

Approved by the Minister of Social affairs on May 29, 2013 with decree no. 66
„Norra finantsmehhanismist 2009-2014 rahastatud programmi
„Sooline võrdõiguslikkus ning töö- ja pereelu tasakaal“
avatud taotlusvoorude korraldamise ja toetuse andmise tingimuste kehtestamine“

INFORMATIVE TRANSLATION

Guidelines for Applicants Responding to the Call for Proposals
under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014
“Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance“

GUIDELINES

GENERAL PROVISIONS

General Framework Regulating the Financial Mechanism and Programme Area

- (1) The objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen relations between Norway and the Beneficiary States.
- (2) The main objective of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 EE09 “Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance” is to promote gender equality in Estonia and offer support in balancing work, family, and private lives.
- (3) The *Programme Operator* is responsible for the preparation, implementation and for achieving the objectives of the programme as agreed upon within the framework of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. The Programme Operator of the programme “Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance” is the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA).
- (4) A *Project Promoter* is a public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as a nongovernmental organisation, having the responsibility to initiate, prepare and implement a project.
- (5) A *Project grant* is a grant awarded by the Programme Operator to a Project Promoter to implement a project. A project grant is comprised of financial support from the Kingdom of Norway in the proportion of 85% and of co-financing by the Project Promoter in the proportion of 15%. In the case of NGO-s, the financial support from the Kingdom of Norway is in the proportion of 90%.
- (6) A *Call for Proposals* is a published call for project proposals contributing to the programme objectives. There are two calls for project proposals within the framework of EE09 (one corresponding to the objective of promoting gender equality and the other to promoting work, private, and family life balance) that are merged into one call for proposals.
- (7) A *Project Contract* is an agreement between the Programme Operator and the Project Promoter regulating the implementation of a particular project and the use of the project grant.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

(1) What do we mean by Gender Equality?

Gender equality, according to the Gender Equality Act¹, refers to the equal rights, obligations, opportunities and responsibilities of men and women with reference to their professional lives, their acquisition of education and in their participation in other areas of social life.

Gender equality is a matter of human rights, public welfare and democracy. Under the contemporary concept of human rights, the gendered stratification of society is not only viewed as a hindrance to human development but as a breach of human rights as well. One of the presuppositions of economic and democratic development is that all individuals have to have equal opportunities to function successfully within societies. *Gender equality in a general sense* refers to a situation in which all members of society are free to develop their capabilities and make choices that are not limited by traditional gender roles and stereotypes, nor the hierarchical relations of power between men and women.

Gender equality in a narrower sense refers to an area of policy that is attempting to balance the social relations (incl. relations of power) between two of the largest social groups – men and women.

The term gender refers to the social roles, responsibilities, and opportunities that are attributed to men and women, signifying cultural customs, norms and values that determine the provisions of being a *man* or a *woman*, i.e. the societal expectations and not the biological differences. Gender identity and gender roles are not innate, they are acquired and shaped over time by various social norms, customs and ideologies; therefore, gender identity is not a static concept, but changing and changeable over time.

(2) Situation in Estonia

The Educational System²

Although an equal amount of boys and girls go through preschool and commence their further studies in the public education system, considerable differences appear in their further educational performance: more boys drop out of elementary schools, vocational and professional choices after both elementary and high-schools vary according to gender, and a large gender gap in higher education prevails (to men's disadvantage). Even though the undereducated part of the population is predominantly made up of men (women are generally better educated), women are still at a disadvantage in the labour market and face many obstacles in attaining leadership positions in addition to economic independence.

The rigid gender system, low awareness of both the principles of equal treatment and the intentions behind promoting gender equality have contributed to the development of a situation where prejudices along with conservative and gender-stereotyped expectations on what is considered *gender-appropriate behaviour*, influence the decisions and choices of boys and girls (and men and women alike) not only in the field of education, but lead to differences in their socio-economic status and general well-being in their later lives as well.

¹ The Gender Equality Act is available in English at:

<http://www.legaltext.ee/et/andmebaas/tekst.asp?loc=text&dok=X80041K2&keel=en&pg=1&ptyyp=RT&tyyp=X&query=soolise>

² Civil society has been the most active in the promotion of gender equality in the Estonian educational system.

For examples (in Estonian) refer to activities by the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT):

<http://www.enut.ee/enut.php?id=278>; Activities (in Estonian) by the Estonian Women's Association

Roundtable (EWAR): <http://www.enu.ee/haridus-ja-sugu/>

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info@sm.ee

As a result of the inability to notice and analyse the gender stratification that prevails in a scientific manner (with reference to social sciences), it is often considered a “natural” outcome of choices. Both pedagogues and leaders in the field of education hold a strong belief that gender, gender differences, social relations between genders, gender roles, and patterns of behaviour are biologically predetermined.³ The majority of them have not received any training concerning gender equality as part of their education and preparation processes, neither has corresponding special literature been translated into Estonian. While the curriculum for those studying to become teachers does foresee the study of the physical gender-specificities of children and adolescents, none of that includes knowledge on how to recognize various factors that contribute to the development of the gender identity of youngsters and most importantly, how to take those factors into account and critically assess them.

Although gender equality has been referenced as one of the founding principles in forming the education-related policy for elementary and high-schools, it is still widely unrecognized as an analytical category in various studies in the field of education.

Studies that have been conducted in Estonia show that stereotypical gender roles are being reproduced and determined not only through the attitudes and expectations of teachers and leaders in the field⁴, but by curricula and study-materials along with shadow-curricula.⁵

Education and upbringing both influence a person’s identity, values, convictions, attitudes and the understanding of how society functions (incl. how gender roles function within society) which all influence vocational and career choices. These in turn preserve the segregation on the labour market which consecutively impacts the gender pay gap.

In addition to theoretical approaches in the analysis and resolution of problems surrounding gender inequality, teachers and leaders in education need additional skills and expertise to take notice of the factors that influence the development of students’ gender identities through everyday interactions (incl. knowledge on the structures that produce gender inequality and how to correct them).

Liberation of the seeming gender neutrality, knowledge on the paradigms of gender studies, integration of various aspects of gender into higher education and other fields (e.g. social sciences, law, economics, public administration) would further support making more knowledge-based decisions among specialists, leaders, policy-shapers and policy employers (both present and future) and would raise general awareness of the importance of gender equality to the society at large.

³ Students – or boys and girls? A study into the readiness of Estonian teachers and educationalist for gender sensitive teaching and upbringing (in Estonian). Collection of articles. Edited by Ü.-M. Papp. EWAR. Tallinn 2012. p 111. Downloaded at:

http://www.enu.ee/lisa/468_Kas_opilased_voi_poisid_ja_tydrukud_Artiklikogumik.pdf

⁴ Students – or boys and girls? A study into the preparedness of Estonian teachers and educationalist for gender sensitive teaching and upbringing. Collection of articles (in Estonian). Edited by Ü.-M. Papp. EWAR. Tallinn 2012. p 111. Available at:

http://www.enu.ee/lisa/468_Kas_opilased_voi_poisid_ja_tydrukud_Artiklikogumik.pdf

⁵ Gender roles in study materials. University of Tartu (2002) (in Estonian). Available at:

<http://www.enut.ee/lisa/soorollid.pdf> (14.01.2010)

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Professional Life⁶

The horizontal segregation of the labour market

The current situation in the labour market reflects precisely the stereotype-based decisions among members of society. Seeing as men and women are engaged in different fields of activity, we can safely conclude that clear *women's jobs* and *men's jobs* have developed (horizontal segregation). Women are the majority in fields that are considered important but which are not highly valued (social affairs, healthcare, and education). Men dominate in fields such as construction, energetics, and transport. The negative side of this came into full effect during the economic recession that began in 2008 when the general employment rate started decreasing - more men lost their jobs than women since the recession had the strongest impact on fields in which men were and are overrepresented.

From the standpoint of gender equality, many other problems are associated with a horizontally segregated labour market. For example, common beliefs on what are *women's jobs* and what are *men's jobs* limit the self-actualization of men and women alike. This in turn indicates that society is losing a number of talents in various fields because the true potential of its members is not being utilized.⁷ The clear understanding of what job a man or a woman should and should not have influences the choices of future generations as well and in addition to limiting their career choices, sets limits on employers in trying to find highly qualified and educated labour.

The vertical segregation of the labour market

Men and women have not only applied themselves in different fields of activities, but in different occupations and levels as well (vertical segregation). According to data from 2012, 32.7%⁸ of executives in Estonia were women. The proportion of women in executive roles in the largest quoted companies was 20% and the proportion of women in highest decision bodies (supervisory boards or board of directors) was a meagre 8%.⁹ None of the presidents of either executive boards or highest decision-making bodies were women.¹⁰

Causes for this have to be looked for among general stereotyped attitudes. According to the 2009 Gender Equality Monitoring, only 50% of Estonians agreed with the statement that the inclusion of women to leadership positions would be beneficial to organizations. More than a third of the respondents (38%) completely disagreed with that statement.¹¹ At the same time, the Monitoring demonstrated that in cases where people had had positive experiences with women in leadership positions, they were much more positively inclined to the notion of including women to leadership positions.¹² We may conclude that

⁶ Multiple activities have been conducted to promote gender equality in professional lives. Examples include: "Women to the top" <http://w2t.se/uk/index.htm>; EU Transition Facility 2006 programme project "Equality between Men and Women - Principle and Goal for Effective and Sustainable Enterprises" (in Estonian) <http://www.sm.ee/tegevus/sooline-vordoiguslikkus/tooelu.html>; the Estonian ESF programme "Promotion of Gender Equality in 2008-2010" (in Estonian) <http://www.sm.ee/tegevus/sooline-vordoiguslikkus/soolise-vordoiguslikkuse-edendamise-programm-2008-2010.html> and the ESF programme "Promotion of Gender Equality 2011-2013"

⁷ Järviste, L, "Gender Equality and Inequality: Attitudes and Situation in Estonia in 2009", Policy analysis series of the Ministry of Social Affairs, 3/2010 ENG, p 5, available at: http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumentid/V21jaanded/Toimetised/2010/series_20103eng.pdf

⁸ Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

⁹ Data by the European Commission, available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/executives-non-executives/index_en.htm

¹⁰ The first female president of an executive board will begin her term on May 15, 2013. More information available at: <https://newsclient.omxgroup.com/cdsPublic/viewDisclosure.action?disclosureId=545191&messageId=671942>

¹¹ Järviste, L, "Gender Equality and Inequality: Attitudes and Situation in Estonia in 2009", Policy analysis series of the Ministry of Social Affairs, 3/2010 ENG, p 8, available at: http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumentid/V21jaanded/Toimetised/2010/series_20103eng.pdf

¹² Ibid, p 10

increasing the number of women among top executives is a crucial step in the gradual improvement of all women's career opportunities.

Problems between balancing professional and private lives may also be considered as hindrances to women's ability to move upward on the career-ladder in addition to achieving a better balance between men and women in decision-making positions. As a result of problems accompanying the balancing of professional and private lives, employers often view women as unsure of themselves and as less dedicated workers. The lack of role models for women and a lack of mentoring programmes (even the lack of experience people have with women in leadership positions) do not influence the opportunities that are being presented to women in the labour market in a positive manner.

Pay gap

The horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market is one of the many reasons why the gender pay gap is so high in Estonia (27.7% in 2010, 27.3 in 2011¹³).

An extensive study of the nature, extent and reasons for the gender pay gap was commissioned by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs in the years 2009-2010 within the framework of the European Social Fund programme "Promotion of Gender Equality 2008-2010"¹⁴. The study was carried out by two independent research centres, Praxis and CENTAR, who, besides studying the nature of the gender pay gap, made policy recommendations on how and with what means to proceed when attempting to reduce the gender pay gap. The study showed that, taking real wages as the basis, the general gender pay gap between the years 2000 and 2008 was on average 28.6%, with the unexplained wage difference forming approximately 85% of this figure. According to the same survey, between 2000-2008, both the general and the unexplained pay gap increased.

According to the results of the survey, the Estonian gender pay gap itself is a result of many different problems and numerous interrelated aspects affect it. Such aspects include general prevailing attitudes and stereotypes in society, the level of knowledge of policy makers regarding gender equality and its mainstreaming, women's career breaks, the possibilities offered to balance work and family life and the gender segregation in the labour market.

Parents' employment¹⁵

Gender disparities manifest themselves in the general employment rate as well – according to Eurostat, the employment rate of men in the age group 20-64 was 73.5% in 2011 and that of women was 67.6%.

There are noteworthy differences in the participation in the labour market between men and women with children under the age of 3 as well. According to Statistics Estonia, the employment rate of women with small children was 45-55% between 2000 and 2009. Only 27% of women (compared to 84% of men) whose household included children under 3 years of age were employed in 2010. The percentage of employment among

¹³ The average in the European Union in 2011 was 16.2 %. Information available at:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tsdsc340&plugin=0>

¹⁴ Articles about empirical analysis and policy recommendations parts of this survey are available in English at: http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/V2ljaanded/Publikatsioonid/2011/Gender_pay_gap_Estonia_analysis.pdf and

http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/V2ljaanded/Publikatsioonid/2011/Gender_pay_gap_Estonia_recommendations.pdf

¹⁵ We recommend reading the Development plan for Children and Families (in Estonian):

<http://www.valitsus.ee/et/valitsus/arengukavad>

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info@sm.ee

women was remarkably higher (75%) in households which included children between the ages of 3-6¹⁶.

One of the forms of flexible work arrangements is part-time work. In comparison to men, women work part-time more often and the difference is especially striking in households with children under the age of 2. 54%¹⁷ of women who work part-time have reported the need to participate in some form of care work as the reason for doing so. Additionally, women have cut working hours and taken days off to take care of children remarkably more often than men.

The described differences are mostly contingent upon the unequal division of care burdens between women and men, partly by shortages of affordable and high-quality childcare possibilities, and partly by inadequate possibilities (offered by the employers) to reconcile work, family, and private life.

The above mentioned problems influence not only employment rates but the opportunities for men and women to take part in society as well as their ability to achieve complete self-fulfilment. Therefore, as a result of perceiving childcare as solely a woman's job, women experience longer career-breaks which have a negative impact on their future careers opportunities and choices.

Policy Formulation and Enforcement¹⁸

According to the Gender Equality Act, all state and local government agencies are required to promote gender equality systematically and purposefully. Their duty is to change the conditions and circumstances that hinder the achievement of gender equality. While planning, implementing and assessing national, regional and institutional strategies, policies, and action plans, these agencies have to take into account the different needs and social statuses of men and women and consider how different measures affect the situation of men and women.

In December 2012 the Government of Estonia adopted a new methodology for impact analysis which foresees an obligation to officials who are actively involved in formulating policies, developing area-specific development plans, taking official stances in matters concerning the EU or the adoption of EU laws to perform an impact analysis of draft legislation. The objective of the methodology is to improve and unify the capabilities of various government offices in the process of developing and implementing government policies. The methodology foresees a social and demographic impact-analysis which

¹⁶ Krusell, S. Reconciling work and family life as a task for women?, in Statistics Estonia publication "Man`s Home is the World, Woman`s World is Her Home", Tallinn 2011, p 74, available at: http://www.stat.ee/publication-download-pdf?publication_id=25640

¹⁷ Krusell, S. Reconciling work and family life as a task for women?, in Statistics Estonia publication "Man`s Home is the World, Woman`s World is Her Home", Tallinn 2011, p 68, available at: http://www.stat.ee/publication-download-pdf?publication_id=25640

¹⁸ A number of activities have been carried out to promote gender mainstreaming in Estonia. Examples include: a Phare Twinning Project "Development of Administrative Capacity of National Authorities in the Field of Gender Mainstreaming" was implemented in 2004-2005 between German and Estonian partners <http://gender.sm.ee/index.php?097923740>; "Gender Impact Assessment as a Core Measure for Gender Mainstreaming" <http://www.ut.ee/gender/pdf/GM%20impact%20analysis%20Est.pdf>; "gender mainstreaming Strategy. A manual" http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/V2ljaanded/Publikatsioonid/2006/SV_strateegia.pdf; "Gender Equality Act. Commented edition" http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/sooline_v6/Soolise_vordoiquslikkuse_seadus_Kommenteeritud_valjaanne.pdf; "Equality for local development: gender mainstreaming in municipalities" <http://digar.nlib.ee/digar/show?id=35976>; project "Mainstreaming gender perspective into state budget" <http://www.sm.ee/tegevus/sooline-vordoiquslikkus/programm-progress.html> and the manual that was published in the same framework "State budget for men and women. Need-based budgeting in the public sector" http://www.svv.ee/failid/RNJM%20VEAS_2012_final_bookmarqid25012012.pdf

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includes gender equality (potential impact on men and women and the power-relations between the two).

The low awareness of government officials on the various manifestations and effects of the principles and strategies of the promotion of gender equality as well as a lack of other related competencies, inhibit the efficient enforcement of laws and procedures as well as the full promotion of gender equality.

To change this, it would be of utmost importance to provide those employed in the public sector as well as those involved with the formulation and enforcement of various laws with much needed additional knowledge and skills, as well as advice, in order to support them in the processes of policy formulation and enforcement.

RULES CONCERNING THE PRESENT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Overall Objective and Expected Outcomes

- (1) Within the framework of this open call, activities that promote gender equality are supported. Separately, specific activities that promote the balance between work, private, and family life are supported.
- (2) As a result of the activities that promote gender equality, a broad base has been created for the formation and/or implementation of systemic structures that raise awareness on the importance of gender equality among various target groups and other stakeholders in a sustainable manner.
- (3) As a result of the activities that promote a balance between work, private, and family life, the work and living environments of people have been improved through enabling the reconciliation of work, private and family lives.

Supported Types of Activities

- (1) **Supported types of activities under *Promoting Gender Equality***
 - Development and implementation of sustainable and high-quality systems to promote gender equality. These actions may include but are not limited to:
 - i. developing a training programme for officials in the public sector;
 - ii. integrating topics of gender equality into various undergraduate degree programmes (fields of education, social sciences, law, economics);
 - iii. creating mentoring programmes for women in leadership positions to balance gender representations among leaders in the public and private sectors.
- (2) **Supported types of activities under *Promoting Work-Life Balance***
 - Development and implementation of knowledge-based actions for employees and employers in order to promote a family and employee friendly working environment (including one that promotes gender quality). These actions may include but are not limited to:
 - i. Supporting employee and family friendly employers via a scheme that recognizes employee and family friendly employers (the scheme should promote and safeguard gender equality as well)

Application Deadline and Period of Eligibility

- (1) The deadline for submitting applications is Monday, August 26, 2013 at 17:00 PM (EET). All calls shall be open for two months from the date on which they are officially announced by the Programme Operator. All applications must be submitted on the proper form together with all relevant annexes.
- (2) The eligibility of activities and costs starts from the date on which the decision to allocate support to a project is made.
- (3) All eligible activities must be finished by December 31, 2015 at the latest.

Size of Grants

- (1) The amount to be distributed under the area of *Promoting Gender Equality* is 550 245 EUR.
 - 2 to 3 grants will be allocated with the minimum amount of one grant being 170 000 EUR and the maximum amount 225 000 EUR.
- (2) The amount to be distributed under the area of *Promoting Work-Life Balance* is 340 000 EUR.
 - 2 grants will be allocated in the amount of 170 000 EUR.
- (3) The maximum grant rate for non-governmental organisations is 90% of eligible expenditure and 85% of eligible expenditure for all other applicants. This means that the minimum co-financing rate for non-governmental organisations is 10% of eligible expenditure and 15% of eligible expenditure for all other applicants.

APPLICATION PROCESS. ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND PROJECTS

Submitting an Application

- (1) All applications should be signed digitally and sent to MoSA via email at info@sm.ee. The subject of the email should read: "Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Work-Life Balance". All applications must be submitted on or before the deadline set forth in these guidelines. Information on how to sign documents digitally is available on the homepage of the Certification Centre at <http://www.id.ee/>.
- (2) In the case that a digital signature is not obtainable, an application may be submitted in the form of a hard copy (2 copies: one signed and marked as "the original") by mailing it or bringing it in person to MoSA (address: Gonsiori 29, 15027 Tallinn). Nonetheless, an electronic version of the application must be submitted as well.
- (3) All applications submitted after the deadline will be disregarded and will not be evaluated. Applications that arrive past the deadline due to a server failure of the applicant or that carry postal stamps of the deadline day, but arrive to MoSA later than the set time, will be disregarded as well.
- (4) Guidelines for the Call for Proposals including the application form (together with all relevant annexes) are available at <http://norra.sm.ee>.

Eligible Applicants and Project Partners

- (1) Any entity, public or private, commercial or non-commercial and non-governmental organisations*, established as legal entities in Estonia as well as inter-governmental organisations operating in Estonia are all considered eligible applicants.
- (2) An applicant must possess knowledge, skills and experience as well as administrative capacity to implement the project for which the grant is applied for. The application must provide proof of the existence of a competent project manager, a realistic time schedule and appropriate activities that should all contribute to achieving the expected results.
- (3) Any entity, public or private, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations, all of whose primary locations are either in Norway, Estonia, other Beneficiary States (Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus or Malta), Russia or any inter-governmental organisation, actively involved in and effectively contributing to the implementation of a project are considered eligible partners for the projects. The partner shares a common economic or social goal with the applicant which is to be realised through the implementation of that project. Nonetheless, as one of the objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism is the strengthening of bilateral

relations between Norway and the beneficiary states, projects that contribute to the accomplishment of that goal will be favoured in the evaluation process

- (4) An applicant must not have national tax liabilities, including social security contribution obligations as of June 20, 2013 (source: electronic database of the Tax and Customs Board).
- (5) The applicant as well as the partner organisation(s) may not be under liquidation procedures or bankruptcy, the operation of the organisation may not be put to a halt and none of the people associated with the project (at any level) may be convicted of professional misconduct, fraud, money laundering, corruption, involvement in criminal organisations or in some other illegal operations.

* In the framework of this Call for Proposals, *Non-governmental organisations* (NGOs) are considered to be non-profit voluntary organisations established as legal entities, having a non-commercial purpose, independence of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations. Religious institutions and political parties are not considered NGOs.

Eligibility of an Application

- (1) Applications must be presented on the proper form (Annex 1 "Application form") and include the following documents:
 - a detailed budget (Annex 1A "Project Budget");
 - CVs of team members, experts and the project manager;
 - in case of the existence of project partners, a letter of consent by the partner (Annex 4 "Project Partner Statement").
- (2) An application is eligible when:
 - the activities listed in the application correspond with activities supported in the current call for proposals (Promoting Gender Equality or Promoting Work-Life Balance);
 - the amount of the applied grant corresponds with the minimum and maximum grant rate requirements set forth in the current Call for Proposals;
 - the applicant foresees co-financing of the project in correspondence with the requirements for co-financing that have been set forth in the current Call for Proposals;
 - eligible project activities have not begun before MoSA has made the official decision to allot a grant to an applicant and activities are planned to end by December 31, 2015 at the latest;
 - the information presented in the application is complete and correct;
 - the application complies with the administrative eligibility check-list (Annex 2 "Administrative eligibility check-list");
 - the application and all other relevant documents are signed by an authorised person.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Administrative Compliance of the Applicants and Applications

- (1) An e-mail confirming the submission of an application will be sent by the programme coordinator to the contact person named in the application.
- (2) MoSA will check the administrative and eligibility criteria of the application (Annex 2 "Administrative eligibility check-list") and then draw up minutes with the decision on which applications qualify for the evaluation process and which do not.
- (3) In the case that an application does not pass the administrative and eligibility criteria check, the programme coordinator will set a deadline for the Applicant to eliminate the shortcomings. If the shortcomings are eliminated by the set deadline, the deadline will be directed into the process of evaluating its content. If the shortcomings are not eliminated within the set deadline, the application will be

excluded from the evaluation process. The Applicant has the right to contest the decision in the Administrative Court within 30 days after the decision is made.

Evaluation of Applications and Casting a Financing Decision

- (1) Every application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria will be evaluated by two independent experts who will separately evaluate the quality of each proposed project according to the selection criteria/evaluation grid (Annex 3 "Evaluation grid"). If the difference between the scores given by the two experts is more than 30%, a third expert will be commissioned to conduct an independent evaluation. In such cases the average of the two closest scores shall be used in the ranking of the applications.
- (2) The ranking of applications by their average scores will thereafter be forwarded to a Selection Committee.
- (3) The Selection Committee is a committee established by MoSA, consisting of at least three persons all of whom possess relevant expertise. At least one of them shall be external to MoSA. The Selection Committee will review the ranking of applications. It may modify the ranking in justified cases. The justification for modifications in the ranking shall be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Selection Committee.
- (4) The Selection Committee will approve the ranking and submit the list to MoSA.

Approving or Disapproving an Application

- (1) Based on the decision of the Selection Committee, MoSA will make a decision on which projects will receive the grant.
- (2) Applications scoring on average less than 65 points out of 105, will not be awarded a grant.
- (3) The programme coordinator will inform applicants of the evaluation results via e-mail within two weeks after the financing decision has been made. The information will also be published on MoSA's website for the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. Applicants who do not receive a grant will receive feedback on the shortcomings and weaknesses of their applications.
- (4) MoSA will sign project contracts with all Project Promoters who will receive financing through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. The project contracts are contracts under public law, signed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

Modification and Termination of the Project Contract

- (1) MoSA or the Project Promoter may launch an amendment procedure of the project contract if it becomes clear – through monitoring activities or through other relevant sources – that changes are needed to assure the achievement of a project's objectives.
- (2) MoSA may launch the amendment or termination procedure of a project contract if it becomes clear that an awarded grant is no longer justified.
- (3) Modifications that do not affect the objective, outcomes, outputs, indicators or targets of a project do not call for a project contract amendment provided that changes have been confirmed with MoSA in advance and that the cumulative transfers between budget headings are less than 10% of total eligible expenditures. However, this excludes the request to change management costs.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Eligibility of Expenditures

- (1) The period of eligibility of a project is fixed in the project contract and limits the timeline when eligible project activities can take place and relevant costs may incur.
- (2) The eligibility of activities and costs starts from the date on which the decision to

- allot a grant to a project is made by MoSA and ends on December 31, 2015.
- (3) Eligible expenditures of projects are actually incurred by the Project Promoter and meet the following criteria:
- they have been incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;
 - they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are shown in the estimated overall budget of the project;
 - they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
 - they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
 - they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular by being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and determined in accordance with applicable accounting standards of the country where the Project Promoter is established and are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
 - they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.
- (4) Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date for eligibility. Overheads and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the Project Promoter.
- (5) Direct eligible expenditures of a project are those expenditures which are identified by the Project Promoter and/or the project partner, in accordance with their accounting principles and customary internal rules, as specific expenditures directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can therefore be booked to it directly.
- the cost of staff assigned to the project, comprising of actual salaries and social security charges as well as other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that this corresponds to the Project Promoter's and project partner's customary policy on remuneration;
 - travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the Project Promoter's and project partner's customary practices on travel costs and do not exceed the relevant national scales;
 - cost of new or second hand equipment, provided that it is depreciated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the Project Promoter and generally accepted for items of the same kind. NB! Only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be taken into account by the Programme Operator;
 - purchase of land and real estate directly linked to the objectives of the project and representing maximum up to 10% of the total eligible expenditure (see Article 7.5 of the Regulation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism);
 - costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
 - costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a Project Promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project
 - costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project (e.g. dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations, reproduction).

- (6) Indirect costs are all eligible costs contributing to the project but which cannot be solely identified with one concrete project activity (i.e. office costs). Flat-rate methodology of 15% of eligible direct staff costs shall be applied to indirect costs without a requirement for the Project Promoter to execute any calculation to determine the applicable rate.

List of indirect costs under flat-rate methodology include (list is conclusive):

- administrative costs;
- office supplies;
- communication costs, including telephone and postal costs;
- information technology (servers and networks) and maintenance of equipment;
- public utilities, including heating, water, electricity and cleaning;
- room rent;
- security services;
- land tax;
- costs of opening and administrating the project related bank account and transfer fees of the payment if a separate bank account is necessary for the project.

These costs cannot be submitted as direct eligible expenditures.

- (7) The following costs shall not be considered eligible:
- interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
 - charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs;
 - provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
 - exchange losses;
 - recoverable VAT;
 - costs that are covered by other sources;
 - fines, penalties and costs of litigation;
 - excessive or reckless expenditure.
- (8) Every project must include co-financing with by a minimum of 15% of the eligible expenditures of the project. In case of NGOs the project grant rate may be up to 90% of eligible expenditures.
- (9) In case of projects implemented by NGOs, in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work may constitute up to 50% of the co-financing required by the programme for the project and will be calculated according to the median average labour expenses (per hour or per month) in the particular region and category of labour, including all required social security contributions, on the basis of the salary survey carried out by Fontes PMP OÜ¹⁹. Additional information regarding the salary of a concrete category of labour can be acquired from the contact person of the Call for Proposals.

PAYMENTS AND REPORTING

Method of Payments

- (1) A Project Promoter will submit an advance payment request to MoSA no later than at the time of signing the project contract. The advance payment request includes a prognosis of expenditures through the first and second reporting periods (the duration of a reporting period is four months) but may not be more than 25% of the total amount of the allotted grant. The subsequent interim payments will be made jointly with the interim financial reporting where the costs made in the last reporting period will be checked and approved and a new payment request will be submitted for the next reporting period.
- (2) A *payment request* is a formal written request made on a standard form that will be

¹⁹ available at:

<http://www.fontes.ee/est/fontesest/uut/44/valminud-on-fontese-eeesti-palgauuring-2012>

submitted by the Project Promoter to MoSA in order to receive the next payment of the project grant. The payment request will be accompanied with a list of costs made and copies of invoices and payment receipts requested by MoSA. The payment request must include all eligible costs of the project made within the reporting period and can be verified. In justified cases and in agreement with MoSA, the Project Promoter may present costs related to the previous reporting period in the payment request.

- (3) MoSA may withhold up to 10% of the total grant, i.e. the final payment until the approval of the project's final report.
- (4) The payments to the Project Promoter will be made in the same proportion as the project grant rate constituted in the project contract.
- (5) The Project Promoter is responsible for forwarding the relevant grant to its project partner(s).

Project Interim and Final Reporting

- (1) Within 20 workdays after the end of a reporting period, the Project Promoter will submit an interim project progress report as well as a financial report to MoSA. Both reports will have to be submitted three times a year.
- (2) Specific reporting periods will be identified in the project contract.
- (3) Within 40 workdays after the end of the project activities, the Project Promoter will submit a final project report that will have to include final progress and final financial reports.
- (4) MoSA will review the interim project progress report within 10 workdays and the final project report within 20 workdays after the report has been submitted by the Project Promoter. When no deficiencies are found, MoSA will approve the report.
- (5) In the case that deficiencies are detected, MoSA will request corrections from the Project Promoter within a reasonable deadline.

Irregularities

- (1) In the case of irregularities, Regulation No 278 of the Government of Estonia - "*The procedure and criteria of reclaiming and reimbursing the received grant and informing on irregularities*" - (adopted on December 22, 2006) will be followed.
- (2) According to Article 7.16.2 of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 all Project Promoters must follow the Estonian Public Procurement Act. Article 7.16.3 makes an exception to NGOs who have to comply with the Public Procurement Act starting from thresholds set for public procurement by the European Union. Neglecting the before mentioned act will be treated as an irregularity.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Date of Information Seminars

Detailed information on the date, venue and agenda of the information seminar on the Call for Proposals regarding the programme "Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Work-Life Balance" will be made available on the programme's website <http://norra.sm.ee>.

Contact Person

Karel Parve

Programme Coordinator

Gender Equality Department

Ministry of Social Affairs

E-mail: karel.parve@sm.ee, Phone: (+372) 626 9818

Website: <http://norra.sm.ee>

Documents and other Relevant Information Related to the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014

- Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2009-2014 between The Kingdom of Norway and The Republic of Estonia²⁰
- Programme Agreement of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 programme "Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance"²¹
- Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014²²
- Regulation No 278 of the Government of Estonia - "*The procedure and criteria of reclaiming and reimbursing the received grant and informing on irregularities*" - (adopted on December 22, 2006) (In Estonian)²³
- Website of the Ministry of Finance dedicated to the Norwegian and European Economic Area Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014²⁴
- Website of the Norwegian and European Economic Area Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014²⁵
- Website of the Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality, and Social Inclusion – the Donor Programme Partner²⁶

²⁰ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/217062011001>

²¹ <http://norra.sm.ee>

²² <http://eeagrants.org/content/download/5899/65320/version/1/file/Regulation+Norway+Grants+2009-2014.pdf>

²³ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/12769549>

²⁴ <http://eeagrants.fin.ee/>

²⁵ <http://eeagrants.org/>

²⁶ <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/bld.html?id=298>