

UNECE

GUIDELINES FOR **MAINSTREAMING AGEING**



UNITED NATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why we need to mainstream ageing

Populations in the UNECE region are ageing. While there are currently about one in six persons over the age of 65, this will be the case for one in five persons by 2030, and for about one in four persons by 2050. Population ageing impacts all spheres of society and is taking place in the context of climate change and fast-speed digitalisation. These complex and interlinked developments call for innovative solutions in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Societies need to anticipate and adapt to the social and economic implications of both population ageing and individual longevity to seize the opportunities and mitigate the challenges of this demographic transformation, which include fiscal pressures on social security and protection systems, changing labour market dynamics and family and intergenerational relations. In designing policy responses, it is important to ensure that everyone can realise their full potential across the life course and age equitably, in security and with dignity, leaving no one behind. The importance of policymaking that takes into account the needs and rights of different age groups and population groups (persons with disabilities, migrants, etc.) and assesses the potential impacts of new laws and programmes for them has become even more evident in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing were developed to support member States in adapting to population ageing and creating societies for all ages by strategically considering and integrating ageing issues into all relevant policy fields and at all levels. The importance of mainstreaming has been recognized in various international frameworks on ageing. Mainstreaming ageing is one of the core commitments in the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), 2002. In the past two decades of MIPAA/RIS implementation, many countries have introduced cross-sectoral ageing policies to adapt pension systems, health and care systems and labour markets, among others, to population ageing and improve the situation of older persons. But in many cases, there has been no emphasis on systematically ensuring coordination and policy coherence across policy areas and government levels. For mainstreaming ageing to be effective, this effort needs to be underpinned by political commitment and leadership, and effective coordination mechanisms. Age-sensitive analysis and impact assessments should systematically inform new laws, policies and programmes and be based on sound data and information. The Guidelines make suggestions on how these potential shortcomings and challenges can be systematically addressed.

What is meant by mainstreaming ageing?

Mainstreaming ageing is a strategy, process and multi-dimensional effort of integrating ageing issues into all policy fields and all policy levels. The Guidelines recommend applying a 'twin-track approach' to mainstreaming that considers ageing from both a societal perspective – population ageing – as well as from an individual life-course perspective, taking into account people's changing needs and capacities as they age. Mainstreaming ageing does not replace age-group specific policy measures that are tailored to the concrete needs and rights of persons at different stages of their lives, from cradle to grave. Rather, it encourages a coherent and holistic policy approach to ageing that is gender-responsive and human rights-based and addresses the needs of all generations, enabling smooth transitions of individuals through different phases of their lives.

Benefits of mainstreaming ageing include the development of government policy that is more relevant to society as it enables policymakers to respond more effectively to the needs of all age groups. By taking into account all generations and recognizing the heterogeneity and diversity within and across age groups, mainstreaming ageing promotes intra- and intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion. While advancing

policy coherence and integration through enhanced coordination and collaboration across policy areas, levels of government, and between different stakeholders, mainstreaming fosters higher quality and more effective public policies. The ultimate aim of mainstreaming ageing is to achieve a society for all ages in which more equitable development within society will benefit all age groups.

Purpose of the Guidelines

The purpose of the Guidelines is to support governments in building a strategic framework for mainstreaming ageing to facilitate the systematic consideration and integration of both individual and population ageing aspects into broader national policies. The Guidelines recognize that each member State is unique and stress the importance of country ownership of the mainstreaming process. They do not prescribe a 'one-size-fits-all' solution but suggest and share approaches that can be adapted to each specific country context, government structure, levels of decentralisation, as well as traditions and cultures. They encourage countries to align their policies with relevant international frameworks and initiatives such as the MIPAA/RIS for the UNECE region, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030), while taking into account and building on existing structures, processes and measures that work well and can support the mainstreaming process.

The Guidelines include recommendations for broad stakeholder engagement through participatory and inclusive processes in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Framework. They recommend horizontal and vertical coordination of mainstreaming efforts through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. In line with core principles underpinning the Guidelines, emphasis is placed on ensuring that the Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing should be human rights-based, life course-oriented, gender-responsive and equitable.

The Guidelines are primarily intended as a tool for government staff responsible for the development, coordination and monitoring of ageing-related policy, who seek to develop or adapt mainstreaming efforts in their country. As the Guidelines support a participatory and inclusive process, they can be of interest to stakeholders such as experts and officials from line ministries and government agencies at the national and subnational levels, social partners, civil society organizations, academia, think tanks, and representatives from the private sector.

Developing the Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing

The Guidelines outline five stages in developing the Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing. Each stage is presented as a stand-alone section that can be consulted separately or read in sequence.

Stage 1 – Getting Started

Stage 1 focuses on making the case for mainstreaming ageing to secure stakeholder buy-in and political commitment. Suggested activities include a stakeholder mapping and analysis and the establishment of a team - composed of a core group and broader stakeholder network - that will lead and coordinate the development of the Strategic Framework and provide inputs. Stage 1 results in a proposal and workplan for its development, detailing the rationale, goals, objectives, scope, budget, and timelines as well as the results of the stakeholder analysis and plans for stakeholder engagement.

Stage 2 – Analysis

Stage 2 proposes to carry out a situation analysis and comprehensively take stock of the policy context, data situation and existing mainstreaming mechanisms. The objectives of the analysis are to obtain a thorough overview of the gaps in mainstreaming process and practice, ageing-related policies in place, sectors covered,

and relevant national and international policy frameworks and strategies into which ageing-related priorities should be integrated and/or aligned with to ensure policy coherence.

Stage 3 - Vision and Directions

Stage 3 formulates, based on the evidence gathered and gaps identified in Stage 2, the goals, objectives and expected outcomes for the Strategic Framework. Stage 3 proposes to build to the extent possible on existing approaches, address remaining gaps and address ageing-related issues through policy fields / levels in which this was not yet the case. Suggested activities in Stage 3 support formulating a vision statement and defining the goals, objectives and expected outcomes for the framework.

Stage 4 – Identification of Activities

Stage 4 focuses on identifying concrete short-, medium-, and long-term activities that ensure that ageing is addressed through all policy fields and at all levels of government and that implementing partners have the capacity and resources to do so. Suggested activities include setting up a coordination mechanism for the implementation of the framework and producing an implementation plan detailing the activities, expected outputs, timelines and implementing partners to reach the goals, objectives and expected outcomes formulated in Stage 3.

Stage 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation

Stage 5 suggests making provisions for both a continuous assessment of progress on defined activities, outputs and expected outcomes (monitoring) as well as the periodic examination of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of activities in light of the specified goals and objectives (evaluation). The mechanism for monitoring and evaluation should ensure that lessons learnt are captured and feed into a continual adjustment and improvement of mainstreaming efforts. Suggested activities include developing relevant output and outcome indicators, plans for data collection and the definition of a reporting structure and format.

The results of the five stages will provide the core content of the Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing and can be presented in a final document.

Five stages of developing a Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing

