



**UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY**

**UNU-EGOV**

**Operating Unit on Policy-Driven  
Electronic Governance**

## **Gender Mainstreaming at UNU-EGOV**

State of Affairs and Future Action

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# List of Acronyms

<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GM</b>	Gender Mainstreaming
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNU</b>	United Nations University
<b>UNU-EGOV</b>	United Nations University Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance

# Glossary

**Equality:** Equality remains one of the core values of institutions and governments around the world. Presenting frameworks on equality for better application of the research agenda of institutions cannot be overemphasized. As a gender equality approach, gender mainstreaming aims at transforming institutions, governments, businesses, and societies by attempting to reduce gender biases in existing practices<sup>1</sup>. Thus, it involves the combination of a set of guidelines for the realization of gender equality. These are preparation, design, and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, as well as regulatory measures and frameworks. These must have a gender perspective to be able to promote equality between men and women. Equality does not mean men and women are the same or will become the same. It implies that men's and women's rights, privileges, responsibilities, contributions, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female<sup>2</sup>.

**Gender:** Gender can be referred to as the "socially constructed" roles played by both male and female characteristics. Such roles vary and can be in the form of norms, characters, and relationships between men and women<sup>3</sup>. 'Socially constructed' implies that these are not naturally assigned roles. As such, they can either be modified or changed at any given time<sup>4</sup>.

**Gender Analysis:** Gender analysis studies and examines the difference in roles, rights, and opportunities of men and women as well as the relationship that exist between them<sup>5</sup> It is significant as it ensures a more effective response to individuals within governments, institutions, and communities, giving the recognition that men and women have different needs.

**Gender Equality:** The idea that women and men, girls and boys are treated equally, or have the same conditions and opportunities to express their full potential, human rights, and dignity<sup>6</sup>. It presents the opportunity for men and women to contribute, take advantage and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political growth. The priorities, needs, and interests of individuals must be taken into consideration, acknowledging the existence of diversity amongst all humans. In all spheres of life, all humans must be

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<sup>1</sup> Squires, J. (2005). Is mainstreaming transformative? Theorizing mainstreaming in the context of diversity and deliberation. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 12(3), 366-388.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (2017). Available at [Gender equality: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS \(unicef.org\)](https://www.unicef.org/gender-equality/glossary-of-terms-and-concepts). Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization. (2020). Gender. Available at [WHO/Europe | Gender](https://www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/who-europe/gender). Accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Cropley, D., & Cropley, A. (2017). Innovation capacity, organizational culture and gender. *European journal of innovation management*.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (2017). Available at [Gender equality: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS \(unicef.org\)](https://www.unicef.org/gender-equality/glossary-of-terms-and-concepts). Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

able to exercise their rights to develop and grow their capabilities and make choices without any forms of boundaries set by gender stereotypes and prejudices<sup>78</sup>.

**Gender Equity:** The process of allowing for fairness between individuals and significantly the equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity involves the application of measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination<sup>9</sup>. It brings about fairness in different actions and behaviors and reduces bias or drawbacks that come with gender roles, norms, or differences between men and women, boys and girls. More so, it considers the needs of individuals, cultural barriers, judgements as well as discrimination<sup>10/11</sup>.

**Gender Relations:** Gender relations are core to the understanding and the analysis of institutions, as well as the specific boundaries of inclusions and exclusions that they may construct. They represent a potential sub-set of social relations uniting men and women as social groups in a particular community<sup>12</sup>. This includes how power and access to control are distributed between the genders. Therefore, they intersect with all other influences on social relations such as age, ethnicity, race, religion, etc., to determine the position and identity of people in a social group<sup>13</sup>. Since gender relations are a social construct, they can be transformed over time to become more equitable.

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<sup>7</sup> Cropley, D., & Cropley, A. (2017). Innovation capacity, organizational culture and gender. *European journal of innovation management*.

<sup>8</sup> World Health Organization. (2020). Gender. Available at [WHO/Europe | Gender](https://www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/who/europe/gender). Accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund (2017). Available at [Gender equality: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS \(unicef.org\)](https://www.unicef.org/gender-equality/glossary-of-terms-and-concepts). Accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> World Health Organization. (2020). Gender. Available at [WHO/Europe | Gender](https://www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/who/europe/gender). Accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Karam, C. M., & Jamali, D. (2017). A cross-cultural and feminist perspective on CSR in developing countries: Uncovering latent power dynamics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 142(3), 461 – 477.

<sup>13</sup> Makpor, M. E. (2021). Corporate social responsibility and gender relations: A critical appraisal of community bias approach. “*Manuscript submitted for publication*”.

## Executive Summary

There is no doubt about the relevance of the application of gender mainstreaming as a strategic mechanism for the pursuit of gender equality. In line with SDG 5, governments, the private sector, international institutions, and society at large are all striving to mainstream gender in their operations. As part of the UNU system, the UNU-EGOV has joined in this global effort and adapted its management, administrative and research operations to include a gender mainstreaming approach.

This report details the state of affairs of gender mainstreaming at the UNU-EGOV and recommends the need for a gender mainstreaming approach in research which seems to be lacking in the Unit.

# 1. Introduction

Gender mainstreaming has evolved in the past two decades and has expanded its debates on how women's voices can be heard as well as men's in organizations (Makpor, 2021). Since its adoption as a methodology applied by the United Nations (UN) towards the empowerment of women and gender equality (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2020), gender mainstreaming has been internationally recognized as a force for equal opportunities and rights for both men and women (Parpart, 2014; UNSDGs, 2020). As it is not an end in itself, it is seen as an approach, strategy, and method of achieving the goal of gender equality.

The concept has been described by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as "the process of making assessments of any planned action – legislation, policies or programs – of men and women, in all areas and at all levels. It is also an approach for making men's and women's concerns and experiences a significant aspect of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political and socio-economic spheres to allow for equal benefit, and to ensure inequality is not perpetuated in the process. Thus, the ultimate goal for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in any institute or government entity should be the achievement of gender equality." (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997)

The study analyzes the state of affairs of gender mainstreaming by exploring how it is being communicated within the UNU-EGOV. The study also questions whether gender mainstreaming as a strategy is being integrated into the activities - policies, programs, operations, procedures, and research within the Unit.

The agenda for the study is twofold. The first guides the introduction of key gender words that represent definitional constructs to the various concepts relating to gender mainstreaming. The second presents the introduction of a gender dimension and its related contents into the various research areas, administrative procedures, and communications of the UNU-EGOV Unit allowing for a gender perspective to addressing issues.

As a basis for developing further research, the study recommends a set of resource tools for conducting research and initiatives specifically on gender mainstreaming. The study also supports the gender mainstreaming agenda, action plans, and initiatives of the Unit by recommending a set of consolidated solutions and strategies to be applied to research and general activities.

## 1.1 Literature review and practice analysis

Persistent debates abound on the idea that gender mainstreaming goes beyond the integration of gender equality in the policies and programs of any institution (Council of Europe, 2021; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021). It is the comprehensive and systematic implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy which results in institutional transformation (EIGE, 2021), thereby impacting the organizational culture of an institution. Hence the strategic goal is to integrate gender in the internal workings of an institution which should consequently result in improved policy outcomes, ensure that the experience of staff is free of gender bias as well as the organization, promoting gender mainstreaming.

As a contested concept, practice, and a global equality norm (Krook & True, 2012), it involves the reinvention, restructuring, and rebranding of a significant aspect of feminism or the contemporary feminist theories (Walby, 2005; Zalewski, 2010). As a form of theory, it employs the revision of key concepts to have an in-depth understanding of a gendered world, rather than the formation of a separatist theory (Zalewski, 2010). Thus, for theory development, it is commonly regarded as a new system of gendered political and strategic approaches within a gendered world. In terms of practice, it is the promotion of

gender equality and the improved effectiveness of policies through a gendered analysis of norms, cultures, processes, and outcomes (Walby, 2005).

Since its introduction in recent years, its impact on institutional practices and outcomes has been somewhat limited (Rittenhofer & Gatrell, 2012). Even though the idea behind its introduction is to offer the transformative potential to the achievement of gender equality within institutions, it has been slow progress both in theory and practice (Walby, 2005). Literature on the concept which explains women's concerns as '*different*' from those of men stipulates that mainstream practices may present a drawback especially within institutions and advise for a change through taking 'positive steps' to better accommodate women's concerns (Rittenhofer & Gatrell, 2012). Other theoretical works of literature (e.g., Rees 2005) expand the notion of 'difference' within the concept through ideas of 'transformation'. Accordingly, the origins and backgrounds behind such a 'transformation' agenda remain in the politics of difference (e.g., institutionalized sexism) within institutions (Rees, 2005).

Significantly, the ambiguity of definitions and in-depth explanations within the gender mainstreaming literature relating to how women's concerns should be expressed and addressed limits the development of both theory and policy research on the concept as well as its practice implementation (Krook & True, 2012; Rittenhofer & Gatrell, 2012; Zalewski, 2010). The review of the literature within this field of study is therefore significant as it allows for a deep array of research exploration into the policies and practices of the concept.

## 1.2 Gender mainstreaming at the UN institutions

To aid the acceleration of the attainment of gender equality by institutions and the global community, institutions have called for the incorporation of gender equality into the 'mainstream' of activities rather than regarding the concept as an 'optional' activity (UN Women, 2015). The gender mainstreaming approach pursues the institutionalization of equality through embedding gender-sensitive practices and norms in the mainstream structure and process of activities within an institution. Therefore, it is meant to be implemented depending on the institutional level and the type of activities carried out within the institution.

Gender mainstreaming at the UN institutions seeks to address gender equality and women empowerment through Institutions' activities such as "resource allocation, strategic planning, programs and policies, human resources, staff capacity, leadership management, accountability and performance management" (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2018). Following the call by ECOSOC to promote transparency and accountability for gender mainstreaming within the UN institutes (Agreed Conclusions 1997/2), the UN System-wide Policy on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment was endorsed by the Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB/2006/2). The main aim was to put together a framework with performance indicators to show accountability, track results, monitor result-based management systems, human and financial resources, capacity, and knowledge exchange as well as networking for the entire UN System (UNEG, 2018).

Secondly, the approach drives the assessment of the progress of gender equality in the UN System (UN Women, 2015) by serving as a resource tool for the evaluation of gender mainstreaming and gender equality within the system. It shows the coherence of gender equality amongst UN entities and contributes to a more robust and sustainable future for the institutes (UN Women, 2015). Recently, the EQUALS annual meeting was held in September 2021 to provide the opportunity for the UN institutes and diverse stakeholders to reflect on their gender progress and achievements attained over the past year 2020; and

to look forward to the next steps that will also be taken as a global assignment for the attainment of gender equality.

### 1.2.1 Gender mainstreaming at United Nations University

Following the United Nations mandate on gender mainstreaming and gender equality, the United Nations University (UNU) has made significant steps to incorporate gender in its research activities and capacity development programs. The acceleration of gender mainstreaming throughout the UNU is an offshoot of the gender equality commitments of the UN. The idea is to ensure that most projects and activities are gender-transformative (UNU, 2016), targeting SDG 5 - Gender Equality. Through the improvement of the 2011 UNU Policy on Gender Mainstreaming (GM), the Gender Focal Point Network was formed at all UNU institutes (UNU, 2016).

The gender policy and action plan developed by the UNU Gender Focal Points, representatives of the Office of the Rector, the Communications Office, and the Human Resources Office, is a document that monitors the progress and communication of gender mainstreaming within the UNU institutes. The main goal for the UNU institutes is the adoption of the UNU Policy on Gender Equality with two major focuses: (i) the promotion of gender parity at all hierarchical levels within the UNU; and (ii) the promotion of gender mainstreaming in research, teaching, capacity building, and other activities.

More significantly, the policy, and action plan comprised of three main areas: (i) the Policy on Gender Equality, outlining aims, principles, and key roles; (ii) the Action Plan for 2016 to 2019 providing nine specific action lines; and lastly, (iii), the Accountability Framework which spells out the main responsibilities of the Rector, Council, Board of Advisors and Committees, and the personnel. The policy outlines the goals, value system, and key roles on gender equality that guides the UNU institutes. More so, since 2011 UNU has been improving its Policy and action plan on Gender Mainstreaming.

The most recent Action Plan 2020-2024 builds on the previous one that ended in 2019. It intends to grow on what was already achieved, promoting a “more inclusive and gender-sensitive work environment” and giving particular attention to enhancing gender mainstreaming in research and other activities. The Gender Action Plan is the *‘first-ever’* that has seen significant improvement in the achievement of gender parity at the strategic and most senior levels. Examples of this can also be seen at the UNU-EGOV Unit where at the strategic and most senior level, the director is female while the deputy director is male.

Significantly, the Gender Action Plan is made up of seven priority areas: Strategic management; Gender Mainstreaming into UNU programs and activities; Human and financial resources; Organizational culture; Capacity development, knowledge sharing, and communication; Coherence; Monitoring, reporting, and risk assessment. Each priority area has a goal, and a set of objectives to be achieved. Objectives are described in terms of activities, an indicator for measurement, reporting method and frequency, who is responsible for it, and the time frame for execution.

The accountability framework presents the key responsibilities of the Rector, Council, Advisory Boards, and Committees as well as the UNU Units and institutes on the personnel level. It strengthens gender mainstreaming through institutional mechanisms, and management culture. Most of the elements contained in the policy and action plan on gender equality for the UNU institutes can be measured at the UNU-EGOV level.

Lastly, the UNU Atlas Initiative is also a mechanism by the UNU aimed at communicating the progress of gender equality within the framework of the SDGs as well as recommend measures for the reduction of inequities. Its current report for 2021 highlights the interlinkages to SDGs, gender integration in research,

action research, commitment to feminist principles as well as identifying gaps in the gender quality research and practice in general.

### 1.3 How to assess Gender mainstreaming

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), called for an end to gender inequality using a range of strategies including gender mainstreaming, gender impact assessment policies, and programs for supporting women and gender equality at all levels. This call has supported several other international declarations and conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The European Union has also adopted the gender mainstreaming idea as a strategy for delivering gender policies and has further developed the idea (EIGE, 2021). Goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG) pushes for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

In evaluating the impact and advancement of gender mainstreaming in the past two decades, feminist and policy scholars have concluded that results are mixed and often inconsistent especially within institutions. This also includes similar conclusions in other multilateral institutions. Consequently, efforts to mainstream gender both in policy formulation and implementation have had limited impact as strategies, approaches, and tools are often flawed, poorly framed, and lacking specific and measurable goals and objectives.

GM at National levels versus the EU Level: While EU institutions are responsible for the implementation of GM at the Institutional level, individual member countries and their governments are responsible for their member states (EIGE, 2016). Following the project: "Implementing gender mainstreaming at Governmental level in the EU Member States" (Sterner & Biller, 2007), gender mainstreaming at national level within the EU member states was first introduced and set up by Sweden in 2005 with other participating member states such as Finland, Lithuania, and Portugal taking part in the process. Over the years membership has increased. The main purpose was to design, coordinate, and implement government policies and frameworks for gender equality amongst EU member states.

Gender mainstreaming at the national level requires well-structured objectives and action plans embedded in the legal and policy frameworks for proper implementation (EIGE, 2021). For the legal basis, political commitment to gender mainstreaming becomes a legal obligation that can take place in three different ways: (i) through contextualization embedded in the national gender equality legislation; (ii) through a separate law on gender mainstreaming; (iii) through the resolution of the Council of Ministers. As for the National Action Plan, gender equality references are included in the national strategy or action plans for gender equality. However, a few of these countries are specifically dedicated to pushing the agenda for gender mainstreaming (EIGE, 2021).

The EU institutional approach to gender equality and gender mainstreaming recognizes men and women as equal and have equal rights as a prerequisite for the attainment of growth, employment, and social cohesion (EIGE, 2016, 2021). Hence, in ensuring proper practices of gender equality at national levels, the EU assigns tasks to specific representatives of the 28 EU Member states to check for violation of rights and provide legal protection for both men and women equally (EIGE, 2016). Representatives are gender focal points assigned to take charge in ensuring the implementation of the institution's gender equality and/or gender mainstreaming measures. Responsibilities also include monitoring the gender equality laws and policies, which vary from country to country, at national levels.

## 2. Assessing Gender Mainstreaming at UNU-EGOV

The relevance of Gender Mainstreaming has been extensively highlighted. Particularly, associated with the mission of the United Nations and all its institutions. UNU-EGOV personnel, as part of the UNU system, understand the magnitude of the concept and its implementation. But more than that, the personnel know the importance of assessing and monitoring the evolution of implementing new practices in all procedures, operations, and activities of the unit to position itself. For these reasons, a project to assess the situation regarding Gender Mainstreaming within UNU-EGOV was most welcome and embraced by all personnel.

This section of the report presents the project outline, goals, and methodological approach.

### 2.1 Research outline

The project consists of uncovering how gender mainstreaming is perceived and acted upon within UNU-EGOV. To achieve this, a set of tools was prepared, including assessment frameworks and an interview protocol. These were applied to an extensive document analysis and interviews with every collaborator.

All the analysis is based on the UNU Gender Action Plan which was transformed into direct tasks to assess each objective of the action plan. These are described below.

### 2.2 Plan and expected outcomes

As a guide to orient project direction and implementation, a set of objectives and research questions were defined.

The proposed objectives are:

- To assess the state of affairs of gender mainstreaming at the UNU-EGOV.
- To improve the outcome and impact of gender mainstreaming within the Unit which contributes to SDG 5.
- To introduce a gender dimension to research areas within the Unit.
- To promote gender equality and gender parity (inclusivity) at all levels, research areas, and activities including administration, conferences, workshops, panels, research design and implementation, external events, etc.

An explorative exercise relating to two core research questions was carried out:

- RQ1: What is the state of affairs of gender mainstreaming in the UNU-EGOV?
- RQ2: What efforts are in place to promote mainstreaming gender in the different designs and implementation of research areas and activities within the Unit?

For RQ1, this involves the understanding of the main issue, how it is perceived, and the extent to which it is practiced within the Unit.

For RQ2, this includes how the concept is being used to drive the various research areas and their implementation. It also considers the promotion of the concept within the various departments and levels of the Unit.

The expected timeline for Project implementation and reporting is described in Annex A.

## 2.3 Methodological Approach

The approach taken to assess the current situation regarding Gender Mainstreaming at UNU-EGOV was to identify an adequate set of objectives and activities from the UNU Gender Action Plan that can be implemented and verified at UNU-EGOV. The result of this selection can be found in Table 1.

Each goal is identified with the code provided in the action plan followed by its description, who is responsible for its achievement, and how it will be assessed in this project. All goals spelled out in the table below ought to be compared to the status quo of gender mainstreaming and its implementation in the Unit.

**Table 1 - Goals from the UNU Gender Action Plan to be assessed**

Goal	Responsibility	Assessment
1.2.1 To maintain, and where necessary, revise gender benchmarks and indicators	Institute	Check for gender parity benchmarks and indicators at UNU-EGOV and other UNU institutes
2.1.1 Identify good practice examples of gender mainstreaming within the UNU system	Gender Focal Points/ Institutes	Interview – how is gender mainstreaming being applied in practice (research and other activities) at UNU-EGOV
2.1.2 Identify knowledge exchange opportunities between researchers	Gender Focal Points/ Institutes	Interview – how is gender mainstreaming being applied in practice (research and other activities) at UNU-EGOV
2.1.3 Improve, revise, and disseminate gender mainstreaming guidance resources	Gender Focal Points/ Institutes	Interview – how is gender mainstreaming being applied in practice (research and other activities) at UNU-EGOV. What tools and methodologies are documented and being put in practice to do so.
2.2.2 Keep Pelikan updated to capture whether projects have met their stated gender equality objectives	Project managers	Verify all UNU-EGOV projects at Pelikan regarding gender mainstreaming aspects
2.3.1 Include at least one female speaker or panelist on every panel where possible and discourage participation in events with all-male panels	All UNU staff	Interview – how is gender parity being ensured in UNU-EGOV external activities
2.3.2 Engage with external organizers on the issue of gender parity prior to participating in events organized by non-UNU entities	All UNU staff	Interview – how is gender parity being ensured in UNU-EGOV external activities
3.2.1 Vacancy announcements to use language encouraging male/female applicants to apply as applicable	Recruitment Managers	Verify vacancy announcements

3.2.2 Include at least one qualified female candidate and one qualified male candidate in each recruitment shortlist	Recruitment Managers	Interview - recruitment process
3.2.3 Ensure shortlists are gender-balanced (40-60% female candidates)	Recruitment Managers	Interview - recruitment process
3.2.4 Targeted recruitment outreach to female/male applicants and networks by recruitment panel members	Recruitment Managers	Interview - recruitment process
3.2.5 Aim for gender parity on hiring panels where possible, with a minimum of at least one female panel member	Recruitment Managers	Interview - recruitment process
3.3.1 Develop a financial resource tracking mechanism to quantify disbursements of funds that promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming	Project managers	Interview - What tools and methodologies are being put in practice to do so
3.4.1 Include a financial benchmark in future budgets for Headquarters for resources allocated for UNU work on gender equality including training and capacity building	Institute Directors	Enquire financial office on the subject
4.1.1 Establish a voluntary, pilot mentoring scheme pairing younger female and male employees with more senior women and men for internal career guidance.	Institute Directors	Identify the existence of such a scheme and how it is being implemented
4.4.1 Speak publicly on the promotion of gender equality and the importance of gender mainstreaming	Institute Directors	Interview – how is Gender Mainstreaming being communicated
5.1.2 Engage in gender-sensitivity training in the workplace and capacity building initiatives that are feasible	Gender Focal Points	Interview - "I know gender" - UN online training on Gender

**Source: Authors**

Besides these, the action plan identifies a set of responsibilities associated with the various positions and offices within the UNU system as presented in Table 2. In the cases of Human Resources and the Office of Communications, the responsibilities were adapted to correspond to the reality of UNU-EGOV.

**Table 2 - Goals from the Accountability Framework to be assessed**

Task	Responsibility	Assessment
Champion the implementation of the UNU Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (as updated)	Institute Directors	Interview – are people aware of the existence of these documents and their content?
Make gender equality a regular topic in their meetings with managers and staff	Institute Directors	Interview – are the internal meetings being referenced associated with the topic of gender mainstreaming?
Designate one or more staff members in their Institute/Program to liaise with the UNU Main Gender Focal Point and assist in the implementation of the UNU Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (as updated)	Institute Directors	Identify who is doing such work
Provide support to the UNU Main Gender Focal Point and channel communication to/from the Director	Gender Focal Points	Is the main contact point disseminating or sharing information with other UNU Institutes and how is the coordination done?
Participate in meetings of all Gender Focal Points	Gender Focal Points	How often do attendance and active participation take place? Monthly, bi-annually, or yearly?
Guide their colleagues, including their managers, on the UNU Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (as updated)	Gender Focal Points	Normally give a session on Ethics once per year. Gender awareness and gender mainstreaming are communicated in this yearly session.  Identify other points of guidance.
Their work on gender-related issues is recognized in their performance appraisal review	Gender Focal Points	How is gender related work recognized in performance appraisals? Are there specific projects related to gender or that are gender-sensitive?
Provides regular up-to-date gender-disaggregated data	Human Resources	How is data shared and how often? Through a centralized system
Take into account the need for gender parity when recruiting new staff	All Managers	Understanding of the recruitment process
Strive to achieve gender parity on panels they organize and engage with external organizers on the issue of gender parity	All Managers	Understanding of the selection process
Include and discuss gender-smart goals in their performance appraisal review and in those of the personnel they manage	All Managers	Verify gender-smart goals are being included in performance appraisals

Task	Responsibility	Assessment
Take the “I know gender” online training by the end of 2016	All Staff	Report on the number of staff that has completed the “I know gender” course at the Unit
Contribute to a gender-sensitive work environment	All Staff	Interview - work environment
Keep themselves informed of the UNU Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (as updated)	All Staff	Interview - mentions to the Action Plan

**Source: Authors**

The collection of tools and methods to put in practice includes an interview protocol for all UNU-EGOV staff focusing on aspects of Gender Mainstreaming that go from conceptualizing the topic to the practical implementation of gender-related issues, document analysis, Pelikan projects analysis, website analysis, and benchmarking UNU-EGOV to other UNU institutes.

The interview was the first step as it encompasses most of the issues being assessed and provides the primary source for results analysis.

### 2.3.1 Interview guide

An exploratory interview protocol of approximately 40-60 minutes regarding researchers and administrative personnel’s perspective on Gender Mainstreaming at UNU-EGOV was prepared.

The interview was conducted online, taking place on Microsoft Teams and Skype. These enabled both audio and video recording simultaneously. All interviewees agreed to the recording and file upload to the UNU-EGOV cloud folder. Anonymity is fully observed and respected throughout the report. All information and data gathered are fully stored in the cloud and following the Unit’s privacy and security regulations.

The questions prepared for the semi-structured interview can be consulted in Annex B. The questions are classified into three main sections namely, RQ1 (state of affairs), RQ2 (efforts to promote gender mainstreaming), and Others. Questions from numbers 11 to 14 were not asked to researchers (except as required); these were prepared for the administrative and communications departments.

### 2.3.2 Interview process and coding

Interviews took place from the 10<sup>th</sup> of February until the 15<sup>th</sup> of March. From the 17 requests sent to staff who are closely engaged in UNU-EGOV activities, 16 participants were interviewed - 12 researchers and 4 administrative staff. Interviews took an average of 44 minutes with the shortest being 23 minutes and the longest being 72 minutes. All interviews were conducted by the lead researcher.

After the interviewing process was completed, the project team agreed that a summary note of each interview would be helpful for its analysis. To retain the idea being transmitted by the interviewee, the researcher who conducted the interviews performed this task. Each interview was summarized into a summary note for further analysis.

Each summary note contained all the questions asked during the interview as well as the answers given by the interviewee. It was then based on these documents that the researchers performed the coding of each interview.

The researchers decided to follow a qualitative approach using topic coding (Saldaña, 2014). Topic coding allows for label texting according to its subject (Roth, 2006; Saldana, 2014). The coding process was done manually by both researchers. Each researcher performed an independent coding and the two were compared and discussed until an agreement was achieved. This was done to avoid one researcher influencing the other during the coding process in the first instance.

Prior to summary notes' analysis, a set of codes was defined based on the Accountability Framework. The codes derived from aspects of the Accountability Framework related to the responsibilities of the Institute director, Office of communications, Management, and staff in general, that was expected or likely to be mentioned during the interviews. Table 3 presents these codes referring to the code, it's shortening, and a description.

**Table 3 - Preliminary coding for interview analysis**

Code	Shortening	Description
Policy/Action Plan	PAP	References made to the UNU Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan
Internal_meetings	IM	References to gender issues being addressed in meetings
Liaison	L	References to the liaison with the UNU Main Gender Focal Point and implementation of the UNU Gender Policy and Action Plan
Website	W	References to UNU-EGOV website aspects regarding gender
Gender_parity	GP	References to gender parity regarding staff recruitment, events, communications, etc.
Gender_goals	GG	References to gender-smart goals in their performance appraisal review and in those of the personnel they manage
Training	T	References to any training in gender issues
Work_environment	WE	References to the work environment. Staff perception and feelings regarding the workplace
Gender_in_practice	GiP	References to the integration of gender considerations in their research or other activities of the unit

**Source: Authors**

During the coding process, the researchers felt the need to add new codes that would cover the subjects mentioned as presented in Table 4. An effort was made to leave the codes list as short as possible and not add codes unless they were necessary for more than one interview.

**Table 4 - Additional codes added during interview analysis**

Code	Shortening	Description
Gender_mainstreaming_definition	GMD	References made to what is Gender Mainstreaming
Gender_culture	GC	References made to how the gender perspective is lived within the Unit and projects (gender neutrality, consideration for each person's reality). More so, actions, habits, way of thinking
Improvement_suggestion	IS	References to some method, technique, or solution that could improve gender aspects within the Unit

Gender_communication	GCom	References to communication aspects
Personal_experience	PE	Whenever a reference is made to past or present experience
Diversity	D	When mentioning different characteristics (age, nationality, academic background, race, religion, ethnicity)
Gender_equity	GE	References to having the right expertise independently of gender
Power_dynamics	PD	References to the description of positions and hierarchies

**Source: Authors**

The final set of codes (17) covers all subjects addressed during the interviews. An exception is made to the code regarding 'website' which was never used.

### 3. Gender mainstreaming at UNU-EGOV – State of affairs

This chapter presents the results of the interview and remaining analysis performed. It focuses on presenting results for each objective and responsibility from the Gender Action Plan. Interview transcripts are used throughout to highlight and support analysis.

#### 3.1 Interview coding analysis

The frequency of code usage can be consulted in Table 5. “Usage frequency” shows the number of times a code was used throughout the interviews’ analysis process, and “Frequency” shows the number of interviews where the code was used.

**Table 5 - Interview analysis. Coding frequency**

Code	Shortening	Usage frequency	Frequency
Policy/Action Plan	Pap	7	6
Internal_meetings	IM	4	3
Liaison	L	14	6
Website	W	0	0
Gender_parity	GP	71	16
Gender_goals	GG	3	2
Training	T	4	4
Work_environment	WE	10	6
Gender_in_practice	GiP	57	12
Gender_mainstreaming_definition	GMD	10	7
Gender_culture	GC	60	15
Improvement_suggestion	IS	45	16
Gender_communication	GCom	18	11
Personal_experience	PE	36	13
Diversity	D	13	8
Gender_equity	GE	38	14
Power_dynamics	PD	3	2

**Source: Authors**

Parity is the topic within UNU-EGOV, associated with gender mainstreaming that is most frequently addressed, followed by cultural aspects of the unit, and how gender mainstreaming is put in practice, in research, and other activities.

All interviewees presented improvement suggestions regarding the application and embodiment of gender mainstreaming in the unit's practices. Almost all participants mentioned the culture regarding gender within the unit, equity issues, and personal experiences regarding gender.

### 3.2 The concept of Gender Mainstreaming

Comparing the Gender Mainstreaming definition accepted for the project with the perspectives of participants during interviews, there appear to be several recurrences in the meaning associated with the concept. This is evident in participants' concerns and experiences regarding the significance of the concept in all areas and at all levels of the EGOV Unit.

The adopted definition presented by ECOSOC states that GM is "the process of making assessments of any planned action – legislation, policies or programs – of men and women, in all areas and at all levels. It is also an approach for making men's and women's concerns and experiences a significant aspect of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political and socio-economic spheres to allow for equal benefit, and inequality is not perpetuated in the process. The ultimate goal being the achievement of gender equality"

Interview participants are very aware of the transversal characteristic associated with GM. As one interviewee said, GM is:

*"... a cross-sector, cross-activity, something to always be kept in mind in the elaboration, moderation, monitoring, and evaluation of any activity. "*

Complementarily, another participant stated:

*"it is a concept or movement that gives the idea that organizations and policymakers should consider the perspectives of both genders when making decisions and designing policies".*

Other excerpts from the interviews, highlight the alignment of the participants' perspectives to the definition:

*"Gender mainstreaming is about integrating gender at a level that is more strategic and administrative. It is not so much anymore about having it in statements, in organizations' strategic plans, or that it is spelled out by directors in organizations"*

*"It means to have gender values, principles and practices naturally and completely embedded in the organization's environment.....the elements of gender should be seen, managed and treated in a natural way and all the activities of the organization".*

*"It is an approach that considers gender in policymaking and takes it into account in every stage of the policymaking process. It accounts for both interests of men and women. The interests and concerns with the main goal of trying to promote equality between women and men. Within the objective of combating and fighting discrimination because what's very interesting is that we look into GM based on an intersectionality approach and background... considering all forms of discrimination, gender being one of them."*

*"It is a well-known concept and approach to policymaking that takes into account the positions, posts, and roles of men and women. It takes into account the interests and concerns of men and women.... and tries to integrate and promote gender equality at all stages.... from the top policy level to the strategic level and also to bring to action-oriented action-based projects and activities. It is an inclusive concept and strategy that are integrative of all people".*

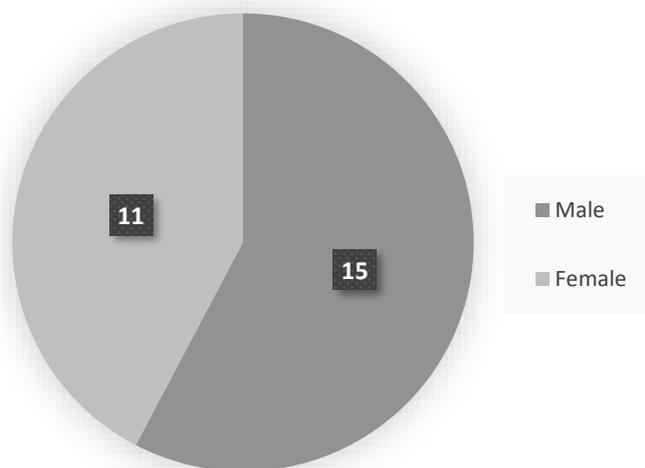
“...it is integrating equal perspectives at all status and levels of work... policies, project implementation... it is used to solve inequalities... sometimes hidden inequalities, that is somethings that are not obvious. Therefore, it is a tool and a process towards achieving gender equality...”.

### 3.3 Gender parity

As one of the main purposes of the UNU Policy on Gender Equality (2016-2019), gender parity is one of the first aspects related to equality that comes to mind. The new UNU Gender Action Plan (2020-2014), although still concerning parity issues, wants to go beyond it and guide the promotion of inclusive and gender-sensitive environments.

### 3.4 Gender parity at UNU-EGOV

At UNU-EGOV, the global gender analysis on staff reveals a good equilibrium as can be seen in Figure 1. Fifteen collaborators identify with the male gender and 11 collaborators identify with the female gender.



**Figure 1 – Gender distribution at UNU-EGOV**

Table 6 presents another perspective on gender distribution. Dividing the staff between researchers, management, and administrative staff, the gender distribution is still quite balanced. Considering the small numbers of staff at UNU-EGOV, the discrepancy between genders is acceptable. Even so, the number of male researchers is 50% higher than female researchers.

**Table 6 - Gender distribution at UNU-EGOV according to role**

	Male	Female
Experts	12	9
Management and Administrative	3	2

From the interview coding analysis, it is observed that UNU-EGOV personnel directly and mostly relate the concept of parity with Gender Mainstreaming. It was mentioned in all interviews, and it was the subject most frequently addressed. The issue of parity was introduced in many aspects addressed during the interviews and in many cases in relation to UNU-EGOV staff.

*“there is a balance amongst the experts, within teams and the organization in general”*

*“Concerning our team/Unit, we are reaching a very interesting balance at all the levels. At the highest level, we are completely balanced. In terms of the administrations and communications aspect, we are also balanced. We only have one person in terms of ICT. As for the researchers, we are not completely balanced.....we are about 11 males and 8 females. So, we are reaching a good balance”*

*“In the Unit, we are more-or-less balanced in terms of gender in our research team.”*

One aspect that was mentioned by some interviewees was the difference in recent years in the number of women joining the unit. Interviewees’ perception of this growth does not always reflect reality but portrays this aspect.

*“The Unit is going in the right direction in its promotion of gender equality. The number of female employees has overtime increased and daily, everyone is being treated equally”*

*“Not sure if we have total gender balance but we as a Unit are doing well in this regard. It is much more balanced now than it was about 4 years ago. In these last years, lots of women have joined the Unit”*

*“The teams are quite balanced. The administrative team is almost balanced with two women and three men. For the research team, we have more women than men now. This is important because it tackles an issue, we had way before now, where we had a lot of male researchers”*

This shift towards including more women is also in line with UNU practices as was also referred to by some interviewees.

*“Now we have a female director and we’ve had her for about four years now. At the UNU system, this has also changed. We have more female directors than men. This was an important shift about two years ago”*

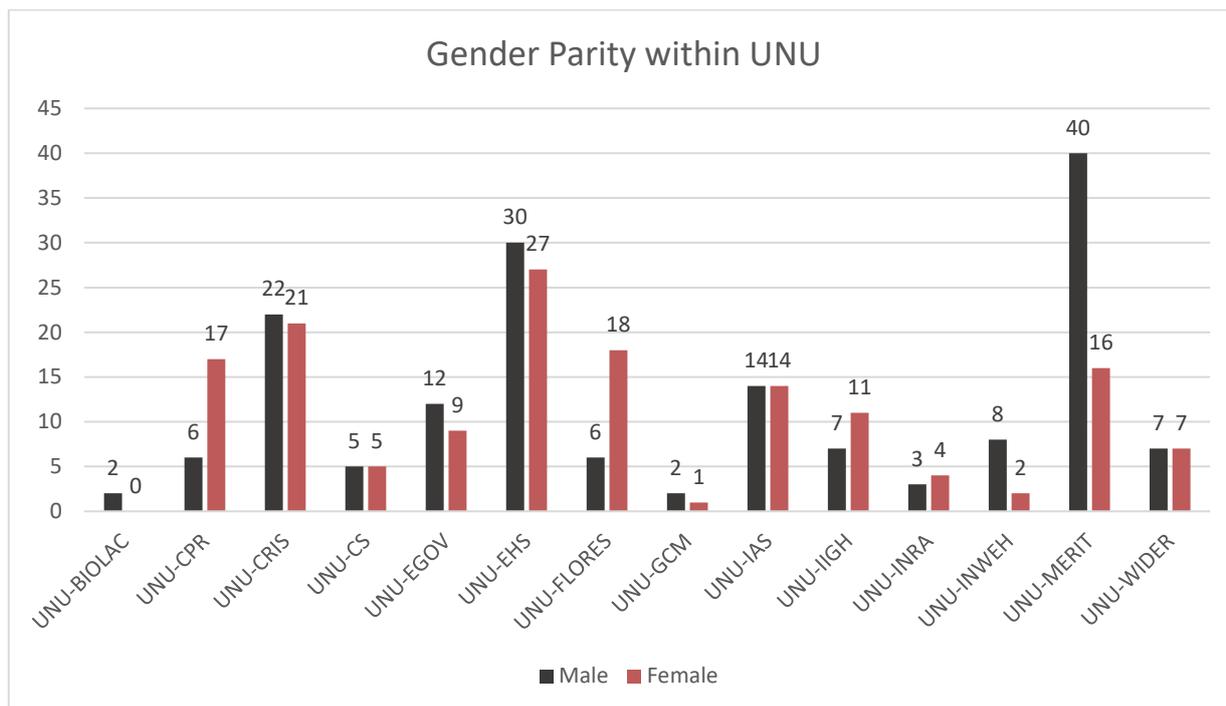
*“Few years ago, we had very few women at the management level but nowadays we have more women at this level. This has been strategically done within the UNU system. We have other types of contracts where we include most of our researchers and try to have gender balance. So, in terms of gender parity and representation, when we take into consideration all staff from UNU-EGOV we are close to reaching parity overall”*

The Action Plan aims for parity within UNU institutes. Although UNU-EGOV is not there yet, an effort is being done in this regard which is recognized by all staff.

### 3.5 Gender parity at UNU

Parity on a global level is analyzed based on the effort from the UNU system to include more women at higher levels and promote gender balance within the different institutions.

Collecting data from the global UNU website regarding the number of experts at each institution, it was possible to attain the results presented in Figure 2. The choice to consider the numbers available at the UNU website took into consideration that each institution website provided different data, with some considering administrative personnel and experts, others only considering the experts, and some making no distinction on the staff presented. To avoid different data analysis that could influence the results and have an official count on the number of experts by gender, the UNU.edu website numbers were used. The total values for each institution are presented, according to the information available on the website.



**Figure 2 – Gender distribution for experts in all UNU institutions**

Focusing on the gender distribution amongst experts from the different UNU institutions, the most balanced with the same number of experts, at the moment of information collection, were UNU-CS, UNU-IAS, and UNU-WIDER.

Comparing UNU-EGOV with other institutes that have about the same number of experts, UNU-EGOV is the only one with more male experts. UNU-CPR, UNU-FLORES, and UNU-IIGH have more female experts. The difference between the two genders is more accentuated at UNU-CPR and UNU-FLORES whilst UNU-EGOV and UNU-IIGH have a shorter gap to reduce this difference.

### 3.6 Culture and work environment

There is a strong concern within the UNU system to promote the creation of a gender-sensitive work environment. This is boosted by the institutionalization of gender culture and generating awareness about gender policies and other relevant aspects. This responsibility falls on each collaborator and only with the cooperation of each person will it be possible to achieve such an environment and culture.

Within UNU-EGOV there is a perception of gender culture and a friendly work environment that does not discriminate. Interviewees stated they mostly feel the unit has a gender-sensitive culture and that the work environment is very friendly.

*“Colleagues are polite and respectful of each other”*

*“(…) we have always made sure that there is gender awareness”*

*“It is a duty. It is something that needs to be done (…) so, it is part of the doings of the Unit (…) it is already part of our culture to incorporate gender”*

*“Gender mainstreaming, gender balance works in the UNU-EGOV. The Unit offers a more respectful environment”*

*“No difference in the treatment given to men and women in our Unit (...) by treating everyone equally. It is natural. If you are aware of the problem and you are well educated on the concept, it will come naturally to treat everyone the same and with respect”*

*“Generally, we are quite gender-neutral in the way we discuss things. So far, no specific complaints based on gender”*

*“When we identify situations where gender equality or gender is not being respected, we need to by all means protect the colleagues who are being abused or vulnerable in this regard”*

*“There is a good gender balance and equality at the Unit. In terms of types of activities...in terms of research preferences... in terms of topics, etc., we have perfect equal opportunity”*

Nonetheless, one interviewee left room for improvement stating that gender mainstreaming:

*“should be considered and treated as something innate.... an innate way of operation and organizing things. However, not sure if we as a Unit are already acting this way. This issue needs to be talked about... bring it artificially to the table... we should not think but act automatically with it”*

Another aspect related to the work environment that was mentioned several times during the interviews relates to the equality of opportunities offered within the unit. These may be in relation to participation in projects, representing the unit, or expressing oneself. It is regarded as something very important to have this ease of communication with everyone to enable personal choice and manifest one's opinions knowing that a person's value lies in their work and qualifications for the job other than in aspects like gender.

*“For our current management.....when there are these opportunities to speak and go on a mission for sort of ad hoc invitations, there is the possibility that management keeps an eye out on giving younger researchers, newer staff, less experienced staff, etc., the opportunity to go and speak at in an event, to do the mission and to participate but again it depends on whether or not it is justified based on the qualifications. This is a positive in terms of the gender equity within our Unit”*

*“We are in a working environment where this is taken as part of the decision-making process. There is always an open relationship between a supervisor and supervisee in terms of equal opportunities. People are always at ease to let the Director or their supervisors know if there are some factors related to family or personal consensus that could be relevant for decision making. Decisions on field activities are taken due to the qualifications, knowledge and the output of the activity, not based on family or personal issues”*

*“(...) the first thing is to know the specifics of the activity and who is qualified to carry out the activity and to represent the Unit (if it is an external event). Secondly, there is always a discussion with the officer to know if there are other aspects of the activity or project to take into consideration. There is an equal opportunity within the teams and at various levels of activity”*

*(...) we are always very worried with our decisions and actions in order to ensure the equity and equality of treatment of all the colleagues within the unit independently of the gender issues. So, everyone is allowed to do or carry out activities, go for conferences and other events, allow everyone to review papers for conferences, etc.”*

*“Generally, within the Unit, we all have equal opportunities. In all events we organize, in all invitations we receive, etc., our leaders always try to look for this balance and to give equal opportunity to everyone; namely for those*

*that are females and working from home with children. Those in leadership positions always try to give equal opportunity to everyone regardless of the circumstances of every employee's life"*

*"We all have the opportunity to discuss, raise issues, questions, concerns, propose a project or initiative, or to propose a project on anything significant for the Unit. We have the opportunity to attend events, conferences, take courses, etc. There are no limitations in our Unit in terms of the opportunities."*

*"Regarding UNU-EGOV, even my involvement with all the UNUs in terms of processes, tasks, action plans ... we look at it by providing equal opportunities for progression, motion, work, for all and more genders...equal consideration for the needs of the genders, equal pay, and benefits...I haven't seen any sort of discrimination between male and female, between their tasks assignments during our work"*

There is a general perception from all UNU-EGOV staff that a gender equality work environment and culture are present. There is respect and equal opportunities, and a constant pursuit for fairness in the selection process that does not discriminate on gender.

### 3.7 Gender mainstreaming in practice

This section provides an overview of the general perspective of the Unit's staff regarding the application of gender mainstreaming aspects into the everyday activities of the unit. Due to the different purposes and configurations, activities are divided into internal activities, and external collaborations, and research projects.

### 3.8 Internal activities

The institute director and local focal points must be the champions of implementing gender mainstreaming within each institute. Planning activities that boost gender awareness and promoting discussions on the topic are some of the tasks that can be done.

Within the UNU-EGOV Unit, the staff recognizes the effort being made at the management level to make the unit a gender-sensitive workspace.

*"The concept has always been there (in the Unit). It is always mentioned in all our internal meetings (...) Our director always mentions the need for research focusing on GM"*

*"We organize formal sessions relating to this from time to time. We also do these as a form of creating awareness amongst colleagues (...) these are the mechanisms that we use internally in order to spread this idea"*

The support provided is acknowledged accompanied by a sense of responsibility being asked from each collaborator regarding how gender mainstreaming is being introduced in their work.

*"I think that this is something that needs to be learned early and if you don't, you will definitely have a manager within the UN who will tell you where to find the gender data or even the evaluation manual when telling you or ask you where is your gender data"*

*"(...) we are all now asked to integrate these questions with gender mainstreaming and to take it into account at all levels of operations"*

One important aspect pointed out by a few interviewees relates to the chain of action put in motion within the UNU system to promote Gender mainstreaming and how it translates into practice at the unit. The

role of the local gender focal points is recognized as an important kick-off to introduce and monitor Gender Mainstreaming into the units' activities.

*“Even for the UNU system, GM is placed as one of the key success factors. Not just for paper purposes but something trusted to be one of the success factors of the Unit in terms of strong leadership, effective governance and effective communication amongst the staff.....and GM within the UNU-EGOV recognizes these key factors”*

*“In terms of having gender-integrated into our policies, programs, and standard operating procedures at the Unit, at this stage, in every single internal procedure, GM is present. (...) Since we had the gender focal point, this has become fundamental. It is a very good practice to have a gender focal point in all UNU institutes in coordination with a more global effort from the headquarters to push this forward and into our agenda (...) we have all the organizational, administrative procedural aspects of the Unit that we need to take into consideration to have a gender-sensitive approach. This applies to all internal processes from the most basic instruction released and disseminated for everyone or for the organization of a simple event, we need to take gender into consideration”*

An interesting curiosity regarding the acknowledgment of the gender aspect is that no interviewee made any direct mention of the Policy or Gender Action Plan. The seven mentions referred to in the frequency table are aspects associated with the Policy or the Action Plan. This can happen either because interviewees do not know of the existence of these documents or assume everyone knows they exist.

### 3.9 External collaborations and research projects

The public work produced by the UNU-EGOV focuses on external collaborations and research initiatives. External collaborations include consulting projects with other UN entities, international and government institutions either in academia or practice. These are usually associated with a client requesting a project to be implemented. Research projects refer to all research initiatives taken up by the Unit. These initiatives are usually internal research projects or involve collaborations with other external entities. These are different from external collaborations because the goal is the creation of new knowledge within the academic and scientific community.

Independently of the type of project, the Unit must assume its role in society and show the importance of leading by example. This happens both with the decision taken regarding gender issues at the start of a project and in the final recommendations provided. There must always be a careful approach to gender. Some excerpts from participants are shown below:

*“we are advising other countries and entities on policies to follow through to promote the concept. We also have an important role where we can be an example to others (...) it is beneficial for our Unit that strategically we can bring this aspect of gender upfront because that is what we are seeing in the context with other UN agencies but with the countries as well”*

Mainstreaming the gender approach implies that more and more institutions, countries, and society in general pay attention to these aspects. This elevates the expectations of clients regarding the use of gender considerations in projects and demands that the unit be prepared.

*“Gender is becoming something very basic in any kind of proposal or terms of reference that we see published. The implication for us is that we need to be trained and prepared to answer these requirements every time we see them explicitly and even when it is not requested explicitly, it will certainly be something that would be giving us extra points if we take and declare these aspects as key in the way we operate”.*

There is the opportunity for the unit to explore how gender can be considered in every project and embedded in the unit's way of operation.

### 3.9.1 Limitations to having a gender approach

There were opposing but complementing positions relating to the integration of a gender approach to projects presented by two interviewees.

Deriving from the cultural view that the unit already has a gender-sensitive culture, integrating gender in projects and external activities, one participant stated:

*“it is definitely welcome as it is already incorporated in our gender habits and culture. No implications seen (...) It is like separating the gender approach from the project approach. For me, it is already part of the project. It is part of the project management approach, the proposal and the evaluation”.*

On the other hand, there is a concern raised:

*“we do not have a strong effort dedicated to this area. We still haven't done enough or created a good position for it. It is still a side work, aside from research...it is not part of our field, it is not part of the core research program (...) we are very far and contribution into this area is limited (...) it is very difficult to do research in e-Government, e-Governance, and Gender but there is a link (...) Therefore, I'll have to say it is very superficial, extremely superficial at the Unit, in terms of the research program and research efforts”*

Other interviews support both claims above. Although most interviewees agree on the fact the UNU-EGOV has a gender-sensitive culture and work environment, a set of limitations as to why a gender approach is lacking in most projects was mentioned and translated into the unwillingness to put it into practice. Thus, a participant said:

*“there is the will to incorporate the concept into research. However, putting it into practice is still challenging and not fully done”.*

The most cited limitations include the project objectives, the client objectives, and demands, resource exhaustion, and the type of project or type of research being conducted. The following quotes mention the latter aspects.

*“In terms of research, it is even more difficult to incorporate GM into research particularly when we are not doing research about people sometimes. If we are focusing on countries or a given kind of technology, it can be difficult”.*

*“In terms of some of the research we are doing, because we are doing a lot of policies to practice, it is not so much in our own internal research, the gender is not necessarily a topic, we are doing a little bit on that. In our own projects, we can do by-products but not with our clients. If they do not want a gender perspective, we should not force it. Time, availability, and resources should also be considered when trying to add a gender perspective into a report for instance especially where it is not required”*

*“It is limited to the project objectives, and it also depends on the client list. But we try to always find a way to integrate GM and all its aspects in the project implementation. It may come in the strategic phase of the project; it may also be for policy development or implementation or action-based project. So, it depends on the type of project and the client's needs, but we also try to include GM and gender aspects within the project. But it is not always possible in all cases because of the limitations”.*

*“In terms of the research agendas, it may be difficult to incorporate them into that. Because very often the research agendas are driven by impetus like you are looking at questions that arise from the literature, you pick a question and you pursue it with the idea of considering a gender angle but at the end of the research, you find that you didn’t touch anything on gender because you run out of time, you try to get the paper out, etc.”*

Another aspect considered relevant by one interviewee focuses on the fact that:

*“We are not experts in gender research and gender-sensitive research. All the theoretical background and all the approaches that link GM into other fields of knowledge... we are not all familiar with these. None of us would risk saying that we are experts in GM and considering gender in their research. So, this is a very difficult challenge to address. Although we can find ways of accommodating gender into our research, we need to bear in mind that we are not experts”*

To guide research and possibly mitigate some of the concerns raised, one interviewee reminded that:

*“there is a tool that was developed within the network of UNU Focal Points. It is a checklist for GM. It was developed by researchers working with gender questions. It gave the researchers guidelines on how to integrate it throughout the process”*

This may be an aid for project planning and development. This is not very well known to experts at the unit and its promotion could be beneficial.

### 3.9.2 Parity and diversity in projects

As already mentioned, parity is the aspect most naturally associated with gender across interviewees. When thinking of applying a gender approach to research and consulting projects, interviewees mentioned, once again, parity as being relevant and frequently taken into consideration during projects.

*“(…) it is important to have male and female representations from UNU-EGOV (…) In terms of consulting projects or where there is some financing involved, it is the client or donor that takes it upfront in terms of the importance of having a team that is diverse. We take this into consideration but as well, proactively, we try to reinforce this aspect whenever there is an activity for it. But at this level, it will happen more within the project management team. From the strategic management point of view, it will come more from the appointment of the team that will be working on the project, more so making the project managers aware of the collaboration or project, and taking gender into perspective. So, it is kind of an awareness initiative”*

*“For example, when we receive requests to provide training to government officials around the world when we prepare our proposals to clients we always include some references in the proposals stating that we would very much appreciate the inclusion of student trainees including women. These are some of the elements we try to apply in order to promote GM. Mainly concerning consulting projects, there are two possibilities: a. If the client is not sending a balanced amount of students, we will not deliver the training, but we try to convince through dialogue, etc.”*

*“(…) we try to have a balance in terms of gender when it comes to interviewees, the scientific work that we use in the lectures or the course, etc.”*

*“(…) we try as much as possible to have a gender-balanced team. It is on a rollover basis. If the team leader is a male, the next in command is automatically a female and vice versa. 2. When it involves a partner, we also try to have a female team involved. The team of the partner is always required to be gender-balanced. 3. During the*

*proposal development, in the content, the gender mainstreaming approach is mentioned as part of the UN culture and as part of the way the project will be implemented and monitored. There is always a gender-specific indicator and most of the time, if there is training involved, there must be a quantitative indicator regarding the participation of women. When it is basically a research or study, the team needs to be balanced. We always try to have gender data within the research. This also depends on the research type. “*

The aspect of balanced teams is something that appears to be innate to the units' operations and project management, possibly as a result of the effort made in the past years by the UNU system and of the previous gender action plan which was very oriented towards gender parity.

### 3.9.3 Opportunities to include a gender approach in projects

According to some interviewees, there are opportunities and research possibilities to include a gender perspective in project activities.

*“(…) if you are doing research and trying to understand the perspectives of men and women from different topics/angles – policy-related or technology-related. Even if you are not implementing surveys but working with microdata that is disaggregated by gender, you can still try to analyze it as there are relevant differences between men and women in the data”.*

*“We try to put in as much effort as possible to promote it through gender-based analysis or gender impact assessments. So, when developing some strategic objectives for useful impact for men and women, what this means in terms of opportunities for both genders will be there. Basically, we try to integrate this into the projects we conduct”.*

*“It helps to study indicators on performance and how attention is given to gender opportunities and gender equality. So, we try to integrate as much as possible GM in both academic perspective and project implementation”.*

*(…) gender issues should be an explicit part of some research programs. We can study digital governance or digital transformation from a gender diagnostic perspective. There are domains in which this can be done and other domains in which it can be very difficult. In the domain of research, it is more oriented to people and society, this is certainly an issue and this perspective is important. The second perspective is that even when we discuss issues such as digital identity, it is believed that there can be different ways to approach this topic. Some of them are more appropriate to promote gender equality and to bring to the forefront the concept of gender”.*

*“We can use gender-sensitive language to have specific data collection and analysis within processes in our research, also to make data processes. The equal utilization of services for genders and more importantly, women and men are equal in the decision-making process. These are the basic processes and tools that should always apply. If these are applied, the impact would be that we will have better results in our research and projects”*

In conclusion, the main thing that one interviewee stands out is that:

*“it shouldn't be about HR, recruitments, having policies that empower women or to deal with situations where the organizations are not really promoting the concept but it is majorly about output. The mission of the organization is to make sure that whatever we deliver, we are integrating these questions into these outputs. GM is very broad because it encompasses all the various aspects related to gender and makes it compulsory to all our activities inside the organization but most importantly outside – in terms of deliverables and what we show to the public and external partners and in terms of what matters to us.”*

### 3.10 Recruitment process

One of the most relevant goals associated with the gender action plan is the recruitment process. How it is done, its fairness, its equity, and the integration of diversity in staff. Although not being able to directly assess the recruitment process at UNU-EGOV during project implementation, interviewees provided interesting content to describe such process.

There is a general sense of correctness and fairness in the recruitment process being done at the unit. Either for the recruitment of new staff or government fellows or organizing events.

*“The UNU-EGOV is thankfully applying gender equality and gender roles especially in the recruitment process”.*

*“The UNU-EGOV unit tries to bring balance to its recruitment process without any form of exposure that could be detrimental to the individuals”.*

*“At UNU-EGOV, in terms of recruitment, we try to employ people from various diversities, geographies, origins, etc.”*

There is this awareness of empowering women that was voiced by a few participants:

*“when there is a need to recruit someone for a specific activity in a project, gender balance is considered as much as equity. When there is a female in contrast to a male, looking at unique distinguishing features and characteristics especially of the female becomes paramount in order to go for the option of the female instead of the male...try to balance between the two profiles...if they are on an equal base, the female is chosen. Women need to be empowered and given equal opportunities”.*

*“in ICEGOV management, in any conference management, in the recruitment of government fellows (...) we are doing our best to invite women and it works very well because we had much more women as government fellows than men. So, there is effort towards that in the different activities that we are doing at the Unit (...) So in theory, we are very aware and there is effort. In practice, we are noticing that it is much more challenging”.*

The recruitment process, according to interview participants, has a gender balance concern. This concern is reflected not only in attracting a diverse group of people but also when selecting candidates.

*“When hiring, there is a balance rule that is being applied, also we have the ICEGOV participation, and the government fellowship program. These are three basic circumstances in which applications can be made to the Unit and equal opportunities can automatically be tested. There is gender balance applied in these processes”*

*“(...) try to get as many women submitting their CVs and proposals to be employed as much as men. This means going further in communication...trying to reach people. In principle, this may not apply to the jobs because most times we get two-thirds of men applying and one-third women, so we need to balance it so there can be a fair choice when it comes to employment”.*

*“For instance, the ICEGOV Conference...we try to balance the keynote speakers and chairpersons. Usually, it is around 24 high-profile role people so we try to have as many women as men speaking. When people apply for scholarships, although we usually have few women applying because there are few women authors in the field. We try to balance this as much as possible so that in the subsequent years, more women may apply”.*

*“(...) in the selection process for government fellows and when this selection process is done, we are very aware of gender breakdown. So, we select based on who we think has put together a good interview but then we sort of look at the list and we deduce how many men and women are in this breakdown, do we need to include more or not”.*

*Besides balance, one interviewee mentioned the diversity aspect as also playing an important role. “For the government fellowship indicators such as country of origin, gender, etc. are put into consideration. The Unit is quite a small think tank group so we lack so much in testing for equal opportunities”.*

There was a concern raised regarding the benefit that might be given to someone just because of their gender:

*“Gender balance policies sometimes fall into this aspect of gender balance especially from the angle of women. One cannot hire someone just because they are a woman. Some sort of expertise is needed. This is the main challenge for the coming years”*

This is also associated with the fact that there are fewer women in the eGov field and in consequence fewer women applying which implies a careful profile analysis and selection if achieving balance is a requirement.

*“In terms of training, capacity building and networking... organizing events, inviting speakers, organizing training, and selecting trainees for programs... when we do these, we need to abide by the principle of gender balance. This is still very challenging because in the ICT area there is still a predominance of men. It is quite challenging to find qualified women in this field and to make their voices heard”*

A contradictory opinion was also shared stating:

*“in terms of attracting people as candidates, we do not have a challenge with gender or in getting a balance between women and girls. We’ve seen a majority of female candidates every time. Not necessarily a big one but in general, the Unit has more of a challenge of attracting non-Portuguese speakers than gender so to speak. Our challenge is a different one to gender. That is a geographical balance challenge”*

### 3.11 Project Management using Pelikan

At the time of the analysis (May 2021), there were 38 projects concerning UNU-EGOV registered in Pelikan. From these, 23 projects consider a Gender Mainstreaming approach and/or have some gender equality objective but only one of them has to promote gender equality as the principal objective of the project - Measuring the Margins: Improving Global Digital Inclusion Metrics.

Regarding what practices will be implemented to facilitate gender mainstreaming through the project, the majority of projects focus on parity aspects regarding participant selection for some stage of the project, involved team, or results in dissemination. Gender is also mentioned as a type of data disaggregation, and in a few cases focused on the equity aspect while providing policy recommendations. These results are in line with interviewees' opinions and perspectives of the state of using a gender approach in research and other projects. They are very much aware of its importance but do not know how to better integrate it or pursue it in their projects.

Aspects mentioned by interviewees regarding projects include their knowledge of the Pelikan platform and how it helps to include the gender perspective into projects although at a very high level.

*“(...)whenever someone starts a new project, the project manager needs to go to Pelikan and register the project there. The project manager does this by describing the project and its objectives as well as the parties involved...there is a field specifically on GM to ask how the project will be contributing to GM. This is a way of reminding researchers and project managers that it is an obligation to integrate GM into their various projects. This is where there are more concrete steps for GM in terms of the policies, programs, and the procedures that support the policies”*

*“(...) we have the Pelikan where we insert and create new projects and we have very concrete questions related to gender there. So, this helps us from the very beginning to think about gender as something that we need to consider in the project. But it is mostly in terms of project management”*

*“When the project progress reports are being done, there is a section that focuses on Gender. E.g. we check for gender discrimination or gender discriminated numbers. There is always a mention of who is a female or not in project proposals”*

### 3.11.1 Projects on Gender

The Gender Focal Points have been highlighting projects from the various institutes within the UNU System that are directly or indirectly related to gender mainstreaming, gender equality, and more concretely to the SDG 5.

There are a total of 19 projects directly linked to SDG 5 and focusing on gender issues. These are from 6 UNU institutes as depicted in Table 7 below.

**Table 7 - Number of projects focused on gender aspects across the UNU institutes**

Institute	Number of projects
UNU-FLORES	1
UNU-GEST	1
UNU-IIGH	8
UNU-Macau	2
UNU-MERIT	6
UNU-WIDER	1

UNU-EGOV, as previously mentioned, does not integrate gender in its core research program and does not have research directly related to gender mainstreaming. This is reflected in the number of projects that have a gender dimension. However, a few recently conducted projects are somewhat or indirectly connected and related to gender. These are projects such as: “Measuring the Margins” which is associated with SDG 10 - (reduced inequalities), and the “MOOC Media and Information Literacy (MIL) for Government Officials and Policy-makers” associated with SDG 16 - (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), both of which have some connection to gender. Both are considered gender-sensitive which means that

there is an approach to research that considers gender in the project's rationale and addresses it within the project design and methodology but they do not (yet) extend to analysis and action to address gender inequalities.

UNU-EGOV is also beginning to get involved in the supervision of gender associated master's and PhD thesis. Two of the Unit's researchers are currently supervising a project on gendering the smart cities.

### 3.12 Gender Mainstreaming in communication

The way gender is communicated either visually, written, or verbally, plays an important role in how the unit is perceived relating to gender, as well as other types, of discrimination in all its forms.

Interviewees highlighted the careful choice of images to present a gender balance:

*"(...) we also try to show or give the idea of gender balance in the Unit especially with the creation of an image. Whenever we are creating and posting images for events, we always try to have the same number of men and women in the pictures (...) We are sensitive to this issue and we have a responsibility to it".*

Even so, some limitations have been proven as hindrances to this task once again related to client's requests or project specifications:

*"Even in our posters, there's always a female element or touch... our pictures are often blended. Sometimes it may be difficult finding the right picture to portray the proper gender balance due to the client's specification. It is difficult to find that image or content that really highlights the conclusion of the report without being a little bit too stereotypical or trying too hard".*

When it comes to speaking or writing, one participant mentioned the struggle of achieving gender neutrality:

*"we do not have a gender-neutral language because that's quite difficult to achieve... we always consider both of our points of view. So, we are very much aware and working towards this"*

On the other hand, another interviewee considered:

*"when in public it only comes naturally to represent the Unit and do things right regarding the topic of presentation. Speaking or communicating in events, gender does not come as a concern....it comes naturally, and it comes as something that is implied in everything we do. No specific concern regarding gender when in regular communication or participation in events"*

It was put in general perspective by one participant, stating:

*"there are many ways and subtle ways of doing this. We are still learning how to do this. We are defining some rules and putting in place some recommendations. For example, when we introduce some images in the news, booklets, etc., we try to always include female images, we include diversity, that is, people from different countries and cultures. More so, conveying this message to the external audience should come naturally and not in a strong way.....should be transferred in a subtle manner and in the right way. These kinds of mechanisms, attitudes, and behaviors can be used to convey the message even better"*

It is about representing the unit perspective on gender in a mindful way to get across to clients, partners, and society. As one interviewee stated:

*“the basic output here is to ensure the representation of women and men in the public space in terms of public representation of the Unit. If possible, organize a presentation to silence the negativity within and outside our Unit...also to silence and challenge gender stereotypes to overcome such negativity, create a gender balance and also promote gender equality through titles to provide a more balanced interface towards how we interact outside, in public”*

### 3.13 Training

As part of the gender action plan, UNU has been offering an online training named “I know gender”. This training is mandatory for all UNU staff. All UNU-EGOV staff has completed the online course.

An interviewee mentioned the training, its usefulness, and impact:

*“General view began from initial training on GM which was quite exciting...first time working with an organization with this kind of focus. So, going through the training materials on GM and understanding the UN perspective on GM was really interesting. It is indeed a good thing to have in an organization and it is an important agenda for any organization”*

### 3.14 UNU-EGOV team suggestions

Throughout the interviews, participants shared ideas and suggestions for improving gender mainstreaming within the unit. The suggestions are mainly related to project design and development, communication, and internal initiatives to take action. These ideas are briefly presented followed by quotes from the interviews.

#### 3.14.1 Research design and development

<p>Project design checklist</p>	<p><i>“In terms of GM, this should be applied from the beginning when the researcher is thinking about the project, how they are going to structure it, the types of research methods to be used, how they will be selecting the participants (interviews... are you taking into consideration both men and women), do you have representation from both sides? are you inviting leaders from both genders?. All these considerations need to be considered”</i></p> <p><i>“Have a checklist that will sort of remind you to pay attention to these things”</i></p> <p><i>“In consulting are there procedures where we stop and ask: ‘what is the gender breakdown of this team that is going on a team’? Or what is the gender breakdown of people that we engage with as we need to involve various people in our consultations, etc. So there may be areas of our activities where we don't have defined procedures. We are relying on people to remember to ask these questions”</i></p> <p><i>“Applying certain checklists as approaches in our research proposals or even in our personal research. We do this but not sure if it is completely clear and</i></p>
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	<p><i>transparent but it can be seen in our research. Generally, when we are starting to prepare a proposal for a project, we should include an item that relates to gender equality”</i></p> <p><i>“From a research point of view, maybe some guidelines need to be provided so that we can somehow include gender into our normal research activities....it is a bit challenging because sometimes we want to do the right thing but we do not know how to go about it. This is problematic because it goes beyond equality between women and men”</i></p>
<p>Results dissemination orientation</p>	<p><i>“further down the line when you are writing and producing your research output and when you present it is very relevant.....it is still not clear the best way to highlight GM in the research project. If you have a scientific paper that is about gender, then it is central.....you will see it in the title, abstract, and conclusions. But if you are doing a paper about Artificial Intelligence (AI), how will gender be included in the work – abstract, introduction, research questions, and conclusions. This is not very clear for our colleagues in research to bring in feasibility. Even if it is integrated through the process, in terms of the output there could be some guidance on how to achieve this”</i></p>
<p>Peer review of project proposals focusing on gender</p>	<p><i>“the challenge is that we don’t get that cross-correlation with our research ideas, we don’t review each other’s work. For example, if you are planning a research project, it would be nice if there was a research review process – for anyone. If every piece of the project we did within the Unit started like this GM project – as in, speculated to a research review committee, we would be creating an opportunity for someone to say: ‘what about the gender perspective? Or is there a gender element in this research question? There is a checklist of questions to be asked. Some of them will be outside of the scope of gender, eg., ‘why are we doing this research?.....does it fit our mandate? How does it contribute to the SDGs? What methods are there? These could be added as a checklist for the committee every time they look at someone’s research”</i></p>
<p>Research proposals training sessions</p>	<p><i>“how we can within our limited resources and capacities and limited knowledge, how we can integrate GM into the different projects.....So, trying to have some sort of awareness raised in training sessions for researchers with a key interest in having some basic instructions and resources that we could use for our research generally for us to get a picture of what GM is, what we can do about it.”</i></p>

### 3.14.2 Communication

<p>Glossary on gender concepts</p>	<p><i>“A table of terms can be shared with new terms that are gender-sensitive and shared with the team and encourage them to use in the communication process within the Unit. If we have a table for new gender-sensitive terminologies, it would be easier for everyone”</i></p>
<p>Create awareness in younger generations</p>	<p><i>“we should involve young ones and debate these kinds of issues... all the SDGs but especially the gender issue. Space should be created for discussion on gender”</i></p>
<p>Summary of gender mainstreaming at UNU-EGOV to be used for public speeches</p>	<p><i>“Maybe a half a page reminder for people who are going to speak or people who are going to present things would help. Having a communication summary of who we are and what our Unit represents and its main focus would be very useful for anyone appearing in public because they could refer to it and on there you could include what are the critical issues or what the critical issue is GM for our Unit. Just a simple reminder because very often in these situations, you just don’t remember”</i></p>

### 3.14.3 Events and training

<p>Promote discussion on Gender Mainstreaming (internally or externally)</p>	<p><i>“There is a need for the creation of new things – research, events, conferences, workshops, and seminars, etc.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is a need to create this space for discussion. It is very important. It could be a digital space, also in the format of a seminar, workshop, conference, etc. Up until now, this space has not been created within our unit”</i></p> <p><i>“We should make more exercise with people who have expertise in this area, not just digital exercises alone. Let us create games on equal and gender balance. If possible, let’s employ a psychologist or an expert in this area to give space for the creation of questions in this area. Just to analyze the situation and commitment. If you don’t do these things, it will not change the way people behave. It is important to reinforce these issues”</i></p> <p><i>“For future study, it is important to speak to the Universities (the entire UNU system). It is not only the problem of our Unit but of all UNU units in general, not just for the balance but also other areas include the research area being worked on currently”</i></p>
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	<p><i>“One method could be to just keep having this kind of discussion all the time so that we can understand that there is no difference, except for opportunity differences”</i></p> <p><i>“It is important to organize some seminar or webinar to explain some issues about GM and the process that will help us understand it more clearly within the Unit. This will be useful and how it can be applied in a systematic way will be welcomed”</i></p>
Alternative and new training	<p><i>“More topics on GM should be introduced (both short and online courses)”</i></p>

#### 3.14.4 Formal methods

General tool for Gender Mainstreaming	<p><i>“We need a tool that will help colleagues think naturally. A tool that will create an attitude in the way of acting...that should be innate or inborn. The tool should have this kind of value. If this study applies or proposes a tool, people may not be able to apply it in a strict way in all situations”</i></p> <p><i>“So far, we have been doing things more informally. If we can establish methods and a set of tools that can help us to move forward in this regard, we could be inspired by the indicators that are used to measure SDG 5. Something like this would be good to have. It is very difficult to look into specific SDGs in isolation. And with GM, this happens a lot. It is not an easy task to look into GM because it touches so many areas and is closely related to other SDGs. Therefore, it is very difficult to find the proper approach that considers gender because the other SDGs have close links with SDG 5 and our main contribution would be to another SDG, so we need to be careful when thinking about this”</i></p> <p><i>“We could aim for a framework that could be applied at the UNU level... A flexible framework where we could adapt the different indicators considering files of the specific units. A contribution like this for the UNU and the UN as a whole would be great”</i></p>
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## 4. Discussion

As part of its goals and following the UNU's major objectives for the implementation of gender mainstreaming and the achievement of gender equality, gender mainstreaming at the UNU-EGOV has become not only a strategic approach but also a systemic process for institutional transformation. Thus, its implementation at the Unit is impacting the Unit's work environment, culture, as well as operating activities but with limited impact on research. The end goal of successfully communicating gender mainstreaming is a significant part of the Unit's objectives for the attainment of gender equality. Unfortunately, the area of research has not seen a significantly great impact as challenges abound in the integration of a gender dimension into the various research areas conducted at the Unit.

For the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in research, the need for specific targeted initiatives or interventions to address gender equality is not precluded. This study, therefore, calls for strategies and designs to fill specific gaps in terms of the integration of a gender dimension into research which is currently missing in the Unit.

This section discusses the current status quo of gender mainstreaming at UNU-EGOV after a careful analysis of the gender action plan goals spelled out in Table 1 above. The goals are aligned to the objectives posed in the study and thereafter summarized in this discussion section. These are used to describe the situation depicted in the Unit.

### a) To assess the state of affairs of gender mainstreaming at the UNU-EGOV

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy places the goal of gender equality at the center of the UNU-EGOV, especially in all its processes and actions. The strategy is oriented towards equality and parity for all staff at the Unit. Following the goal to maintain and wherever necessary, revise gender benchmarks and indicators, the study confirms the promotion of gender equality within the Unit. This implies that gender mainstreaming is recognized, accepted and its implementation covers all levels of management, and activities within the Unit except for research. For the inculcation of a gender dimension in research, it is necessary to introduce certain tools and methods.

Currently, for matters on gender mainstreaming in-house or external, the Unit is represented by a Gender Focal Point Officer who is also in charge of the Unit's Administration. Some of the main tasks and responsibilities of the gender focal point officer include: (i) The dissemination of gender mainstreaming resources and information on gender equality practices to both the Director of the Unit and the Rector of UNU; (ii) Provide support for the UNU main gender focal points and channel communication to and from the Directors of both the UNU-EGOV and the UNU system. In principle, the gender focal point officer communicates and disseminates information on gender equality and parity amongst the UNU Institutes.

The online training on gender offered by UNU was completed by all UNU-EGOV staff. More so, staff demonstrates good awareness of Gender Mainstreaming.

### b) To improve the outcome and impact of gender mainstreaming within the Unit which contributes to SDG 5.

To improve the outcome of gender mainstreaming at the Unit, and to contribute to the enhancement of gender equality and women empowerment, in the long run, the Unit aligns its strategies and operations with those of the UN and UNU systems by mainstreaming gender equality into almost all aspects of the Unit strategically and systematically, thus, scaling up actions that support the empowerment of women at the Unit. Consequently, some of the key themes addressed by SDG 5 at the UNU-EGOV include: (I) Women in leadership positions. Currently, the Director of the Unit is a female, and the Head of Administration is

female as well; (II) Diversity and equal opportunity for all personnel; (III) Equal remuneration for both men and women holding the same hierarchical level of office, etc.,

c) Introduction of a gender dimension to research areas within the Unit

Currently, not every research conducted at the Unit has a gender component to it. One of the reasons being that gender-related issues and concepts are complex. Therefore, defining concepts and solving issues that arise around the concept will require a mainstreaming strategy applied to the life cycle of the research beginning from the start to the end of the project.

Another reason is the lack of expertise in gender research at the Unit, which makes gender integration in research more challenging. Almost all interviewees mentioned the lack of a gender research expert as a major pitfall for the absence of a gender-focus in research at the Unit. To improve the mindsets and skills of personnel regarding gender mainstreaming, it is necessary to set up a guide on integrating gender in research. In setting up a guide for the integration of a gender dimension in research, it is necessary to introduce certain tools and methods or a framework that will guide researchers.

More so, a gender integration measure should be developed to scale up the rigor and intentionality of gender in research. Currently, this is lacking, however, through the introduction of a structured gender guide, toolkit, or framework, gender can contribute to research and push further the promotion of gender equality. The gender guide should be a mechanism to promote the integration of gender mainstreaming in research and other activities within the Unit. Significantly, there should be an increased awareness and knowledge about gender issues, which should spur the development of a toolkit or framework for institutional reflection with a mainstream gender focus, as well as contribute to deeper inclusion of a gender approach in the various research fields in the Unit.

d) The promotion of gender equality and gender parity at all levels, including research, administration, and communication.

The Unit promotes gender equality by treating all staff equally while providing equal opportunity and support. In trying to achieve gender balance and parity especially in recruitment exercises, organizing conferences, and workshops, a 50/50 gender balance score is applied in the process. For example, to ensure gender parity during workshops and conferences organized by the Unit, at least one female speaker or panellist is included wherever possible. The Unit discourages participation in events with all-male panels. During recruitment processes, the recruiting managers ensure an equal number of qualified candidates or push for the inclusion of at least one qualified female candidate and one qualified male candidate in each of their recruitment shortlists.

## 5. Conclusion: Recommended avenues for next steps

The study considered gender mainstreaming by exploring and analyzing the state of affairs of the concept within the UNU-EGOV Unit. The Beijing Platform for Action 1995 requires that gender mainstreaming is communicated and implemented at all levels of an institution. From the analysis of this study, gender mainstreaming is communicated in both the internal and external workings of the Unit. However, integrating the gender approach into research poses a major challenge as researchers come from diverse fields of research. It is, therefore, necessary for the Unit to focus on the promotion of a gender mainstreaming approach and possibly push for gender perspectives that can be integrated into research.

To be able to foster a gender mainstreaming and/or gender equality approach in research, the study proposes that a set of gender mainstreaming objectives be put in place. These may trigger but not guarantee total acceptance in the Unit. Recommended objectives may be in the following aspects: (i) Mapping and enhancing gender dimensions in research programs, (ii) Building collaborations with institutions, the academia, etc., to promote institutional change on gender equality, and (iii) Putting measures in place for gender awareness, capacity, and competence development tools to foster this change within the Unit.

### i. Mapping and enhancing gender dimensions in research programs

Integrating a gender approach in research programs involves putting into consideration aspects of sex and gender throughout the entire life cycle process of research. This may include decisions on who handles the research agenda, defining the research questions, and research methods to apply during the research analysis and reporting. More so, the push for a structured institutional approach towards the promotion of a gender dimension especially in research programs is essential. It is therefore important that every research program conducted is free of gender bias and takes into account the potential effects of gender on the formulation of research questions, study participants, data gathering, theoretical framing, analysis etc.

### ii. Building collaborations with institutions, and the academia

To promote institutional change on gender equality, engaging in partnerships with funding agencies, government institutions, universities, etc., is of great importance. One of the requirements to the UNU system is there be collaborations inter institutional meetings where gender mainstreaming is pushed or encouraged. This will also help in addressing any gender imbalance that may appear during the committee meetings, negotiations, and dialogues. Lastly, it will ensure a strengthened gender dimension in research programs.

### iii. Putting measures in place for gender awareness, capacity, and competence development

A useful way to create gender awareness is not to shy away from sensitive topics or issues related to gender (in)equality as this will help monitor the progress of gender equality and eliminate any gender gaps that may exist within the Unit. Gender awareness-raising, capacity building, and competence development can occur in a lot of ways. Some of which are:

- a. Prepare a training guide to focus on gender mainstreaming and gender equality. A gender perspective must be added to the training materials and programs for all staff including senior personnel.
- b. Ensuring an efficient and effective form of capacity building that will meet the needs of staff. This may be in the form of organizing an in-house workshop following the “*I know gender*” UN online course. This should allow for participation and interaction amongst staff members. The purpose of the continuous training is to remember the exercise that includes aspects from the “*I know gender*” course and more so, to focus on aspects particular to the unit and the type of research conducted in the Unit.

- c. Prepare a guideline for the use of gender-sensitive language in communication, administration, and research to provide practical suggestions or recommendations on how to ensure that language and words are not gender discriminatory and also for communication in general. A part of the guideline should include recommendation on gender-neutral language to guide on non-neutral phrases and words as well as likely alternatives to these.
- d. Prepare a checklist for research projects noting the kinds of gender issues that might occur in research and reminding researcher to check for these and address them in the design, conduct and reporting of their research.

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# Annex A – Project Timeline

	January	February	March	April	May	June
Content Development						
<i>Project background</i>						
<i>Interview guide</i>						
<i>Formal invitation letter preparation</i>						
<i>Sending formal invitation letter</i>						
Data Collection						
<i>Document Analysis</i>						
<i>Literature review</i>						
<i>Interviews</i>						
<i>Interview Analysis</i>						
Structure Literature Review						
Perform results analysis						
Results presentation						
Report Dissemination						

## Annex B – Interview Guide

	Key areas	Key questions
RQ1	<p>Gender mainstreaming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaning</li> <li>• Promoting the concept</li> </ul> <p>Integration</p> <p>Equal opportunities within the Unit</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your perspective on gender mainstreaming?</li> <li>2. As one of the mandates for the UNU-EGOV, what does it mean for the Unit?</li> <li>3. Is promoting gender equality part of the Unit’s general practice?</li> <li>4. The UNU-EGOV has an official statement on its mandate for the promotion of gender equality and its approach for pushing gender mainstreaming. How do you put it into practice?</li> <li>5. How do you perceive gender mainstreaming as being integrated into the policies, programs, and standard operating procedures of the UNU-EGOV?</li> <li>6. Is there a gender balance in the Unit? If yes, what and how is it amongst members at various levels or departments (fields of activity) of the Unit? If not, is there a formal plan to drive this within the Unit?</li> <li>7. Do you think equal opportunities amongst the different fields of activity within the Unit are being promoted? How do you see this happening? If no, why don’t you see this happening? What strategy or approach is being put in place to effectively promote equal opportunities within the Unit?</li> </ol>
RQ2	<p>Gender mainstreaming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods and tools</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. What are the implications of using a gender approach in the UNU-EGOV (development – business and staff, research, and administrative) practices?</li> <li>9. What gender mainstreaming methods and tools have you established, applied, and adopted? What are the outcomes? Have these strategies and approaches worked so far?</li> <li>10. Following the UNU-EGOV policies, practices, and standard procedures, what are the suitable methods for the implementation of gender mainstreaming?</li> </ol>
Others	Administrations and Communications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Given that you create the public face of the UNU-EGOV, how do you ensure gender mainstreaming in communications for the Unit?</li> </ol>

	Strategic Management	<p>12. Number of publications that are gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, and have gender awareness.</p> <p>13. Do the associated members and staff show or demonstrate a commitment to gender equality and the implications of gender mainstreaming formally and informally? And is the responsibility for gender mainstreaming exercised?</p> <p>14. How does gender mainstreaming occur in the consulting projects and the collaboration of projects in and for the Unit?</p> <p>15. Is commitment strengthened in adopting a gender mainstreaming strategy and gender equality perspective to decision making in the UNU-EGOV?</p>
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