



## Gender Impact Assessment in the Area of Radiation Protection and Environment – Brief Report

The Federal Environmental Ministry's (FEM) project "Gender Impact Assessment in the Area of Radiation Protection and Environment" aimed at developing a Gender Impact Assessment prototype. The project had two parts: firstly, on the basis of the 2001 revised radiation protection regulations the prototype was developed (pilot phase), and secondly, the prototype was tested in the area of product-oriented environmental protection (trial phase). Both tasks were successfully completed within the project.

Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) is an important instrument for implementing the policy strategy of gender mainstreaming. Its function consists in ascertaining whether policy measures – for example, laws, programs, concepts and everyday administrative procedures – have different effects on men and women. GIA includes a topic- and task-related component, the carrying out of a gender equity review by means of a GIA-checklist, and the organizational-institutional anchoring of the GIA.

A graded model, in analogy to an environment impact assessment, was selected for the GIA prototype-checklist rather than a non-differentiated checklist, such as the "blue evaluation questions". The checklist has three levels: a preliminary assessment (screening), a main examination (analysis) and an evaluation with recommendations. The carrying out of the assessment steps is guided by questions and explanations of these questions.

The gender relevance of a political measure within the GIA concept is determined in terms of its gender specific impact on target groups. "Target groups" depicts the groups of persons who are directly covered by a measure, or those directly affected by it. The issues investigated are whether or to what extent men or women of these groups of persons are affected differently by the measure.

The approach to evaluation used in the GIA is a positive one: *progress* towards the achievement of gender equity goals is assessed. The assessment is carried out both with the aim of attaining an alliance between environmental and gender equity policy goals and of becoming aware of possible conflicts between these goals. In this regard there is a *weighing* of the environmental and gender equity goals as these are affected by the measures proposed.

The prototype worked out in the FEM project was included in the "Working Aid for §2 GGO: Gender Mainstreaming When Preparing Legal Regulations", which was prepared by the Inter-Ministry Working Group (IMWG) Gender Mainstreaming.

During the pilot phase an exemplary GIA checklist was developed using the new regulations included in the 2001 revised radiation protection regulations. The latter cover the overlapping concerns of radiation protection, protection of reproductive health and protection of unborn life. During the application of the GIA checklist it was possible to give an affirmative answer to the question

whether these new regulations could achieve a positive alliance of the goals of radiation protection and gender equity with respect to the work situation of women who work in occupations with radiation exposure and who are pregnant or want children. Furthermore, it was shown that the different regulations for protecting women and men from radiation are supported by the current state of medical research and, therefore, do not violate the gender equity principle.

*Overall, the Gender Impact Assessment, by weighing many individual aspects, appraised the new regulations as constituting an improvement in achieving gender equity.* Despite this clear-cut vote, room for improvement became apparent during the implementation of the GIA. This was formulated as recommendations included in the evaluation of the assessment. These recommendations were then taken over during the adjustment of the legislative provisions implementing a legal Act.

During the trial phase the prototype developed was tested in the area of product-oriented environment protection, by applying it to the measure "Awarding the Label 'Blue Angel' to the Product Group Multifunctional Devices for Office Communication" (integrated printer, copier, scanner, etc.). An appraisal of the gender relevance of this measure (screening) led to the conclusion that a GIA was necessary, since gender relevance could not be excluded. Research showed that both the award procedures and the multifunctional office devices themselves raised gender relevant questions with respect to the use phase and aspects of use.

As for the multifunctional devices themselves, consideration of gender aspects applies mainly to the use phase of the products, while not ignoring the function, place and context of use. That is, it is not only a matter of the use of these devices in statutorily regulated workplaces within firms or in the public sector but also of their use for occupational and personal ends at home. On the whole, interviews with users, manufacturers, sales and service representatives, revealed three areas of concern that have gender relevant aspects: health; operating manuals and technical support; and advertising and marketing.

Opportunities for integrating gender aspects during the award procedures for the 'Blue Angel', a label granted to environmentally-friendly products, arise with respect to, first, the gender composition of the committees involved in the award procedure and, second, the specifications of the product groups (differentiation between areas of application: for household and personal use; use in public and private organizations; and use in both household/personal areas as well as in public and private organizations), award criteria such as pollutant emissions and threshold values (consideration of the special working conditions within household and personal area), and health (specification with respect to the health of women, children and the elderly). A further aspect of achieving a positive alliance between the goals of environmental protection and gender equity concerns the marketing of the label 'Blue Angel' (consideration of target groups with respect to their gender specific differences, as well as other social differences, while developing communication strategies for the environment label).

Presently, the jury for the environmental label is reviewing to what extent it can apply the recommendations included in the GIA.