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Executive Summary

EVALUATION STUDY OF THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE PROGRAMME

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WORK-LIFE BALANCE PROGRAMME

Summary of the Programme Implementation

This document is a summary of the Final Evaluation Study Report of the Programme Work-Life Balance and Gender Equality developed in Portugal within the scope of the EEA Grants 2014-2021.

The content presented is guided by the commitment to respond to the evaluation questions set out by the Evaluation Guideline EEA of the Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC). The evaluation was guided by the main elements of analysis resulting from the multi-method approach considered in the evaluation, in particular:

- Desk research (including the analysis of the documentary material of the projects);
- Conducting semi-directive interviews with the programme operator and other relevant stakeholders;
- 10 case studies, including auscultation of representatives of the beneficiary entities, partner entities and sample of final recipients (if applicable), in addition to the analysis of the respective project documentation;
- Application of the questionnaire survey to all supported projects.

The Work-Life Balance and Gender Equality Programme (WLB) follows on from PT07 - Mainstreaming Gender

Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance, implemented by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, and is funded by the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (EEA Grants), promoted by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

The two main objectives of the EEA Grants are to reduce social and economic disparities in Europe and to strengthen bilateral relations between beneficiary countries and donor countries.

In Portugal, the EEA Grants 2014-2021 are structured into five programmes, including:

- Work- Life Balance Programme;
- Blue Growth Programme;
- Environment Programme;
- Culture Programme;
- Active Citizens Programme.

The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG, in Portuguese) is the Programme Operator of the Work- Life Balance and Gender Equality Programme, appointed following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Portuguese Government and the Donor Countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) on 27/05/2017.

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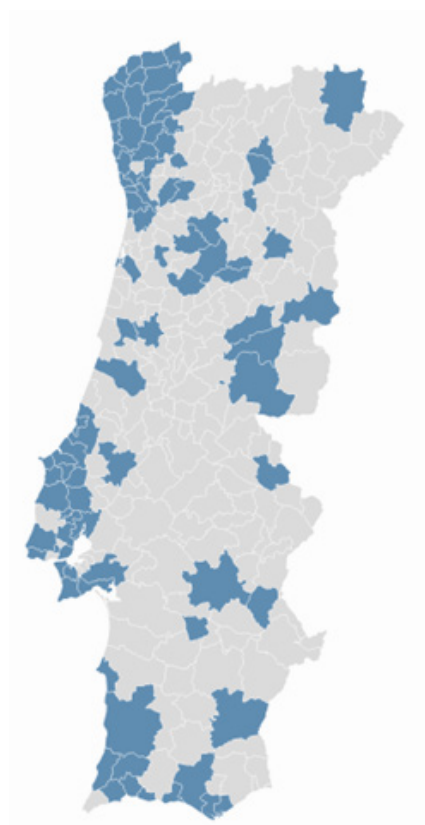


In line with the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 - 'Portugal Mais Igual' - ENIND, the Work- Life Balance and Gender Equality Programme focuses on equality between men and women and work-life balance, with a special focus on research, local development and social cohesion. The final budget for the programme is €7,176,470.59, of which €6,100,000 from the EEA Grants (including €178,037.00 for Bilateral Cooperation) and €1,076,470.59 from national contribution.

The programme supported innovative and structuring projects in 3 priority areas:

- Gender equality and work-life balance;
- Good governance;
- Violence against women and domestic violence.

The Programme was implemented through the development of six pre-defined projects, the opening of 4 'Open Calls' and 3 'Small Grant Schemes'. The calls ran from 2019 to 2021, with projects' implementation running until 30/04/2024, and made it possible to support 33 projects, with a grant of €6,366,534 and covering the various priority areas defined.



| Area of Intervention | Pre-defined Projects | Open Calls | Small Grant Scheme | TOTAL |
|--|----------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|
| WORK-LIFE BALANCE | 3 | 6 | 8 | 17 |
| GOOD GOVERNANCE | 1 | 6 | | 7 |
| VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| Totals | 6 | 15 | 12 | 33 |

TOTAL FUNDED AMOUNT:

7.176.470,59 €

33 projects

29 project promoters

141 national partners

34 partners from donor countries

22 projects with national coverage

94 municipalities covered

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| Outcome | Outputs | Concursos/Projetos |
|---|--|---|
| Outcome 1 - Enhanced gender equal opportunities in the workplace | 1.1. Workplace related gender-equality instruments developed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDP #1 - Equality Platform and Standard Open Call#1 - System for assessing the value of work and pay and development of instruments for measuring gender inequalities in work organizations |
| | 1.2. Pilot programme for women leaders developed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDP #4 - Promova – Gender Equality Opportunities in Senior Management |
| | 1.3. Instruments to combat gender inequalities in education and vocational training developed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDP #2 - Ge-HEI – Gender Equality in Higher Educations Institutions Open Call#2 - Projects to combat sex segregation in educational and professional choices and discrimination in the labour market |
| | 1.4. Knowledge on workplace-related gender equality generated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SGS#1 – Studies on the economic impact of gender equality SGS#3 – Elaboração de Estudos/Livros Brancos para promover a igualdade entre mulheres e homens |
| Outcome 2 - Improved accountability systems for women's equal participatio | 2.1. National Statistics System on Gender Equality developed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDP #3 - National Statistics System on Gender Equality |
| | 2.2. Gender equality mainstreaming at local and regional level supported | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Call#5 - Intervention projects to promote gender equality at local level |
| Outcome 3 - Improved system for the protection and prevention of domestic and gender-based violence | 3.1. Domestic and gender-based violence prevention programmes supported | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SGS #2 – Prevention projects for children and young people and promoting non-violent masculinities |
| | 3.2. Effectiveness of legislation and policies on domestic and gender-based violence assessed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Call#4 - Projects to improve protection of victims of violence against women and domestic violence |
| | 3.3. Model system for coordinated multidisciplinary response to domestic and gender-based violence developed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Call#4 - Projects to improve protection of victims of violence against women and domestic violence |
| | 3.4. Model system for early psychological support and intervention in trauma related to domestic violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDP #6 - BY your Side - Breaking the intergeracional cycle of domestic violence |
| | 3.5. Improved knowledge on the situation of the victims of violence in the context of sexual exploitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDP #7 - Improved prevention, assistance, protection and (re)integration system for victims of sexual exploitation |

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MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

- Assess the impact of the Programme in Portugal, in articulation with public policies in the field of Reconciliation and Gender Equality
- Analyse how the projects responded to the identified needs
- Evaluate the extent to which the Programme's objectives were achieved through project implementation
- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the Programme's implementation
- Produce recommendations on areas for improvement
- Measure and quantify the impact of the support provided on the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the projects
- Identify success stories
- Analyse the sustainability of the Programme







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Evaluation criteria and questions

| Evaluation Criteria | Evaluation Question |
|--|---|
|  <p>Programme Relevance Assess whether the projects responded to the needs initially identified by the Programme Operator</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the defined objectives and areas of intervention of the Programme well designed, appropriate and did they correspond to the needs diagnosed by the Programme Operator? • To what extent was the programme complementary to other existing support during the intervention period? |
|  <p>Effectiveness of the Programme Assess and interpret the results achieved and how well they align with the objectives agreed with the EEA Grants.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were the Programme's objectives achieved? • Did the results achieved contribute to achieving the defined objectives of the Programme? • What factors influenced the achievement of the objectives? |
|  <p>Expected Impacts of the Programme Measure and quantify the current and foreseeable impacts of the support provided, both on the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the projects.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What results can be attributed to the Programme in terms of raising awareness, research and knowledge about gender equality and promoting work-life balance? • To what extent has encouraging the establishment of partnerships (national and bilateral co-operation) resulted in strengthening the impact of the actions and the transfer of experiences and know-how? • To what extent have the different results produced been retained and utilized, including through the replication and scalability of practices and projects? • What is the foreseeable impact of the Programme on the promotion of gender equality, particularly in terms of: Capacity to participate in the design and implementation of public policies (production of scientific knowledge, production/updating of data, innovation, dissemination,...); Campaigns/strategies to influence public policies; Capacity to propose and change laws, policies and practices; Advocacy and monitoring capacity; Partnership work; Involvement and mobilization of target groups, Awareness raising, training and capacity building. |
|  <p>Sustainability</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue? To what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue over the next five years? • What are the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain the benefits over time? • To what extent have the different results produced remained and been utilized, including through replication and scalability of practices and projects? |

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METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The evaluation methodology implemented relied on a range of information sources and employed multiple data collection and analysis techniques, enabling the articulation of quantitative and qualitative dimensions. This methodological approach ensured the triangulation of diverse perspectives and knowledge bases, thereby supporting a comprehensive response to the Study Objectives and each Evaluation Question.

Desk Research

Semi-structured
interviews

Questionnaire
survey

Benchmarking

Case studies

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

The Work-Life Balance Programme plays a fundamental role in the Portuguese context, as it enabled the creation of a public policy response framework and the development of a range of projects addressing key needs, gaps, and challenges identified in Portugal.

The supported projects mobilised a portfolio of high-quality public and private entities, and involved, within their ecosystem, a network of international partners.

The existence of pre-defined projects within the Programme's three main intervention areas targeted innovative and highly relevant domains aimed at addressing the identified needs. The comparative assessment by beneficiaries, in relation to other support mechanisms, positions

the Programme at a high level of positive appreciation.

The strong demand from organisations working with the Programme's thematic areas and target groups also attests to its relevance. It is also important to highlight the strong synergy and structural contribution of the Programme to the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018–2030 – “Portugal + Equal”, to which it contributes across 24 specific measures.



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Effectiveness of the Programme

The Work-Life Balance and Gender Equality Programme aimed to improve work-life balance, emphasizing gender equality, local development, and social cohesion. It supported innovative and strategic projects in three key areas: Work-life balance, Good Governance and Violence against women and domestic violence. The projects carried out most of the activities and delivered the products defined in their applications, achieving the outputs they had set out to reach. This allowed for the amplification of results and contributed to achieving the three main Programme outcomes, with particular emphasis on the following results:

- **Development of instruments related to gender equality in the labour market**, including the EQUAL@WORK Digital Platform, the Portuguese Standard on Remuneration Equality Management Systems between Women and Men, and a job evaluation methodology free from gender bias, designed for the clothing and tanning sectors.
- **Creation of a pilot programme developed for women in leadership positions**, which was highly successful and continued beyond the project's official end.
- **Development of tools promoting gender equality in educational and career choices**, including both the work carried out with school communities and the development of intervention methodologies/training resources with potential for replication, as well as the knowledge generated on gender equality in higher education institutions and the integration of the gender perspective in research processes and content.
- **Knowledge generation on gender equality in the labour market**, through the support of four studies on the economic impact of gender inequalities and four white papers promoting gender equality.
- Development of the National Gender Equality Statistics System, compiling 475 gender equality indicators.
- Promotion of gender equality at local and regional levels, through direct intervention with 49 municipalities and 2 intermunicipal communities. Diagnoses were conducted, and local policy tools/methodologies were implemented. Noteworthy is the close work with women and girls, promoting their empowerment and increased political and civic participation.
- Support for domestic and gender-based violence prevention programmes, with a focus on work with children and young people to develop interpersonal skills free from stereotypes and promote a culture of non-violence, as well as the creation of self-representative women's networks.
- Assessment of the effectiveness of legislation and policies on violence against women and domestic violence, including an evaluative study on the impact of measures applied to perpetrators.
- Development of a model system for a coordinated multidisciplinary response to domestic and gender-based violence, including the creation of the ViViDo Platform, aimed at optimizing processes and modernizing administrative procedures within the National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence (RNAVVD).

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- Development of a model system for early psychological support in cases of domestic violence-related trauma, including a faster and more effective intervention model for children who are victims of domestic violence, tested in the municipalities of Amadora, Loures, Seixal, Faro, Loulé, and Almada.
- Improved knowledge on the situation of victims of violence in the context of sexual exploitation, through the development of an in-depth study on this issue and the specific needs of victims, existing national mechanisms and partners, and the design of appropriate assistance, protection and (re)integration strategies, along with training manuals for mediators and professionals.

The supported projects thus contributed significantly to the creation and systematization of knowledge (through various studies, guides, manuals, platforms, and intervention methodologies), capacity-building of various target groups (children, youth, women, professionals, local authorities, etc.) through (in)training and community-level interventions, and the formulation of recommendations in several key areas for the promotion of gender equality. Factors that positively influenced the implementation of the projects and the results achieved include the characteristics and dynamics of the partnerships, the Programme Operator's experience in the thematic areas and project management, and the recognition and trust placed by partners and target audiences in their work. Also highlighted was the collaboration and strong coordination with the Programme Operator and its team. On the negative side, entities pointed to excessive bureaucracy in financial and physical reporting, both in terms of frequency and the volume of requested information, which was worsened by the lack of an integrated information system.

Expected Impacts of the Programme

The dimension of awareness-raising on gender equality and the promotion of work-life balance benefits from the contribution of all projects supported by the Programme, as all projects contribute to this objective, varying in terms of audience reach and territorial scope. The supported projects also make an important contribution to research and knowledge production on gender equality, promotion of work-life balance, and the prevention and combat of domestic and gender-based violence, with a significant number of scientific studies developed, as well as the development of innovative intervention methodologies.

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Types of Contributions – Raising awareness, advancing research and knowledge on gender equality, and promoting work-life balance

Raising awareness on gender equality and promoting work-life balance



- (In)training and awareness-raising initiatives on various topics for diverse audiences (children, young people, women, educators, professionals, local authorities, technicians, the general community)
- Information-gathering activities involving target audiences
- Presentation/launch of projects and dissemination of activities (e.g. via social media)
- Involvement of stakeholders (policy-makers, technicians, universities, research centres, civil society, etc.)
- Dissemination of project results with diversified outputs and broad levels of participation
- Raising awareness of aspects of gender equality that had previously received little attention from beneficiary and partner organisations

Advancing research and knowledge on gender equality and work-life balance



- Diagnosis on important topics lacking up-to-date information
- Development of innovative intervention methodologies and support materials
- Implementation of pilot projects
- Availability of information for use in future research
- Design of training models and materials

These effects represent an important contribution to generating impact, with evidence of scientific knowledge production and data updates, awareness-raising, training and capacity-building, the engagement and mobilisation of target groups, and collaborative work. There are also both actual and foreseeable impacts in areas such as public policy influence through campaigns and strategies, advocacy and oversight capacity, and the potential to change practices. The establishment of national partnerships has been a key factor in the success of the projects, due to the relevance of the ecosystem of participating public entities, as well as private organisations operating in key intervention sectors. This has enabled the development of new working relationships between national, regional and local decision-making bodies, public sector professionals, civil society organisations, universities, and research centres.

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Indeed, the evidence collected points to high levels of satisfaction and effective functioning regarding the role of partner entities. These entities enabled the development and piloting of outputs, the mobilisation and engagement of target audiences, and the implementation of activities, all of which reflect high satisfaction levels among the project promoters. In terms of bilateral cooperation, there was widespread participation in partnerships with entities from Donor States, with 32 out of 33 supported projects engaging in such collaborations. The Programme's relevance in strengthening bilateral relations between the Donor States and Portugal is clear, particularly due to the high levels of satisfaction and the achievement of intended partnership goals. This positive evaluation is especially notable in areas such as the sharing of expertise, participation in meetings, and study visits.

In half of the projects developed, the partnerships and joint initiatives with entities from the donor countries show signs of continuity, which reflects a positive outcome in this regard. However, some challenges remain in mobilising and involving certain international partners in project activities, particularly due to budgetary constraints limiting more active participation from donor country partners, as well as occasional difficulties in their engagement. There are also cases where the planned study visits could not take place, primarily due to restrictions during the pandemic period.



Key Achievements

- Understanding of other contexts, experiences, and know-how / sharing of good practices
- Acquisition and transfer of knowledge (projects, methodologies, tools, etc.)
- Expansion of the network of contacts with potential partner organisations
- Technical contributions to the development of outputs
- Comparative analyses of legal frameworks, intervention models, and tools
- Strengthening collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities through the Bilateral Relations Fund

Challenges

- Lack of knowledge about partner entities in the donor countries and delays in the formalisation of the partnership
- Budgetary limitations of partners did not allow for more active participation
- The "selected" partnership was not always the most appropriate in relation to the project's objectives
- Cases in which the partnership did not bring added value (learning, knowledge transfer, etc.)
- Difficulty in maintaining regular communication with the partner
- Challenges in establishing initial contact with the partner



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On the other hand, the established bilateral partnerships demonstrate elements of future sustainability—although dependent on leverage funding—through ideas for new joint projects and the testing, exploration, and development of methodologies with potential application in other, non-intervened contexts.

Sustainability

Measuring sustainability is a core aspect of EEA Grants funding, and most supported projects demonstrate potential for long-term impact, though some depend on additional financing or political commitment.

Findings

Integration & Replicability: Most results have been incorporated into the regular work of participating entities, with strong replicability potential for at least five years.

Project Continuity: 18 projects show potential to continue even without further EEA Grants funding.

Policy Influence: Some projects have contributed to legislative recommendations and public policy changes, reinforcing their sustainability.

Institutional Capacity: Predefined projects, especially those linked to public policy entities, have a strong potential for transferability and national scaling.

Challenges: Some projects still require political commitment, financial and human resources to ensure long-term sustainability.

Bilateral Partnerships: Sustainability conditions for bilateral partnerships are weaker, with limited post-project cooperation between funded projects and donor countries.

While many projects show strong institutional sustainability, ongoing political investment and resource allocation are needed to ensure long-term impact and wider transferability of successful interventions.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

RELEVANCE

| Recommendation | Responsible Entity for Implementation |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Pre-defined projects designed in a participatory manner, involving the public policy implementing entities (public bodies) and the defined partners who will implement them | CIG |
| Focus of future programs on interventions specifically aimed at women from vulnerable groups, namely gypsies, migrants, the disabled and the elderly. | CIG |
| Greater involvement of employers in projects aimed at strengthening equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market. | CIG |

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAMME

| Recommendation | Responsible Entity for Implementation |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Consider using simplified cost methodologies | CIG EEA GRANTS |
| Adopt expenditure verification procedures based on sampling | CIG EEA GRANTS |
| Revise the physical and financial reporting system | CIG EEA GRANTS |
| Provide supporting documentation for project implementation (manuals, templates) | CIG EEA GRANTS |
| Improve the Information System | CIG EEA GRANTS |

SUSTAINABILITY

| Recommendation | Responsible Entity for Implementation |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Strengthen advocacy efforts and political engagement to increase the visibility, attractiveness, and dissemination of gender equality tools in the labour market, particularly among companies | CIG |
| Enhance dissemination actions and engagement of target groups with the greatest potential to benefit from project outputs | CIG EEA GRANTS |
| Reinforce human resources in public entities to (re)activate tested practices and intervention models or to implement the Programme's results and outputs | CIG Partnering Public Institutions |
| Develop roadmaps for the promotion of outputs with transferability potential, both regionally and sectorally | CIG |
| Raise awareness among and encourage donor country entities to participate in the Programme and to test and transfer project results | CIG EEA GRANTS |

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PROGRAMME IMPACTS

| Area of Evaluation | Recommendation | Responsible Entity for Implementation |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| EFFECTS AND LONG-TERM IMPACTS | Establish a Strategic Monitoring Mechanism | CIG EEA GRANTS |
| | Foster Thematic Networks with entities involved in project implementation and other relevant stakeholders to stimulate partnerships and experience-sharing among organisations | CIG |
| | Create a validation/recognition “label” for products developed within the projects | CIG |
| | Develop a Platform for sharing good practices (hosting outputs from this and previous mechanisms), with search functionality by theme or product type | CIG |
| | Integrate dissemination activities into project funding (e.g., analysing the consolidation of interventions, replicating projects in other contexts, evaluating medium- and long-term results and impacts) | CIG |
| | Promote the dissemination of project recommendations to decision-makers | CIG Beneficiary Entities |
| | Monitor the level of implementation of evaluation results and recommendations, and related tools | CIG |
| | Prioritise future funding for projects that contribute to deepening and expanding knowledge on gender equality and the development of innovative intervention methodologies | CIG EEA GRANTS |
| ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTNERSHIPS NATIONAL AND BILATERAL COOPERATION | Create a portfolio and contact list of entities available for partnership-building | CIG EEA GRANTS |
| | Increase the budget allocated to donor country partners to ensure the necessary resources for more active participation | EEA GRANTS |
| | Create a Community of Practice among EEA Grants beneficiary states (e.g., virtual practice community, peer reviews, national and international conferences) | EEA GRANTS |
| | Raise awareness and encourage donor country entities to participate in the Programme | EEA GRANTS |