

1. Institutional dimension of gender equality

Introduction

The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (GEPL) highlights that achieving gender equality requires committed leadership, effective institutional frameworks, resources, tools and gender mainstreaming across levels of governments. It underlines that a whole-of government approach, supported by effective institutions and robust accountability, is essential to ensure that gender equality efforts are sustainable.

In light of the 2015 GEPL Recommendation, the 2017 OECD Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies (2017 OECD Survey) sheds light on trends, successes and bottlenecks in the implementation of a whole-of-government approach to gender equality. Whereas countries are making efforts to gradually realise a whole-of-government approach and bridge the implementation gap; findings of the 2017 OECD Survey reveals the following key barriers to the effective implementation of this approach:

- Absence of a strategic plan on gender equality or limited enforceability of the strategic plan;
- Limited resources, mandate and capacity of central gender equality institutions and gender units/focal points in line ministries;
- Limited and uneven implementation of gender mainstreaming tools;
- Limited skills and capacity in human resources and line ministries to determine the need for gender-disaggregated data and to incorporate a gender perspective into their work.

This chapter will examine legal frameworks, national strategies, action plans and institutional arrangements for gender equality; gender mainstreaming tools; oversight and accountability mechanisms; and availability of gender-disaggregated evidence for gender-sensitive and inclusive policy making. It will provide an overview of good practices and will demonstrate where the OECD countries stand vis-à-vis the implementation of the 2015 GEPL Recommendation.

1.1. Legal framework for gender equality and mainstreaming

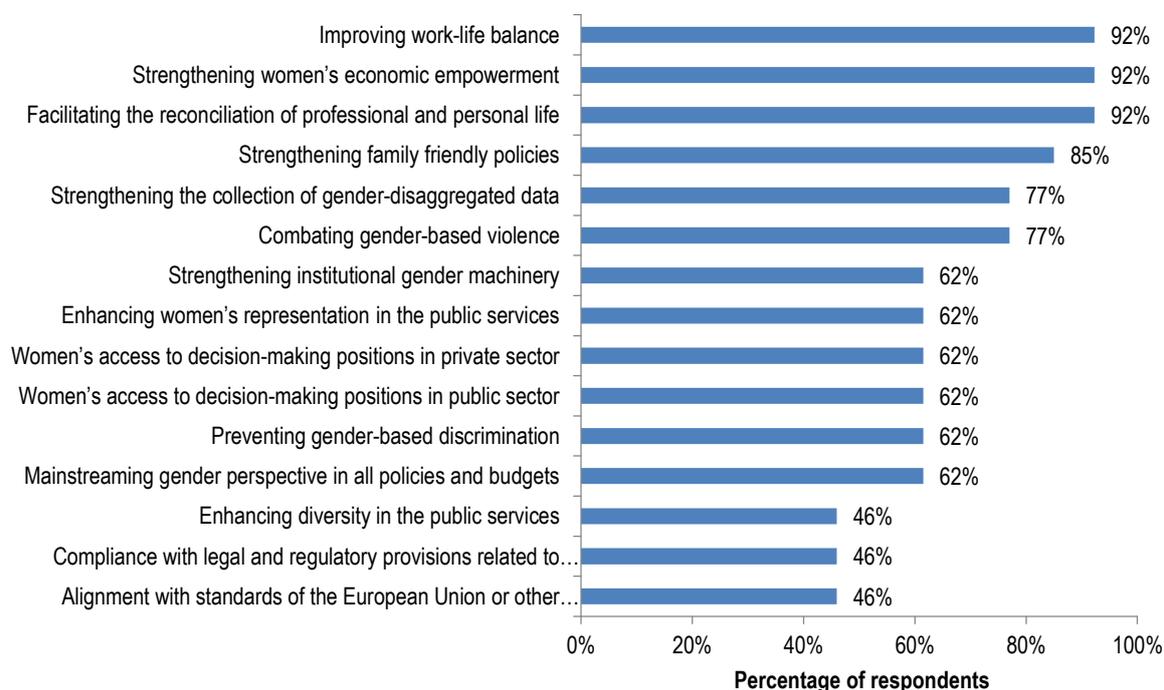
According to the 2017 OECD Survey, a large majority of OECD countries have enacted laws focusing on gender equality at the central or federal level of government. These laws mainly focus on preventing gender-based discrimination (92%); combating gender-based violence (85%); facilitating the reconciliation of professional and personal life (85%); and enhancing gender equality in public employment (77%). While enacting laws on strengthening the collection of gender-disaggregated data and gender mainstreaming in all policies and budgets remain rather an uncommon practice among OECD countries;

Mexico, Spain, Iceland, Finland reported enacting laws on gender mainstreaming in all policies and budgets and Canada reported requiring gender-based analysis (GBA+) to be conducted on all proposals that are submitted to the Cabinet. In the case of Mexico, laws focusing on gender equality have also been enacted at the sub-national level. For instance, the state of San Luis Potosí has legislated laws to strengthen gender equality in decision-making positions in public sector, prevent gender-based discrimination and mainstream gender in all policies and budgets.

1.2. Gender equality strategies and action plans

Having an overarching gender equality framework at the national level, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability enables a whole-of government approach that can structure national gender equality priorities and guide the operationalisation of necessary institutional reforms and implementation of gender-sensitive policies.

According to the 2017 OECD Survey, about half of OECD governments have adopted a stand-alone, overarching gender equality strategy. Most national gender strategies apply to central/federal level of government, but only one third of them to all levels of government, including state, provincial and municipal governments. Priority areas covered by the strategies are: work-life balance; women's economic empowerment; and combating gender-based discrimination and violence, in addition to mainstreaming gender across policies and budgets (see Figure 1.1). About one third of OECD countries reported adopting a stand-alone gender mainstreaming strategy including Sweden, Iceland, and Canada. Another third of OECD countries including Latvia, Spain, Mexico, Finland, and Israel expressed adopting joint gender equality and mainstreaming strategy while Turkey indicated that there are plans to do so. 80% of line ministries noted that they have a strategy in place to improve gender equality in their human resources management and workplace policies.

Figure 1.1. Thematic focus of gender equality strategies (2018)

Source: OECD (2017), Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies.

OECD (2014) underlines that limited accountability mechanisms are one of the key barriers to the effective implementation of gender equality strategies in many OECD countries.¹ To achieve desired outcomes, gender equality strategies should set predefined targets and measurable gender equality indicators; identify clear roles and responsibilities across different levels of government; and be supported by clear accountability, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Available evidence from the 2017 OECD Survey demonstrates that almost all strategies in OECD member countries establish a list of result-oriented objectives for gender equality; and allocate clear responsibilities for implementation across governmental stakeholders. A large majority of gender equality strategies across OECD countries also set out a performance evaluation frameworks (69%); and predefined and regular monitoring requirements with clear allocation of responsibilities to measure progress made against the objectives (69%).

A sound strategic plan needs to reflect the needs of diverse groups in society and collective commitment and ownership by all governmental actors. Undertaking systematic consultations across governmental and non-governmental stakeholders during the development of the strategy helps enable a whole-of-government strategic plan and fosters transparency. Two-thirds of respondents to the OECD (2017) survey indicated that the development of their gender equality strategies has involved a consultative and participatory process. Among those, 60% of OECD countries stated providing feedback on the results of the consultations to the stakeholders albeit through varying mechanisms.

¹ OECD (2014), Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries: Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth.

While the results of the consultation were communicated during face-to-face meetings in Latvia, Spain, Turkey; Switzerland and Mexico published the results of the consultation online; and Finland sent the results to the stakeholders via email. In the case of Mexico, Mexico's National Women's Institute (INMUJERES) established a National Consultation Forum to consolidate the final draft of the National Programme for Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination (PROIGUALDAD). INMUJERES also promoted a virtual platform to gather proposals from diverse stakeholders. The Consultation brought together more than six hundred participants and received proposal from 27 states of Mexico.

An analysis of where a country stands in terms of gender equality is crucial to inform evidence-based gender equality strategies. Gender assessments and studies reveal potential needs and gaps; and help define gender equality objectives, design a strategic plan, set policy priorities and measure their potential impact. All OECD countries responding to the survey reported conducting at least one official assessment or study on policy areas related to gender equality at the federal or central level of government in the past five years to identify potential needs and gaps. These assessments mainly focus on combating gender-based violence (100%); preventing gender-based discrimination (82%); mainstreaming gender in all policies and budgets (73%) and eliminating gender-bias and reducing gender-stereotypes (64%).

PRELIMINARY VERSION

Box 1.1. Gender Equality Strategies

Spain

In 2014, the Spanish Government launched the government's *Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2014-2016*. The strategy was developed with the aim of ensuring a high degree of consensus and viability. To this end, the plan drew on work by the Spanish Women's Institute and existing European strategies such as the EU's *Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015* and *Europe 2020 Strategy*, as well as reports and proposals from the Equality Commissions of both the Spanish Congress and Senate. Objectives and measures were set in collaboration with line ministries. The Plan was also sent to the Council for Women's Participation for final consultation.

The *Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2014-2016* is articulated around seven action axes: labour market and gender pay gap equality, balance between personal, family, and work life and co-responsibility in family responsibilities, eradication of violence against women, women's participation in political life and economical and social spheres, education, development of gender equality actions in sectorial politics and mainstreaming gender in the Government's policies and actions.

In each of the seven axes, the strategy provides an overview of the situation and sets specific objectives, lines of action and planned measures. For some axes, special measures targeting rural and especially vulnerable women were introduced.

The plan includes a clear governance scheme, based on a classification of three disparate types of agents:

Responsible Agents: Each of the Ministerial departments and in particular the Ministry for Health, Social Affairs and Equality are responsible for the implementation of the plan in its competency areas.

- **Support Agents:** Equality Units of the Ministries are responsible for facilitating and ensuring line ministries execute the plan's measures.
- **Coordination Agents:** The General Authority for Equal Opportunities and the Women's Institute are responsible for the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan, as well as coordinating the Equality Units and general plan coordination.

The Plan also commits to developing an Evaluation Program which would include a selection of indicators corresponding to the Plan's objectives, to allow for better monitoring, assess the level of implementation and evaluate the final results.

Finland

In May 2016, Finland launched its *Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016 – 2019*, consisting of an overarching gender equality strategy of around thirty measures covering all ministries. The strategy contributes to meeting Finland's international commitments laid out in the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the European Council's Istanbul Convention, as well as the Finnish Government's programme for the promotion of equality between women and men.

The Action Plan was built on the directions given by experts and key stakeholders consulted during the preparation process and it was later finalised in collaboration with

the ministries. It offers concrete actions and realistic goals articulated around six areas: labour market equality, reconciliation of work, family and parenthood, gender equality in education and sports, intimate partner violence and violence against women, men's wellbeing and health and decision-making that promotes gender equality. For each of these areas, the strategy sets objectives to be achieved during the government's term and others for the long-term. Besides the specific thematic measures that fall into its respective ministry, the plan also includes measures to ensure that all ministries assess the gender impacts of their activities and take them into account in their decision-making.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for the coordination of the work related to the Action Plan. However, the Action Plan requires extensive inter-ministerial cooperation and commitment. A working group has been appointed to support and monitor the implementation of the plan and report to government.

Sources: [Plan Estratégico de Igualdad de Oportunidades 2014-2016](#); [Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2019](#)

Responses to the OECD (2017) survey also highlight major areas for improvement in order to achieve an impactful strategic plan for gender equality and mainstreaming. Limited enforceability of the strategic plan; limited involvement from line ministries in the implementation of the plan; and limited support for the strategy at the highest level of government are identified by most OECD countries as the top barriers to the formulation and implementation of effective gender equality strategies and action plans. A number of countries also indicated absence of a strategic plan or absence of clear monitoring frameworks in the strategic plan as key challenges.

1.3. Institutional arrangements for gender equality

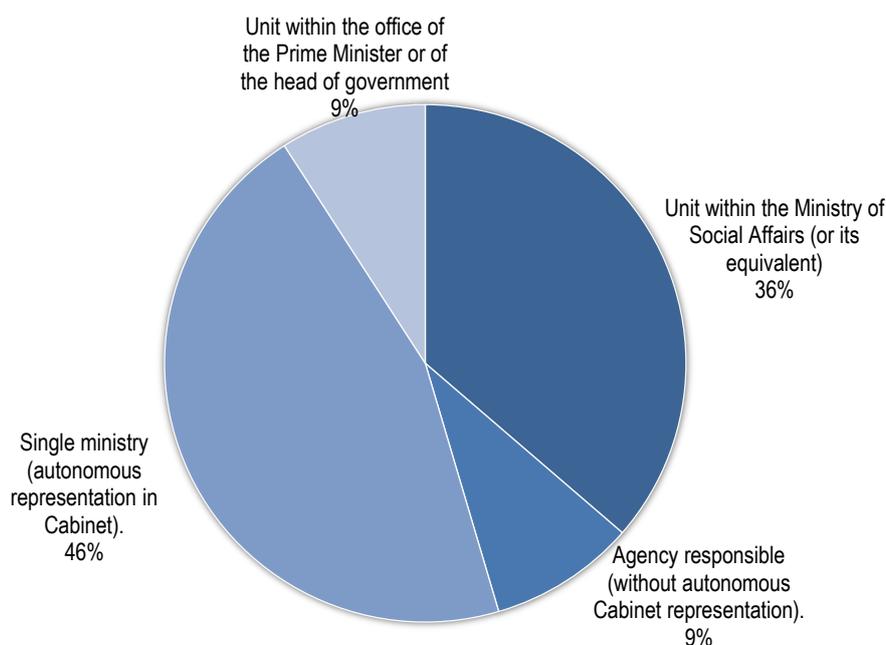
Having established a robust institutional framework with clear roles, mandates, capacity, and co-ordination mechanisms is crucial to ensure effective implementation, co-ordination and sustainability of the gender equality and mainstreaming strategies. This approach calls for equipping various institutions with the mandate, capacity, resources and skills to promote, implement, monitor and evaluate gender equality policies across different levels of government. OECD (2018) Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality underlines the need for a strong coordination among governmental actors including centre of government; central gender equality institutions; line ministries and agencies; and data-collecting and producing bodies for effective institutional framework for gender equality and mainstreaming.²

According to the 2017 OECD Survey, all OECD governments established a central gender equality institution in charge for promoting gender equality. Nonetheless, nature of these institutions varies substantially in terms of institutional design, location in government, functions, resources and capacity across the OECD. To a large extent, the location of gender equality institutions also signifies their status, mandate, budgets, organisational design, human resources, and scope of influence within governments. OECD (2014) highlights that having a dedicated ministry responsible for gender equality sends a strong political signal about government's commitment to gender equality; and provides gender equality institutions with high visibility, role, and access to cabinet

² OECD (2018), "Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality"

submissions and budgetary decisions.³ Available evidence demonstrates that the most common approaches to the location of central gender equality institutions among OECD countries are having a single ministry with autonomous representation in Cabinet; and a unit placed within the Ministry of Social Affairs (or equivalent) (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Central gender equality institutions (2018)



Source: OECD (2017), Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies.

While a majority of responding countries such as Mexico, Luxembourg, Turkey, Italy and Canada reported having a dedicated ministry responsible for gender equality; several countries including Sweden, Latvia, Spain and Iceland indicated that there is a unit in charge of promoting gender equality within the Ministry of Social Affairs (or equivalent). In Poland, central gender equality institution, “Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment” is located within the office of the Prime Minister. This enables access to the pinnacle of decision-making and facilitates co-ordination, monitoring and policy development. In the case of Switzerland, there is an agency called “the Federal Office for Gender Equality” within the Federal Department (Ministry) of Home Affairs.

OECD (2018) Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality highlights that promoting gender equality requires a coordinated responsibility within the government; and should not be considered as the responsibility of the central gender equality institution exclusively. It is crucial to equip line ministries with sufficient capacity (e.g. training and knowledge) and resources (e.g. budget and staff) to implement gender initiatives to enable and co-ordinate a whole-of-government approach across policy fields.

³ OECD (2014), “Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries: Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth”

About a third of OECD countries reported having a dedicated, permanent unit/staff (e.g. gender units, gender focal points) responsible for gender equality in all line ministries (38%); while another third reported their presence only in some line ministries (38%). According to a majority of responding countries, there is no single approach to the location of these gender delivery units/focal points varying from having a separate unit or department to being located in strategic planning or administrative departments. Nonetheless, a large majority of line ministries reported that there is a gender focal person responsible for promoting gender equality whilst only 33% indicating that there is a permanent gender unit. Gender units in line ministries are predominantly responsible for raising awareness on the benefits of gender equality (80%); developing the gender equality policy/strategy/action plan for the Ministry (80%); and supporting gender mainstreaming (73%). A large majority of responding OECD countries including Sweden, Latvia, Spain, Mexico, Iceland, Turkey, Finland, Poland and Canada noted providing regular trainings for the staff of line ministries and agencies on gender mainstreaming and gender awareness albeit mostly on optional basis. Among respondents, only Israel and Luxembourg reported providing mandatory trainings for the staff of line ministries and agencies on gender awareness. Israel further indicated providing mandatory trainings on gender mainstreaming to the staff of line ministries and agencies.

Box 1.2. Central Gender Equality Institutions

Italy

In 1996, the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers established the Office of the Minister for Equal Opportunities and its functions were outlined on a Council of Ministers Decree in 1997. Currently its functions and competencies are regulated by Art. 16 of the Presidential Decree of the Ministerial Council (October 2012) and its internal organization by the Decree of the Ministry of labour and social policies delegated to equal opportunities (December 2012).

The Department for Equal Opportunities supports the person in charge of the promotion and coordination of policies relating to rights, equal opportunities and equal treatment as well as government actions preventing and removing any form and cause of discrimination. It is within the Department's competencies to:

- Direct, propose and co-ordinate regulatory and administrative initiatives in all matters related to the planning and implementation of policies for equal opportunities;
- The acquisition and organization of information as well as the promotion and co-ordination of information, verification, control, training and information activities in the field of equality and equal opportunities;
- The adoption and coordination of study and design development initiatives;
- The definition of new intervention policies, the study and promotion of projects and initiatives, as well as the co-ordination of the initiatives of administrations and other public institutions in issues related to equality and equal opportunities;
- The direction and co-ordination of the competent central and local administrations to ensure correct implementation of government regulations and guidelines;
- The adoption of the necessary initiatives for the adaptation of provisions of the European Union and for the implementation of community programs into national law;
- Take care of the relations with the State, regional and local administrations, as well as with organizations operating in the field of equality and equal opportunities, with particular reference to the European Union, the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OECD.

Within the Department for Equal Opportunities operate the following bodies: Inter-ministerial Commission for the support of victims of trafficking, violence and serious exploitation; The Commission for the prevention and contrast of female genital mutilation practices; Evaluation commission for the legitimacy to act for the protection of persons with disabilities; Commission for Equal Opportunities between men and women; Observatory for the fight against paedophilia and child pornography; Office for the promotion of equal treatment and the removal of discrimination based on race and ethnic origin.

Switzerland

The Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) of Switzerland is placed within the

Federal Department of Home Affairs. FOGE's mandate lies with Art. 8 of the Federal Constitution of 1981 and the Gender Equality Act (GEA) of 1996, which stipulate the removal of all forms of direct or indirect discrimination and the promotion of gender equality in all areas of life.

FOGE works to achieve both; equality before the law and real equality. For the former, FOGE is involved in the drafting of legislation and in parliamentary business, provides tools to assess the impact of legislation, supports the application of GEA and gives its opinion on cases before the Federal Supreme Court and makes knowledge available to experts. For the latter, it promotes equal opportunities and equal pay in the workplace, equality in the family and prevents domestic violence. It does so by informing and raising awareness of the public and professionals, and providing advice to bodies inside and outside the federal administration.

At the national level, FOGE works with all organizations engaged with equality issues and particularly with the Swiss Conference of Gender Equality Delegates, the Federal Commission for Women's Issues and the Swiss women's, men's and equality umbrella organizations. Internationally, FOGE has contact with the UN and the Council of Europe and implementing international guidelines in the country is part of its tasks.

Sources: Department of Equal Opportunities; Swiss Confederation, Federal Office for Gender Equality

The 2015 GEPL Recommendation stresses that gender equality initiatives are needed to be coordinated across institutions at different levels of government. This calls for sound policy co-ordination (vertical and horizontal) and collaboration mechanisms to achieve a whole-of-government approach. Based on available evidence, the most prevalent co-ordination mechanisms in OECD countries include establishing measurement and reporting frameworks on gender equality and mainstreaming (54%); cascading of objectives from national gender strategy to individual performance objectives from top management to employees in line ministries (46%); and establishing cross-governmental committees at working/analyst level (46%), whereas the least emphasis is placed on cross-ministerial agreements and memorandums of understanding.

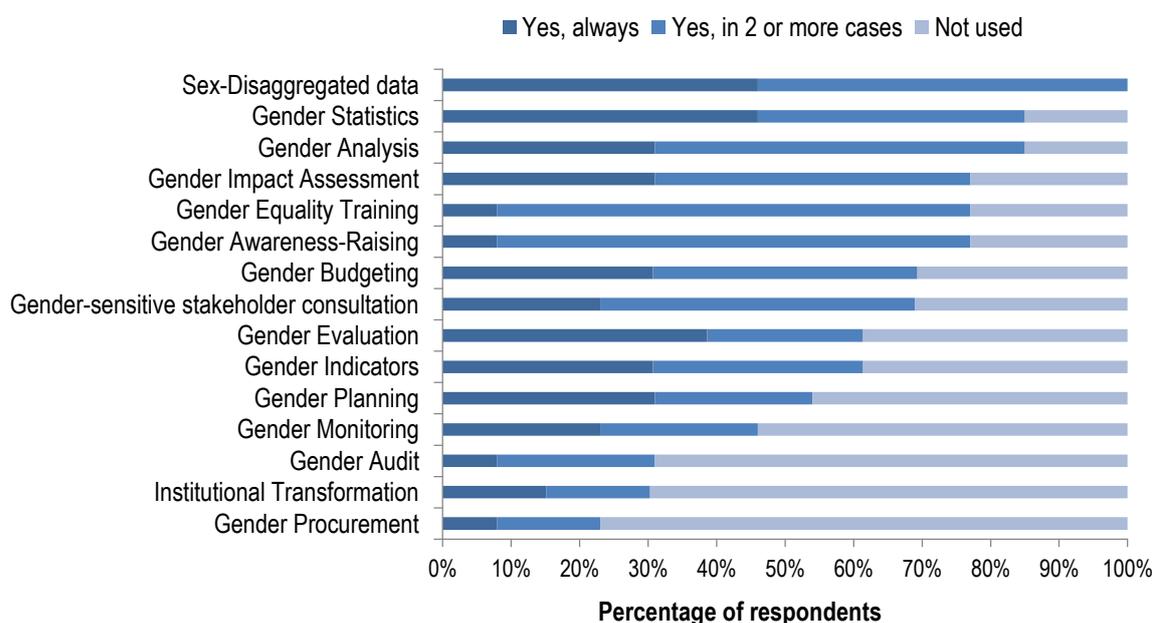
1.4. Evidence-based and gender-sensitive policy making

Inclusive policies require integrating differentiated needs, concerns and circumstances of both men and women at all stages of the policy process and across all policy sectors, through gender mainstreaming. The 2015 GEPL Recommendation highlights that evidence-based assessment of gender impacts and considerations needs to be integrated into various dimensions of public governance including public procurement, public consultation and service delivery management. It underlines that these assessments should be conducted at early stages of all phases of the policy cycle, for instance, by aligning ex ante assessments of gender impacts with broader government-wide policy development processes.

Available evidence from the 2017 OECD survey depicts a mixed picture indicating both progress and room for improvement vis-à-vis data from 2011 regarding the use of gender mainstreaming tools by ministries; departments and agencies at the centre of governments (see Figure 1.3). All OECD countries responding to the survey indicated collecting sex-disaggregated data, tabulated separately for women and men, at least in some cases. 85% of respondents indicated collecting gender statistics referring to data collected and

presented disaggregated by sex based on gender issues, concepts and definitions which reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives and which take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender biases. The other prevalent gender mainstreaming tools utilised by the OECD countries include gender analysis (85%); gender impact assessment (77%); gender equality training (77%); gender-awareness raising (77%); gender budgeting (70%) and gender-sensitive stakeholder consultation (69%). Nonetheless, the use of gender mainstreaming tools such as gender audit; institutional transformation and gender procurement remains limited across the OECD.

Figure 1.3. Use of gender mainstreaming tools (2018)



Source: OECD (2017), Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies

Among responding countries, only Sweden, Spain, Iceland and Israel noted undertaking gender audit, which assesses the extent to which gender equality is effectively institutionalised in policies, programmes, organisational structures and proceedings (including decision-making processes), and in corresponding budgets. Regarding gender-sensitive institutional transformation which aims to integrate gender equality into the regular rules, procedures and practices of an institution; Sweden, Spain, Turkey and Finland reported its implementation at the centre of government. Based on available evidence, utilisation of gender procurement also appears to be an uncommon practice. Among respondents, only Switzerland, Turkey and Spain reported integrating a gender perspective into the public procurement process, while Canada indicated that a gender perspective into the public procurement process is integrated only when a Treasury Board submission is required for procurement.

In the case of Switzerland, the principle of equal pay for men and women was included in the national legislation on public procurement (see Box 1.3). Companies competing for a public procurement contract subscribe to the principle of equal pay and sign off on a declaration stating that they apply the principle in their company. Companies unable to

give this guarantee are excluded from participating in public procurement processes. Regular monitoring is also carried out to ensure the respect of equal pay within the public administration and to verify that companies which receive mandates from public authorities comply with the requirement of equal pay. If wage discrimination is identified in a company, the tender can be revoked or a penalty for breach of contract can be issued.⁴

In Spain, Public Sector Contracts Act states that the contracting authorities may establish social considerations such as the elimination of inequalities between men and women. In Canada, in cases where Treasury Board submission is required for procurement, there needs to be a gender-based analysis as part of the Treasury Board submission process. Treasury Board submissions are required generally for larger size procurements depending on departmental contracting authorities and the Treasury Board Contracting Policy. Other diversity factors are also included in the procurement process in Canada. For example, Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business aims to increase federal contracting opportunities and access to the overall federal procurement process for Aboriginal businesses including many Aboriginal women owned businesses⁵.

⁴<https://www.ebg.admin.ch/ebg/en/home/topics/work/equal-pay/government-control-of-public-procurement.html>

⁵<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100032802/1100100032803>

Box 1.3. Gender Sensitive Procurement

Switzerland

The Federal Equal Opportunities Office in Switzerland has included the principle of equal pay for men and women in the national legislation on public procurement contracts. Companies competing for a public procurement contract subscribe to the principle of equal pay and sign a declaration stating that they apply the principle in their company. Companies unable to give this guarantee are excluded from participation in the public procurement contract.

Companies that have signed the declaration may be subject to an inspection by the Office. The Office has developed two instruments that are used to check whether companies do indeed actually apply the principle. The first instrument concerns a kind of self-control, to the extent that it enables the companies to perform an audit themselves. The second instrument is a sophisticated tool enabling a detailed analysis to be carried out and on the basis of which policy proposals can also be deduced. This audit can only be carried out by experts made available to companies by the Office.

If wage discrimination is identified in a company, the tender can be revoked or a penalty for breach of contract can be issued. Furthermore, in the case of a future procurement, the company is only taken into consideration if it can provide proof that equal pay is guaranteed.

Japan

As part of its measures for Gender Equality, the Japanese Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office is encouraging companies to take positive actions for public procurements and subsidies towards the promotion of women's advancement.

Based on article 20 of the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace, when ministries conduct procurements that evaluate factors other than price, additional evaluation points will be awarded to companies that promote work-life balance based on the content of the contract.

This points will be awarded if corporations are certified under the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation with the "Eruboshi" certification, have the "Kurumin" and "Platinum Kurumin" certification under Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children, the "Youth Yell" certification from the Youth Labor Welfare Act as well as the small and medium-sized companies that formulated action plans for business owners based on the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation. The allocation of points is to be decided by each ministry and companies are given an impartial evaluation and treatment.

All 26 State institutions commenced initiatives in 2016 and all 182 bodies have published schedules for its full implementation. This initiative is being promoted for procurement by local governments as well as by private-sector corporations.

Source: OECD (2017), Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies, [Federal Office for Gender Equality "Government control of public procurement"](#); [Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, Women and Men in Japan 2018](#)

Available evidence also demonstrates that challenges persist in the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming and in linking it to concrete results across OECD countries. About half of OECD governments which responded to the survey reported implementing gender analysis while developing a new legislation or budget, with the aim to ensure they address differentiated gender needs and avoid unintended negative impact on men and women. However, less than one third of responding countries assesses their actual impact (ex-post) on women and men (see Table 1.1). Limited ex-post assessment of normative frameworks obstructs analysing whether legislations and budgets serve the intended goals and whether they equally benefit men and women. The lack of this key information makes it difficult to build on the lessons learnt while developing new proposals and to make progress.

Table 1.1. Undertaking ex-post and ex-ante gender impact assessment (2018)

Ex-ante (development stage)	Yes, always	Yes, in 2 or more cases	No, but the government plans to do so	No, and this is not foreseen in the near future
Primary legislation	46%	23%	8%	23%
Subordinate regulations	23%	15%	31%	31%
Policies	15%	23%	23%	39%
Government programs and initiatives, including on the delivery of public services	23%	15%	31%	31%
Budget proposals	46%	15%	15%	23%
Ex-post (evaluation stage)				
Primary legislation	23%	15%	15%	46%
Subordinate regulations	15%	15%	15%	54%
Policies	23%	8%	15%	54%
Government programs and initiatives, including on the delivery of public services	31%	8%	23%	39%
Budget proposals	31%	8%	8%	54%

Source: OECD (2017), Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies.

Table 1.1 demonstrates that undertaking ex-ante gender impact assessment of policies, regulations and government programs remains rather an uncommon practice. However, about a third of respondents indicating their plans to do so shows that the demand for such practice is starting to take hold across the OECD. Among responding countries, only Sweden and Canada indicated conducting gender impact assessment of all policies during both development and evaluation stage. While Spain, Mexico and Turkey reported implementing gender impact assessment of policies in some cases; and Iceland, Switzerland and Latvia indicated that there are plans to do so. Luxembourg reported undertaking ex-ante gender impact assessment of all subordinate regulations and ex-post assessment of all government programmes and initiatives including on the delivery of public services. In the case of Spain, gender impact assessment of all government programmes and initiatives are conducted both at the development and evaluation stage.

Sweden noted that there are indicators for all national policy goals for gender equality to measure the impact of policies on gender equality when undertaking ex-post evaluation.

These indicators are monitored and regularly updated by Statistics Sweden. In Spain, indicators have been set in Strategic Plan on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (2014-2016) and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security along with targets. In the case of Canada, directives on results include considerations for gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) in program evaluations. In light of the guidance that has been developed in collaboration with Status of Women Canada; all Canadian departments report on departmental results with supporting performance indicators on sex, gender and intersecting diversity factors.

PRELIMINARY

Box 1.4. Impact – Gender Mainstreaming**Iceland**

Iceland conducted gender impact analysis (GIA) of commodity tax including on personal care products that are used by men and women. The results of the GIA showed that women are charged more than men for equivalent products and services. For instance, gender impact analysis of commodity tax on razors demonstrated that although electric razors used by men are exempt from commodity tax; while other hair removal devices designed for women are subject to 7.5% commodity tax. Following the outcome, Iceland abolished the commodity tax on razors used by women in 2017.

Sweden

As part of a city planning project in the city of Malmö, an old parking lot was transformed into an activity space for young people. When looking at the targeted audience for such areas, surveys showed that they were predominantly used by young men and boys and it appeared that the leisure activities provided for youth were mostly used by young men and boys; whereas only 10-20% of the visitors were girls.

The project decided to make of this new space a gender-balanced area, and focus on involving young women and girls from the neighbourhood. An advocacy group of young women was established to contribute with ideas on activities that could be organized in the space and called for more cultural activities related to music and dance rather than physical activities. Also, groups of stakeholder (composed of local associations and small businesses) became involved and were responsible for planning the programme of activities and had direct influence on the spending of the budget. The idea was to build upon the engagement mobilized through the planning processes so that activities offered in the area would be managed and maintained by the users themselves (i.e. the residents in the neighbourhood).

The approach showed to be successful and throughout the year, young people from different groups participated in the preparations and arranged multiple activities. The contribution from the group of young women was acknowledged by media and generated a public debate on the importance of including gender equality in urban planning. When the project came to an end, the group of young women started their own advocacy group “Engaged in Malmö” (EIM) to continue their work. This group continues to organise public events, helping other girls to implement their ideas and encourage citizens to participate in the urban planning of the city.

Sources: Iceland, Ministry of Finance, July 2017; European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, http://www.charter-equality.eu/exemple-de-bonnes-pratiques/urban-planning-on-girls-conditions.html?ref_id=166

A number of OECD countries adopted mechanism to ensure that gender analysis has been applied in practice. Across the OECD, the most common measures include requiring a statement on gender impacts in all draft laws (54%); in all budget proposals (46%); and integrating gender analysis into the mainstream requirement for regulatory impact analysis (38%). The least common mechanisms utilised by OECD countries comprises verification of application of gender analysis by gender institutions, reported by only Switzerland; and independent evaluation or audits of the application of gender analysis,

conducted by only Canada. When it comes to integrating changes to the substance of a legislations, regulations, policies and programmes as a consequence of using gender analysis, 75% of responding countries reported that the effect of gender analysis on legislations, regulations, policies and programmes has not been measured. This indicates the need to further strengthen mechanisms and capacities to translate gender mainstreaming efforts into concrete results across OECD countries.

1.5. Accountability for and oversight of gender equality

Like any public policy field spanning across administrative borders, one of the main challenges to the effective implementation of gender equality strategies and gender mainstreaming is that it may become the responsibility of everyone and no-one.⁶ The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life underlines that independent institutions (e.g. Independent Commissions, Supreme Audit Institutions, Ombud's Offices), and advisory bodies (e.g. Government councils) shall have adequate mandate and capacity to monitor implementation of government-wide gender equality and mainstreaming policy. OECD (2017) also suggests that "sound accountability and oversight that involves reporting to the highest possible level of government increases the likelihood that gender mainstreaming initiatives will be successful and sustainable, and that gender equality will remain a legislative priority".⁷

Respondents to the OECD survey highlighted a variety of oversight institutions and mechanisms for gender equality including by parliament, ombud's office, special commissions appointed by the executive as well as supreme audit institutions (see Table 1.2). Available evidence from the 2017 OECD survey points out that the most prevalent mechanisms for accountability are through the oversight role of the parliaments and parliamentary committees; and ombud's offices, which is in line with the findings of the 2011 OECD Survey. A number of responding countries including Sweden, Mexico, Turkey and Canada indicated that their supreme audit institutions also provide oversight for gender equality. While less common, independent permanent human rights commissions; independent permanent gender equality commissions; and advisory councils were used as oversight institutions in more than 20% of OECD countries.

⁶ OECD (2017), "The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle"

⁷ OECD (2018), "Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality"

Table 1.2. National oversight institutions for gender equality (2018)

	Ombud's Office	Commission in the Political Executive (committee appointed by the Prime Minister)	Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission established by law	Independent Permanent Gender Equality Commission established by law	Parliament	Parliamentary Committee dedicated to gender equality/women's affairs	Judicial body: commission or office located in the Ministry of Justice or that adjudicates claims or advocates in court	Advisory council: lay panel advisory to ministries or political executive
Canada	-	●	-	-	0	●	-	-
Finland	●	0	-	●	0	●	●	-
Iceland	-	0	-	-	0	0	0	0
Israel	0	0	0	●	0	●	0	0
Italy	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	-
Latvia	●	0	-	●	0	-	-	-
Luxemburg	0	0	0	-	0	●	-	-
Mexico	●	●	-	-	●	●	0	●
Poland	●	0	-	-	●	-	-	-
Spain	●	-	●	-	●	●	-	●
Sweden	●	●	-	-	●	●	-	-
Switzerland	-	0	-	-	●	●	-	●
Turkey	●	●	0	0	●	●	●	0

Note: ● "yes"; 0 "no"; N/A "not applicable"

Source: OECD (2017), Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies.

Based on available evidence, two-thirds of OECD countries have gender-equality parliamentary committees, which can be fully dedicated to the issue or, more often, have a combined portfolio. Parliamentary committees play a key role in reviewing bills proposed by the government and act also as a forum where community concerns can be raised. The mandates of these committees vary, but most of them draft gender equality legislation and examine selected draft laws from a gender equality perspective. However, in only few of these countries committees do have the power to look at all draft laws through a gender-sensitive lens. Additionally, the budget approval largely remains a responsibility of budget committees which rarely coordinate with gender equality committees, thus missing the inclusion of a gender perspective into public budgets.

Box 1.5. Oversight mechanisms/Audit Institutions/Parliamentary Committees

Gender budgeting oversight in Austria

In Austria, gender equality and gender budgeting are an integrated part of the federal budget law and the Performance Budgeting System. Under each of the 33 budget chapters, Ministers have to define five outcome objectives, with at least one addressing gender equality. Progress is reported in the Annual Federal Performance Report. The Budget Committee at the Austrian Parliament scrutinises the gender equality objectives as part of its role in relation to budget oversight. The committee often holds intensive discussions of the objectives, and they are also debated in plenary sessions. MPs have been known to question their relevance, the level of ambition and the availability of adequate funds.

Additionally, the Austrian Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), established in 2012, supports Parliament in the budgetary process, in consulting and enacting budget laws and to fulfil its oversight role. To this end, PBO supports the Budget Committee in form of written expertise, analysis and short studies on budgetary matters presented by the government, preparing brief information upon request of members of the Budget Committee, supporting other parliamentary committees regarding impact assessments of new legislation and consult Parliament on performance budgeting concerning equality of women and men (gender budgeting). PBO studies address progress of gender equality in the framework of performance budgeting and also publish recommendations for enhancement of the framework itself.

Gender audits in Andalusia, Spain

The Law 18/2003 on Fiscal and Administrative Measures made it compulsory to promote gender audits within the Andalusian Public Administration. Since this time, the Andalusian Regional Government Administration has understood and designed its own gender audits as tools to assess the progress achieved in implementing its gender responsive budgeting strategy.

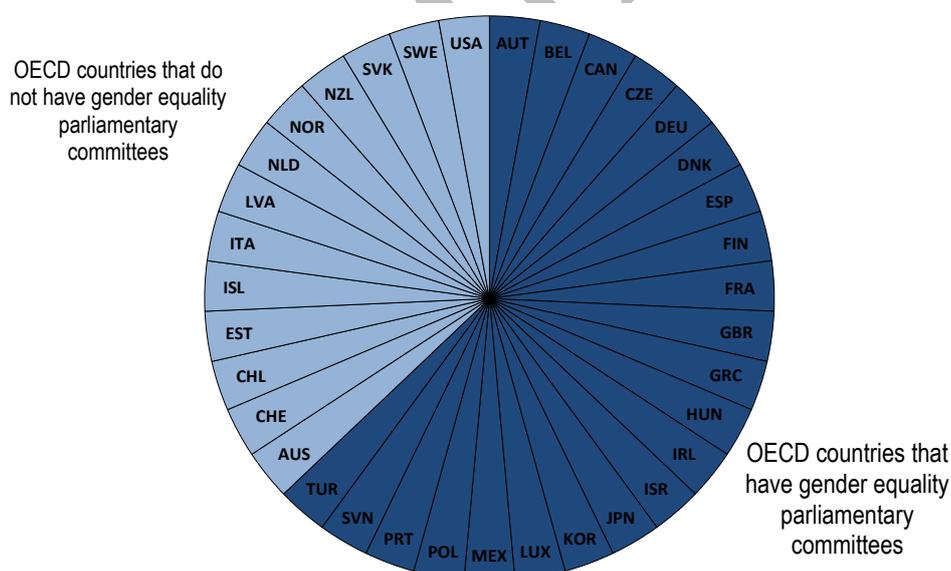
In 2013, as part of its Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) strategy, the Government launched a series of gender audits. The specific objectives pursued by these audits are: (1) to assess the extent to which the objectives assigned to budget programmes classed as G+ have been attained; (2) to analyse and measure the extent to which gender mainstreaming has been implemented in budget planning, implementation and accountability; (3) to assess the strategies carried out by the managing centres to implement the methodology and achieve their targets; and (4) to identify best practices and make recommendations to strengthen GRB within the Andalusian Public Administration.

These audits are undertaken by the Gender Budgeting Impact Commission, established as part of Law 18/2003. It was hoped that these audits would give a new impetus to gender budgeting and establish new lines of work for each programme according to the current socio-economic situation, the progress achieved, the challenges still pending and the lessons learned. The documents resulting from the gender audits are available for public consultation for a specific length of time in order to take account of any feedback from citizens interested in promoting gender mainstreaming.

Sources: Information provided by the Government of Austria, [Austrian PBO 2017](#); [Andalusian Regional Government Administration \(2014\)](#)

Overall, OECD parliaments that responded to the survey acknowledged the oversight role of gender equality committees as a successful practice. Respondents also provided some examples in which the advice given by gender equality parliamentary committee effectively led to the modification of a bill or an existing law or policy. Some respondents identified a challenge in the absence of gender equality legislation, in the limited awareness and presence of accountability mechanisms, and in the insufficient availability of data demonstrating the impact of policies and programmes. Data on the impact of parliamentary oversight remain scarce making it difficult to measure whether recommendations provided by gender equality committees were indeed adopted to ameliorate legal and policy frameworks. Some positive examples of impact were shared by Japan, Mexico and Hungary. In Japan, the Standing Committees on Cabinet in both houses debated a bill on the promotion and advancement of women in the workplace. Almost all parliamentary groups supported the bill during the plenary session, leading to its adoption. Similarly, Hungary's former Constitutional Committee charged with gender equality responsibilities (now the Committee on Justice) played a decisive role in modifying the Criminal Code to recognize domestic violence as a crime. In the case of Mexico, the role of the Gender Equality Commission of the Chamber of Deputies in driving reforms related to combating gender-based violence; and women's access to health, education and political participation has incentivised state-level congressional bodies to establish similar commissions at the sub-national level to promote gender equality.

Figure 1.4. Parliamentary committees on gender equality in OECD countries (2018)



Source: OECD (2017), "The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle"; official websites of OECD country legislatures; PARLINE database on national parliaments, <http://www.ipu.org/parlinee/parlinesearch.asp>.

OECD (2018) highlights that independent oversight institutions and advisory bodies have proven quite effective in providing objective evaluations on policy formulation,

implementation, evaluation and outcomes.⁸ Available evidence demonstrates that supreme audit institutions play an important oversight role for gender equality in some OECD countries; and increase effectiveness of implementing gender equality. For instance, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada is one of few supreme audit institutions across the OECD that has audited gender-based analysis (GBA+).⁹ The Auditor General of Canada published a report on the implementation of GBA+ in 2015.¹⁰ In response to the recommendations of the report, Status of Women Canada, the Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board Secretariat committed to work together with other federal departments and agencies; and tabled the Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016-2020), which has changed the way the Government of Canada implements GBA+.¹¹ The plan builds on progress made and lessons learned; and lay out a comprehensive roadmap for more rigorous application of GBA+ at the federal level. In the case of Sweden, following the Swedish National Audit Office Report stating the need for an institutional structure that strengthens gender equality, the Swedish Government announced in its Budget Bill its intention to establish a gender equality agency in 2018 to achieve a strategic, cohesive and sustainable governance, and effective implementation of the gender equality policy¹².

Available evidence demonstrates that ombud's offices are also one of the most common mechanisms for oversight of gender equality across the OECD. A majority of responding countries including Poland, Turkey, Finland, Spain, Mexico, Latvia and Sweden reported having an ombud's office providing oversight for gender equality. OECD (2014) underlines that mandate, resources and capacity; thus the effectiveness of ombud's offices varies across contexts. One of the notable examples is Ombud's Office of the Republic of Latvia, which is entitled to examine the legislation and provide an independent analysis as well as recommendations for the government. The Latvian Ombud's Office works on enhancing the provision of human rights, including equal treatment and gender equality by raising awareness on the importance of the prohibition of gender discrimination and differential treatment; and consults individuals in the human rights matters, including gender equality. As well, in Mexico, the National Commission of Human Rights (the Ombudsperson) is mandated to monitoring and evaluating Mexico's national gender equality policy.

A number of OECD countries including Sweden, Luxembourg and Turkey indicated presence of independent permanent human rights commissions overseeing gender equality. In Luxembourg, the National Commission on Human Rights (Commission consultative des droits de l'homme) is regularly consulted on issues on human rights including women's rights. The Commission also provides statements to legislations related to gender equality and women's rights. In the cases of Latvia, Israel and Finland, independent permanent gender equality commissions also oversee gender equality agendas. For instance, in Latvia, the Gender Equality Commission focuses on promoting

⁸ OECD (2018), "Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality"

⁹ OECD (*forthcoming*), "Gender Governance Review of Canada"

¹⁰ http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201602_01_e_41058.html#hd3b

¹¹ <http://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-ac/plan-action-2016-en.html>

¹² Swedish National Audit Office (2015), "Summary: The Government's gender equality initiative – temporary or permanent improvements?"

http://www.riksrevisionen.se/PageFiles/22905/Summary_2015_13.pdf

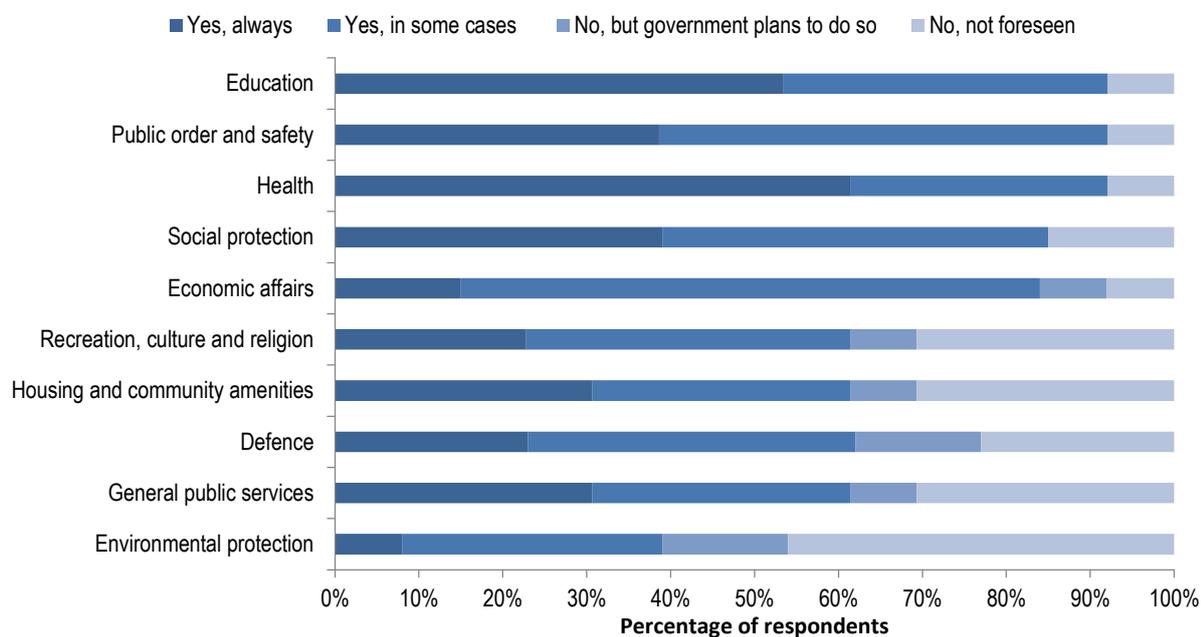
gender mainstreaming in national policies; performing gender analysis; and coordinating gender equality action plans.

Gender-disaggregated evidence for better policies

Setting the right data target is crucial to establish an accurate picture of reality. Gender-disaggregated data builds an evidence base for identifying gender gaps, designing policy interventions and evaluating their impacts. The 2015 GEPL Recommendation also underlines that readily accessible and reliable data on gender equality and mainstreaming allows results to be tracked vis-à-vis national and international targets and benchmarks; and enables both sound evidence-based policy making; and gender monitoring and evaluation.

The purpose of gender-sensitive statistics is to ‘adequately’ reflect the living conditions of women and men; and to collect data in those areas which are able to shed light on enduring gender discrimination and lack of redress. This requires the identification of the type of data need to be collected, but also the proactive and competent implementation of gender-sensitive surveys, both regular (such as household surveys) and ad hoc (such as violence against women surveys). The collection of sex-disaggregated data across service providers such as schools, hospitals, courts and police stations is critical to understand the differentiated impact of policies and legislations on men and women; and reveal gender gaps. However, available evidence from the 2017 OECD Survey demonstrates that the regular collection of gender-disaggregated data remains insufficient and patchy across policy areas and government services.

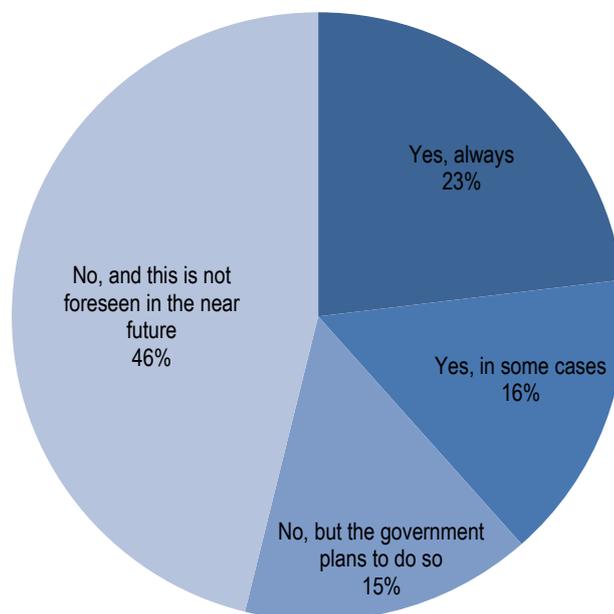
A number of OECD countries use government-wide measurement and reporting frameworks supported by the collection of gender-disaggregated data across policy areas. Nevertheless, the collection of gender-disaggregated data is not consistent across policy areas (see Figure 1.5). While the majority of responding countries reported to regularly collect gender-disaggregated data in policy areas related to education and health, this remains largely uncommon in areas seen as “gender neutral” such as environment, economic affairs and defence, thus perpetrating the perception that gender would not be a relevant dimension. As a result, policy and budget decisions in these critical areas for the well-being of both men and women, risk to remain gender-blind and to produce negative implications for men or women, boys or girls. These findings of the 2017 OECD Survey reflect the trends observed in data from 2011 regarding the limited availability of gender-disaggregated data in certain policy areas such as environment and defence, indicating overall a sluggish progress across the OECD. As such, closing these data gaps will be critical for developing a comprehensive knowledge base across policy areas and achieve de facto gender equality.

Figure 1.5. Collection of gender-disaggregated data across sectors (2018)

Source: OECD 2017 Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies.

About a third of responding countries reported formal requirements to use of gender-disaggregated data in the development of normative frameworks and policies (see Figure 1.5). Among respondents, Sweden, Canada and Spain indicated requirements to use gender-disaggregated data in the development of all primary legislations; subordinate regulations; policies; government programmes and initiatives; as well as budget proposals, while Latvia reported that there are plans to do so. Turkey noted requirements to utilise gender-disaggregated data in the development of all normative frameworks and policies albeit in some cases. Italy indicated requirements to use gender-disaggregated data while developing budget proposals; whereas Mexico mentioned that gender-disaggregated is required to be used in some cases while formulating policies, government programmes and initiatives; and budget proposals.

Figure 1.6. Requirements to use of gender-disaggregated data in the development of policies (2018)



Source: OECD 2017 Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies.

PRELIMINARY

Box 1.6. Gender-disaggregated data

Canada

Statistics Canada, the Canadian central statistical agency, provides gender-disaggregated data through its surveys facilitates instituting a GBA+ research framework and works closely with other federal government departments and agencies to provide sex-disaggregated data. Statistics Canada is also working on data integration aimed at demonstrating social and economic impacts of policy initiatives (e.g. social determinants of health incomes). Additionally, it also builds departmental knowledge and capacity on Gender Based Analysis+ through data finding workshops.

In their “Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report”, Statistics Canada provides a compilation of data related to women’s family status, education, employment, economic well-being, unpaid work, health and more. In order to reflect women’s experiences in its totality, Women in Canada reports include chapters on immigrant women, women in a visible minority, Aboriginal women, senior women and women with participation and activity limitations.

Statistics Canada is orienting its future work towards supporting departments in the development of progress and impact indicators and development of a gender portal in collaboration with Status of Women Canada. The aim is to provide federal departments and civil society with a “one stop shop” for sex-disaggregated data.

Israel

In 2008, the Israeli Statistics Law was amended to require every data collecting institution to analyse and publish statistics by gender.

The Department of Gender Equality in the Israeli Civil Service commission conducts two yearly reports on gender equality across the governmental offices and public sector. These reports comprise of gender indexes which provide a statistical analysis of each governmental office and ministry, as well as of the public sector as a whole. It is founded on both administrative databases and the offices’ own self-report, thus achieving a balanced view through cross-examination.

The detailed data collection and statistical compilation offer thorough and comprehensive insights to the condition of gender equality within each governmental office and unit, thus enabling extensive practical actions. In light of the gender disaggregated statistical data provided, governmental offices and units are stimulated to take appropriate actions to implement the recommendations of the Department of Gender Equality in the Israeli Civil Service Commission as the oversight institution in the field of gender equality.

Sources: OECD (2017) Canada Gender Governance Review; [Statistics Canada, Women in Canada: a Gender-based Statistical Report](#); Information provided by the State of Israel, Department of Gender Equality

Box 1.7. Gender indicators

Sweden

Statistics Sweden is commissioned by the Government to regularly follow up and present a total of 88 indicators for the development of gender equality in Sweden. These indicators cover the four sub-goals for gender equality that Sweden had until November 2016. As of November 2016, Sweden has two added new sub-goals for education and health; therefore new indicators are being developed to monitor the new goals. Statistics Sweden also publishes the book “Women and men in Sweden – Facts and figures” every second year, this presents the situation and development of gender equality in Sweden based on the indicators.

The Swedish Government has introduced a requirement in an ordinance that all governmental public agencies must present individual-based statistics in their annual reports disaggregated by sex, to ensure that access to sex disaggregated statistics improve.

Norway

Since 2008, Statistics Norway has published national gender equality indicators, including:

- Share of one-to-five-year-olds in kindergarten, gender distribution in municipal council representatives, education;
- Gender distribution in the workforce, distribution of income, gender distribution in part-time work, use of father’s quotas;
- Gender distribution in business structures, gender distribution in the public sector; gender distribution in the private sector, gender distribution among leaders, and gender distribution in educational programmes.
- Results are published on a national scale and are also available by county and municipality to allow policy makers to address regional and local issues.

Sources: Information provided by the Government of Sweden, Division for Gender Equality; OECD (2014), *Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries: Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth*, OECD publishing, Paris.

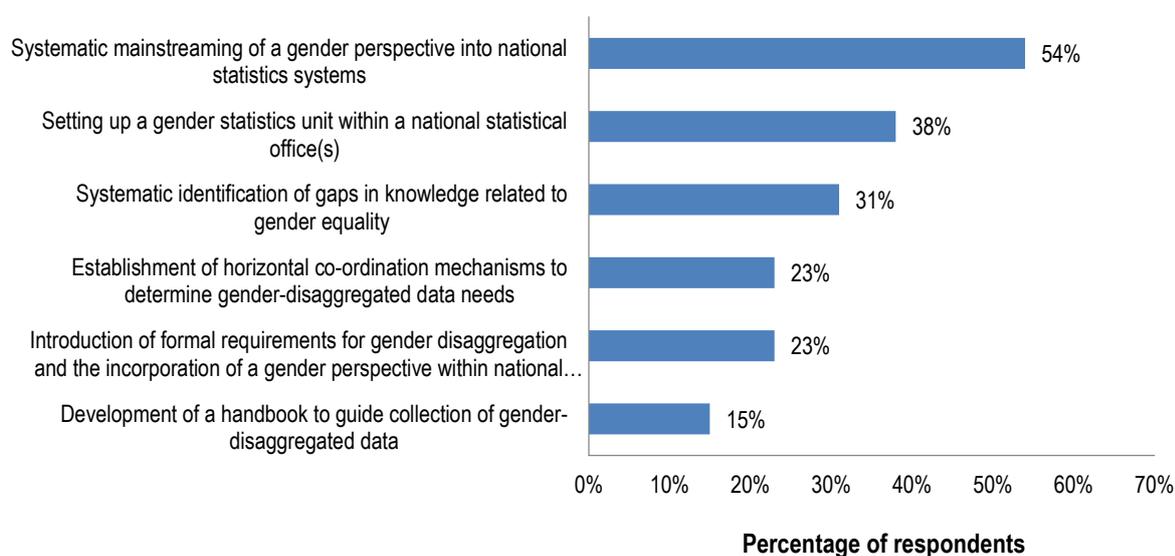
A large majority of responding countries including Latvia, Switzerland, Spain, Turkey, Finland, Iceland, Israel and Canada indicated that gender-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data and information is widely disseminated and communicated mainly through making it publicly available. In Latvia, once a quarter the Ministry of Welfare publishes an electronic collection of gender equality data, policy news and tendencies. The draft action plan for gender equality 2018-2020 foresees an in-depth review of data collection methods, mechanisms and amount in employment, education and gender based violence in order to define gaps as well as clear indicators for further data collection. In Israel, the Department of Gender Equality in the Civil Service Commission conducts two yearly reports of gender-disaggregated data. The first report provides a statistical analysis of each governmental office and ministry, as well as of the public sector as a whole; while

the second report covers a more in-depth account of each office's actions for the promotion of gender equality, primarily with regard to the performance of each office's Supervisor of Gender Equality.

Countries responding to the survey also identified some of the key challenges in collecting gender-disaggregated data at the centre of governments. These challenges mainly relate to capacity challenges including limited human resources; limited skills and capacity in line ministries to determine the need for gender-disaggregated data and to incorporate a gender perspective into their work; as well as limited co-ordination mechanisms to determine the kind of data that need to be collected. Some countries also highlighted lack of indicators to guide the collection of gender-disaggregated data among the obstacles.

A number of OECD countries have adopted measures to improve their capacity to collect gender-disaggregated data at the central level of government. Based on available evidence, the most prevalent mechanisms appear to be through the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into national statistics systems (54%) and through setting up a gender statistics unit within a national statistical office (38%). However, the development of a handbook to guide the collection of gender-disaggregated data (15%) and the establishment of horizontal co-ordination mechanisms to determine gender-disaggregated data need (23%) remain uncommon (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3. Measures in place to improve the capacity to collect gender-disaggregated data (2018)



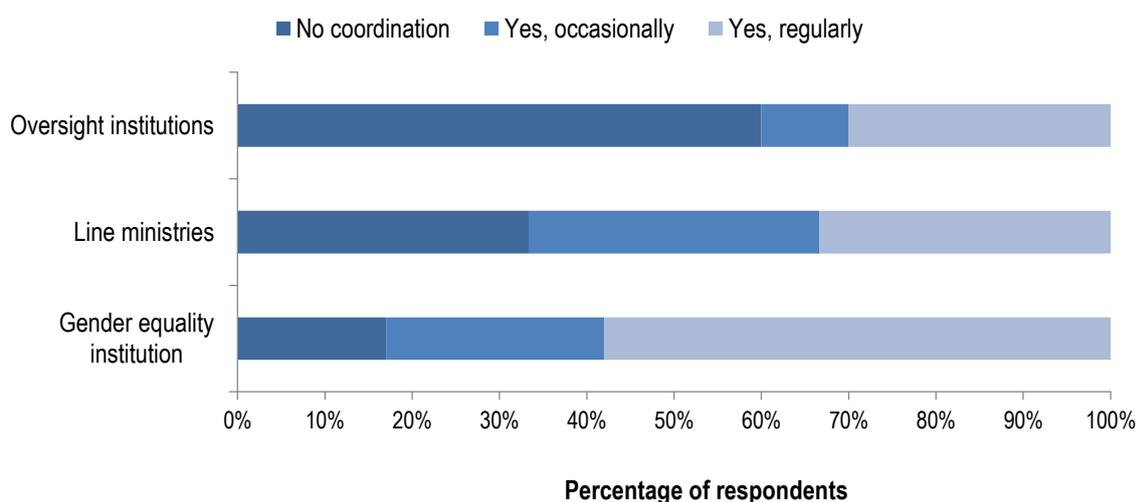
Source: OECD 2017 Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies.

National data collection efforts need to be aligned with national goals for equality, growth and social development to address the existing challenges. While over half of responding countries highlighted the leadership of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) in identifying the needed data domains to be collected, as well as in setting gender equality indicators, countries pointed out a limited role for National Gender Equality Institutions and line ministries in contributing to this task. Consulted line ministries further pinpointed that the identification of critical areas for data collection is insufficient and that coordination

among data producers is scarce. Yet, if a country is to demonstrate impact of gender equality initiatives and relevant resources, there appears to be a strong scope for National Gender Equality Institutions and line ministries to more closely coordinate with NSOs (see Figure 1.7).

Finally, respondent countries highlighted a broad variety of data collection actors and mechanisms involved in evaluating the impact of gender equality initiatives. Relevant stakeholders are: NSOs, line ministries, National Gender Equality Institutions, centre of government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector, and citizens. Mechanisms include: surveys, evaluations, studies, impact assessments, and regular data collection. This picture demonstrates the existence of rich National Statistics Systems across OECD. At the same time, while scarce information does not allow to obtain a full picture on the level of coordination and the effectiveness of leadership across these efforts, cross-referencing countries' responses around gender mainstreaming indicate a significant scope for improvement regarding the collection and availability of relevant data to develop and evaluate gender initiatives.

Figure 1.7. Coordination mechanism with the national statistics office (2018)



Source: OECD 2017 Survey on National Gender Equality Frameworks & Public Policies.