

GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN UKRAINE

Summary – final project implementation report

2013–2020



GRB
project

FUNDED BY



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This Summary Report provides *implementation overview, main results and risks handled* during implementation of the Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) project in Ukraine carried out with financial support of the Government of Sweden from 2014 to the end of 2020. This document also outlines the *next priority steps* to ensure the sustainability of achieved results.

The goal of the GRB project was to provide advisory support to the Ministry of Finance (MF) of Ukraine as it undertook the process of ensuring increased economic efficiency and transparency in budget allocations that take into account the different needs of different groups of women and men.

In a wider context, the project sought to eliminate the gap between Ukraine's international commitments and the financing of the gender equality policy by identifying strategies on how to inject gender perspectives into current and future budget programmes. Integrating GRB into

the budget process helps government overcome the gap between its declared gender equality policy and the actual allocation of resources for its implementation. It concerns not only direct financing of the gender equality policy (for example, the State Programme on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men) but also indirect financing, i.e., integration of a gender perspective into the process of formulating policies, strategies, plans and programmes in various sectors. By introducing a strong process of gender budget analysis, drafting of recommendations, and amendments to budget programmes, GRB ensures financial effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery (this concerns both the targeting of services and fairer distribution of expenditures between women and men) in sectors such as healthcare, education, sports, security, agriculture, etc. Hence, GRB is designed to be an effective tool to achieve strategic gender equality goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations.



Implementation overview (2014 – 2020)

During the first four years – up to 2017 – the project’s work focused on piloting the GRB concept at the state and oblast levels. This work included gender analysis of selected budget programmes, definition and promotion of necessary changes in the programmes, administrative and statistical reporting, and drafting of documents used in the budget process to eliminate gender gaps found during the analysis.

In parallel, practical gender budget analysis work included mastering international best experience and sharing it with civil servants and local government officials through training. 2017 was a decisive year not only for the GRB project but also GRB-related work generally in Ukraine. In February of that year, the Government adopted the *Strategy for the Public Finance Management System (PFMS) Reform for 2017-2020*, which contained a commitment on GRB implementation as part of the programme performance budgeting. During the year, results of the GRB piloting were translated into proposals on regulatory legal acts that govern the budget process.

In full compliance with the project’s initial goals and activity areas, it was suggested also in 2017 to introduce some additional activities. The project validity period was extended until December 2020. Scale-up of the project’s operations helped widen the pool of competent civil servants, local government officials, and GRB experts in Ukraine. The project also contributed to the integration of GRB into other key reforms of the PFM system such as fiscal decentralisation, medium-term budget planning, and programme performance budgeting (PPB). Hence, extension of the project’s implementation period and scope of activity strengthened the GRB impact and sustainability beyond the project’s life.

The MF received expert advisory support from the project, and its leading role in supporting the project’s work at state and local levels became a crucial factor in the application of a gender-responsive approach in the budget process. In April 2019, the Ministry approved the *Methodological Recommendations on Implementing and Using the Gender-Responsive Approach in the Budget Process* (hereinafter referred to as “the Methodological Recommendations”) that provided a regulatory ground for the promotion of GRB.

With its activities scaled up, the GRB project was operating in the following areas:

- 
Providing practical support to MF and key spending units (KSUs) in the application of the Methodological Recommendations in the course of formulation, execution, and reporting on execution of budget programmes;

- 
Increasing the number of the KSUs involved in GRB work at the state level;

- 
Increasing the number of local governments (raions, cities of oblast significance, amalgamated territorial communities or ATCs) involved in the GRB work at the local level; and

- 
Expanding the pool of GRB experts to support activities at state and local levels.

The project's implementation schedule:



Stage 1: Initial work for GRB implementation (2014–2015)

- Working groups in pilot line ministries and oblasts established
- GRB capacity of pilot line ministries, oblasts and MF built
- Gender analysis of selected budget programmes of pilot line ministries and oblasts conducted



Stage 2: Implementation and validation of pilot GRB work results (2016)

- Gender mainstreamed into relevant documents of pilot ministries and oblasts based on findings of gender analysis of budget programmes in Stage 1
- GRB Action Plans for pilot line ministries and oblasts developed
- GRB piloting expanded to include more oblasts and line ministries
- Proposals developed for improvement of statistical administrative reporting with a gender aspect considered



Stage 3: GRB institutionalisation (2017)

- Methodological Recommendations on GRB implementation developed at state and local levels
- Documents used in the budget process and departmental regulatory legal acts improved based on results of piloting at line ministries
- Work planning system in line ministries and structural units of local administrations improved to ensure gender equality
- Scope of activities at new administrative-territorial levels (raions, cities, ATCs) expanded



Stage 4: Rolling out of GRB (2018–2020)

- Final changes of the legislative and regulatory legal framework by means of mainstreaming gender into the budget process at state and local levels
- Capacity of MF staff strengthened as well as that of all KSUs on integrating GRB in PPB by means of providing systematic informational, methodological, expert and advisory support
- Including GRB in the educational process at higher educational institutions of accreditation level III-IV and NAPA (including advanced training centres for civil servants and local government officials)
- Sustainable provision of skilled practitioner specialists in GRB

* Activities introduced in 2018 are indicated in bold.

During all seven years of project implementation, socio-political shifts in the country were taking place: The Revolution of Dignity, a war in the east of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, an economic crisis in 2014–2015 and related austerity policy, as well as presidential and governmental changes accompanied by permanent staff reshuffling. The project's flexible approach helped it adapt to the changes and use some of them as entry points for initiatives such as reform of the PFM system, decentralisation, and other sectoral reforms.

Even the COVID-19 crisis became a gateway for new areas in the project's work. The study *Gender Dimension of the COVID-19 Pandemic* clearly showed the pandemic, like any other crisis, has a different impact on women and men of diverse age, economic and social status, or residence. The study was used to remind civil servants and local government officials about the importance of gender sensitive decision-making amid the pandemic.



Despite the challenges faced during its implementation, the project's results are an indication of its success. According to the project's theory of change, impact of the various activities can be observed at the level of:



Strengthening gender equality:

- taking the needs and interests of girls/boys and women/men into account when developing and implementing budget-funded programmes;
- enhancing targeted focus, accessibility and quality of public services for women and men in all their diversity;
- strengthening gender equity in allocation of public funds.



Mainstreaming the gender responsive approach into all stages of the budget process:

- the regulatory legal acts approved by MF correlate with each budget process phase. In addition, the project submitted recommendations on amendments to the Budget Code of Ukraine and some other regulatory legal acts so GRB be systematically integrated into the entire budget cycle.



Formulating policies with account of the gender-responsive approach, which is indicated by:

- the Strategy for the PFMS Reform for 2017-2020;
- the draft Strategy for the PFMS Reform for 2021-2025;
- the draft Law of Ukraine "On Local Self-Governance".



Today, the GRB project is considered to be one of the most comprehensive donor-financed implementation processes in its field. The project has often been used as a best practice example, but its operational results have also been on the agenda of international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

“I take my hat off to Ukraine and Austria for their use of the gender responsive approach in the budget process as a highly effective financial tool”

Christine Lagarde, former Managing Director, IMF. Speech at the Fiscal Policies and Gender Equality conference held at the IMF headquarters in Washington, DC, in December 2016.

The final conference that took place on 18–19 November 2020 noted that GRB had become one of the components of PFMS reform in Ukraine and acknowledged that “using the gender-responsive approach in the budget process is the demand of a society that expects fair, effective and transparent allocation of expenditures with account of the interests, needs and opportunities of women and men in all their diversity”.

Overview of main outputs and results achieved

Result area 1 - Line ministries introduce GRB in the budget process at the state level

The initially planned outputs in Result area 1 were linked to gender analysis of budget programmes in (pilot) line ministries, increasing the corresponding knowledge of how to undertake pilot work on GRB and applying relevant instructions and methodological guidelines.

Originally established working relations with four pilot ministries – the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (MSP), the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (MYS), the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (MH), and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MES) – gradually expanded to all KSUs of the state budget and analysis of at least one budget programme from a gender perspective.

The project encountered the fact that budget programmes were often neither gender neutral nor human-centred at all, and of unclear need-base and end-benefit. Nevertheless, the project succeeded to establish more indepth work with ten

committed institutions at the central level of Government. Special GRB Working Groups (WGs) were established to select and analyse relevant budget programmes to eliminate gender gaps and improve regulatory legal acts. This more focused work led to a change in mindset and an adjustment in programmes to make them more responsive to gender needs. For instance, considerable progress was observed in the use of the gender-responsive approach in the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) budget process, and 20% of budget programme requests for 2021–2023 have become gender sensitive. Meanwhile, intervention in the area of sports (MYS) led to an increase in the share of girls attending children’s and youth sports schools.

In total, the project achieved:

-  **Gender analysis of more than 100 programmes financed from the state budget in sectors such as education, healthcare, physical training and sports, agriculture, security, construction, financial control and audit – resulting in recommendations to reduce gender gaps, eliminate gender discrimination, and meet gender balance;**
-  **Inclusion of gender aspects in 43 budget programmes of KSUs in 2020, which facilitated the channelling of public funds to meet the needs of women and men of different ages and residence;**
-  **Application of a gender-based approach in budget requests for 2021–2023 by 29 KSUs under 41 budget programmes; and**
-  **Introduction of more systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data.**

The project also contributed to help build expertise of KSU specialists for the application of the gender-responsive approach in the budget process and supported amending KSU strategic documents, legislative acts and regulations.

As result, more than 1,000 civil servants acquired knowledge and practical skills for the use of GRB and amendments were made to more than 30 regulatory legal acts governing relations in respective sectors.



Result area 2 - Oblasts, raions, cities of oblast significance and ATCs apply GRB in regular budget process

The initially planned output in Result area 2 was to build knowledge in regions to undertake pilot work on GRB and include a gender perspective in their budget programmes. The work started in four pilot oblasts (Kharkiv, Zhytomyr, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kherson) and Kyiv city gradually expanded to new oblasts. As of the end of 2018, the GRB application work covered all oblasts and Kyiv city as well as all the administrative-territorial tiers. Since 2019, GRB has been applied in raions, cities of oblast significance, and ATCs, which facilitated the introduction of cross-cutting GRB integration in the budget process also at the local level. The project cooperated actively with other donor-funded projects, such as U-LEAD, which implement activities to enhance budget literacy and/or GRB. Furthermore, the functioning of five GRB Trainers' Schools for civil servants was an effective mechanism to ensure sustainability at the local level.

GRB WGs were established in all oblast state administrations (OSAs) and Kyiv city state administration (KCSA). The WGs developed, approved and executed the Action Plan for GRB implementation in each oblast and Kyiv city on an annual

basis. Budget programmes were selected based on relevance for gender gap analysis, identification of public services and service recipients/users. Findings of the the gender programme analyses allowed the GRB WGs in oblasts and Kyiv city to formulate recommendations and proposals aimed at reducing the identified gender gaps. Successful use of a gender-based approach in the budget process at the local level resulted in a substantial increase in the number of gender aspects included in budget programme passports. As result, 1,075 passports of budget programmes financed from local budgets included gender aspects in 2020 compared to only 6 in 2017. Furthermore, one-third of the budget programme passports have a gender-based approach implemented on a comprehensive basis, covering all sectors including public administration, housing and utilities, economic activities, etc.

The established cooperation also enabled the introduction of changes in relevant policies, improved mutual relations between specialists of OSA/KCSA finance and line departments, and resulted in amendments to 30 related regulatory legal acts used in the budget process. The GRB project used the Council of Donors established under the Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories as a platform to integrate a gender-based approach in decentralisation

reform. As result, the draft Law of Ukraine “On Local Self-Governance of Ukraine” has a provision on including a gender perspective in the budget process.

The project supported capacity-building of specialists on gender equality policy, the basics of GRB, and the methodology of gender analysis during the budget process. The initial organisation of training was challenged by the low awareness among civil servants and local government officials of the gender equality policy, stereotypical thinking and rapid staff turnover, particularly in the OSAs/KCSA. High turnover also posed a need for retraining. The annual selection of new programmes that required gender analysis resulted in a “refresh-

ing” of the GRB WGs with new members: sectoral specialists who undertook sound training on the gender responsive approach in the budget process and strengthened the region’s internal capacity accordingly.

The lack of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data were often a challenge for analytical work in gender budget analysis. The project promoted relevant amendments to statistical and administrative reporting and initiated and financially supported the annual publication of the *Women and Men* statistical fact sheets containing sex-disaggregated data, which were very popular among public authorities, local governments, scientists, teachers, post-graduates and students.

As a result of the project intervention, the following were achieved under Result area 2



The gender-responsive approach is being implemented in the budget processes of 24 OSAs, 24 cities of oblast significance, 93 raions, and 449 ATCs;



118 (total of 75% of all) oblast budget programmes financed from local budgets in 60 expenditure areas were analysed during 2015–2020;



More than 2,000 civil servants and local government officials (84% women, 16% men) improved their knowledge and acquired practical GRB application skills;



9000 participants graduated from an online “GRB for community development” course;



A pool of 58 trainers (90% women, 10% men) among civil servants were ready to disseminate GRB-related knowledge in their domains of operation;



70 *Women and Men* statistical fact sheets were published in oblasts and Kyiv city during 2015–2020.

Result area 3 – The MF applies GRB at the state and local levels

The initially planned output in Result area 3 was to establish a functioning GRB Coordination Group and multiple working groups to support GRB and strengthen MF knowledge to support pilot GRB work at state and local levels. The MF was expected to build needed capacity to instruct KSUs at state and local levels to apply GRB and supervise the GRB process



and include a gender perspective in the budget documents regulating programme performance budgeting. The project implementation plans also foresaw the development of proposals and recommendations concerning the integration of a gender-based approach in the legislative acts and regulations that govern budget relations. The goal of that groundwork was to provide a regulatory framework to build a sustainable system of using the gender responsive approach in the budget process in Ukraine.

The project started with the establishment of the GRB Coordination Group [represented by all relevant MF departments, pilot line ministries, four pilot oblasts, Kyiv city, State Statistic Service of Ukraine (SSS) and the GRB project] as a collegiate body to coordinate and discuss the process of implementing the gender responsive approach into the budget process at both local and state levels. Thereafter, the project supported the MF to expand the range of civil servants in the field of PFM who possess practical skills of using the gender-responsive approach in the budget process. GRB Academies were organised and held for specialists of the MF structural units and aimed to enhance theoretical and practical GRB competences and the assessment of a gender perspective in the KSU budget programme passports during 2018–2019. Furthermore, the project organised study visits to learn about the GRB experience outside of Ukraine (Sweden – 2015, 2016 and 2018; Austria – 2016 and 2017; Albania – 2018). As a result, 25 specialists from the relevant MF structures deepened their knowledge and today apply the acquired experience to the Ukrainian situation. The study visits also involved representatives of the GRB WGs from oblasts, and specialists from the SSS and the Office of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU).

The project's work with state and local budgets KSUs was ongoing in permanent cooperation with the MF to ensure performance of gender analysis of programmes at state and local levels on a continuous basis. For instance, pilot ministries' WGs included a specialist from a structural unit of the MF, but representatives of the MF Local Budgets Department coordinated and monitored gender anal-

yses results carried out by the GRB WGs in oblasts and Kyiv city. The MF specialists provided systematic advisory support to line ministries, played an active role in joint meetings of line ministries and regions, and contributed to implementation of the recommendations drafted on the basis of the gender analyses and making necessary amendments to regulatory legal acts, target/budget programmes and other documents.

The project has contributed and facilitated systematic amendment of more than ten strategic, methodological documents and regulatory legal acts that govern budget relations and cross-cutting integration of the gender-responsive approach in the Budget Code of Ukraine (e.g. draft Strategy for PFMS Reform in 2017–2020 and 2021–2025, The Methodological Recommendations, and others). As result, the Strategy for PFMS Reform became a strong foundation for further work concerning GRB as a component in the PFMS reform processes in Ukraine. Another medium-term milestone, "The Main Directions of Budget Policy for 2018–2020" (approved by the CMU Executive Order No. 411-p of 14 June 2017) introduced a gender perspective and stated that KSUs should adhere to the principle of ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men in formulation of budget indicators.



Close cooperation between the MF and line ministries contributed to consideration of a gender perspective in Model Lists of budget programmes and their performance indicators for local budgets. In 2019, the Methodological Recommendations were approved (Order No. 1 of 2 January 2019) and provided an impetus for further GRB institutionalisation. In 2019–2020, the MF comprehensively included the gender responsive approach to the range of regulatory legal acts that govern the budget process. Finally, in 2020, the MF also included information on the requirement for applying a gender-responsive approach in the budget process in its *Explanatory Note* to the draft law of Ukraine “On the State Budget of Ukraine for 2021”.

The project supported the MF with development of a gender budget statement as a tool to strengthen the Government’s accountability and reporting in terms of budget programmes’ targeting to ensure gender equality, reduce gender gaps, eliminate gender discrimination, cater for the needs and meet the interests of women and men and/or their groups. Particular support was provided also with the elaboration of “Budget Statement by a Key Spending Unit on Consideration of the Gender-Based Approach in the Formulation of Budget Indicators for 2020-2022”. This tool is an important aspect of GRB institutionalisation and government accountability on fair and unbiased distribution of social wealth between women, men and/or their groups as well as the MF’s discharge of a supervisory function for the process of using a gender-based approach within the scope of competence of line ministries and KSUs.

Finally, the GRB project developed a “Concept of Ensuring Sustainability of GRB Implementation in Ukraine”. The key principles of the Concept include: integrating the gender-responsive approach into the regulatory legal framework; building capacity of KSUs and other institutions involved in the budget process; and providing political support to the work for implementation and use of the gender responsive approach in the budget process. To promote institutional sustainability of the GRB process, the project proposed to establish a unit within one of the MF departments, which would be responsible for the a gender-based approach implementation process. For this purpose, the GRB project has elaborated a manual *Gender-Based Approach in the Budget Process at the State and Local Levels* that covers all the main aspects for managing a gender-based approach in the budgeting process.

Result area 4 – Relevant actors actively participate and support the GRB processes

The initially planned outputs in Result area 4 were to: (1) facilitate MSP and relevant staff in VRU to operate as an active participant of GRB introduction; (2) establish effective cooper-

ation and coordination of the project with relevant GRB initiatives and (3) build the GRB project team, national experts and facilitators as competent GRB trainers using modern effective coaching approaches.

The GRB project interacted with all the relevant budget process stakeholders including the VRU and non-governmental organisations. Close partner relations were established with the MSP, the Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Government’s Representative for Gender Policy, the Equal Opportunities Caucus, the Ukrainian Women’s Congress, and SSS among others. Cooperation was developed with donors, projects and all-Ukrainian associations of local governments on GRB implementation.

Some of the project’s reliable partners included:

- **UN Women,**
- **National Democratic Institute**
- **EU-financed Local Empowerment Accountability and Development Programme (U-LEAD)**
- **German Society for International Cooperation**
- **Friedrich Ebert Foundation**
- **Canadian-financed Quality and Accessible Legal Aid in Ukraine project**
- **USAID-financed Policy for Ukraine Local Self-Governance project**
- **Association of Ukrainian Cities**
- **Association of ATCs of Ukraine, etc.**

Cooperation was also established with educational institutions to include GRD in the educational process:

- **The National Agency of Civil Service of Ukraine,**
- **Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University,**
- **Vadym Hetman Kyiv National Economic University,**
- **Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University and**
- **University of the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine**



Today, thanks to the GRB project:

- 1 GRB is a widely recognised topic in the public discourse and policy discussions in Ukraine;
- 2 All budget process actors understand GRB as a tool aimed at implementing the gender equality policy and ensuring fair allocation of public finance to meet the needs and interests of women, men and/or their groups;
- 3 Application of a gender-responsive approach in the budget process is supported at the top decision-making level;
- 4 The list of indicators according to which data are collected to monitor gender equality as part of the Sustainable Development Goals achievement has been approved legislatively; and
- 5 GRB has become a cross-cutting theme of official development assistance in Ukraine.

Upon completion of the project, donors and international organisations are expected to continue scaling up GRB implementation and application at the state and local levels.

Management of acknowledged risks

The GRB project faced and handled a number of risks during its implementation:

(1) **Lack of sex-disaggregated data and full-scale gender statistics** was a considerable obstacle to using a gender-based approach in the budget process. The project facilitated amendment of administrative and statistical reporting forms, contributed to design of indicators for monitoring of the gender equality situation, and systematically supported the preparation and publication of the *Women and Men* statistical fact sheets in oblasts and Kyiv city.

(2) **Staff turnover** was one of the key constraints throughout the project implementation period, both in line ministries and oblasts and Kyiv city. This factor entailed the loss of both institutional memory and responsibility for the realisation of the previously drafted recommendations. The project periodically (a) delivered trainings for the staff of newly established structural units and new GRB WG members, (b) provided systematic expert advisory support to main stakeholders, and (c) trained trainers who performed gender budget analyses and disseminated the GRB knowledge among the budget process actors.

(3) Lack of legislative support was related to the **absence of a binding provision concerning the use of the gender-responsive approach in the budget process**, which encountered difficulties for the KSUs in GRB implementation at both state and local levels. The project provided support





to the Government institutions for amending the regulations and legislative acts that govern budget relations, particularly the Budget Code of Ukraine, the draft Law of Ukraine “On Local Self-Governance”, etc.

(4) Managerial decisions were affected by the **lack of political will and the insufficient awareness of KSU managers and other budget process actors about the benefits of using a gender-responsive approach** in the budget process. The project facilitated amendments to the state budget legislation and establishment of a procedure for coordination of actions among central and regional government levels.

(5) **Rejection of changes and distorted perception of GRB** was evidenced by middle-level specialists at central and local levels of government who were reluctant to change entrenched approaches, procedures and formats when developing the documents used in the budget process. In response, trainings, workshops and high-level meetings with the main stakeholders were held on the formulation and implementation of gender policy, how to combine strategic goals of gender equality with the budget process, and introduction of relevant legislative change.

(6) **Government-level coordination** among participants for cross-cutting comprehensive integration of a gender-based approach into the strategies, policies and programmes and projects was fragile, whereas **absence of a developed “National Machinery for Gender Equality”** was one of the main obstacles to GRB institutionalisation. The project provided support in coordination of work concerning the use of a gender-based approach in the budget process between main stakeholders at the central and regional level through support to the GRB Coordination WG and organisation of joint conferences, seminars and meetings.

(7) **Imperfect use of PPB** was one of the key barriers to integrating a gender-responsive approach into budget programmes due to primary focus on maintenance of institu-

tions rather than on provision of public services to specific target groups and defined performance indicators. The project contributed to “humanising” budget programmes by amending their goal, objectives, funds utilisation areas, and performance indicators.

Sustainability and next priority steps

The GRB project has equipped stakeholders with relevant instruments that will enable them to integrate GRB in budget process going forward. Their further attention is required to ensure sustainability of achieved results by:

- 1 **Getting GRB officially and fully integrated in the budget code and processes of Ukraine by 2024 and requiring KSUs to apply previously approved methodological guides, instructions and corresponding handbooks;**
- 2 **Mandatory development of binding internal regulatory frameworks in KSUs;**
- 3 **Setting indicators on gender gaps and establishing budget/gender policy linkages;**
- 4 **Establishing an institutional and coordination framework in the Government on GRB policy by determining the lead coordinating institution, distribution of functional responsibilities (e.g. the MF, MSP, line ministries), the cross-cutting GRB role of the *Commission for Coordination of Interaction among Executive Authorities for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men* and interaction with other inter-institutional coordination bodies at the central and regional levels;**
- 5 **Establishing donors’ coordination on GRB issues in delivery of the projects; and**
- 6 **Permanent application of developed GRB project’s resource base and involvement of know-how (local project experts, trainers and training graduates) in GRB process.**

For further information, contact:

Maja Bosnic

NIRAS Business Development Director

M: +46 73 088 49 50

L: +46 8 545 533 34

E: maja.bosnic@niras.se

Catharina Schmitz

NIRAS Sector Lead Gender Equality & Human Rights

M: +46 70 768 45 83

L: +46 8 588 318 16

E: catharina.schmitz@niras.se

Hantverkargatan 11B

Box 70375

112 21 Stockholm

Sweden

www.niras.com/dc