



Analysis of workplace practices on gender equality in the Government of North Macedonia

Executive summary



Acknowledgement

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Introductory note

With this research process we attempted to answer two key questions regarding gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the government in North Macedonia and the institutions that were a part of these analysis:

- What are the current processes, procedures, and practices for gender mainstreaming in the Government and national institutions?
- What are the capacities of the national institutional gender machinery at the central level?

The starting point of this research were existing publications on the responsibilities of national institutions that arise from international and national legal frameworks pertaining gender equality, but also noted obstacles that responsible institutions are facing on local and central level in pursuing these responsibilities.

The methodology used in this paper relies on both qualitative and quantitative methods. The gathering of primary data was enabled by the self-assessments of the individuals that work within public institutions as the responsible persons for gender mainstreaming or working on gender equality in a broader aspect. Both institutions from the legislative and the executive branch were a part of this research endeavor. We added a pillar that analyzes the power relations between man and women in terms of the decision – making positions in institutions and the gender dynamics and their behavior.

Executive summary

UNDP has a strong commitment towards gender equality, especially through women's economic empowerment, including through care economy, with intersectional approach. The organization works to address exclusion and strengthen the targeting and delivery of quality social services, with a focus on persons with disabilities, Roma, and young people.

We also believe that a successful gender mainstreaming, with intersectional perspective, will lead to a gender transformation of an institution, impacting the organizational culture, transforming the existing gender norms, and becoming an integral part of the objectives and daily work routines within the institution. We are convinced that this process will also result with changes in the values and beliefs, dominant in a certain institution, as well as changes in the rules and regulations that lead to certain working results.

Led by this belief, and the transformative power of gender mainstreaming, we commissioned research aimed at analyzing the work practices on gender equality in the Government of North Macedonia.

For the purposes of this study, we sent out a self-assessment questionnaire to public institutions, to learn more about their capacities for gender mainstreaming. The questionnaire was sent out to forty institutions, and we have received an answered by a total of thirty-two institutions. We also received a response from 94% of the ministries in North Macedonia [15 out of the 16 ministries responded, as well as the General Secretariate of the Government].

General Secretariat & state ministries that responded to our self-assessment questionnaire

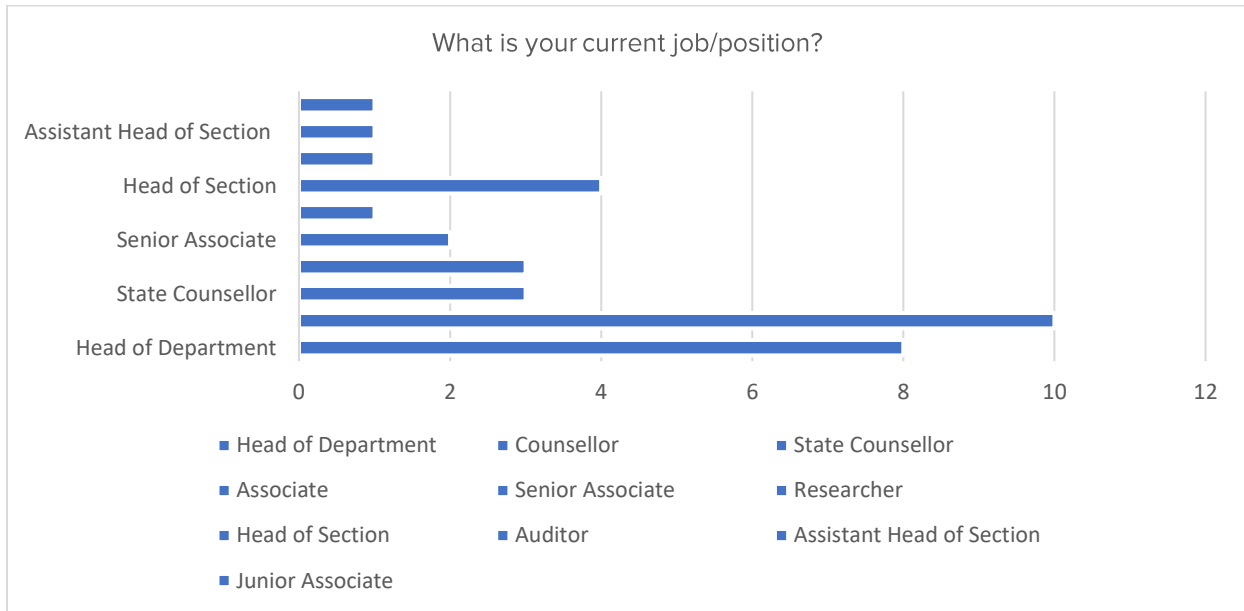
General Secretariat	Ministry of Economy	Ministry of Culture	Ministry of Information Society and Administration	Ministry of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Defence	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	Ministry of Transport and Communications	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Education and Science
Ministry of Justice	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Agriculture

National institutions that responded to our self-assessment questionnaire

Vocational Education and Training Center	Protection and Rescue Directorate	Administration Agency	Institute for Public Health	Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism
State Audit Office	Crises Management Center	State Commission for Prevention of Corruption	Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services	Vocational Education and Training Center
State Assembly	Institute for Social Occupations	Agency for Youth and Sport	State Statistical Office	Parliamentary institute

Total number of thirty-four representatives, on different positions in those institutions answered the questionnaire. From those that responded, thirty are women [88%] and four representatives [12%] are men.

The following chart gives an overview of the positions that the responders of our questionnaire have.



What is noteworthy is that most individuals that responded to our questionnaire [61.8% or twenty-one people] also have the role of ‘coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men in those institutions. Out of them two are men and nineteen are women. From the women who are coordinators only six of them, or 31.5% are on managerial positions, and from the men coordinators only one has a managerial position within the institution.

Most of these institutions have coordinators for equal opportunities, only five institutions self-reported that they do not have a ‘coordinator for equal opportunities between women and men’ which accounts for 15% of the institutions that answered the questionnaire.

Regarding the perceptions on public sector equality duty, according to our questionnaire, almost half of the respondents answer that this is responsibility only of the coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men, while 38% of the representatives of the

institutions are aware of the public sector equality duty, including the responsibility to consider the gender aspects in the preparation of documents relevant to the institution. Considering that the coordinators do not have specially systematized positions and in more than 70% are not on management positions, it can be concluded that they cannot significantly influence the preparation of policies at the level of the institution, which is also confirmed in the Report for the Implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men on Central Level¹. Changes of this situation are expected with the adoption of the new Law on Gender Equality, where the coordinators for gender equality are envisaged as specially systematized positions in every institution. However, since the law does not envisage the level of the position in the hierarchy of public sector, it can be expected that the coordinators might still have limited possibilities to influence the overall gender mainstreaming on institutional level, especially in the ministries, where the coordinators have limits as to their influence or inclusion in the planning processes or processes of preparation of policies, but also the institution's budget.

The following statement is given from one of the respondents, coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men:

'As a coordinator, I am not involved in any project. Everything I find out is through social media....All this contributes to wrongly implementing the sphere of gender equality'

Another aspect that can be analyzed from the answers of the respondents is the gender dimensions in the public sector and the need for gender sensibilization of the management structures, which was emphasized in some of the answers, as the one shown below:

'Greater awareness about the integration of gender equality, as essential in all programs, policies, and sector work in the institution, is needed from everyone in the institution, especially from the management. Someone who works on this problem should work only as coordinator, because it requires a lot of arrangements and dedication, and

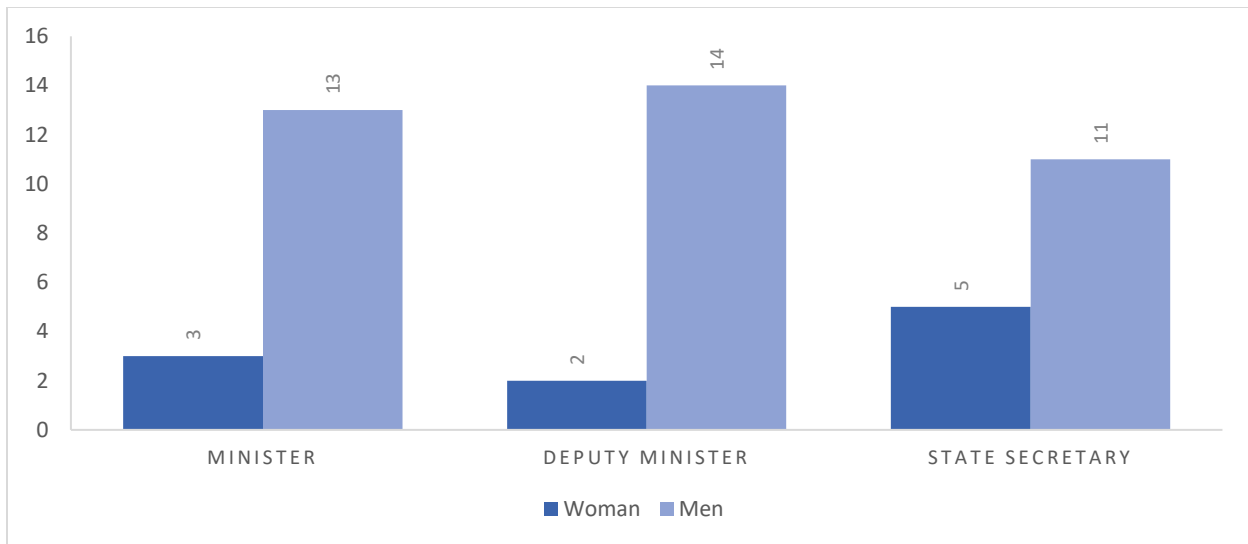
¹ The Report for the Implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men on Central Level is available on Macedonian language on the following link:
https://mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokumenti/2020/5.3_Assessment%20of%20the%20Law%20on%20EOW%20M_CENTRAL%20LEVEL_FINAL_MKD.pdf

she/he should be in a higher position in the institution, with the aim of greater involvement in all processes and with decision-making power.'

The public sector is relatively gender balanced, with existing gender segregation in certain sectors. From year to year, there are no significant fluctuations in the number of men and women. The data highlights the dominance of women in the sector, which is minor, but still noticeable. For example, the general gender parity in the public administration for 2021 is 55% women and 45% men. However, women are less represented in the highest positions in the institutions and in most institutions that are subject of this analysis. For example, in the bodies that are in the internal composition of the ministry's women are represented with 41%, in the ministries with 46% and in the independent bodies of state administration with 46%. Exception from this situation is the Government, where women are represented with 59% compared to men, which are represented with 41%.

The existence of gender stereotypes is evident in public sector professions, which contributes for gender segregation in some sectors. As a result, women usually work in education, health and judiciary, unlike climate and environment, IT, forestry, water supply and sewerage, customs and public transport which are mostly occupied by men. In numbers, situation is as follows: women are most represented in the field of labor and social affairs (82.11%), especially public institutions for social and child protection. The percentage of participation of women is also high in two other large sectors - health (72.48%) and education (65.74%). Men on the other hand, are mostly represented in the environment sector (87.72%), and they are also predominantly represented in transport (86.22%).

There are women at the higher positions in the administration, and men are most represented in junior positions and in the highest management positions (ministers, deputy ministers, state secretaries). For example, the Prime minister is a man and from the four Deputy prime ministers, three are men and one is a woman. The State secretary is a man. In the ministries, there are only three women ministers from sixteen, only two women deputy ministers from sixteen and only five state secretaries from sixteen.

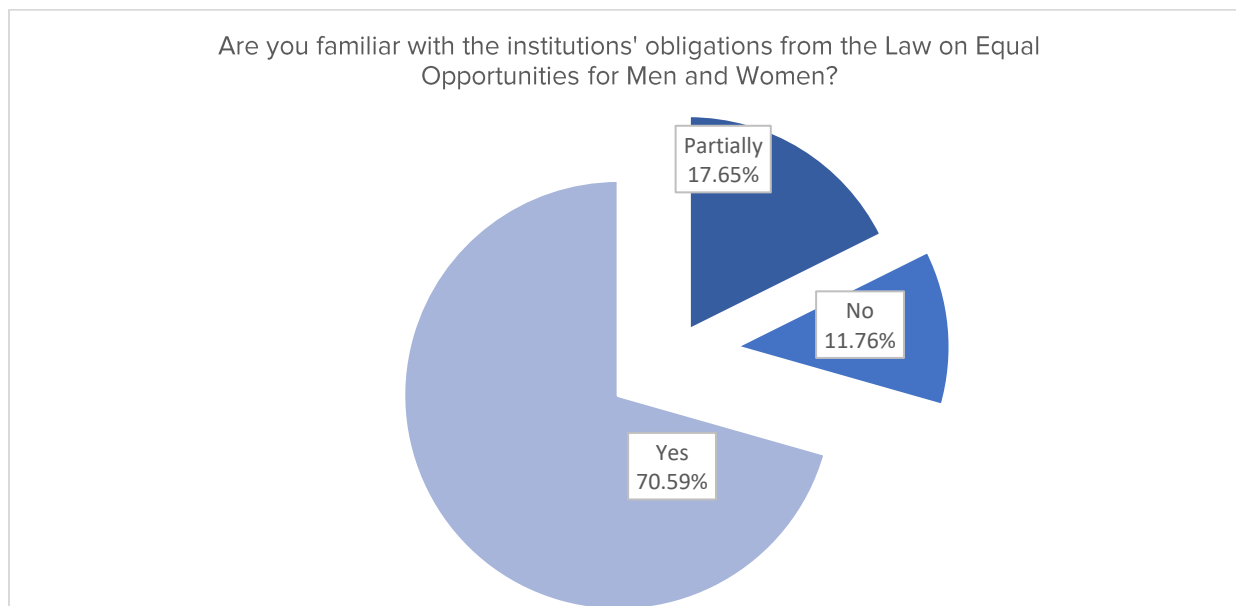


This supports the claim that there is unequal distribution of power from gender perspective in North Macedonia. One of the most significant factors influencing this situation are the general stereotypical attitudes and prevalent gender norms in the society. In countries where there are contemplations that men are better leaders, such as ours, there are fewer women leaders and, in general, fewer women in the workforce. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the need for inclusion of women in decision-making.

From the answers received in the questionnaire, but also from the available quantitative and qualitative data from other research it is evident that the public administration lacks gender sensitivity awareness in its work and does not have capacities for gender mainstreaming in the process of creation of policies. In general, even though in most of the high positions in the public administration women are represented, a recent survey shows that neither women nor men in public administration have a clear idea of the concept of gender equality. 43% percent of women confirm that it is very important to hold a managerial position, compared to 15% of men. It shows lack of gender awareness among men (but also among women), and a signal that concrete actions for increasing the gender organizational culture should be taken in the institutions.

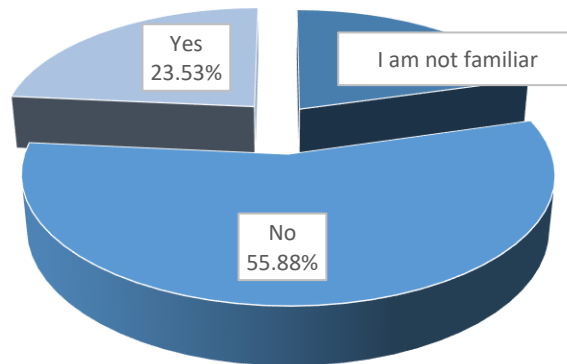
It is positive that most of the respondents, 71%, are familiar with the institution's obligations from the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, which shows general awareness by the institutions of the provisions of the law. Only three respondents stated that they are not familiar with the institution's obligation from the Law on Equal

Opportunities for Women and Men (Center for Vocational Education and Training, State Audit Office, and the Government of RNM/General Secretariat).

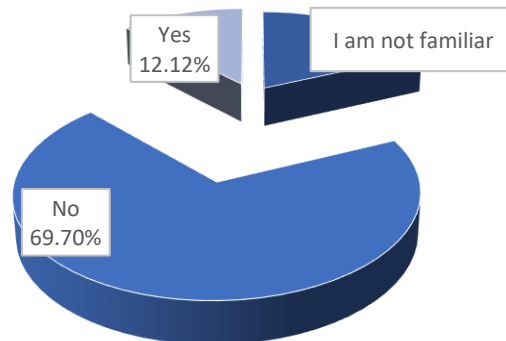


Even though there is general awareness of the respondents for the institution's obligations from the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, it is obvious that there is absence of capacities and tools for gender mainstreaming in the institution's policies and documents. Only 24 % answered that in the institutions there is a guideline or a tool for including gender aspects in the process of documents preparation (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agency for audio and audiovisual media services and Ministry of Finance). The percentage is even lower on the question on the existence of a rulebook, a guideline or a tool for including gender aspects in the institution in their everyday organizational work. Only 12% answered that the institution where they work use guideline or a tool for including gender aspects in their everyday organizational work (Ministry of Defense, Agency for audio and audiovisual media services and State Statistical Office). The low capacities for gender mainstreaming in the policies, but also on organizational level can be also confirmed through the available data in other analysis and researches and the available data on the web pages of the institutions.

Is there a rulebook, a guideline or a tool for including gender aspects that you use in the institution in the process of preparing documents?

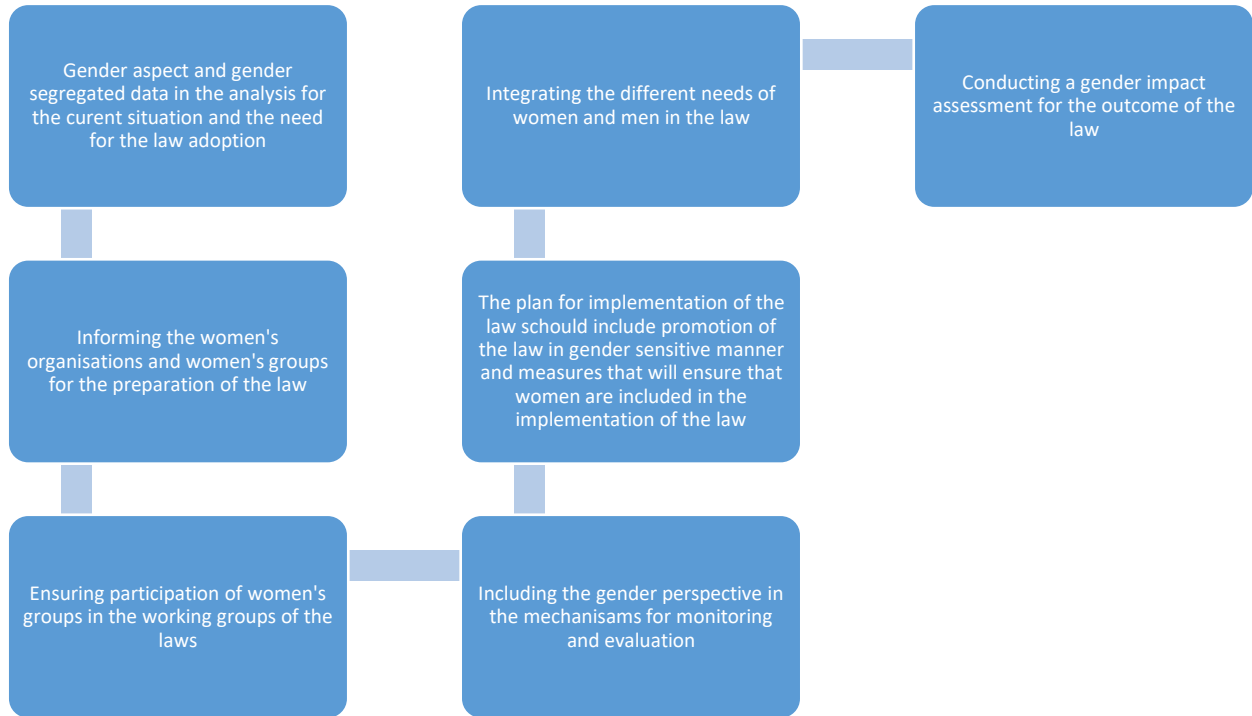


Is there a rulebook, a guideline or a tool for including gender aspects that you use in the institution in the daily operations/workflow?



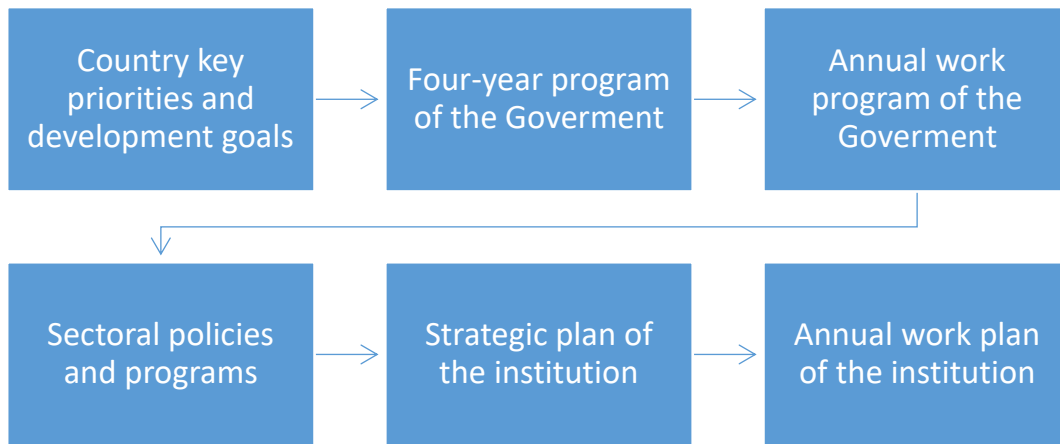
In Republic of North Macedonia there is no clearly established procedure, nor a uniformed practice for gender mainstreaming in the process of preparation of laws, bylaws, or strategic documents. In the process of preparation of laws, there is a guideline for regulatory impact assessment, but gender equality is not included as one of the areas that is assessed in the impact analysis of the laws.

The process of gender mainstreaming in the process for preparation and adoption of the laws should include:



Furthermore, the process of adoption of the laws in the Assembly should include revision of the laws by the Commission for equal opportunities between men and women. Except the legal framework, the Government develops policy framework for setting priorities and achieving the government's objectives.

The following chart shows the process for creation of policies on government's level and other state administration bodies:



The strategic planning process should include several steps for gender mainstreaming if the goal is the policies to be at least gender sensitive. Following chart is showing the minimum steps that should be taken in order to ensure gender sensitive policy making:



The available data from other analysis shows that there is, also, a general lack of knowledge about the meaning of the basic and special measures for gender equality, but also about the way of their use. At the same time, the authorized persons who should integrate these measures in the policies, are not trained for their practical application. From the analysis of the annual reports on the activities undertaken and the progress achieved to establish equal opportunities for women and men, published on the website of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, it can be concluded that the number of institutions that reported on basic or special measures is between 3 to 6 institutions out of a total of 42 institutions, which means that on average only 10% of the institutions report that they have taken measures to improve the status of women. In addition, the institutions that have reported that they take such measures have been repeated over the years. Based on the data, it can be concluded that the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Economy are the only ones that report every year.

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