but there is no evidence that this happened. Training was also intended to take place more recently through the gender framework contract, but institutional changes meant that the training was delayed.

To date, the training activities carried out have been insufficient to create any sustained or improved capacity in gender within the EC. High staff mobility and the fact that predominantly young experts or junior or temporary staff participate in the training courses instead of more senior permanent staff have limited their effectiveness. In addition, EC staff involved in the training assessed the content of some of the courses as insufficiently relevant to their work (see 3.1.2.5 below).

Steps are being taken to remedy this weakness. There are plans to launch a training programme – for Commission staff and co-operation partners - in 2003, following a call for tender³⁵.

3.2.5 Capacity building amongst partners

Training activities have also been undertaken in third countries. The most substantial training effort was made in 1997-1998 in African countries, commissioned by the Gender Desk of DG VIII. This Africa Gender Training Programme (AGTP) involved a series of regional training courses for gender trainers and consultants followed by ten national courses, run by some of the gender trainers trained in the regional courses. More recently, gender training courses have been run in MEDA countries by the (former) technical assistance MEDATEAM 8 based in Brussels, which had a highly qualified gender expert with international experience in its staff team.

³⁵ A preliminary sensitisation training of senior- and middle-management staff in DG DEV was planned for the end of 2002; however, this planned training had to be postponed due to scheduling conflicts. Gender training of middle-management staff and desk officers in DG DEV is planned for April 2003.

The assessment of the AGTP by the Gender Desk in DG VIII who supervised the training programme is critical. The main difficulty was to make it relevant to the needs of the participants. In the final report of the AGTP noted that while most of the country partner participants said that the training was relevant for their work, most of the Commission participants said that it was not relevant. The main weakness of the training was that it was not based on a sufficiently good training needs assessment. Participants were too heterogeneous and the training material was “pre-cooked”, so it was not adapted to the EC’s needs. In the view of the Gender Desk “it would have been better if the training had been very focused and worked with smaller specially selected groups who had the same training needs.”

A successful example of gender training

An example of a successful gender training course in the context of EC development co-operation is a residential five-day training course in “gender-integrated PCM” organised for programme and project managers of EC co-operation in Madagascar in July 2000. This well-targeted training course was developed in response to an identified need and demand by partners and by the IGED project, and was based on a solid training needs assessment undertaken by FORMFED, who commissioned and co-ordinated the training. The investment in preparing the training, in adapting the training materials to the specific context of EU-MAD co-operation and in evaluating and following-up the training was substantial, but this appears to have paid off in view of the results of the evaluation of the training. Follow-up training was provided in 2002, organised as part of the IGED project.

While one-off courses can have positive effects, the impact of the training is limited and can be difficult to sustain. Although two training sessions had been organised for Delegation, Programme Managers and key counterparts in Jordan in 1999 and 2001, staff and partners felt that further training was needed particularly with the high turn over of staff and the large numbers of new staff.

On the evidence of the projects assessed by the country missions, capacity-building on gender is taking place in some projects and programmes. This capacity-building is, however, rarely due to initiatives taken by the EC, but is largely brought in from outside. The main source of capacity-building at project level appears to be training provided by FAO, UNIFEM or other organisations, or organised by project/programme staff with prior experiences of other development institutions. While one of the risks of such training is that it is not well adapted to EC development co-operation, it is a pragmatic response to an evident demand for gender training at project level.

3.2.6 Institutional location of responsibility

Since the most recent reorganisation of the Commission services, responsibility for gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation has been shared between DG DEV and AIDCO in accordance with the overall division responsibility between the units. DG DEV (Unit B/3) is responsible for the integration of gender in policy and programming while AIDCO (Unit F/4) is responsible for gender in the management of the project and programme cycle. In each case the Head of Unit is responsible for gender issues, with implementation carried out by a Gender Desk.

The Gender Desk in DG DEV is staffed by a national expert supported by a grade A civil servant working part-time on gender. Since the autumn of 2002, gender capacity in AIDCO has been strengthened and the Gender Desk is now staffed by one grade A official, supported by one grade B official, both full-time. There is no equivalent arrangement in DG Relex, which is responsible for external affairs policy. In other words, gender issues have little very little visibility and status within the institution³⁶.

³⁶ Only two Commission DGs or services have fully-staffed Gender Units: the Equal Opportunities Unit in DG EMPL, which has overall responsibility for gender equality and mainstreaming policies; and DG Research, which has a Women and Science Unit. The latter provides an example of good practice in institutionalising gender mainstreaming.

Limited ability to influence decision-making at key levels

The low level at which responsibility for gender is located in DG DEV and AIDCO and the absence of a Gender Desk in DG Relex places severe limitations on the ability of those responsible for gender mainstreaming to influence decision-making in other domains of EC development co-operation. Indeed there is an anomaly between the institutional location of responsibility and the tasks that have been set by EC policy on the integration of gender. This policy requires that gender equality should be taken into account across the range of development co-operation policies, instruments and programmes and at all phases of the policy and programme cycle. To be able to effectively influence decisions in these domains, and to ensure coherent approaches across policies and programmes, the gender mainstreaming strategy should be managed at an appropriate level within the institution. This is particularly so in an institution such as the European Commission, which has a clear hierarchy of decision-making levels.

Low visibility of institutional arrangements

Another weakness in current institutional arrangements is that their visibility is poor. For example, a survey of institutional arrangements for implementing "equal opportunities" policy in the Commission, carried out at the beginning of 2002 by DG ADMIN, elicited no responses from the three DGs/services in the Relex family: DG DEV, AIDCO and RELEX. This would have been an opportunity to raise the visibility of arrangements in these three DGs/services, at least within the European Commission.

Within Delegations, staff members working on gender issues feel that they need a clearer indication as to whom they can contact at headquarters for information and support. This lack of visibility limits the demands for guidance or support, and also the potential to learn from, and disseminate, initiatives being implemented on the ground.

In addition to Gender Desks in the Relex DGs/service in Brussels, there are "Gender Focal Points" at headquarters and in Delegations. As these have no institutional responsibility for gender as such, this initiative is described under Evaluative Question 3, in the section on human resources and capacity.

3.2.7 Institutional change

The 1995 Resolution indicated that EC "development co-operation must encourage and support changes in attitudes, structures and mechanisms" at various levels in order to reduce gender inequalities. There is no evidence of any effort to implement this commitment, although awareness-raising activities have been proposed in the past. The provision by the DG VIII Gender Desk of gender assessments of Financing Proposals to responsible desk staff and to the Quality Support Group in the late 1990s was intended, in part, to raise awareness of the need for changes in the way development interventions were appraised and managed. The current framework contract for support to gender mainstreaming managed by AIDCO envisaged awareness-raising activities to target institutional attitudes, but actual activities appear to have been limited to a half-day seminar in 2001.

3.2.8 Information resources

Efforts have been made by the Commission services to produce and make available relevant information on gender in EC development co-operation. These include a number of studies and reports of gender issues in particular sectors, regions and countries, including guidance and examples of good practice; most were produced in the late 1990s by consultants engaged by DG VIII.

In addition, some attempts were made by the Gender Desk in DG VIII during the late 1990s to provide regular information on gender and development activities in the EC and by other

donors.³⁷ There was also an attempt by DG VIII to produce a replacement manual for the 1991 Women in Development manual, which was out of use since the 1995 Resolution introducing the gender in development (GAD) approach. A partial draft was produced by consultants for DG VIII, but was never finalised. While the 1991 and 1993 Women in Development manuals produced for ACP and ALA/MED co-operation respectively could perhaps still have been used (with some adaptations or complementary notes)³⁸, their distribution was discontinued following the introduction of the post-1995 GAD policies. As a consequence, there has been no manual on the integration of gender into EC development co-operation, or other equivalent guidance, since the early 1990s.

Aware of the severe lack of practical information, Gender Desks have tried in the last few years to establish appropriate sources of information. A "Gender Source Book" and Web site have been planned, and some of the material has been prepared. However, as of November 2002 the Web site is still under construction and can only be visited, at the site of the consultant who prepared it, using a password. AIDCO now intends to produce a manual in 2003.

Information available within Delegations is, partly as a consequence, very limited. Methodological resources in the Philippines Delegation are limited to a "Gender and Development Box" in the resources centre, containing one manual on Gender and Micro-Finance in ACP countries, the 1993 manual on "Women and Development Co-operation with ALA/MED countries" and the OECD DAC source book on gender equality.

3.2.9 Monitoring and evaluation

DG VIII commissioned several studies in the mid to late 1990s on gender monitoring and indicators. These included a study on indicators to monitor the implementation of the 1995 Resolution and studies of the systems and instruments for monitoring gender in development co-operation in the EC and by some EU Member States.

Studies were also commissioned of the EC's project monitoring and reporting on WID/GAD in line with DAC criteria. The Gender Impact Assessment Annex attached to the Standard Format for Financing Proposals³⁹ has been the only obligatory instrument for monitoring and reporting on the intended impact of a project on women/gender equality. A study for DG Development in 1998 found that the Annex was not always completed, that provision of the required information was very uneven and that statistical reporting was incomplete.⁴⁰ Although the Gender Desk in DG Development made attempts to follow-up on the study's recommendations (which resulted in some improvements to the Identification Fiche), there was no follow-up by the Commission on the format for reporting to the OECD/DAC. The production of a revised Gender Impact Assessment Form is now planned for 2003.

3.2.10 Co-ordination with other donors

Co-ordination with other donors at country level appears to be taking place in a number of third countries. 42% of the 59 Delegations that responded to the questionnaire survey indicated that the Delegation is involved in a co-ordination forum with other donors in the country on gender issues. This involvement is "regular" in 40% of the Delegations involved in

³⁷ A "Newsflash" targeted primarily at Gender Focal Points was produced by the DG VIII Gender Desk during 1998-1999, and articles were included in the DG VIII newsletter "Newshuit" by the same Desk.

³⁸ Disseminating manuals that provided practical guidance on the integration of gender into the management of EC development co-operation – even though they were not fully coherent with the new GAD policy – would at least have provided staff and partners with some useful support. As it is they were offered no replacement to the earlier WID manuals. Gender staff in place around the time of the 1995 Resolution did not expect that the policy commitments would not be followed up to such an extent (pers.comm.).

³⁹ Prior to the reorganisation of EC development co-operation, ALA/MED and ACP co-operation used different formats for Financing Proposals, although both included an Annex with the WID form for DAC reporting. A common format for Financing Proposals for all regions is now in use.

⁴⁰ Studies on Monitoring the Integration of Gender in EU Development Co-operation, produced as part of the "KIT contract" for the Gender Desk, DG Development.

a co-ordination forum. In only two cases is the EC involved in co-ordinating the forum or in convening meetings.⁴¹

There is co-ordination with other donors at European and international levels principally through the participation of DG DEV in the OECD DAC Working Party on Gender Equality, of which it is a permanent member, and through annual meetings of the Member States Gender Expert Group.⁴² Other events are occasionally organised, such as the presentation in October 2001 by a speaker from the World Bank on the Bank's strategy on Engendering Development.

3.3 Evaluative Question 3: To what extent have resources, capacity and institutional culture changed to meet the requirements on gender mainstreaming?

Resources and capacity to implement the policy commitments on integrating gender in EC development co-operation have been substantially insufficient compared to the policy requirements. Staff capacity has been exceptionally low. The sustained implementation of policy commitments has been harmed by a lack of continuity in staffing of gender desks and a failure to build gender capacity and skills within the Commission's permanent staff.

Financial resources have also been seriously insufficient. Rather than increasing the budget allocation to gender to match the new demands, the main financial resource to support gender mainstreaming was reduced just at the moment when the Programme of Action was required to come into effect.

The image presented by the Commission is that gender equality is not a priority. There is a visible and severe gender imbalance at top levels of management within the EC presents, suggesting that the organisation not committed to gender equality. The most visible and accessible statement by the EC on gender and development co-operation - on the gender and development page of the Commission's web sit - is unclear, out-of-date and contains several basic typographical errors, even though it is only one page long.

3.3.1 Financial resources

The 1995 Resolution stated that mainstream funds should increasingly be used for "gender sensitive interventions". In the absence of any monitoring of budget allocations from the perspective of gender, no data are available to identify if this commitment has been put into effect and, if so, to what extent.

The main financial resource to support the strategy of gender mainstreaming during the period 1995-2001 has been the gender budget line (B7-6220). The only known additional resource is the use of the MEDATEAM 8 technical assistance budget, which financed gender missions and training in MEDA countries during the period 1998-2001.

Although the budget line existed prior to 1998, and had been used to support actions to integrate gender in EC development co-operation⁴³, the Council Regulation of 1998 on Integrating Gender Issues in Development Co-operation provided its first legal basis and specified how the budget line could be used to support gender mainstreaming in development co-operation.

Significant reduction of the gender budget line

Prior to 1998, 5 million EURO were available per annum. Although the "reference" budget for the period 1999 to 2003 was 25 million EURO (i.e. also 5 million EURO per annum),

⁴¹ The most frequent co-ordinator is the UN (mainly UNIFEM but also UNDP). EU Member States, in particular the Netherlands, take the lead in a number of countries.

⁴² No meeting was organised in 2001.

⁴³ For example the substantial Africa Gender Training Programme and "KIT" contract, covering studies and gender missions in ACP countries, were financed from the gender budget line.

substantially less than this was committed and the budget was reduced. The budget available (so-called commitment credits) and the actual commitments and disbursements over the years 1998-2002 are presented in the table below.

Table 2: Gender budget line allocations and commitments 1998-2002⁴⁴

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Budget available	5.0	3.3	1.4	2.0	2.0
Commitments	n.k.	3.0	1.4	1.7	2.0
Payments	3.2	1.2	1.7	1.9	0.6

In fact, the 2001 budget allocation will be used as from the end of 2002. This will include 800,000 EURO for a UNIFEM-led project on gender budgeting in four countries. 950,000 EURO is earmarked for projects on gender in health and education; a call for proposals is planned for early 2003. The 2002 budget commitment of 2.0 MEURO is earmarked for the production of a manual on gender and development and for "an extensive capacity building and training scheme for EC headquarters and delegation staff", to be implemented as from 2003.

The Commission explains the slowdown in implementation of the budget allocation, particularly during 2001 and 2002 as the result of institutional restructuring and staff changes. While this argument is relevant, it does not explain why the overall budget available declined so sharply. Just as the Council Regulation of 1998 was approved, the already limited financial resources were allowed to decline even further. Given the policy commitments made in the 1995 Council Resolution and 1998 Regulation, the reduction of the financial resources available is difficult to comprehend. Some (confidential) explanations were provided to the evaluation team by Commission staff, but, assessed overall, the reduction appears to have been the result of a failure by the European Commission and Parliament to justify the case for at least the same, if not greater, resources, and a failure by the Commission to ensure that sufficient human resources were available to manage its implementation.

As a further point of comparison, the 2002 budget allocations available for other cross-cutting issues (which also support both projects and mainstreaming actions) are 100 million EURO for budget line B7-70 on democracy and human rights and 40,9 million EURO for budget line B7-6200 on the environment and tropical forests. More specifically, the amount available for commitment for measures to integrate the environmental dimension in Community support to developing countries is expected to be around 20 million EURO for 2002 and 2003, around five times that available for the integration of gender.

Few resources at country level

At country level, some financial resources have been made available to support the mainstreaming of gender in EC development co-operation across sectors and country programmes. Two examples are the IGED/IGED projects in Madagascar and Guinée Conakry (see Box 1 below). It is also reported that some country programmes now allocate a percentage of mainstream funds to support gender actions, although it is not clear whether these actions support capacity-building and gender mainstreaming at institutional and country strategy levels, or simply at the level of projects and programmes.

The situation in the four countries visited by the evaluation suggests that it is difficult to access resources for gender mainstreaming at institutional levels. In Bolivia, no institutional resources have been allocated by the Delegation to support gender mainstreaming, and there is no budget to train Delegation staff, project staff or partners. In Jordan, the situation is similar; gender-mainstreaming initiatives, including gender training, have been financed by

⁴⁴ Information provided by AIDCO F4.

the gender budget line through a UNIFEM project and through the MEDATEAM technical assistance programme. In Mali, no resources have been allocated to gender by the Delegation or national partners since 1995, and there are no financial resources for training of staff or partners, nor for studies or tools. The Philippines Delegation also seems not to have allocated any resources to gender mainstreaming, apart from financing a four-hour briefing for project co-directors on gender.

Staff in the Mali Delegation suggests that the budget line for civil society – which is now relatively substantial in ACP countries since the Cotonou Agreement and is managed by the Delegations - could be useful to support actions on gender equality. This suggestion should be given serious attention, to identify how these resources could be used to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation at country level. However, it is important to ensure that using civil society resources for gender does not marginalise the issue and make it difficult to influence mainstream development co-operation.

3.3.2 Human resources and capacity

Limited capacity at headquarters

There has been very limited capacity to manage policy, strategy and resources on gender mainstreaming within the Commission services in Brussels responsible for EC development co-operation. For most of the period 1995-2001, the human resources engaged to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation have varied from two to four staff members spread across the services. For much of this period, skills, knowledge and experience in gender and development have come primarily from national experts. While the use of national experts has brought valuable skills and knowledge of gender in development, there have been problems of continuity due to gaps between appointments.⁴⁵

The EC civil servants engaged to support gender mainstreaming have been predominantly grade B officials, who have had to “learn on the job” about gender issues in development. Expertise and prior knowledge of gender have not been among the criteria for the appointment of these officials.

The recent appointment as Gender Desk within AIDCO of a grade A official with knowledge and previous experience in gender mainstreaming is a positive step towards ensuring that the institution creates within itself sufficient capacity and appropriate skills in the integration of gender in development co-operation. However, current capacity is still extremely limited compared to the policy obligations.

Fragile network of Gender Focal Points

The approach of using Gender Focal Points (GFPs) to carry out the task of ensuring that gender issues are addressed in specific areas of EC development co-operation (e.g. in budget lines, instruments, country and sector programmes) has been in existence since the 1995 Resolution, following the example of other development institutions. It is clear that many Gender Focal Points make efforts to ensure that gender issues are addressed and their work has clearly contributed to some attention to gender in guidelines, projects and programmes.

However, there are severe limitations on the effectiveness of their work. Firstly, there has been no “network” of GFPs, which would enable them to exchange experiences and provide some mutual support. Indeed, the exact number, names and location are unknown. In addition, the selection of a member of staff as GFP appears not to be based on any

⁴⁵ Moreover, all the national experts seconded since 1997 to work on gender in EC development co-operation in the Commission have come from one Nordic country (Sweden), which is known for its specific and strong support for gender equality. This has made it more difficult to overcome the resistances of some Commission staff who feel that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are not appropriate to many societies and cultures in developing countries. The existence of such views were confirmed during the interviews and focus group discussions undertaken during the evaluation, and indicate that there is insufficient awareness of the relevance of gender issues within third countries and of gender equality to development.

assessment of their capacity to guide and inform other members of the Unit; they are often relatively junior members of a unit. Moreover, GFPs seem not to be provided with any training, job description or technical support, which would assist them in carrying out their task.

Capacity in Delegations is also very limited

Some actions have been taken by many Delegations, but capacity, knowledge and skills are on the whole very low. The main obstacle to integrating gender into EC development co-operation, according to respondents to the questionnaire survey, is “insufficient capacity in the Delegation to address the issue”. While the responses of the Delegations that replied to the questionnaire survey may not be typical of all Delegations⁴⁶, the findings nonetheless indicate efforts by many Delegations to address gender issues in the allocation of responsibilities within their team of staff. Among the 59 Delegations responding to the questionnaire survey, 63% have a member of staff with responsibility for gender issues.

Concerning the status of Gender Focal Points, some are Grade A officials with responsibility for managing programmes (e.g. in Cap Verde, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Fiji, Guyana, Somalia, Madagascar, Mozambique and Nicaragua). More frequently, they are local agents or young experts. Afghanistan appears unique in engaging a senior expert as “gender consultant”. 71% of them are women; 29% are men.

While more than half of the Delegations responding to the questionnaire has a GFP, the time available for work on gender and the knowledge and skills they have available are rather limited. 76% of them spend 5% or less of their working time on gender issues. Only 16% have a Terms of Reference or job description for their work on gender, and 29% have received gender training.

37% of the 59 Delegations have taken steps to improve the capacity and ability of their staff to address gender issues in EC co-operation. 32% have organised training and 40% have good documentary material on gender issues.

Some motivated staff, working in a difficult environment

A number of responses from the Delegations indicate the problems that exist. The comments also show the motivation of some staff to integrate gender in their work in spite of the obstacles. A comment from the Togo Delegation is typical of the responding Delegations: “In reality, the Delegation is not particularly interested in questions of gender. It does not have any specific human resources to do so. It’s more about a personal investment as a woman working in development and seeing the reality of African lives on the ground”.

The four case study countries give a deeper insight into the capacity of Delegations to address gender issues in EC development co-operation. All four Delegations have allocated a member of staff responsible for gender, although the sustainability and status of their positions is varied and not always sufficiently strong.

In the Jordan Delegation, there has been a Gender Focal Point for several years despite changes of personnel, and there has been a fairly consistent interest in women’s issues, primarily translated into EIDHR activities on women’s rights. The GFP does not have a specific TOR and her influence on gender issues within the Delegation is largely confined to the EIDHR programme activities, although she occasionally provides information on request from other colleagues working on other social sectors and programmes.

In the Mali Delegation, a GFP had just been appointed prior to the evaluation mission. She is on a temporary contract and is responsible for social sector programmes. She has been trained in gender, although not by the EC. As yet she has no job description, but has an “open mandate” on gender. The Bolivia Delegation has no GFP as such, but a recently appointed, DFID-seconded development officer has responsibility for transversal issues

⁴⁶ It can not be precluded, that the questionnaire survey was faced with a selection bias, in that the attitude towards gender influenced the likelihood of a delegation to respond. This limits the representativeness of the results for the whole population of EC Delegations.

generally, including gender. While his post is aimed at supporting deconcentration and improving quality, he has no direct line manager in the Delegation or Brussels. While this could be an asset, giving the freedom to innovate, it is also a constraint since he may have little influence on decision-making. Moreover, his temporary status casts some questions over the sustainability of any efforts he may make on gender equality.

In the Philippines Delegation there is a GFP, but her role is not clearly defined and lacks visibility. She has no Terms of Reference for the role, has not received gender training and, as the role is not listed in her "workload share", other Delegation staff were unaware that she had been appointed as GFP.

Knowledge and skills to address gender issues are also insufficiently strong in the four Delegations. Some training has been organised in the past, but high staff mobility means that the improved knowledge has not been sustained. The lack of skills is recognised by some staff, and there are demands for training and support to improve capacity. However, there are also resistances from other staff to what they perceive as additional demands on their time and tasks.

In the Bolivia Delegation, the level of gender skills amongst staff is low. However, gender awareness has increased and a demand for gender competencies is emerging. Some staff expressed resistance, perceiving gender as an additional burden. In Jordan, there have been two courses on gender organised through the MEDATEAM technical assistance, although staff mobility has meant that the improved capacity has not been maintained. Here too there is an expressed demand for further training.

The Mali Delegation has capacity problems in general, with most staff feeling overworked. There are no resources for training staff or for studies or tools. During 1997-1997 some staff participated in gender training organised by DG DEV, but these staff have since left the Delegation. In the Philippines Delegation, there has been no capacity building on gender in recent years, other than a half-day seminar in May 1999 during a co-directors' meeting. Moreover, there is some expressed resistance to "huge gender training initiatives for staff".

Some capacity amongst country partners and in projects and programmes

Amongst country partners and at project/programme level, the picture is perhaps a little brighter in terms of awareness, knowledge and skills, but it is still very mixed. In Madagascar, and to a lesser extent in Guinea Conakry, there is an important – although seemingly unique - example of good practice in the building of capacity, knowledge and skills at country level.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The IGED/GIGED approach is concerned with building local capacity and creating sustainable structures for gender mainstreaming. A participatory approach to development is one of the success factors here too.

Box 1: the Gender and Development Inter-Projects Initiative (IGED)

The IGED project (Initiative Genre et Développement) in Madagascar is, with its sister project in Guinea Conakry (GIGED), the only known example of a sustained approach to building capacity in gender mainstreaming at country level. An "IGED" is a network comprising a team of two or three national consultants (the GIGED HelpDesk or Secretariat), a (growing) number of resource persons working within the framework of EC-country co-operation in different sectors and at different levels of co-operation, and a steering committee. The objective is to ensure the integration of gender issues into development co-operation, in conformity with EC and national policies. The IGED strategy is to support and to strengthen capacity and skills in a network of gender resource people in projects and programmes and gender focal points in partner institutions, such as line ministries. Initially financed by the gender budget line as "start-up" support, the IGED projects have been financed out of mainstream EDF funds, which is also an important part of the institutionalisation and sustainability of the approach. Through the HelpDesk and network of resource people, IGED provides transversal technical support on the integration of gender in country strategies, projects and programmes throughout their cycle. To do this, "contextualised" tools (i.e. adapted to the country context and to EC development co-operation) have been developed and applied: gender training programmes, including gender-integrated PCM; a Web site, publications, gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools; etc.⁴⁸

The four country missions provide the main source of evidence of capacity, knowledge and skills in gender amongst country partners and projects and programmes. The picture is very mixed.

In **Bolivia**, Ministry of Finance staff are sensitised but not trained. In the Ministry responsible for the PRAS Beni project, gender is not a priority, resources are limited and priority is given to developing and improving "infrastructures" (rather than to their access and use). However, the technicians closer to the field acknowledge that the participation of women in water and sanitation projects is a success factor, and there is a critical mass of people working on participation, including women, at project level. For staff in the Ministry of Mining and Metallurgy responsible for the APEMIN project, gender is irrelevant, "because the project is in a male-dominated sector" (the role of female workers is ignored). Although field staff is aware of increasing references to gender, they do not know, how to respond to these demands. Moreover, there is major cultural resistance to the idea of women in mining; encouraging women's involvement in handicrafts and baking, on the other hand, is acceptable, fitting with cultural perceptions of women's roles (but preventing women from being more fairly remunerated). There is no awareness or knowledge at Ministry or project level to counter these perceptions and prejudices.

In **Jordan**, some post-Beijing gender training was financed by the EC, which resulted in a project to mainstream gender in the National Social and Economic Development Plan (its success was partial, especially with respect to economic sectors). Several staff involved in the EJADA programme management unit have been exposed to and trained in gender, through their previous involvement in other development agencies.

In **Mali**, there is no female head or deputy head of any project. The Ministry of Rural Development, responsible for the VRES project, is sensitive to gender. Project staff of VRES had received some training organised by DG DEV, which had led to local awareness-raising sessions in some villages and to the undertaking of a gender analysis. The analysis showed some significant gender disparities, but the Delegation or staff in Brussels did not follow up these findings. The second phase of the VRES project engaged a gender specialist for a seven-month period, but this was not continued into the third phase. The Government partner responsible for the decentralisation project is aware of the need to address gender, but no

⁴⁸ IGED in Madagascar has been financed during its most recent phase out of 8th EDF. Under 9th EDF, it is proposed to integrate the IGED approach into a more global technical support programme for EC-MAD co-operation. This will be a new approach to the integration of gender, and will require careful monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the "gender dimension" remains sufficiently strong and concrete. The GIGED project in Guinée Conakry appears to have run into difficulties and its future is unknown. The Guinée Delegation did not respond to the questionnaire survey.

training or support has been provided by the EC. The training director is trained in gender, although not by the EC.

In the **Philippines**, all project staff and international co-directors are men except for the women's health project. Both projects have invested in training and capacity-building of staff and local partners. There is no specific staff member for gender; this was requested by the CASCADE project but as it was not included in the Memorandum of Understanding it was not allowed.

3.3.3 Institutional culture

A more or less equal balance of female and male staff in the Commission institutions should not be seen as a pre-condition for gender mainstreaming in development policy (men as well as women can, and are, concerned about gender equality). However, the gender imbalance amongst staff, particularly at top levels, does not help to present an image of an organisation that is strongly committed to gender equality. The following table presents the gender balance of Heads of Unit and Directors in DG Relex, AIDCO and DG DEV and of Heads of EC Delegations in third countries.

Table 3: Gender balance of Heads of Unit and Directors in DG Relex, AIDCO and DG DEV and of Heads of EC Delegations in third countries (as at end of November 2002)

Heads of Unit in DG Relex, AIDCO and DG DEV				
DG	Women	Men	% Women	% Men
RELEX	12	30	29%	71%
AIDCO	7	38	16%	84%
DEV	4	16	20%	80%
TOTAL	23	84	21%	79%
Directors in DG Relex, AIDCO and DG DEV				
DG	Women	Men	% Women	% Men
RELEX	1	9	10%	90%
AIDCO	0	8	0%	100%
DEV	1	3	25%	75%
TOTAL	2	19	9%	91%
Heads of EC Delegations in third countries (ACP, ALA, MED, TACIS and CARDS)				
DG	Women	Men	% Women	% Men
All Delegations	5	97	5%	95%

Main source: DG Admin/B/4; figures correct as of November 2002.

The gender imbalance amongst Heads of Units – a middle management position – is fairly substantial, but is particularly extreme at the level of Directors and Heads of Delegations.⁴⁹

Poor visibility of gender in EC development co-operation

Moreover, there is no visible evidence of any clear statements, addressed externally to partners as well as internally to staff by the top level of management, concerning the need to

⁴⁹ The severity of the imbalance is particularly surprising given the clearly-stated commitment within the EC's personnel policy of promoting women into management.

integrate gender equality into EC development co-operation.⁵⁰ The Webpage on “Gender and development” on the Commission’s Development Website merely contains a statement mentioning the gender and development policy (the 1995 Resolution and 1998 Regulation) and giving some very confused statements about gender as well as inaccurate information on the availability of “operational tools”.

Indeed, the poor quality of the Gender and Development Webpage gives a negative impression of the Commission’s interest in and capacity to address gender issues. Though only one page long, it contains a number of unclear statements about gender and development. For example, “Women’s possibilities to contribute to and benefit from development policy changes and the outcomes of the projects at (sic) an equal footing with men are determined not only by their biological sex but also by the roles and interrelations between them and with the community. This is decided by culture traditions, law, prejudices and expectations.” The page is also out-of-date (the 2001 Communication is not mentioned) and mentions a number of operational tools that are not available or in use. Moreover, there are a number of very basic typographical errors: “The Support to concept of women in development has been given used supported by the Commission since 1988” and “instruments to measure weather the needs of both women and men”.

The poor communication about gender in EC development co-operation within the Commission appears also to be a problem at Delegation level, if the four country case studies are representative. In the Mali Delegation, gender is discussed neither internally, nor externally (although staff indicated that gender had been a subject of discussion in the past). Even when gender issues are being raised by projects, these are not being discussed with the Delegation. In the Philippines Delegation, some staff members have a positive attitude to gender equality, but this is an individual view and is not institutionalised into the Delegation’s discourse or practices. The attitude presented by the Delegation is “open to gender but not active in promoting it”. The issue is never discussed in staff meetings. Both the Mali and Jordan missions note that there is an evident “catch 22” situation on the ground: because the EC is not pro-actively creating a demand for gender and is seen as uninterested in the issue, partners and projects make no demands on the EC for support, so there is no corresponding initiative taken by the Delegation.

The absence of an institutional culture that actively promotes gender equality not only discourages attention to gender issues, but, more seriously, creates an environment where negative reactions to gender can be expressed. When staff members are motivated to raise gender issues in meetings or discussions, the reaction is not always encouraging or positive.⁵¹

3.4 Evaluative Question 4: To what extent is gender integrated into procedures and instruments for managing EC development co-operation?

Procedures and instruments for managing EC development co-operation do not currently provide adequate guidance on how to integrate gender. While some efforts have been made to address gender within some guidelines and manuals, these are insufficiently operational and detailed to be effective in guiding actual practice.

The integration of gender into mainstream procedures and instruments is too often being interpreted as inserting a separate section (often at the end of a document or in an Annex).

⁵⁰ As a point of comparison, this contrasts with the World Bank’s promotion of its Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, which is available in the form of a substantial report on “Engendering Development” and on the World Bank’s “Gender” Website. The introduction to the Strategy on the Website is a strong statement by James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank Group, explaining his own personal commitment to the issue and arguing why integrating gender is important to development.

⁵¹ In interviews with staff and during the focus group discussions, staff talked of the typical – and demotivating – responses to the mention of gender issues : the « ironic smile », the immediate indication of « cultural difficulties » in dealing with the issue, the suggestion that it is an issue promoted by Western feminists and not relevant to third countries, etc.

Gender issues are rarely addressed in a truly “cross-cutting” manner, i.e. appearing coherently throughout all guidelines and instruments.

Moreover, insufficient use is being made in guidelines and manuals of relevant information and instruments on gender produced by other development agencies. Some projects and programmes are making use of gender tools developed by other agencies, and this is a practical response to the absence of EC-specific tools. However, this can create problems of coherency of approach as well as the visibility of EC support.

The identified entry points for gender point to the need to integrate gender into mainstream procedures and instruments (ToR, Financing Proposals, indicators, guidelines on monitoring and evaluation) and to avoid the production of “separate” instruments specifically on gender. While there is a request for “tools” and “instruments” to help integrate gender, there is resistance from many staff to having additional guidelines and a clear desire for more streamlining of guidelines and tools.

The assessment of four types of procedures and instruments for managing EC development co-operation are presented here: Programming guidelines including the framework for Country Strategy Papers (CSPs); Project Cycle Management including guidelines for conducting evaluations; sector guidelines (private sector development, transport, agriculture, health and forestry); and budget line guidelines for democracy and human rights.

3.4.1 Programming guidelines including the framework for Country Strategy Papers

The main guidance on how to produce CSPs, including the core content and process, took the form of a document, entitled “Framework for Country Papers”⁵². This Framework also provided the criteria by which CSPs were assessed for “quality” by the interservice Quality Support Group (see Question 5 below). Additional guidelines were provided for specific aspects of the programming of EC co-operation embodied in the country strategies, and, where relevant, in national indicative programmes.

Little practical guidance on how to integrate gender in CSPs

The Framework for CSPs contains very little and inconsistent guidance on the integration of gender. Under the Policy sections, there is no specification that policies on cross-cutting issues should be assessed. Concerning the Country situation analysis, there is no reference to the need to address gender (in)equalities in the political, economic and social situations (although access of “disadvantaged and vulnerable” groups is referred to). Concerning the assessment of the sustainability of current policies, “the roles of men and women and gender equity... may be included... depending on the objectives of the assistance”; this formulation implies that gender is optional and might be relevant in some sectors and not in others. It further notes that “Where the country analysis indicates a major disparity of treatment between men and women, the CSP should demonstrate how further progress can be made towards gender equality and the empowerment of women”, but as the guidance on country analysis does not explicitly require gender (in)equalities in social, economic and political life to be assessed, the implication is that where gender issues have not been analysed, the CSP does not need to demonstrate how it can improve gender equality. The section on past and ongoing in-country strategy and planned further strategy states that the process of focusing of EC country strategy “will include cross-cutting issues such as... gender equality”; however, no guidance is given on how this might be done.

The guidance on CSP processes puts stress on discussions with the partner country, but there are no recommendations concerning discussions on gender, either with Government or civil society. The guidance on developing implementation mechanisms for country strategies (including, for example, National Indicative Programmes) specifies that a key element will be the development of suitable indicators. There is no reference to the need to disaggregate key

⁵² SEC(2000)1049

development indicators by sex, wherever relevant and feasible, nor to formulating indicators for measuring improved gender equality.

Varied integration of gender in programming guidelines

In addition to the main Framework for CSPs, briefing notes – often called “programming guidelines” or “programming tools” - were provided on various aspects of programming, either for thematic issues, specific country contexts or co-operation instruments and budget lines. There is no specific briefing note on gender. A number of the briefing notes were assessed by the desk study.⁵³ Gender issues, or rather women’s issues, are relatively well highlighted in the “poverty focus” briefing notes. The briefing note on programming in countries in conflict or emerging from a crisis makes no reference at all to gender. The programming guidelines on involving non-state actors make no mention of the need to ensure that non-state partners are representative of the populations concerned, and there is no discussion of barriers to the involvement and representation of certain groups, such as women.

The weaknesses that have been highlighted here concerning the (largely inconsistent and incomplete) integration of gender into guidelines for country strategies and programme appear to extend also to proposals for the monitoring of country strategies. Instructions sent to Heads of Delegations and Geographic Units in March 2002 on “annual reporting and operational reviews under the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement” make some references to cross-cutting issues. The last of the twelve issues that “can” be addressed in the section presenting an update on the political, economic and social situation concerns “other cross-cutting issues and the adequacy of public policy responses”. Gender is not specifically mentioned. Reporting on each of the focal sectors, on macroeconomic support and on programmes outside focal sectors should be presented under three headings: results; activities; and degree of integration of cross cutting themes (gender issues, environmental issues and institutional development and capacity building). While the instructions are not gender-blind, gender as a cross-cutting issue is once again put in a “separate box” rather than being integrated into mainstream reporting. For example, reporting on the results achieved – which are to be “measured against the identified targets and indicators and sectoral policy commitments” - could be undertaken with reference to sex-disaggregated key targets and indicators and against gender policy commitments.

3.4.2 Project Cycle Management, including evaluations

Project Cycle Management, based on the logical framework approach, is the main methodology for managing EC co-operation projects and programmes, particularly during identification, formulation, appraisal and evaluation phases. The PCM method as used by the EC rests principally on the use of a series of standard formats for documents at key stages of the project cycle.⁵⁴ The use of PCM is supported by written guidelines and instruments (a PCM manual, a training manual, standard formats), training programmes carried out in Brussels and in third countries and a Help-Desk staffed by consultants.

The **PCM manual** is the main reference document for the application of the PCM method to the management of projects and programmes.⁵⁵ The original manual published in 1993 was up-dated in 2001. The revisions were relatively limited and mainly took into account policy initiatives launched since 1993, including the “cross-cutting issues”. During the revision, some efforts were made to ensure that the PCM manual is coherent with gender policies,

⁵³ Programming tools on the following subjects were assessed: human and social development with a particular focus on poverty; countries in conflict or emerging from a crisis; and involvement of non-state actors / decentralised co-operation.

⁵⁴ Unlike the PCM or logical framework method used by many other donors, the EC’s approach to PCM has traditionally placed little emphasis on process, including participatory processes for planning, appraisal and evaluation. Recent adaptations, such as the introduction of stakeholder analysis, indicate some progress towards a more process-oriented and participatory approaches, which are potentially important for the integration of gender.

⁵⁵ Projects financed under the budget lines are not obliged to use PCM, nor are non-project forms of development co-operation, although most proposal forms are structured on PCM principles. Given the shift from project to sector support, PCM is currently being adapted to make it more appropriate for non-project forms of aid.

drawing in part on earlier work that had been undertaken by gender consultants working with the Gender Desk in DG Development.⁵⁶

Improvements made in the revised PCM manual

The need to promote gender equality and to use gender analysis tools is clearly indicated in the revised PCM manual. For example, it now includes requirements such as “good consultation with stakeholders ensuring balanced representation of different interests, including women and men” and statements such as “the key idea is that projects/programmes are designed to address the problems faced by different target groups/beneficiaries, both women and men, as well as their needs and interests”. There is also some guidance on how to incorporate gender analysis into phases of PCM, and the section on stakeholder analysis (a new introduction to PCM) includes an explanatory paragraph that states that gender differences (different roles of men and women, their access to and control over resources and their participation in decision-making) should be identified.

Some important opportunities for presenting a clear and coherent message about the treatment of gender are, however, missed. There is, for example, consistent use of aggregated terms such as “beneficiaries”, “target groups” “farming families”, which means that the message about the need for systematic disaggregation of target populations is not reinforced. The authors of the revised text were urged by Relex staff to “drop too many references to men and women as this would provoke undesired reactions”. This indicates that the principle of systematic disaggregation by sex of beneficiaries and target groups is not well understood or accepted as a basic principle of good project management, even by those responsible for project cycle management methodologies. Moreover, while there are references to gender in the two case studies, which are both from the roads sector, these do not give good examples of a consistent integration of gender in logical framework analysis and planning.

Instead of coherent and concrete statements, recourse is often made to the recommendation that gender should “be further analysed”; this not only gives the impression that gender is “difficult” to address (requiring special and separate analysis) but also implies that gender can be “left to later” in project analysis and planning. Unfortunately, as will be shown in the answers to evaluative questions 6 and 7, if gender is not adequately integrated into project design, including logical frameworks, at the beginning, it is extremely difficult to integrate into project implementation, monitoring and evaluation later on.

Adaptations formal rather than substantive

Perhaps more importantly, the experience of “integrating” gender into a mainstream management instrument such as the PCM manual indicates the severe limitations of a formalistic – rather than substantive – treatment of the issue. The request to the gender experts was to advise on integrating gender into the manual (i.e. into an already-prepared draft text) and not to advise on adapting the method – and subsequently its accompanying instruments – so as to ensure that gender issues are sufficiently addressed during the actual process of managing the project cycle. However, the PCM experts too were only asked to revise the manual, taking into account new issues, and not to revise the method.

Nonetheless, **a guide to assess the quality of financing proposals and feasibility studies** addresses gender reasonably well, in part because it was originally produced by

⁵⁶ The author of this evaluation report, who is herself a PCM expert and trainer, led the work carried out by gender consultants for the Gender Desk in DG Development, which included the adaptation of PCM procedures and instruments to integrate gender. This work on an “engendered PCM” was undertaken not only because of the importance of the PCM methodology within EC development co-operation but also because the Evaluation Unit, responsible for PCM, proposed to revise the PCM manual. At the time of this work, in 1998-1999, attempts were made to involve the Evaluation Unit and PCM consultants, but this proved very difficult, in part because there was reluctance to revise PCM until the treatment of all cross-cutting issues was clarified (however no initiative was taken at the time to undertake such an exercise) and because the long-proposed revision of PCM had not taken place. In early 2001, when the PCM manual was finally revised, the author of this report was engaged by the then Gender Help-Desk to comment on the draft version of the revised PCM manual. Some but not all of her comments were taken into account.

PCM consultants who included a gender expert. On the other hand, the **standard formats for PCM**, although revised following institutional changes in the management of EC development co-operation with third countries, have not yet been adapted so as to ensure that gender is adequately addressed as a cross-cutting issue. Proposals for revised standard formats for Financing Proposals and Terms of Reference for feasibility studies and evaluations, integrating gender, were produced by gender consultants working with DG Development in 1997-1998, but these were never “adopted” into mainstream use by PCM. One stated reason was the need to address all cross-cutting issues in a coherent way, rather than gender on its own; another was the ongoing institutional reform, which separated management of the project cycle from policy development and made it more difficult for DG Development to influence the management of PCM.

Evaluation guidelines provide clearer guidance on taking gender into account

Concerning **evaluations**, specific guidance is provided by the Evaluation Unit in EuropeAid, in the form of a standard format for Terms of Reference (ToR) for project evaluations and guidelines for evaluation. The standard format is too generic to have space for gender issues, although it notes, in the section on expertise of evaluators, that “it is also especially important to ensure that, among the various cross cutting issues, adequate gender expertise is present”.

The **Guidelines for evaluation** provide more detail than the standard format for ToR. The Guidelines consistently make reference to cross-cutting or over-arching issues such as gender, environment and poverty, with reference to project effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Moreover, there are many cross-references in the main text to an Annex on “Key Cross-Cutting Issues for Consideration in Evaluation of EC Aid projects/programmes”. The references to gender are for the most part thorough and coherent with the EC’s gender policy, although there is some confusion in explaining basic gender concepts and the terminology does not always conform to widely used definitions.

3.4.3 Sector guidelines

A sample of sector guidelines, covering both social and economic sectors, was assessed for their treatment of gender. These include the substantial two-volume guidelines for the forest sector and the guidelines for the transport sector, as well as the much briefer papers providing guidance on private sector development, health and rural development and food security. Some of the guidelines specifically concern the formulation of sector strategies in the current programming process and are therefore recent documents. Some of the guidelines have a specific geographical scope, for example ACP or ACP-ALA countries.⁵⁷

Systematic attention to gender in forestry sector guidelines

The two substantial volumes on “Forests in Sustainable Development”, produced for **forest sector** development co-operation in ACP and ALA countries, date from 1996 and 1997. Of the guidelines assessed, the forest sector guidelines give the most systematic attention to gender issues and are the most coherent with EC policy on gender in development. The first volume presents the underlying principles of forestry development and includes, under a list of five social principles, “recognising the roles and needs of women as well as men, and seeking to establish equal participation and benefits”, and “encouraging the participation of all stakeholders in the development process and seeking to empower local communities”. In addition it lists principles to promote participation and reach poor and disadvantaged populations (“often women”), and mentions the principle of “recognising gender roles and establishing equal participation and benefits”.

⁵⁷ The regional bias may be partly due to the fact that some guidelines (e.g. transport and forestry) pre-date the more recent reorganisation of the Relex services and were thus produced for specific regional co-operation programmes. The sector guidelines produced for the current programming period should apply to all third countries. No region-specific sector programming guidelines for regions other than ACP or ALA were identified. The IQSG website, containing the guidelines on CSPs and programming, was the main source of the more recent guidelines.

The two-part Volume 2 of the forest sector guidelines gives detailed guidance on programming and project tools looking at nine thematic areas of intervention of forestry co-operation at each phase of the programme and project cycle. Under each theme, at each phase of the cycle, a checklist of issues gives guidance on six key subjects. The checklist for the key subject on “Socio-cultural aspects / women in development” takes a gender approach and raises issues about the need for equal participation of men and women in project and sectoral activities, as well as the need for gender analysis to inform understanding of activities.

One factor in explaining the better treatment of gender in the forestry sector guidelines may be the seemingly very wide consultations conducted during its production, which included staff in the Commission services, Delegations in ACP and ALA countries, Member State partners and a significant number of experts from the private and NGO sectors.

Partial attention to gender in transport sector guidelines

The **transport sector** guidelines that were assessed include the undated “Programming Guidelines for the Transport Sector” and the 1996 manual entitled “Transport Sector Guidelines: Towards sustainable transport infrastructure”, which remains the main source of guidance and instruments (standard formats for studies and proposals) concerning EC-supported transport sector interventions. The Programming Guidelines, although brief, indicate that transport programming should be “gender sensitive”; this is specified by the question “how are the different transport needs of men and women reflected?” There is no mention of gender equality in decision-making or in employment in the transport sector. Points on regular data collection and analysis do not specify the need for sex-disaggregated / gender-sensitive indicators (although there has been subsequent work by the EC and Member States on the development of transport sector indicators, which include one specific gender-sensitive indicator).

The 1996 manual, which is still widely in use, includes occasional references to “women” or “gender”, including comments on the opportunities that transport sector interventions offer to promote men and women’s equality in employment (“particularly in management and maintenance functions and operations”), to “increase the access of both men and women to jobs and social services” and to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS. No guidance is given on how this might be done, other than to refer users to the 1991 “Women in Development” manual, which has not been available for many years.

Some of the weaknesses in addressing gender can be explained by the fact that the 1996 guidelines were being developed at the same time as the evolving policy on gender in development, and before the more recent work by other development institutions – most notably the World Bank – on gender and transport. However, these recent initiatives, and the growing body of documentation and tools on gender and transport, do not yet appear to be reflected in the EC instruments guiding transport sector interventions.

Missed opportunities to address gender in some sector guidelines

The guidance on strategies for **private sector development**, as given in the 1998 Communication on “A European Community Strategy for Private Sector Development in ACP Countries” and in the undated “Guidelines on Private Sector Development in the Programming Process”, includes only one statement on gender. The Communication states that the strategy will “enhance the role of women in the labour market and support women entrepreneurs”, but without indicating how this might be achieved.

There have been some efforts to include gender in the Programming Guidelines for **Rural Development and Food Security**, although these do not fully respect gender policy and are inconsistently integrated across the various elements of sectoral strategy. The Programming Guidelines include guidance on how to produce analysis papers on national rural development policy and strategy, specifying their core generic content and format. This format includes a section on cross-cutting issues, which says that these issues “must be reflected in sectoral analysis, policies and strategies as well as in the set of indicators to be monitored for impact assessment”. However, in the sections of the format that deal with

these aspects there are no references to cross-cutting issues, including to gender. There is no requirement to disaggregate these data by sex, in spite of the well-known gender differences in food production, food consumption, incidence of poverty and migration. Equally, this section does not ask for a description of men's and women's roles in production, nor their access to and control of key resources, although these are known to be of major significance in rural development and food security.

The 13-page undated Programming Guideline for **Health, AIDS and Population** raises a number of women's issues, but not systematically and not from a gender perspective. It mentions that "women's groups" should be "particularly" consulted during stakeholder consultation (but not balanced participation of women and men) and there is a focus on women in special references to maternal/reproductive health and STDs. In the section on monitoring indicators there is no mention of the need to disaggregate indicators by sex.

3.4.4 Budget line guidelines

Procedures and guidelines for managing initiatives on democracy and human rights were assessed. Some important first steps have been made to address gender issues, including in project selection, although the overall approach is incomplete and requires more concrete realisation.

The current programming guidance on the **European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights** (EIDHR) and guidelines on applications for financing under the EIDHR budget line B7-701 make some efforts to ensure that gender issues are addressed. It is stated that, as "gender is a crucial factor to ensure that EIDHR funded projects comply with the wider policy of the Commission", "the inclusion of a gender perspective is an over-arching characteristic for all projects and programmes". However, the EC policy goal of promoting equality between women and men is not mentioned and the document as a whole gives no indication of how a gender perspective could be included. Gender issues are absent from the descriptions of thematic areas, except for "Democratisation, Good Governance and Rule of Law", which notes that there is a need "to promote greater participation of people in decision-making at all levels, including equal participation of men and women and different identity groups."

The guidelines for the assessment of proposals submitted for EIDHR funding include a question on gender, which is worth 5 points out of a total score of 100 for ranking proposals. A very detailed description of how gender aspects could be assessed is included in an annex to the guidelines.

3.4.5 Use of guidelines and instruments

The use of guidelines and instruments by actors in the four case study countries, including in the eight projects, was assessed by the evaluation.

A strong demand for improved guidance and tools

Delegation staff and co-operation partners express a widespread need for information and tools to guide the integration of gender in strategies, projects and programmes. "Unclear procedures and tools" are identified by respondents to the questionnaire survey as the third most important factor constraining the integration of gender in EC development co-operation.

Where gender tools are in use, for example within some projects, these have been adapted from formats and instruments developed by other agencies. While these are recognised to be useful, there is a strong wish for instruments that have an "EC label" and that are not only tailored to the specific characteristics of EC development co-operation, but also give visibility to the EC's efforts on gender. Widespread frustration is expressed about the lack of guidance from headquarters and within existing instruments and procedures.

Concerning Project Cycle Management, knowledge and application of PCM instruments vary widely. Where PCM is used, interviewed staff and partners consider that it is not helpful as a

guide to the integration of gender. Unsurprisingly therefore, most project documents (Financing Proposals, logical frameworks) contain only “symbolic phrases” about gender as a cross-cutting principle. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation reports are silent about gender issues and contain little or no sex-disaggregated data. Gender analyses are sometimes undertaken within socio-economic studies, but the data and information on gender appear not to then be used in project planning. The absence of practical guidance on how to make use of gender analysis and data within the management of the project cycle, as well as of a simple and standard procedure to ensure attention to gender in projects and programmes, underlie these weaknesses.

Key entry points for gender

Terms of Reference (ToR) are considered as a key entry point for gender, especially for feasibility and evaluation studies. How to integrate gender equality into the intervention logic of projects and programmes (especially into objectives and indicators) is of major concern. The provision of briefings – and briefing materials - for consultancy teams, on how to address gender issues in identification and formulation, in assessments of feasibility and in evaluations are also considered to be very important.

3.5 Evaluative Question 5: To what extent has gender been taken up as a truly cross-cutting issue in Country Strategy Papers and in the processes, including political dialogue, to formulate and agree them?

Gender has not been taken up as a truly cross-cutting issue in CSPs. The contribution of country strategies to gender equality is unclear, and strategic objectives concerning focal sectors of co-operation and key instruments are also widely lacking. The weak treatment of gender in the guidelines for CSP processes and content is one explanation, compounded by the very low capacity within the Commission to address gender issues at key points in the strategy formulation process. Much stronger consultation with representative stakeholders on the ground and more serious efforts to integrate the information and recommendations into the analyses and strategies would have offset these internal weaknesses. While a significant opportunity to improve attention to gender issues at a key phase in country programming has been missed, there are now other important opportunities – particularly in the programming of focal sector support – that must not be missed.

The potential of country strategies, especially the support to focal sectors, to promote gender equality in economic and social life in third countries is considerable. The EC is often a major player, not least in terms of financial resources, in these sectors. At present this potential is not being realised because there are no clear objectives, nor any coherent and comprehensive strategy, for reducing gender disparities and promoting gender equality. Little use is being made of the capacity and resources that exist at country level, and there is also little dialogue and collaboration with other development agencies as well as Government and civil society actors.

Some dialogue and some attention to gender in CSPs according to country Delegations

Of the 59 Delegations responding to the questionnaire survey, 47% indicate that assessments of gender issues were carried out during formulation of the CSP, 37% indicate that there was dialogue with line Ministries on gender issues, and 32% indicate that consultation took place with national gender bodies. Compared with the findings of the assessments of CSPs presented below – which are consistent in their conclusions – these figures seem surprising. Either the Delegations responding to the survey are untypical, or the analyses, dialogue and consultations do not systematically produce CSPs that address gender as a truly cross-cutting issue. We shall return to this anomaly later on.

Five CSPs were selected from among the Delegations that had responded to the questionnaire survey and that had answered positively to the question asking about attention to gender in the CSP process. These five Delegations had indicated that there had been an analysis of gender as well as consultation and/or dialogue with national partners on gender in the country strategy. The five countries are Uganda, Jamaica, Afghanistan, Peru and Madagascar. In theory, if the responses are correct and gender issues were taken into account in the CSP process, these five CSPs should be relatively 'good' in addressing gender. In fact, the gender dimension is conspicuously absent from the country strategies. With the exception of socio-economic development in Peru (which mentions women in vocational training) and human and social capital in Afghanistan (women and health), none of the main areas of intervention of the five CSPs – i.e. the focal sectors or strategic pillars – address gender issues or gender equality. In the Uganda, Madagascar and Jamaica CSPs, none of the main areas of intervention address gender, i.e. there are no objectives, no actions and no indicators concerning gender, or even concerning women.

Formalistic rather than substantive treatment of gender

The findings of the assessment of these five CSPs are supported by those of the two, more extensive, assessments carried out within the Relex services. The assessment of CSPs by the Gender Desk in DG Development concludes that gender is treated as a standard statement of principle, but is not an integral part of the analysis or strategy. An assessment by the interservice Quality Support Group (iQSG), responsible for screening CSPs, arrives at similar conclusions, although a representative of the IQSG has indicated that 'the quality of the more recent CSPs has improved' (compared to earlier ones).

Gender is added on, rather than integrated into the strategy

There are some references to gender policy, and to women's situation or gender disparities, in the analyses sections, but these are then not reflected in the strategies, and there is no systematic presentation of key gender issues in the countries or focal sectors. Gender references concern mainly women's social or reproductive situation (e.g. female enrolment in primary education, maternal health) and, in some cases, women in politics or decision-making. There is much less concern for the economic or productive situations of women, and no gender analysis (i.e. disaggregation of data/information by sex or analyses of gender disparities). In the cases where there are references to gender (for example, the Madagascar CSP notably includes an annex on gender issues) these are very much 'added-on' and not integrated into the mainstream parts of the CSPs/NIPs. That this failure to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue occurs in the CSP/NIP for Madagascar, where there has been the IGED project to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation, suggests that there are systemic and institutional weaknesses, which marginalize even the most organised and targeted of 'voices' on gender in EC development co-operation at country level.

Gender is interpreted in a limited way

Further insight into the treatment of gender in CSP processes and strategies comes from the evidence gathered by the four country missions. The Jordan CSP is relatively good in addressing gender issues; it reflects some awareness of gender issues, although 'gender' is interpreted in terms of women's rights and participation in decision-making. Gender is however absent from the analysis and strategy concerning economic aspects, in spite of the significant and well-known gender disparities in economic activity and employment. Gender is interpreted in the Jordan CSP as 'targeting the special needs of women'. The Mali CSP also makes some efforts to integrate 'gender' but there is a lack of strategic orientation. Gender is again mentioned in social and political areas, but not economic, and there are no data or objectives concerning gender in focal sectors. The Bolivia CSP is vague and not operational on gender. Girl/boy education is the only sex-disaggregated data given, and gender is interpreted as concerning 'women's and children's rights' and 'vulnerable women'. Gender is in social areas but not economic; indeed, tackling social exclusion and reducing inequalities are treated globally as concerning social not economic sectors. The Philippines

CSP contains few substantive references to gender other than mentioning some women-specific projects.

Gender insufficiently addressed in the assessments of CSPs

One reason for weak treatment of gender issues and equality in the CSPs is that the guidelines for their preparation did not address these issues adequately (see section 3.4.1). Another is that gender was not sufficiently addressed during their assessment.

The interservice Quality Support Group (iQSG) is the main mechanism for improving the substantive quality of CSPs and National and Regional Indicative Programmes (NIPs/RIPs). The criteria used by the iQSG for establishing an adequate quality standard for CSPs make no specific reference to gender, only that the iQSG will *inter alia* assess 'the focus given to community support for example to specific sectors, areas or thematic issues' (my emphasis). The members of the iQSG were selected for their 'all-round overview' and not to represent their specific areas of competence. The iQSG has only been able to assess the extent to which CSPs comply with the CSP guidelines, in which, as has already been shown, gender is weakly and inconsistently addressed. Prior to being submitted to the iQSG, CSPs should be assessed by a country team, including relevant sectoral and geographical staff. Given the very limited capacity on gender within the Commission, it can be hypothesised that these teams include staff with appropriate knowledge of gender issues in the countries and sectors concerned.

Processes of dialogue are insufficient

In Bolivia and Mali, the CSPs are based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which had been produced through a consultative process. This is the reason given for the absence of any participatory process or wide consultation to formulate the CSPs (or at least none beyond a formal consultation with the main Government partners). The Philippines CSP is based largely on the national development plan and was drafted mainly in Brussels, with limited consultation with national partners and none at all on gender. The Jordan CSP was extensively discussed between the Delegation and the Desk Officer in Brussels. The latter was credited with the insertion of a number of references to gender inequalities and the need for gender mainstreaming. The CSP was also extensively discussed with Member States Embassies and with key Ministries such as the Ministry of Planning, and Finance. No special studies or situation analyses were conducted, and there was no dialogue with civil society.

Focal sectors have considerable potential to reduce gender inequalities

All four missions note the considerable potential that EC support in the chosen focal sectors could make to reduce gender disparities, particularly in skills, labour market participation, economic empowerment and decision-making. However, these positive effects will only be realised if gender issues are adequately addressed at appropriate levels.

3.6 Evaluative Question 6: How far has the EC focus on gender issues, including specific actions for women, increased women's and men's participation in and influence on EC development interventions in different sectors, and in particular increased women's participation in decision-making and their access to and control over resources?

The effectiveness and visibility of the EC's development co-operation concerning gender equality is seriously harmed by the near total absence of data emerging from projects and programmes. Moreover, there is no means to capitalise on positive experiences and thus to improve strategy and practice.

The little evidence there is suggests that while positive effects may be occurring, some projects may be marginalizing women from access to decision-making and important

resources. The lack of specific objectives concerning gender equality and the absence of gender analyses and of gender-sensitive monitoring are among the causes of these weaknesses.

Evaluations provide very little information on gender

An assessment was undertaken of final reports of sectoral/programme evaluations⁵⁸, which should be an important source of information on the effects of EC development interventions on target groups and beneficiaries. However, these produced very limited information concerning this evaluative question.

Only two of the evaluation reports contain findings that show a positive effect on women's situation. The evaluation of the NGO budget line indicates a positive effect on the participation of women amongst staff at project level; however this is the only positive contribution identified and this is not the result of any approach taken by the EC. The evaluation of the MEDA Democracy programme notes that women are a prioritised target group; it can be extrapolated that this programme has contributed positively to improved women's rights.

Most evaluations had not addressed gender, or even women, in their evaluation questions or criteria. Moreover, since sectoral evaluations are primarily based on project evaluations, and projects are assessed against their planned intervention logic (logical frameworks) in which gender is widely absent, no evidence emerges from the project findings concerning any gender dimension. Where gender equality – or rather impact on women – is mentioned in evaluations, the findings indicate that the projects and programmes have not been successful in addressing gender or in bringing about identifiable improvements in the situation of women.

Some evidence of positive effects on the situation of women and girls

Another source of information for this evaluative question was the assessment of the eight projects visited during the country missions.⁵⁹ Among these, five appear to have made positive contributions to women's participation in decision-making and in development, and to their improved access to certain resources.⁶⁰ What positive effects appear to be occurring, and why?

Amongst the 'mainstream' projects, the PRAS Beni project in Bolivia – considered by Delegation staff to be 'the most gender aware' project in their portfolio – has had a positive impact on the basic and political needs of women. According to the evaluation mission and project staff, this is principally due to the project having a specific objective on women's participation and allocating resources to 'gender mainstreaming'. From a participatory assessment with representatives of female and male beneficiaries, the VRES project in Mali is also considered to have had positive effects on women's participation in community decision-making and on their access to resources (credit and the revenue from increased productive activities). However, these positive effects are not due to any prior planning or

58 The evaluations assessed include : - An evaluation of PHARE-financed Transport Programmes. Final Report: December 1999 ; - An evaluation of PHARE-financed Programmes in support of SMEs : Final Report, February 2000 ; - Evaluation of EC Support to the Education Sector in ACP Countries: Synthesis Report, FTP international, May 2002 ; - Evaluation of EU Development Aid to ALA States: Phases III – Synthesis Report, Societa Italiana di Monitoraggio S.p.A SIM (I). EC, SCR, March 1999 ; - External Evaluation of Community Aid Concerning Positive Actions in the field of Human Rights and Democracy in the ACP countries, 1995-1999. Synthesis Report, Franklin Advisory Services, Channel Research Ltd, SEPIA. EC, SCR, August 2000 ; - Synthesis Report on EC Activities in the Field of Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance, Particip consortium. EC, August 2001 ; - Evaluation of the Forestry Components of EC Programmes in Developing Countries: Synthesis Report, Volume 1: Main text. ECO, July 1998 ; - Evaluation of co-financing operations with European non-governmental development organisations (NGOs) - Budget line B7-6000, Final Report. South Research + Consortium, December 2000 ; - Evaluation of the MEDA Democracy Programme 1996-1998, Nadim Karkutl and Dirk Butzler, March 1999

⁵⁹ Readers are referred to Volume 2: Field Phase Report, which provides a detailed assessment of these eight projects.

⁶⁰ It is important to stress that most of the projects were selected for assessment because they were known to have 'addressed gender' in some way; the Relax staff consulted on project selection were understandably keen that the evaluation findings should contribute to learning about how to address gender within projects or programmes. In some cases (PRAS Beni in Bolivia, the Women's Health project in the Philippines and the Women in Parliament project in Jordan) the projects were selected precisely because they were considered to be the 'most gender aware'. It therefore has to be kept in mind, that the overall assessment of the eight projects is therefore not representative of EC projects and programmes as a whole.

specific approach, but as a reaction during project implementation to evidence from the ground that addressing women's participation is necessary for project effectiveness.

In the Philippines, the CASCADE project, considered a 'model' example by Delegation staff in terms of gender, has had a positive, but largely indirect, effect on women's participation through investment in local capacity-building, influenced by local approaches and local staff and not as a direct result of the EC support. The other two 'positive' projects are women-specific actions (Women in Parliament in Jordan and Women's Health in the Philippines) and can be expected to have positive effects on women's participation in decision-making on the one hand and on women's access to resources on the other. In addition, the EJADA project in Jordan has a number of women in visible positions of authority in the programme management unit, a proportion of women that is untypical for Jordan and that sets of positive example in the Jordanian context.

The responses to the questionnaire survey of EC Delegations indicate that other EC supported projects may be contributing positively to women's participation in development and decision-making and to their access to project resources. 45 Delegations report that one or more EC supported interventions in their countries make a contribution to reducing gender inequalities or improving the situation of women.⁶¹ The positive contributions identified mainly concern improved women's rights and access to resources in the areas of education, health and employment (including access to credit, training and revenue). Some positive changes in the involvement of male programme and project staff in addressing gender issues and in the participation of women in decision-making are also noted by around half the Delegations.

The effects of EC co-operation on gender are widely unknown

However some of the responses indicate that the actual situation is not known. 37% of the Delegations responding to the survey replied 'not known' to the question 'Have any actions or programmes supported by the EC in the country made a clear contribution to reduce gender inequalities or improve the situation of women?'

While positive effects of some EC interventions on the situation of women can be reasonably assumed to be occurring, it is also clear that there is no real evidence to demonstrate the precise effects and impacts of EC co-operation. There seems to be a widespread assumption, as evidenced in discussions with Delegation and project staff during the country missions and from the questionnaire responses, that projects and programmes that target women (either implicitly because they are part of the beneficiary population or explicitly in the case of female-targeted actions) will inevitably, even without specific planning, contribute to gender equality. This assumption is not supported by any evidence, and is indeed contradicted by other evidence (see below). While projects that include women amongst their target groups or beneficiaries may benefit women in specific ways, they are highly unlikely – in the absence of any specific objectives or activities - to make any contribution to reduced gender disparities or to improved women's rights and empowerment.⁶²

Some projects are marginalising women from decision-making and access to key resources

The evidence from three of the projects assessed during the country missions shows the significant risks that may arise if gender disparities are not addressed, as well as the potentially negative effects that EC supported projects may have on women's situation. The APEMIN project in Bolivia has no conceptual framework for addressing gender issues or disparities, and is marginalising women in its activities. Since these women are already

⁶¹ 55% of returned questionnaires (25 Delegations) report two or three projects that have a positive effect on reducing gender inequalities or improving the situation of women. Nine Delegations (Bangladesh, Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Ghana, Somalia, Lebanon, Morocco and Pakistan) report six or more projects that have a positive effect. Pakistan's response is that 'All projects address practical needs of women (education, health, etc.)'

⁶² Since women widely have less power and resources than men, and since improving gender equality requires changing existing inequalities in decision-making and in access to and control of resources, a specific approach is required that - gradually but surely - raises awareness of the issues, builds the confidence and capacity of women and men to bring about change and supports this change with appropriate resources, structures and systems. Thorough analysis of the needs and interests of women and men (as well as their roles, resources and powers) and a participatory approach that involves women and men equitably in development are prerequisites.

experiencing severe poverty and are highly vulnerable, the project's potentially negative impact on their situation is of serious concern. The decentralisation project in Mali is also excluding women, in this case from levels of decision-making that can contribute significantly to local access to resources and services. Women are in a very small minority in the communal councils and groups being supported by the decentralisation process. They are however represented equitably, or are in a majority, in local associations and NGOs which played a major role in local development prior to decentralisation, but which are now being marginalized by the decentralisation process. No steps are being taken by the project to counteract this exclusion.

No attention to gender does not mean neutral effects

In Jordan, the EJADA project is too new for any effects, positive or negative, to be identified. However, gender mainstreaming has been considered as 'irrelevant' to the project, and as a consequence no steps had been taken to ensure that women and men benefit equitably from the economic and employment opportunities created, even less to ensure that the project contributes to reducing the severe gender disparities in labour market participation in Jordan. Significant disparities exist already in women's and men's participation in the Jordanian labour market, and women face often severe discrimination in access to certain posts and jobs. In this situation, the absence of attention to gender within the project means that there is a clear risk that it will not contribute to improved opportunities for women. Indeed, if traditional attitudes about women's roles and existing forms of discrimination are not challenged, the project may contribute to women's continued marginalisation within the labour market; it may even be increased if the project – unintentionally but in reality - favours men.

The lesson here is that by not paying explicit attention to gender, projects and programmes are allowing their effects and impacts on the situation of women and on gender equality to be entirely 'hit and miss'. While the EC can claim, from the evidence of the country missions, that there are some positive effects of EC support on the situation of women, it is clear that, with the exception of women-specific actions, these effects are largely unplanned (indeed accidental) and that EC support is not the engine for integrating gender. The source of the problem appears not, however, to lie at the level of projects and programmes, but points, once again, to an institutional and systemic weakness. Project staff report that there is no operational guidance from the Delegation or Brussels and that if a project is interested in addressing gender - either because it has been identified as important to project effectiveness or because project staff are personally keen to address it - help and guidance must be sought from elsewhere.

Absence of data is a critical weakness

One of the other main findings of the assessment of the evidence under question 6 is the systematic absence of data on women and men (amongst project staff, target groups or beneficiaries) and on women's and men's situations before, during or after project and programme implementation. As has already been shown, there are widespread weaknesses in the approach taken to gender within EC development co-operation. Among the most glaring weaknesses is the absence of measurement, monitoring and reporting of the effects and impacts of EC supported projects and programmes on women and men. Firstly, indicators that specify the human population concerned, even in broad terms, are rare. Even when the human population concerned is mentioned (farmers, transport users, rural poor, etc.), the indicators are very rarely broken down by sex. Furthermore, indicators for measuring reduced gender disparities or improved gender equality are widely absent, with the more or less exclusive exception of primary education or maternal health, where the Millennium Goals are taken into account. However, without clear guidance from Delegation or headquarters on what effects and impacts EC development co-operation should have on gender equality in a particular sector or country, or project and programme, and on how these objectives could or should be met, these weaknesses are unsurprising.

3.7 Evaluative Question 7: **How far have actions or measures financed by the EC contributed to redress inequalities and improve the gender balance?**

It is not possible to assess the contribution of EC support to reduced gender disparities, because of the absence of relevant data. While identifying the EC's specific contribution may be difficult, it is necessary in order to inform policy and strategy and to meet international and EU policy obligations. EC development co-operation carries considerable potential to contribute to reduced gender disparities and improved gender equality. This concerns not only social sectors and human rights and democracy, but perhaps most importantly improved equality between women and men in access to and control of key productive resources. Given the perceived, and real, strengths of EC co-operation in 'infrastructures' and 'macro' support, the EC could also contribute substantially to improved economic empowerment of women and increased gender equality in economic activities and employment.

Evidence of impact on gender equality is extremely limited

The final reports of recent sectoral / regional and programme evaluations were examined for evidence of the contribution of EC support to redressing gender inequalities. The reports indicate a 'double-bind' in answering this evaluative question; there is no systematic attention in evaluations concerning any effects or impacts of EC development co-operation on gender equality, and there are, in any case, few or no data from projects and programmes. The evaluation of the Phare SME programme – which could have been a valuable opportunity for assessing the programme's contribution to women's and men's economic empowerment – did not include gender equality or even effects on women in its evaluation questions and criteria. In other evaluations, specific aspects of women's situation are addressed (most typically their participation in decision-making or amongst project staff), but there is no intention or attempt to identify effects or impacts on reduced gender disparities or improved gender balance.

Some inequalities are being addressed, but the situation is largely unknown

For some limited evidence concerning question 7, we must turn to the four country missions.⁶³ In Jordan, it is reported that EC co-operation may have contributed to redressing some specific inequalities, but only in some social sectors and concerning women's rights. There is no evidence of any positive contribution of EC co-operation to women's improved economic situation, in spite of the significant gender disparities in economic participation and the contribution of EC co-operation in economic sectors.

The country mission to Mali reports that it is impossible to assess what contribution EC co-operation has played because there are no data and because reduced gender disparities or improved gender equality are not among the stated aims of EC co-operation in these countries. The Mali mission notes that if positive changes are happening as a direct or indirect result of EC support, these are unknown and they are anyway likely to be due to the influences of other donors or development institutions. Informed observers cite the positive influences of Canadian and Dutch co-operation, UN agencies, the World Bank and international NGOs.

The EC's contribution has low visibility

A similar picture emerges from the Bolivia mission. 'Currently it is virtually impossible to assess the EC contribution to gender equality: a) there are no before/after data available at programme/project levels, b) the EC has not supported initiatives with the aim of reducing inequalities (macro/meso levels) and c) there is no follow-up of the reduction of inequalities in EC sectors of interventions.' The EC has the image of an agency dealing with 'infrastructures' and macro policies, not social change or gender. Where positive changes are occurring these are widely considered by informed observers to be due to local women's

⁶³ Readers are referred to Volume 2: Field Phase Report, which presents the detailed assessments of the situation in the four countries and eight projects studied.

organisations working with the support of other agencies; the Dutch, Swedish and Canadian bilateral agencies and UN agencies are named as influential actors on gender.

In the Philippines, the visibility of the EC's contribution to gender equality is low and is ranked poorly by other donors and by the UN agencies. Although the EC has been involved in the 'donors GAD network' in the Philippines since 2001, the coordinator of this network was not aware of the EC's activities on gender, not even its 'flagship' project on Women and Health. This lack of visibility even when positive initiatives are being taken has inevitable repercussions on the sustainability of efforts on gender, since successes are not capitalised on and there is no replication of learning across projects and programmes.

If there is no attention to gender, negative impacts cannot be ruled out

In one instance, the evaluators were pointed towards a potentially negative impact of an EC intervention on the situation of women. The experts conducting the Bolivia mission were told by Delegation staff of evidence of increased inequalities in the context of EC interventions; for example, the Programa de Autodesarrollo Campesino *'promoted patriarchy where it did not exist and imposed a certain division of labour between the sexes where there was none.'*

As was seen for question 6, the potential of a negative impact of any EC intervention on gender equality must be considered. No explicit attention to gender does not mean a neutral approach to gender relations and inequalities, since many assumptions about gender roles and relations can be built unconsciously into project design, and brought in by project staff and consultants. The Philippines mission also notes that there is no awareness of the possible negative impacts on gender of interventions if gender inequalities are not addressed.

The Jordan mission and one of the responses to the questionnaire survey of Delegations ask whether the specific contribution of EC development co-operation at a more global (country or sector) level can in fact be identified, particularly given the move from project to budget and sector support. The respondent from the Uganda Delegation writes that 'within the Uganda context the EC is giving much support through sector wide approaches or general budget support. In this regard Government policy when it comes to gender issues is what needs to be, and is being, influenced. This is the case in the health and education sectors... but gender mainstreaming is also being pursued in other sectors. It is therefore difficult to pencil out exactly what the EC contribution is as it is integrated in a multi-donor / Government approach.' While this argument is valid in terms of identifying the specific contribution of EC support, it does not – and should not - exclude attention to gender in the indicators for monitoring the effects and impacts of sector and budget support.

3.8 Overall assessment of the integration of gender in EC development co-operation

The Terms of Reference of the evaluation specify that an assessment is made of the integration of gender in EC development co-operation under the five DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. These criteria are normally used for the assessment of programmes and projects, and are not easy to apply to cross-cutting or thematic issues. The assessment below aims to further develop the findings of the seven evaluative questions, shedding light on aspects of the integration of gender in EC development co-operation that cut across the seven questions and that emerge from the evaluation as key issues and challenges. As section 4.1 presents the conclusions of the evaluation, this section is brief, to avoid unnecessary repetition of key points.

3.8.1 Relevance

The policy shift in 1995 to gender mainstreaming was very relevant to EC development co-operation, enabling it – at least in theory - to respect European and international obligations and evolving paradigms and to improve the impact of its development co-operation on the

situations of women and men in third countries. The 1998 Regulation provided the necessary legal basis for the use of the gender budget line, and the 2001 introduced an element that had been missing until then, in the form of a precise plan for implementing the policy commitments.

While the policies have been relevant, they exist primarily as a result of external imperatives, and have not been adopted internally by the institution as having real value and practical relevance to EC development co-operation itself. This can be seen most notably in the “externalisation” and “marginalisation” of the efforts to integrate gender. The main funds for mainstreaming come from a budget line (an ad-hoc instrument) and key tasks and functions have been entrusted to external consultants and national experts rather than civil servants. This has made it difficult to firmly root activities on gender mainstreaming within the institution and within its procedures; and activities have not always been well adapted – in time, place or content - to the requirements of EC development co-operation.

Moreover, the EC failed to realise the implications of the shift to a GAD approach, both conceptually and in practice. In particular it did not foresee that integrating gender would mean changes to its culture and practices, and would require a long-term strategy supported by improved resources and capacity. While the organisational changes since 1995 have clearly made adaptation to the demands of gender mainstreaming extremely difficult, they could equally have provided opportunities for improvements to be made, if other elements had existed, and if a more pragmatic approach, with less ambitious but realistic objectives, had been adopted. Some of these elements – such as participatory methods, stakeholder consultation and social and human development perspectives – are weakly developed in EC development co-operation.

3.8.2 Effectiveness

The lack of clear operational objectives and of a realistic strategy for the integration of gender in EC development co-operation from 1995 to 2001 makes the assessment of effectiveness illusory. The scattered and isolated nature of many initiatives (training courses, gender missions, studies, technical advice) means that while short-term aims may have been achieved in some cases, they have not contributed effectively to gender mainstreaming, which implies that an institution integrates into its standard practices and resources, right across the range of its policies and programmes, attention to gender issues and gender equality. The highly fragmented nature of initiatives on gender – resulting in the absence of evidence of real mainstreaming - can be seen in the variable treatment of gender in procedures and instruments, across sectors and programmes, and through the cycle of strategies and projects. Gender issues might appear in an analysis, but not in the strategy; they may be addressed in an evaluation or in the collection of data, but there is no influence on subsequent decisions.

Perhaps only in Madagascar, where the IGED project has been consistently developed and supported with high-quality technical assistance and mainstream funds, can any successes be identified. However, the lessons of this initiative for gender mainstreaming at country level have yet to be used and disseminated more widely.

3.8.3 Efficiency

The weaknesses indicated above have led to an inefficient use of financial and human resources. Not ensuring that staff responsible for integrating gender into EC development co-operation has the required knowledge and skills is an inefficient use of human resources; the necessary investments in well-targeted training have not been made. The lack of sources of data and information on gender either deters staff from seeking out relevant information (therefore impacting on the quality of their assessments and decisions) or means that they spend unnecessary extra time obtaining even small amounts of relevant information. When staff capacity is very low in general, compared to the scale of the development co-operation

managed by the Commission, it is inefficient not to provide good, easily accessible sources of data and information.

In addition, the available financial resources have not been used fully to promote gender. This is illustrated by the difficulties during the period 1998-2001 of maintaining the previous levels of commitment under the gender budget line and of disbursing the limited credits available. The lack of information on any allocations by other budgets or financing instruments to support gender mainstreaming also indicates a poor use of the financial resources that have been potentially available.

3.8.4 *Impact and Sustainability*

As the answers to questions 6 and 7 clearly demonstrate, no quantifiable evidence of impact could be identified by the evaluation. The only evidence available is some anecdotal indications of positive – as well as negative – impacts.

There are some examples of success in integrating gender, but their sustainability is in some doubt because of their institutional isolation, their dependence on individuals and on localised and temporary dynamics to initiate and keep them going, and on the absence of internal structures and mechanisms to support them. Overall there has been a very low level of sustainability of efforts to integrate gender in EC development co-operation, especially between 1998 and 2002: indicators of this are the discontinuous staffing of the gender desks and the resulting loss of momentum and institutional memory, and the stop-start efforts to produce information resources on gender and to adapt key procedures and instruments to the requirements of the post-1995 policy on gender mainstreaming.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

The evaluation conclusions are presented using the “web of institutionalisation” analytical framework that was used during the analysis of the evaluation findings (see section 2.6). The “web” contains a series of elements of a gender mainstreaming strategy, which fall into four main spheres: policy; organisational; delivery; and citizen representation. The evaluation conclusions are presented following this structure. Positive aspects are identified, as well as the weaknesses. Some of the former provide important opportunities for progress in a future strategy of change, while many of the latter are constraints that must be overcome if significant improvements are to be achieved and sustained.

4.1.1 Policy sphere

Strong gender policy, but gender not yet integrated into planning

A strong policy framework on gender equality and gender mainstreaming exists to guide EC development co-operation. Moreover, national policies exist amongst partner countries, which also provide a meaningful framework for setting goals and formulating strategies. In addition, clear commitments to gender equality in Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals provide some strong objectives and targets for development co-operation.

However, specific policy goals on gender equality and the integration of gender in EC development co-operation are lacking, and EC policy is widely unknown at all levels. There is no explicit and systematic planning process within EC co-operation instruments or country strategies that establishes the objectives, outputs and actions concerning gender mainstreaming and gender equality, hence progress cannot be monitored or evaluated. A strategic perspective has been missing, and implementation of policy commitments has rarely gone beyond the inclusion of formalistic and standard phrases in texts and instruments. Gender has little visibility and is marginalised in the plethora of policies, procedures and instruments that staff and consultants are faced with in the management of strategies, programmes and projects. Not surprisingly, country and focal sector strategies, as well as most mainstreaming programmes and projects, are formulated, implemented and monitored without sufficient attention to gender issues or to their effects on gender equality. Moreover, the potential synergy between poverty reduction and gender equality is very weakly exploited, other than to identify girl/boy education and maternal health as relevant targets and indicators for social sectors.

Weak institutional commitment to gender and few incentives to staff

There has been little demonstrable commitment to making substantive progress in integrating gender into EC development co-operation from top management in the Commission. Among the EC Commissioners, it is the Commissioner for DG EMPL, who is responsible for the EC's gender mainstreaming policy overall, who has shown a visible interest in driving forward actions on women's rights and gender equality in third countries. However, the new inter-service sub-group established in 2002 offers some potential for increased institutional commitment and action.

The gender imbalance at senior management level and the lack of leadership and institutional commitment to gender equality give negative messages about the importance placed on women's and men's experiences both within the institution and in its co-operation with third countries. There is a widespread feeling that integrating gender is not a priority within EC development co-operation, and, faced with other more important priorities and demands, many staff consider gender to be an “optional extra”. It is left to a limited number of motivated individuals, working with few incentives and little support, to try to ensure that EC

development co-operation integrates gender, and benefits women as well as men on the ground.

Resources are seriously insufficient

A budget line is the main financial resource to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation. The annual budget (5 million EURO prior to 1998) was already very small, but has declined even further. The lack of institutional commitment to gender and the insufficient staff capacity to manage the budget line are key explanations of the poor level of resources for gender mainstreaming.

No information is available on the use of mainstream resources to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation at headquarters or country level, although there is some anecdotal evidence of budget allocations for gender initiatives within some programmes. There are also the gender mainstreaming initiatives in Guinea Conakry and Madagascar (GIGED and IGED), which were initiated using gender budget line resources but then financed through the main country support programme (EDF) so as to help sustainability and support mainstreaming. The considerable rigidity of resource allocation means few or no resources, at headquarters and in Delegations, for the training of staff and partners, or for studies or tools. At project level, unless specific actions have been foreseen at the outset in the intervention design, it is very difficult to release resources for analyses, capacity-building or other supporting measures.

Human resources are also substantially inadequate for the task of integrating gender into EC development co-operation. Inconsistently staffed Gender Desks, an over-reliance on external and temporary staff and very low levels of knowledge and know-how on gender equality and mainstreaming mark the period 1995 to 2001.

Information resources are also very poor. The effects and impact of EC development co-operation on women and men, and especially on gender equality, are largely unknown, because of the absence of attention to gender in indicators, monitoring and evaluation. As a consequence there is little or no information available to help, and appraise, the integration of gender in policies, strategies and projects/programmes. Moreover, those genuinely interested in obtaining information and support do not know where to go.

The paucity of information applies also to the experiences of gender mainstreaming, and even the few examples of good practice have not been disseminated and are largely unknown. As a result there is hardly any capitalisation of these experiences. Some urgent action to research and draw conclusions about these past experiences and good practices, and to disseminate them to a wide audience, would prevent a further loss of institutional memory and contribute usefully to the information resource base.

4.1.2 Organisational sphere

Some improvements in management support for gender, but constraints remain

Responsibility for gender within DG DEV and AIDCO is clear. There is no equivalent Gender Desk in DG Relex. Moreover, there is, however, no person or structure responsible for co-ordinating gender mainstreaming strategy between the three Commission services that manage EC development co-operation. This severely hinders the visibility of gender mainstreaming and makes strategic planning across the full scope of EC development co-operation very difficult.

Responsibility for implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy is located at a low level in the institutional hierarchy, and the reliance – for most of the period 1995-2001 - on national experts and grade B staff has further marginalised gender issues within the institution. The recent appointment of a grade A official responsible for gender mainstreaming in AIDCO indicates some improvement in the status of gender desks, but this will only be meaningful as part of an overall effort on the status of gender mainstreaming.

The creation in 2002 of a network on gender mainstreaming involving the external relations' DGs (DEV, AIDCO, RELEX, TRADE) and EMPL is also evidence of improved management support for gender mainstreaming. The objective is to share knowledge and promote common initiatives in the areas of training, indicators and methodology.

The appointment of Gender Focal Points in many Units and Delegations is evidence of some effort to address gender issues in EC development co-operation. But without Terms of Reference or job descriptions and with little knowledge, support or guidance, most of the Gender Focal Points are poorly equipped for this task. While some are grade A civil servants, many are temporary or junior staff. They must undertake their task in addition to their other responsibilities. Most are not in a position to advise their colleagues on how to improve attention to gender in sector strategies, programmes or projects and, through insufficient remit and lack of time, tend to focus on the integration of gender in their own area of responsibility. Often this concerns NGO, human rights or social sector projects; macro-economic, infrastructure and other focal sectors of co-operation are therefore rarely addressed.

Mixed integration of gender in procedures and guidance

There appears to be an emerging demand for tools and guidance on how to integrate gender into strategies, sector support and projects/programmes through their cycle. Terms of Reference are considered a particularly vital means to ensure that appropriate gender expertise is engaged and that gender issues are addressed adequately in analyses and proposals. This demand is in clear response to the widespread lack of procedures and guidance that would help to address gender at different phases of the cycle and across co-operation instruments, sectors and programmes⁶⁴.

With some notable exceptions (the forestry manual, programming guidelines on poverty and, to some extent, the revised PCM manual), and other than some formalistic phrases, procedures and instruments for the management of EC development co-operation do not provide sufficient guidance on how to integrate gender issues or gender equality. This includes guidelines for country strategy papers and most sector guidelines.

From the viewpoint of EC staff at headquarters and in Delegations, the heavy demands of procedures, especially concerning procurement, restrict – and indeed harm – attention to the substance and quality of development co-operation. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for staff to cope with additional procedures and tools to support the integration of gender. Adding to the burden of staff is not an option, which means a greater reliance on gender experts and on integrating sufficient guidance on gender in mainstream procedures and instruments.

Some skills and knowledge, but no sustained building of capacity

Some attempts have been made to increase the knowledge and skills of staff through gender training. However, there is no regular gender training programme and no obligatory requirement on staff to have even a basic knowledge of gender issues in development. The appointment of Gender Focal Points and the expectation that they can fulfil this role without training or support are indications of the lack of recognition within the institution that the integration of gender requires specific knowledge and skills.

Since EC civil servants are recruited as generalists and are expected to move easily from one Commission service (and policy area) to another, knowledge of development issues is primarily gained "on the job". This is especially true of senior management levels within the Commission services, where civil servants predominate. Moreover there is a lack of incentives and opportunities for civil servants to acquire specialist skills and knowledge. Training opportunities are extremely limited, and a civil servant's chances of promotion are

⁶⁴ However, in the views of the evaluation team the demand for tools and procedures is exaggerated and potentially misplaced, placing too much emphasis on formalistic approaches (ticking boxes and completing formats) and too little on substantive knowledge and processes which are more likely to lead to real results.

not enhanced by specialising in a particular domain – especially if this is gender – because this may be perceived as limiting the person's ability to be mobile within the institution.

Specific expertise, if required, is largely brought in by seconded national experts or consultants, but this often results in loss of momentum and memory when the person leaves. It also reinforces the trend not to engage in real mainstreaming.

While some training courses have been provided, their effectiveness and sustainability have suffered from poor targeting of participants, inadequate adaptation of the training content to EC requirements, high turnover of staff in the institution and in projects and programmes, and a general failure to integrate the training into a comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategy. The general problem of weak human resource development in the Commission, and extreme difficulty to access financial resources for training, substantially hinders a sustained improvement in the knowledge and skills of staff and partners concerning gender.

Institutional culture is not supportive of gender equality

The institutional culture gives priority to procedural issues over substantive, and to technical domains over social. The EC as an institution is widely seen as being primarily concerned by the “macro-economic” and “infrastructures”, and not as being concerned by the human dimensions of development. It gives very few messages that it is interested in gender issues or gender equality, and those that it does communicate (such as the one-page text on gender in the Development Website) are confused and poorly presented.

There is also a significant “catch 22”, that because of this image no demands to support gender in development are placed on it by national and regional partners – Government or civil society – and, as a result, there is no incentive to meet the (potential) demands that exist.

The EC's comparative advantage is not yet being exploited

Ironically, given the EC's potential comparative advantage as a major donor in economic and infrastructure sectors, the treatment of gender is weakest in these areas. The treatment of gender is stronger in social sectors and in small and marginal areas of co-operation but is sidelined – and even contested - in areas such as transport, institutional strengthening and economic and private sector development. This reflects an incorrect view about the “appropriateness” of gender issues to particular areas of development.

The EC is not yet using its comparative advantage, and its strong policy framework on gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities between women and men, to develop a coherent and visible approach to gender in budgetary support, economic co-operation and infrastructure development. Given this weakness, it is missing a significant opportunity to contribute to the improved economic empowerment of women and to the promotion of gender equality in economic and labour market participation.

4.1.3 Delivery sphere

Methodological tools from other agencies are in limited use

Methodological approaches and tools for integrating gender into development co-operation are widely available, although generally not produced by the EC. Projects that have decided to address gender issues, through capacity building or other specific measures, have used – and in some cases adapted - tools developed by the EU Member States as well as by other donors (CIDA, USAID) and development institutions (World Bank and UN agencies such as UNIFEM, ILO, FAO and UNDP). Given the low capacity and knowledge within the EC, these information sources and tools provide a valuable resource for the EC's development co-operation. Such external resources should be drawn on more systematically, to provide staff and partners with relevant guidance and tools.

There is some evidence, in some countries and sectors, of an increasing use of gender expertise, including local gender experts, within projects and programmes and of the

inclusion of specific measures to raise awareness and build capacity and to provide targeted support to women (e.g. micro-credit). Such initiatives, however, appear concentrated in social sectors and micro projects, especially those that involve NGOs.

Effects and impact on gender equality are largely unknown

Nonetheless, in general – across all regions, sectors, instruments and programmes – the effects and impacts of EC development co-operation on women's situation and especially on gender equality are largely unknown. While there is some evidence of positive effects in relation to women's rights and improved access by women to some resources (mainly in social sectors or at very local level), there is equally evidence that some EC co-operation may have harmful effects. The absence of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data and information at all levels and of any efforts to monitor and evaluate gender aspects are major weaknesses.

Participatory approaches facilitate the integration of gender

Participatory approaches, in the few cases where they are used, appear to be an important facilitating factor in addressing gender. While participation is not a guarantee that gender differences and inequalities will be addressed adequately, it is a clear precondition for an approach that recognises people and involves them in analyses and in decision-making on development outcomes and processes. While the introduction of stakeholder analysis into the revised PCM manual, if used, should assist in improving a "people perspective" in EC development co-operation, participatory approaches are not strongly encouraged.

Increasingly heavy procurement procedures even for smaller-scale interventions appear, however, to be a potential constraint on the use of approaches that include stakeholders and beneficiaries. Participatory approaches require a level of "openness" during formulation (in terms of who makes the decisions on intervention objectives, results, activities and resources) and during implementation (allowing flexibility for adaptation of activities and resources to tackle previously unidentified problems and meet emerging needs). Such openness to involving stakeholders and beneficiaries (both women and men) and flexibility to change are difficult to achieve within the current procedures for managing EC development co-operation.

Good experiences not being capitalised

A final point on the delivery of projects and programmes concerns the absence of mechanisms to capitalise on experiences at project level through networking and exchanges of experience across projects, sectors and countries. This is not unique to gender, but when examples of good practice in gender mainstreaming are so few and far between and when there is such a high demand from staff for practical examples of gender in EC development co-operation, the absence of such mechanisms is a significant constraint on learning and progress on the integration of gender.

Conceptual understanding is mixed

Related to the poor knowledge of EC policy on gender in development co-operation is a very poor understanding of gender concepts. This may be due in part to inadequate dissemination of background documents on the EC's policy on gender mainstreaming. An absence of easily understandable definitions of the basic concepts and approaches, backed up by examples relevant to EC development co-operation, also hinders comprehension.

The requirement to integrate gender is often taken to mean "equal opportunities between women and men" (or at least some kind of gender balance of staff) in organisations. "Ensuring equality" is often taken to mean "not discriminating". Gender is often simply interpreted as concerning women. Some partners are interpreting gender mainstreaming as entailing no more specific actions. Gender is treated as "irrelevant" to macro-economic and infrastructure interventions. An absence of precise goals on gender equality – apart from some limited targets taken from the Millennium Development Goals – also hinders a clear understanding. The need for clarity on goals, concepts and approaches is considerable.

4.1.4 Citizen representation

Important opportunities for consultation with stakeholders exist

A number of positive aspects can be discerned here. One is the opportunity for a greater involvement and participation in EC development co-operation by civil society - and thus potentially by women's and equality organisations – particularly in ACP countries following Cotonou. In some countries, women's organisations are already important partners in NGO and human rights projects, and the commitment to involving civil society, most notably post-Cotonou in ACP countries, holds out potential for the future. However, in many countries women's or equality organisations do not (yet) see the EC as a potential supporter, because of its image as a donor for macro-economic and infrastructure programmes rather than as a supporter of social change.

The national gender machinery is also a positive factor in many countries. Since Beijing in 1995, many third countries have taken significant steps to establish gender equality policies and national structures for its implementation. As yet, however, Ministries of Women or Gender appear not to be regarded by the EC as important partners in decision-making on country strategies and during the identification and design of projects and programmes. Moreover, support to the strengthening of national gender policy and machinery, including capacity-building, appears to be left largely to other donors. EC Delegations could do considerably more to support and engage with Ministries of Women or Gender (as well as other leading national institutes and organisations on women's and gender affairs).

Influences on EC development co-operation from the European Parliament, OECD DAC and European NGO organisations appear to be weak, compared to the leverage that could potentially be exerted. Pressure from Member States has led in the past to the establishment of mechanisms for improving the quality of EC development co-operation (for example, the creation of the Quality Support Group to screen Financing Proposals). However, it appears that the persistent observations by some Member States – for example in EDF and ALA/MED Committees – concerning the (poor) integration of gender issues has not led to a similar strengthening of mechanisms to improve the “gender” aspect of quality. And while some Member States, most notably Sweden, have made significant efforts to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation, few significant improvements of EC processes and resources for addressing gender are apparent.

Women's and men's experiences insufficiently taken into account

Although opportunities for improved stakeholder participation exist, there is as yet little evidence of truly “equitable” and “participatory” approaches within much EC development co-operation, which ensure balanced representation of women's and men's interests and attention to gender equality. This applies to the elaboration of country and sector strategies and the formulation and implementation of projects and programmes. Combating inequalities and involving stakeholders and beneficiaries equitably in decision-making requires very thorough – and sex-disaggregated - analyses of the different population groups concerned, of their roles in development and in decision-making and of their relative access to and control over resources.

Women's political rights and access to some social and productive resources are addressed in some areas of EC development co-operation. Some projects are increasingly obtaining sex-disaggregated information, although its use to influence decision-making on project design is often poor. Important aspects of women's and men's situations and experiences are missed. EC development co-operation is largely “blind” to women's and men's different experiences, needs and interests. Analyses of women's and men's situations are rarely undertaken, and then often as an “output” of, rather than an input into, project management. The system for managing EC development co-operation does not require sex-disaggregated or gender-specific information and data, in spite of the prominence of this requirement in gender mainstreaming policy.

Varied attention to gender across sectors

Gender – or at least women’s - issues are recognised in some sectors and types of interventions, notably social sectors (health and education) and in human rights and democracy and civil society or community-level interventions. However, gender issues in economic and infrastructure areas of intervention are largely ignored, even in contexts where the existence of gender disparities is well known. This is a consistent finding from the field missions and the assessment of country strategies, and is also reflected in responses to the questionnaire survey⁶⁵.

In some cases, the relevance of gender to economic and infrastructure development interventions is questioned. Where addressed in these areas, the gender issue (or rather women’s participation) is often sidelined into micro-level initiatives. Significant opportunities to promote gender equality in mainstream developments (skills, employment, enterprise, institutional strengthening) are being missed through this marginalisation.

4.2 Recommendations

The demand, expressed by the Board of Commissioners of the EuropeAid Co-operation Office when initiating the evaluation, was that the evaluation should provide the Commission’s policy-makers with an “indispensable aid in view of improving strategies for integration of gender across sectors and policies”

Based on the conclusions reached by the evaluation, a series of recommendations are made, which aim to provide the Commission with a strategic way forward. These recommendations build on the strengths and opportunities of the EC’s development co-operation, and attempt to overcome the current weaknesses and barriers to the integration of gender across sectors, policies and programmes. The recommendations are also influenced by the evaluation team’s knowledge of the experiences of other institutions – bilateral and multilateral – in integrating gender in development co-operation, as well of the initiatives taken by other services of the European Commission to integrate gender in EC policy and programmes. However it is the specific nature and requirements of the EC’s development co-operation that have been born strongly in mind when formulating and shaping the recommendations.

Some of the recommendations are already envisaged in the 2001 Programme of Action. These include strengthening of capacity and skills through training, the integration of gender in key procedures and documents and the provision of information. However, for the Programme of Action to be effective, and to achieve sustained improvements in the integration of gender in EC development co-operation, additional actions are required. These particularly concern visible commitments to gender equality and the firm institutional “anchoring” of gender mainstreaming in the management of EC development co-operation, both in Brussels and in Delegations. Measures are also required to ensure that the improved capacity, procedures and instruments are used effectively. Motivated staff must be encouraged and supported, and skills and knowledge in gender issues in development given value, particularly in recruitment and career development.

The recommendations aim to provide the Commission’s policy-makers with a strategic way forward that is **relevant** to the EC’s policy and institutional framework for development co-operation with third countries, both now and as it evolves in the near future, and that produces a **sustained impact** on the capacity of the EC, at headquarters and in third countries, to effectively integrate gender into sector strategies and programmes. Moreover, the recommendations aim to make these impacts **visible**, both in-country and at European and international levels, which in its turn provides the basis for monitoring and evaluation and the start of a learning process within EC development co-operation.

⁶⁵ When EC interventions that are considered to promote gender equality are listed these are predominantly in social sectors (health and education in particular), are often small-scale or local-level interventions (e.g. micro-credit, rural development), or are specific actions (often NGO and in the field of democracy and human rights).

The number of recommendations is limited to nine. These are therefore core recommendations, considered by the evaluation team to provide the necessary foundations for real progress in integrating gender in EC development co-operation. In particular, the first three recommendations are considered as prerequisites, which must be implemented for the other five recommendations to be realised and their impact to be sustained.

The evaluation has identified two fundamental constraints on the integration of gender in EC development co-operation: the poor understanding and knowledge of policy and strategy at all levels, and the lack of institutional support. Policy texts exist, but their format and language do not provide a sufficiently clear explanation of why gender equality is important and of how gender mainstreaming should be put into effect within EC development co-operation. The absence of an adequate level of institutional support, backed up by sufficient resources, has been a critical weakness in recent years. The first three recommendations aim to overcome these constraints and to provide the necessary conditions for integrating gender in EC development co-operation.

4.2.1 Recommendation 1: Disseminating clear statements about the objectives and strategy for integrating gender equality in EC development co-operation

An important first step is to **formulate and disseminate a coherent and clearly-understandable statement on Community objectives concerning gender equality and on the approach to integrating gender in Community development co-operation**. Strong and clear messages on the importance of gender equality and of the need for improved and sustained efforts to integrate gender in country and sector dialogue, strategies and programmes should be communicated to all key stakeholders by the top-most levels of the Commission. A clear indication should also be given of the responsibilities of the various actors in the implementation of the strategy.

The message could take the form of a “mission statement” stating the “rationale for action” on gender within EC development co-operation, indicating the precise contribution that EC development co-operation should make to achieving gender equality in third countries and presenting the basic steps that should be taken by key players at headquarters and in third countries to meet these objectives. A strong strategy for its dissemination will be required, to ensure a high level of visibility of the EC’s position.

4.2.2 Recommendation 2: Making visible the EC’s commitment to promote gender equality and integrate gender in development

Hand in hand with the first step, there is an urgent need to **create awareness and understanding at the topmost levels of management of EC development co-operation at headquarters and in Delegations about the objectives, rationale and strategy of gender equality in development co-operation**. The aim of this recommendation is to secure commitment by top management to the challenges of gender mainstreaming and to enable these to be communicated convincingly to staff and co-operation partners.

Awareness-raising should focus initially on top and middle levels of management (Directors-General, Directors, Heads of Unit, Heads of Delegations and Co-operation in third countries). The aim is to achieve a common and widespread understanding of the objectives and relevance of gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation, and of the changes that will be required to achieve the objectives. As a result of the awareness-raising, top level staff should be able to convince other Commission staff and co-operation partners of the importance of gender equality and gender mainstreaming within their spheres of responsibility. Awareness-raising should then progress to achieving a broad understanding amongst staff responsible for co-ordination, co-operation instruments and country and sector strategies and programmes of the main challenges and requirements of gender mainstreaming, so that they understand the importance of ensuring adequate attention to

gender issues in the management of EC development co-operation across sectors and countries. All awareness-raising measures must be implemented by credible, articulate and highly-experienced experts with convincing knowledge of the priorities and instruments - and the challenges of gender mainstreaming - in EC development co-operation.

4.2.3 Recommendation 3: Anchoring gender mainstreaming securely in the institution and ensuring effective co-ordination of strategy

The third recommendation is vital for any effective and sustained integration of gender equality across the various policy domains, sectors and regions of Community development co-operation with third countries. The **creation of one strong, visible and adequately resourced structure for gender mainstreaming, located in a stable and high-level position within the Commission services responsible for development co-operation** is a prerequisite for moving forward. It is vital that this structure is placed at a sufficiently high level in the hierarchy, so that it is visible and able to influence policy and practice across the full scope of EC development co-operation.

This structure should be responsible for guiding and co-ordinating strategy, capable of acting as an advocate for gender at high-level and able to act as an “animator” and “networker” across the institution, between headquarters and in-country and between the EC and other actors. The structure must be equipped with an operational arm and stable and adequate human and financial resources, implying a substantial strengthening of the currently available resources. One of the other important roles of this structure is to capitalise on positive experiences and good practice wherever it exists, and to learn, exchange and share these as widely as possible within EC development co-operation.

The structure should not preclude, and indeed may need to be supported by, more operational structures within each of the Commission services (DG Relex, AIDCO, DG DEV). These are required to manage the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy within the specific areas of responsibility of each service.

Six additional recommendations are made, which aim to set in place the necessary building blocks for gender mainstreaming at key levels and phases of the management of EC development co-operation. These aim to build on existing strengths and overcome key weaknesses in the integration of gender in EC development co-operation. It should be emphasised that the evaluation considers it vital that measures are taken, and resources are allocated, both in third countries (in Delegations, amongst country partners and at the level of sector strategies, projects and programmes) and at headquarters in Brussels. Deconcentration in particular makes it important that greater attention is paid to strengthening capacities within third countries, and to providing effective support and guidance to partners and actors on the ground.

4.2.4 Recommendation 4: Creating sustainable mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming at country level

The **establishment of stable mechanisms at country level for supporting the integration of gender in country and sector support and in programmes and projects** is a particular priority. This could take the form of a permanent network or forum at country level. While being capable of drawing on the experiences of other donors and actors in the country, it should focus on the integration of gender in Community development co-operation. An important task is to create, and sustain, a pool of knowledge and resources able to address gender issues at sector, programme and project levels. The IGED approach, developed most notably in Madagascar and referred to in the 2001 Communication, is an example of one type of mechanism.

These country-level mechanisms should focus in the immediate period on the identification, formulation and monitoring of programmes and projects in focal sectors and on the main co-operation instruments as well as on ways of building local capacity, skills and resources to support the integration of gender into programmes and projects through their cycle. These “mechanisms” may be structures or forum, either addressing gender equality and gender mainstreaming specifically, or capable of addressing them adequately within a more global focus (for example on poverty reduction or with other cross-cutting issues).

The structures or forum should involve the EC Delegation, Government partners and representatives of gender issues in key sectors of Community development co-operation. Leading civil society actors (NGOs, professional associations representing women, institutes specialising in gender equality), as well as other development actors (e.g. Member State donors), may be included as relevant. The main actors should be knowledgeable about the expertise, information and other resources on gender issues within the country (and region) and able to play a role as networker and advisor, providing guidance to those responsible for EC projects and programmes on who to contact and engage and on what experiences and information could be drawn upon to improve the integration of gender throughout the policy, strategy or programme cycle. They should also be capable of influencing decision-making; this requires that they have sufficient credibility and clout, and that procedures must be in place to ensure that their recommendations are taken into account adequately and early enough in any decision-making process.

The gender budget line, or other specific resources (e.g. for civil society), could be used to pump-prime such initiatives in the short term. However, support from mainstream resources should be sought wherever possible so as to strengthen their ability to influence mainstream EC development co-operation and to ensure their longer-term sustainability.

4.2.5 Recommendation 5: Building adequate levels of skills and knowledge at all levels

An important element of the 2001-2006 Programme of Action is the **creation of a sustained level of knowledge and skills within the Commission services in Brussels and in Delegations, and at the level of programme/project management in third countries, on the integration of gender in country and sector strategies and programmes**. The evaluation reaffirms the importance of these proposed actions.

A basic knowledge of gender issues (and of sources of information and expertise on gender) in third regions and countries and in the main sectors and instruments of co-operation is required, as well as skills in assessing and integrating gender in programming and project instruments (e.g. in ToR for studies, sector strategies, Financing Proposals). Advocacy and guidance skills, to convince and support staff and consultants in how to integrate gender at different phases of programme and project cycles, are also needed.

A necessary first step is a comprehensive skills needs analysis, to identify which staff members need what types of knowledge and skills. While training and other capacity-building actions – such as coaching and mentoring - will be required, other measures must be put in place to ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired are applied. Recognition that addressing gender in development co-operation requires specific competencies, and will be rewarded, is necessary. The value of **skills and knowledge concerning the integration of gender in development must be recognised in job descriptions and Terms of Reference, and in the recruitment and promotion of staff**.

To ensure full integration of gender into mainstream practices, it is strongly recommended to **integrate gender issues – as appropriate - into other training**, for example on sectoral, procedural or methodological topics, and to link, as closely as possible, any specific training courses on gender with key tasks within the management of EC development co-operation.

4.2.6 Recommendation 6: Integration of gender equality in key management procedures and instruments

The sixth recommendation is also prominent in the Programme of Action. This concerns the more systematic, and coherent, **integration of gender into key management procedures and instruments at critical points in the cycle of strategies, programmes and projects, so as to prompt appropriate responses when assessments and decisions are being made.**

The country strategy and programming processes are particularly important, as well as guidelines for sector programmes and projects and for managing the major budget lines. The integration of gender should ensure that appropriate information on gender issues is obtained at all points in the cycle (formulation, assessment, approval, monitoring, evaluation), and that gender equality is taken into account as one criteria in decision-making, for example in the approval of strategies or financing of initiatives.

High-level technical inputs on gender issues in the relevant processes and domains, most probably out-sourced from external experts, will be required. However, these inputs must be strongly and coherently guided from within the institution (ideally by the gender mainstreaming structure – see recommendation 3), to ensure relevance to EC development co-operation and consistency of approach across procedures and instruments. For example, improved procedures are required to ensure that gender issues are taken into account adequately in situation analyses and during identification, feasibility and evaluation phases, including when objectives are being set (thus ensuring that objectives and targets on reduced gender disparities are specified and sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators formulated). While positive “prompts” are necessary, mechanisms are required to ensure that a minimum standard of “gender integration” is achieved across sector and country strategies and programmes.

Some key procedures and instruments concern the assessment and approval of country and sector strategies and Financing Proposals: gender should become not only one criterion for assessment and approval, but, if it is not addressed adequately, should lead to rejection or reformulation of the strategy or proposal. For example, a requirement that all projects/programmes should include improved gender equality – or at least equitable benefits for both women and men - within the specific objective (specified through an appropriate indicator) or should formulate one specific result on gender equality would ensure that “gender” is addressed during implementation, and in monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Standard formats - for Terms of Reference of studies at all phases of the cycle, Financing Proposals and sector strategy studies – should be checked, and if necessary revised, to ensure adequate treatment of gender, and explanatory notes on how to obtain relevant information or undertake the necessary analyses should be provided wherever necessary.

Substantially increased use of participatory approaches and encouragement of good (sex-disaggregated) stakeholder analyses are also required; the revision of the PCM methodology and instruments is an opportunity for strengthening the identification of and attention to the needs of beneficiaries in the development co-operation, which is a pre-condition for addressing differences and inequalities between women and men.

4.2.7 Recommendation 7: Ensuring systematic monitoring, evaluation and reporting on gender equality in EC development co-operation

Closely related to recommendation 6, is the need for **systematic integration of gender equality into key indicators and in monitoring and reporting systems at all levels of EC development co-operation.** This is presented as a separate recommendation because of its importance in ensuring that gender equality is effectively taken into account, and also to the visibility of the EC’s efforts on gender mainstreaming (including its external reporting responsibilities).

The task here is to establish systems and guidance to ensure the systematic disaggregation by sex of indicators wherever relevant and the elaboration of specific indicators to measure the contribution of EC development co-operation to gender equality. All levels of indicators, and of monitoring and reporting, should be addressed: development indicators/country strategies, focal sectors, co-operation instruments and programmes/projects. An immediate priority should be given to ensuring the integration of gender into indicators for monitoring and evaluating country strategies and focal sector programmes.

Indicators and monitoring to assess progress in gender mainstreaming within the institution and in the management of EC development co-operation would also be useful, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the gender mainstreaming strategy. As for recommendation 6, this may require the use of specialist inputs from external experts on appropriate indicators and data-collection requirements for specific sectors and aspects of EC development co-operation, guided by the internal gender mainstreaming structure to ensure coherency of approach.

This work is likely to require a specific post, supported by high-quality specialist knowledge on gender data and indicators, to co-ordinate the data collection, monitoring and reporting and to provide quality advice and support on the integration of gender issues in monitoring and evaluation, especially at country and sector levels.

4.2.8 Recommendation 8: Establishment and maintenance of a visible and easily-accessible source of information and resources on gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation

Improved and up-to-date information and reference materials are mentioned in the Programme of Action. These are required urgently, but should be part of a more comprehensive strategy aimed at making EC actions on gender in development more visible and providing easy access to appropriate information and data. The **creation and maintenance of a central and visible source of “information and resources” to support gender mainstreaming in EC development co-operation** is therefore recommended.

The information and resources should be easily accessible to development partners at country level and to those involved in managing programmes and projects (i.e. available in print, on CD-ROM and by Internet in several languages). A particular priority is the provision of convincing data and information, and concrete examples of practice, that demonstrate the relevance of gender to EC development co-operation as well as the contribution of EC development co-operation to improved gender equality. Key sectors and interventions, such as transport, institutional strengthening and economic development, and key phases, such as in policy dialogue and programming, should be covered. Information should also include gender issues in countries and regions and in key instruments of EC development co-operation and relating to other development goals and cross-cutting issues (poverty reduction, environment, institutional development, etc.).

Guidance on appropriate tools and methods for addressing gender issues in EC development co-operation should also be provided. Maximum use should be made of already-existing sources of information and data, and of tried-and-tested tools and methods in use by other donors and development institutions.

Once established, significant efforts must be made to inform actors involved in EC development co-operation – Commission staff at headquarters, Delegations, country partners, consultants and experts – of the existence of the information point and to encourage its use and up-dating, particularly with good practices drawn from EC development co-operation.

4.2.9 Recommendation 9: Securing adequate financial resources for gender mainstreaming

The effective integration of gender in EC development co-operation requires **a substantial increase of financial resources specifically allocated for gender mainstreaming, particularly in sector strategies and country programmes.** A two-pronged strategy is required here. Firstly, every effort should be made to ensure that specific allocations to support gender mainstreaming are made within all mainstream resources (training budgets, budget lines, regional programmes, country/sector support, etc.). Sufficient capacity and skills to effectively manage these allocations must also be put in place.

Secondly, the gender budget line, with its very limited resources, must play – as the Programme of Action indicates – a catalytic role, pump-priming pilot initiatives and developing and disseminating good practice. However, it is crucial to avoid the risks of marginalisation and lack of sustainability of actions that have characterised many previous actions on gender mainstreaming supported by the gender budget line. Longer-term financial sustainability – and ownership of any pilot initiative by mainstream actors – must be amongst the criteria for allocating gender budget line resources, to achieve a maximum impact on the mainstream of EC development co-operation.