

**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance

Towards a Gender-sensitive Framework for Sound Public Governance

OECD Headquarters, Paris, France
4-5 February 2020

In preparing the next monitoring of the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life and in line with the Public Governance Committee Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming and its Action Plan [GOV/PGC(2019)7], the Secretariat has produced the draft analytical framework for gender-sensitive public governance, which directly builds upon the OECD's Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance [GOV/PGC(2018)26/FINAL]. The document will provide a foundation for the OECD to assess the gender-responsiveness of public governance approaches and processes across OECD member states in a comprehensive and consistent way.

The Delegates are invited to discuss this preliminary version of the document and share their comments at the 1st meeting of the Working Party on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance in February 2020. It will be then shared with the Public Governance Committee's policy networks for further consultation.

Tatyana TEPLOVA, Tatyana.TEPLOVA@oecd.org; +(33-1) 45 24 18 52
Pinar GUVEN, Pinar.GUVEN@oecd.org; +(33-1) 45 24 15 38

Table of Contents

1 Introduction	3
Context	3
Importance	5
Objectives	6
2 Values	7
Overview	7
Integrity	7
Openness and Transparency	8
Inclusiveness, Participation and Diversity	9
Accountability, and Respect for the Rule of Law	9
3 Enablers	13
Overview	13
Commitment, Vision and Leadership	13
Equitable and Evidence-informed Policy-making	14
Whole-of-government Co-ordination	14
Innovation and Change Management	15
4 Problem Identification, Policy Formulation and Design	18
Overview	18
Problem Identification and Policy Design	18
Management Tools	18
Policy Instruments	20
5 Policy Implementation	24
Overview	24
Management	25
Monitoring Performance	29
6 Policy Evaluation	32
Overview	32
Institutional Framework for Policy Evaluation	33
Promoting Quality and Use of Evaluations	33
Reviewing Impact of Regulations	33
References	35

1 Introduction

Context

The OECD has long championed the cause of gender equality and has placed it at the core of its policy advice. In 2010, the OECD launched the OECD Gender Initiative to examine the obstacles to gender equality in the fields of education, employment and entrepreneurship. The Initiative was a catalyst for the Council's adoption of the 2013 Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship [[OECD/LEGAL/0398](#)] and the 2015 Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (GEPL) [[OECD/LEGAL/0418](#)]. The latter, adopted and led by the Public Governance Committee, promotes a government-wide strategy for gender equality reform, sound mechanisms to ensure accountability and sustainability of gender initiatives, and tools and evidence to inform inclusive policy decisions. It also promotes a “whole-of-society” approach to reducing gender stereotypes, empowering women to participate in politics and decision-making, and removing implicit and explicit barriers to gender equality. In adopting the GEPL Recommendation, Adherents commit to mainstreaming gender equality in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of public policies and budgets. Mainstreaming gender equality requires a gender lens that focuses attention on the experiences and outcomes of different groups of women and men in an attempt to create more gender equal policy processes and outcomes. In so doing, Adherents also commit to integrating evidence-based assessments of gender-related impacts and considerations into various dimensions of public governance and the policy cycle, such as public procurement, regulatory policies, and budgeting.

1. A key component of the GEPL Recommendation is the joint commitment by Adherents and the OECD to monitor and report on progress made. Accordingly, in 2019, the OECD released the report *Fast Forward to Gender Equality: Mainstreaming, Implementation and Leadership*, which took preliminary stock of the current state of affairs in OECD countries vis-à-vis the GEPL Recommendation. This report found that while governments are increasingly adopting strategies and policies to narrow gender gaps, these efforts often do not fully achieve their goals, as public governance systemsⁱ are insufficiently gender sensitive (OECD, 2019^[1]). Similarly, the *2017 Report on the Implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations* [[C\(2017\)44/REV1](#)] highlighted that despite increasing political commitment to, and growing political awareness of, gender equality, its effective and long-term realisation will depend upon whether public governance approaches are gender-responsive. This means that public governance processes have to advance gender equality. It also implies that they, then, would need to attend to gendered dimensions of governance processes and outcomes. This entails consideration of not only state action or inaction, values, and institutions, but also how state decisions, or lack thereof, influence private life. Establishing gender-sensitive public governance processes would be important because gender equality is *a public interest*. Women make up half of the world's populationⁱⁱ and such meeting their needs and improving outcomes should be a core objective of the public policy and governance. Otherwise, these processes are not achieving their purpose and not serving the entire public. Furthermore, gender equality is *in the public interest*. Research shows that equitable societies tend to be more peaceful, economically prosperous, and happier.ⁱⁱⁱ Moreover, gender equality has been shown to improve productivity in the private sector and enhance trust in public institutions and decision-making processes (OECD, 2014^[2]).

2. In preparation for further monitoring and evaluation of Adherents' progress on the implementation of the GEPL Recommendation, and taking into account the findings of the reports mentioned above, the OECD has developed the Analytical Framework for Gender-sensitive Public Governance (hereinafter the "Analytical Framework"). The Analytical Framework will provide a foundation for the OECD to assess the gender-responsiveness of public governance approaches and processes across OECD member and partner countries in a comprehensive and consistent way. It will also help OECD member and partner states to maximise the role of governance processes and tools in closing gender gaps. Importantly, the Analytical Framework directly builds upon the OECD's Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance [[GOV/PGC\(2018\)26/FINAL](#)] (hereinafter the "Policy Framework"), a tool aiming to help governments design and implement public governance reforms that take into account effective policy-making approaches and that enable government to move closer to OECD standards and good practices (See Box 1.1. for the definition of sound public governance).

Box 1.1. Definition of Sound Public Governance

Sound public governance consists of the formal and informal rules, procedures, practices and interactions within the State, and between the State, non-state institutions and citizens, that frame the exercise of public authority and decision-making in the public interest.

Sound public governance constitutes a sine qua non condition for pluralist democracies to give effect to the respect for the rule of law and human rights, with efficient democratic institutions lying at the core of sound public governance.

Sound public governance is therefore the combination of three interconnected elements:

- Values: context-dependent principles of behaviour that guide public governance across all of its dimensions in a way that advances and sustain the public interest.
- Enablers: an integrated nexus of practices that supports the effective design and implementation of reforms.
- Instruments and tools: a set of policies and management practices for efficient governance and policy and service design, implementation and evaluation.

3. In line with the Public Governance Committee's (PGC) Strategy and Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming [[GOV/PGC\(2019\)7](#)], the Analytical Framework offers a strategic approach for countries in closing gender gaps through effective and inclusive governance and structural reforms. It also advances the PGC's priorities identified in the 2019-2020 Programme of Work and Budget [[GOV/PGC\(2018\)4/FINAL](#)], as it will assist efforts to help "governments build overall capacity for anticipatory governance, identify innovative approaches to policy design and deliver increased value for public services."

4. The primary target audiences of the Analytical Framework include centres of government, line ministries, agencies and other public institutions in the executive branch at all levels of government focusing on designing, implementing and evaluating policy and governance reform agendas for results. This in particular, includes central gender equality institutions and/or gender equality units within line ministries for whom this tool could prove useful in promoting gender equality as a critical whole-of-government policy and governance issue. In addition to executive branch actors, the Framework could also be useful for legislative and judicial branches seeking to gender mainstream their approaches to governance and/or hold executive branches accountable for their gender equality goals and commitments.

Importance

5. There is growing awareness among the global community that gender equality is a cornerstone of inclusive growth. Gender-balanced leadership and gender-responsive policymaking are more likely to ensure that the members of society equally share the benefits of growth. Women's full involvement in decision-making and agenda setting are crucial for adequately reflecting the priorities and needs of all members of society, and addresses systemic power imbalances in public and private life. It also contributes to greater trust of citizens in public institutions (OECD, 2014^[2]).

6. Nevertheless, gender inequality continues to persist across the OECD, although to varying degrees, in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life and hinders inclusive growth and opportunities for all. While women's labour force participation rates have been improving over the past few decades, progress remains slow and patchy and the glass ceiling persists. Women are still less likely than men to be in the workforce across the OECD, although their educational attainment tends to be higher. When women do participate in paid labour, they are more likely to work part-time and work for lower pay in a gender-segregated labour market (OECD, 2017^[3]). In the recent years, a number of OECD countries have stepped-up efforts to enhance pay transparency and these efforts are slowly coming to fruition. Yet on average, gender pay gaps across the OECD remain at about 15% at the median, with little progression recorded in recent years (OECD, 2017^[3]). Moreover, evidence clearly demonstrates that gender pay gaps widen when we account for intersecting differences such as race and disability (Chapman and Benis, 2017^[4]). Furthermore, much needs to be done to achieve gender balance at the top of listed companies (on average, 4.8% of CEOs were women in 2016 across OECD)^{iv}.

7. Within public administration, women remain overrepresented in both low-level job categories (e.g. secretarial positions) and part-time work (75% of total part-time workers in the public sector in participating OECD countries). The higher the position, the lower the proportion of women in many OECD countries across all branches of power. In parliaments and senior roles in the public service, there has only been a marginal increase (around 2%) since 2012. Women continue to represent, on average, only one-third of senior public service employees, members of parliament and Supreme Court judges (OECD, 2019^[1]).

8. The sluggish progress reveals that many of the government initiatives to date have not always been up to the task of dealing with persisting stereotypes and cultural norms. By way of example, women remain disproportionately responsible for unpaid care work^v, with major potential to improve public, accessible and affordable child and/or elderly care, and to encourage men to participate in care work. Although women are often at the losing end of structural gender inequality, cultural norms and stereotypes are simultaneously creating pressure and subsequent problems for men and boys, such as underdiagnosed mental health problems, addiction and alcohol abuse, and use of violence as a masculinity norm. These are reinforced by structural disincentives and cultural norms that discourage men from participating in care work, both paid and unpaid.

9. In addition, new challenges arise: while presenting real opportunities for change, digitalisation, disruptive technologies and big data generate additional risks to expand the scale of persisting inequalities, and create new forms of divides. Increasing incidences of digital violence, abuse and harassment in the form of (online) sexual harassment and gender-based violence, including gender-based violence is a staggering example. This may also generate a risk of democratic deficit as women, for example, may become intimidated to participate in public debate to avoid such violence. As a response, G7 countries have already made a political commitment to end gender-based violence, abuse and harassment in digital contexts.

10. Effective governance is key to delivering gender equality results. Given the crosscutting nature of structural inequalities, a siloed public governance approach is neither effective in accelerating progress in gender equality, nor in removing deeply rooted cultural norms and stereotypes. Meaningful changes on the ground require a co-ordinated, competent and powerful whole-of-government commitment, as well as

clear and effective mechanisms in place within and across government institutions to be able to translate public policies, programmes, services and budgets into concrete benefits for men and women. All institutions and policy areas are important for gender equality as they all impact men and women. Yet these impacts are differentially experienced between men and women, due to their different circumstances. This is why mainstreaming gender equality considerations throughout government is a fundamental requirement to identify and remove structural and systemic barriers that prevent the realisation of a fully inclusive society.

11. Gender mainstreaming, however, does not happen in a vacuum. Its ability to deliver on society-wide goals strongly relies upon the broader effectiveness of gender-sensitive public governance approaches, and the capability of governments to operate in an increasingly complex policy environment in a gender-responsive manner. In the context of this evolving policy environment, the PGC adopted the Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming and its Action Plan, which recognised the need for the PGC to reinforce its role in supporting countries in closing gender gaps through effective and inclusive governance and structural reforms. To this end, the Strategy proposed to develop an Analytical Framework which would identify gender dimensions of various governance levers and decision-making processes, and which would lay the foundation for deepening the understanding of how to best leverage governance tools to close gender gaps.

Objectives

12. This Analytical Framework builds on and complements the OECD Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance by highlighting potential gender-related dimensions of its core pillars. The Analytical Framework has several objectives:

- To offer a strategic approach for supporting countries in closing gender gaps through effective and gender-sensitive governance and structural reforms;
- To establish a tool aiming to help governments design and implement public governance reforms that take into account gender-sensitive policy-making approaches;
- To provide a foundation for the OECD to assess the gender-responsiveness of public governance approaches and processes across OECD member states in a comprehensive and consistent way, and thereby serve as a framework for gender governance reviews;

2 Values

Overview

13. The OECD defines values as “context-dependent principles of behaviour that guide public governance across all of its dimensions in a way that advances and sustains the public interest.”^{vi} As governments around the world struggle with issues of declining trust and legitimacy, values, notably integrity, openness and transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability, have emerged as the foundation of sound public governance. Values help guide the behaviour of public officials and shape citizen expectations. They are therefore essential in rebuilding trust in public institutions.

14. Values, however, are not gender neutral in application or effect. Research in public administration has documented how values shift in relation to organisational leadership, and can reflect masculine bias in ways that obscure marginalising behaviour (Stivers, 1994^[5]). Thus, it is necessary to understand how values contribute to gendered organisations, and how they might be better utilised to promote equality.

Integrity

15. Public Integrity refers to the consistent alignment of, and adherence to, shared ethical values, principles and norms for upholding and prioritising the public interest over private interests in public-sector behaviour and decision-making (OECD, 2017^[6]). It is the cornerstone of any system of sound public governance because it is critical for preventing corruption and thereby safeguarding democratic institutions and the rule of law. That said, no country is immune to violations of integrity, and corruption remains one of the most challenging issues facing governments today.

16. Although there is debate about the causal mechanisms (Stensöta, 2018^[7]) (Goetz, 2007^[8]), research points to important connections between public governance systems that contribute to violations of integrity and the underrepresentation of women across all branches of power. Indeed, there is emerging evidence on the links between gender equality in public decision-making and institutional integrity and trust. In a cross-country analysis of over 125 countries, for example, it was found that corruption is lower in countries where a greater share of parliamentarians are women. Similarly, in the private sector, there is strong evidence (although non-conclusive) that gender, ethnic and cultural diversity on boards is linked with better decision-making and fewer instances of governance-related scandals, such as bribery, corruption, fraud, and shareholder battles (MSCI, 2014^[9]). In short, public integrity systems seem to be stronger when more women hold decision-making roles.

17. Corruption also impacts gender equality in numerous, damaging ways. For example, evidence suggests that women, especially those from vulnerable groups, are more affected by petty corruption when accessing public services. Often the primary caretakers within families, women are more dependent on public service provision, which makes them more susceptible to extortion at the point of service delivery^{vii}. Women are more at risk of being exposed to physical abuse, sexual extortion (sextortion), exploitation, or harassment, which are disproportionately experienced by women. Unfortunately, the forms of corruption are not always formally recognised and are even less likely to be reported, in part because of a culture of shaming and victim blaming.

18. Furthermore, violations of integrity, such as corruption, are also likely to have disproportionate impacts on women in terms of public services and resources. Corruption contributes to under-resourced, inefficient and unresponsive public services and programmes. With men holding most of the decision-making power in countries, this increases the likelihood of corrupt practices targeting services and resources typically considered to be for women. As a result, as they may lack resources to seek private alternatives, women are primarily exposed to the devastating impact of corruption on the quality and quantity of public services. This is especially problematic since such services are usually under resourced in the first place.

19. Moreover, traditional measures aimed at curbing corruption, including whistle-blower protections and legal provisions, are experienced differently between men and women. For example, research suggests the possibility that whistle-blower protection measures are not gender neutral, with women often more susceptible to retaliation than men.^{viii} Thus, implementing such protections without considering power differences and gender norms within organisations, risks silencing women and other marginalised individuals and preventing them from coming forward. It would be important for such measures, then, be designed from a gender perspective that accounts for these differences.

20. Adopting a gender lens in national integrity systems can reveal hidden forms of corruption and go some way in helping to reduce the opportunities for, and the harmful impacts of, corrupt practices. It can also expose and help mitigate the gender implications of anti-corruptions measures. In support of this, it is necessary to establish data collection procedures from a gender perspective, collecting sex-disaggregated data to document the potentially divergent men and women's perceptions of, experiences with, and impacts of corruption, as well as with policy interventions designed to curb it. Such data will assist in devising strategies to eliminate corruption and in developing a gender-sensitive integrity framework.

Openness and Transparency

21. The basis of government openness and transparency is the disclosure and accessibility of government data and information, especially in relation to public services and resources. As such, they are key building blocks for accountability and public trust, as well as for the design and implementation of quality public services, and contribute to the functioning of democracies and market economies.

22. Establishing sound public governance that is gender sensitive requires transparency. Indeed, open government can serve as a potential mechanism through which to achieve gender equality, and some countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom, have adopted open government strategies that are gender sensitive.^{ix} From this perspective, institutions should report/disclose data, trends, outcomes, etc. When institutions are transparent with information, they can better facilitate change and respond to the needs of all citizens because there is more awareness on the scope and scale of the problems that exist, as well as an awareness of those groups most acutely impacted. Moreover, with such information, citizens and non-government organisations can better identify and advocate for their needs. At the same time, however, research demonstrates that women often lack access to government information compared to men (International Development Research Council, 2018^[10]). As such, designing open government and transparency initiatives through collaborative processes with diverse organisations and in gender-inclusive ways can help ensure that all citizens have equal access to information.

23. Moreover, public institutions need to be transparent with respect to how public decisions are made. This includes, at minimum, full disclosure of gender impact assessments and budgeting processes, as well as reporting back to stakeholder and impacted groups. Doing so not only enhances access to information, but also nurtures trust, legitimacy, and a sense of reciprocity among citizens and community groups.

24. It is also important that public institutions are open and transparent about gender equality within their own bodies. This can be achieved by adopting a gender lens in all planning, monitoring and evaluation processes and reporting on progress. In addition, institutions can track and publish information about the

workforce composition from a gender perspective of institutions across all branches of government, including within leadership positions, and report on gender pay gaps. Public institutions should also report on their initiatives to improve employment and pay equity.

Inclusiveness, Participation, Gender Equality and Diversity

25. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasises the principle of “leaving no one behind.” For public governance to be gender-sensitive, the GEPL Recommendation endorsed a dual approach, which includes a gender-mainstreaming strategy, to actively design, apply, and monitor gender equality in governance and decision-making across the policy cycle, as well as targeted measures to improve the representation of women across public institutions, including leadership structures.

26. As explained in the Policy Framework, “Applying a gender equality and inclusiveness lens in decision-making process can help governments better understand the needs of people of all genders across the broadest of cross-sections of society, and how to respond to them more effectively. Such a lens also helps decision-makers assess the differentiated impacts of their decisions - across policy themes or sectors - on people of all genders from different backgrounds, to evaluate whether any given policy mitigates or reinforces existing inequalities. Governments pursue inclusiveness by leveraging the information, ideas and resources held by all stakeholders, including citizens, civil society organisations and the private sector, and by better engaging with them in tailoring policies and services to societal needs.” (OECD, 2019^[11]) Moreover, research demonstrates that improving gender representation in decision-making institutions and processes improves policy outcomes for those groups (Kahn, 2012^[12]).

27. Facilitating representation and participation, however, is complex, necessitating initiatives aimed at addressing stereotypes and related cultural expectations associated with gender systems, as well as harassment and gendered value systems that undervalue or malign care work. It requires the design of participatory systems that ensure everyone has equal access to participate, and harassment free and inclusive workplaces in both public institutions and the private sector.

28. In so doing, it is essential to acknowledge that gender inequality also concerns men. On the one hand, this requires the use of various policy levers to challenge and change masculinity norms. On the other hand, it requires engaging men and boys in efforts to achieve gender equality. Cultural norms and stereotypes also create pressure and subsequent problems for men and boys, such as underdiagnosed mental health problems, addiction, and use of violence as a masculinity norm. Cultural norms and stereotypes simultaneously inform and get reproduced by structural and systemic barriers that discourage men from participating in care work, both paid and unpaid. Addressing these barriers is necessary to achieve gender equality. For example, research demonstrates that non-transferrable paternity leave policies not only result in more fathers and other parents taking leave, but also result in a more equitable distribution of care work beyond the leave period^x. Thus, work-life balance policies that encourage men and other parents to participate more equitably in care work can effectively challenge norms and stereotypes and reduce systemic barriers that reproduce and reinforce gender inequality. In addition, it is important that men understand the benefits of gender equality, including economic, social and political benefits, and participate in efforts to achieve it. Importantly, their participation is vital to the success of gender equality initiatives, especially considering the disproportionate decision-making power men have across society and in government.

Accountability, and Respect for the Rule of Law

29. Accountability refers to the governments’ responsibility and duty to inform its citizens about the decisions it makes as well as to provide an account of the activities and performance of the entire government and its public officials.

30. Public governance is meant to serve the interest of the public. Accountability mechanisms thus are critical for ensuring public governance systems and processes do just that. Governments have yet to be held accountable for persistent, and in some cases, increasing gender inequality. For example, gender mainstreaming is not well enforced or monitored, even when strategies and policies are in place. This can be problematic because poor gender mainstreaming can maintain and even exacerbate inequalities throughout society. This means that public governance is only serving the interest of a segment of the public, with women often being on the losing end.

31. Gender equality objectives have the greatest chance of being achieved if they are supported by robust accountability mechanisms. Sound accountability and oversight begins with articulating a clear vision of gender equality, and premised on the consultation and deliberation with key stakeholders and citizens' groups, and that establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability of key governmental and oversight bodies. Accountability systems that involve reporting to the highest levels of government increase the likelihood that gender equality and mainstreaming strategies will be successful and sustainable. Public sector accountability and performance frameworks that promote gender-sensitive decision-making and service design and delivery are effective tools that help articulate this vision, and can nurture include workplaces with respect to both representation and practices.

32. Independent oversight institutions, such as independent commissions, supreme audit institutions (SAIs), Ombud's offices, as well as the legislatures and judiciaries all strongly contribute to the advancement of gender equality. Such institutions can play both a pre-emptive and remedial role. Independent oversight institutions and advisory bodies, in particular, can provide neutral, objective assessments and evaluations on policy formulation, implementation, evaluation and outcomes. Parliaments and parliamentary committees, for example, are the gatekeepers of gender equality agendas, reviewing draft and existing legislation and monitoring the activities of government through reviews and inquiries into programmes, policies, expenditure and appointments. Expanding the mandate of these committees to review all legislation, beyond simply that which relates to gender equality or women's issues, as well as tasking all committees with adopting a gender lens to their respective policy areas will deepen gender equality commitments and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

33. In addition, such institutions play a remedial role in evaluating results and protecting equality rights. For example, available evidence shows that SAIs can provide an important boost for the advancement of gender equality objectives by governments, by offering an independent assessment of gender equality initiatives and making recommendations. In turn, these institutions can strengthen the evidence base and systematically measure progress towards gender equality performance, based on gender impact indicators and measurable outcomes, thereby enhancing and strengthening accountability with respect to gender equality.

34. The rule of law is a core element of accountability. The rule of law has been pivotal in the promotion of gender equality in both international and domestic contexts, offering a venue for equality seeking groups and a mechanism with which civil society and the judiciary can hold governments to account. For rule of law to be effective, however, it requires equal access to justice. Indeed, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.3 calls on countries to "promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all", implicating both formal and substantive equality. Formal equality requires that all citizens are equal under the law, whereas substantive equality ensures that no individual or group obtains special treatment under the law by virtue of origin or background, socio-economic circumstances or links to society's power structures. Substantive equality enables governments to remedy systemic barriers that limit the opportunities and outcomes of various groups.

35. Achieving equal access to justice, therefore, requires governments to identify and address both the barriers that prevent particular groups from the full benefits of citizenship and the unique legal needs of women and girls. In part, this requires equal representation within the judiciary and addressing pay gaps therein, as outlined in the OECD report *Fast Forward to Gender Equality* (2019). It also requires gender-

sensitive processes that are needs-based and community centred. To date, measures adopted by OECD members have primarily included encouraging the application of a gender perspective in the analysis of cases and in judgements, integrating gender issues in courts arrangements, and correcting systems and inappropriate practices where gender-based discrimination is embedded. Other initiatives, such as the identification of gender bias in laws and judicial practices use of gender-sensitive language in courts and promotion of people centred gender-sensitive justice pathways have received less attention to date. To address this, it is important for governments collect sex-disaggregated data to better identify and respond to the needs of marginalised groups. For example sex-disaggregated data that assesses and measures issues such as awareness of rights and legal literacy; access to legal advice and representation; equal access to justice institutions; addressing procedural barriers such as cost and perceived fairness; trust; and attrition rates, is critical in ensuring equal access to justice. In addition, specialised training, supplemented by gender knowledge assessments, for lawyers and judges that addresses implicit bias, exposes systemic barriers, and illuminates the unique experiences of particular justice seeking groups can help facilitate more inclusive justice processes. Finally, gender-sensitive codes of conduct for members of the judiciary serve as a reminder that a one-size-fits-all approach to justice is neither appropriate nor effective.

Box 2.1. Proposed Policy Actions

- Establish values statements/guidelines and codes of conduct that take into account gender equality;
- Apply a gender lens to national integrity systems, including gender sensitivity whistle-blower mechanisms and data collection policies;
- Establish a gender equality strategy that includes both mainstreaming and targeted measures, with a clearly articulated vision for gender equality, indicators and measurable outcomes;
- Report on progress in meeting gender equality goals;
- Design gender-sensitive open government policies to help ensure that all citizens have equal access to information;
- Establish consultative and participatory processes that invite input from diverse stakeholders and citizens' groups;
- Require reporting to highest levels of government on the implementation of gender equality objectives, including those identified in gender equality strategies as well as whole of government other policy or sectoral strategies;
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and clear lines of authority of all stakeholders, including centre of government, line ministries, gender equality institutions and other governmental agencies;
- Establish independent oversight institutions and advisory bodies to help monitor and enforce gender-sensitive processes and outcomes;
- Ensure that accountability and oversight institutions consider gender aspects as part of their core processes;
- Understand legal needs and justice pathways of women and men, and girls and boys;
- Ensure access to justice by encouraging equal representation within justice institutions and adopting a gender-sensitive and people-centred approach to justice processes and decision-making.

Box 2.2. Self-assessment questions

- Does the government/organisation have a values statement? Is it prepared from a gender lens? If not, how might it change if a gender lens was applied? Does the government/organisation have a clearly articulated vision regarding gender equality? Is this linked, explicitly or implicitly, to the values statement? Are these statements available to the public?
- Has the government/organisation applied a gender lens to the national integrity system, including whistle-blower and data collection policies and procedures? Do the leaders of the government/organisation demonstrate commitment to integrity and gender equality?
- Does my government/organisation monitor, report on, and promote effective gender equality initiatives?
- Does everyone in the government/organisation know and understand their roles in achieving gender equality? To whom does one report if issues arise?
- Do we have a legal framework for gender equality? How have we addressed gender inequality within justice institutions? Are our justice institutions representative of the population? What measures might we adopt to improve representation?
- How do we understand and seek to ensure access to justice? Are some groups denied from pursuing justice remedies? Why? What measures might we adopt to address this? How is it ensured that legal and justice services are accessible and responsive to the needs of women and men, and girls and boys?
- Do parliament, the Supreme Audit Institution or other oversight institutions have a framework for monitoring gender equality initiatives? Do they have capacities, tools and data to take into account the gender dimensions of budgets, laws, regulations and programmes?

3 Enablers

Overview

36. As noted in the OECD *Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance*, public policy challenges have become more complex and multidimensional due in part to increasing interdependence and interconnection across nations. It is important to note that these challenges are experienced differentially across various groups. Indeed, the effects of climate change, migration, economic precarity and uncertainty and so on are disproportionately experienced by women, most often racialised and/or poor women, and women living with disabilities.^{xi} Thus, as governments grapple with these new challenges, it is important to do so with gender equality in mind. Importantly, gender-sensitive public governance requires a dual approach to gender equality that includes both gender mainstreaming and targeted measures, and that span the whole of government, including all policy sectors and branches of government. Moreover, progress should be measured with respect to gender equality indicators, and monitored and reported on regularly.

Commitment, Vision and Leadership

37. Commitment, vision and leadership are key elements for successful gender equality strategies and policies. In particular, political commitment at the highest levels of government is crucial because it signals to the rest of government that gender equality is a priority. In return, this puts positive pressure on line ministries to demonstrate better results on gender equality, which makes them more likely to take gender-sensitive approaches to governance more seriously. Without high-level commitment, it becomes difficult to generate buy-in across the administration, and broad buy-in is essential to effective implementation considering the crosscutting nature of gender inequalities.

38. An important way that governmental leaders can demonstrate commitment to and leadership on gender equality is by incorporating a medium- to long-term whole-of-government vision for gender equality into a broader national development platform. The vision, developed in partnership with stakeholders and citizens' groups, should incorporate the public service, elected bodies, and the judiciary, and include clearly defined goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities, and adequate resource allocations. This not only conveys a national aspiration for a gender-equal society, but also sets expectations for policymakers and provides a benchmark for measuring progress.

39. In addition, governments should actively seek to recruit and promote leaders with gender equality goals in mind. Research demonstrates that a gender-balanced public sector results in better policy outcomes for all citizens (Galinsky, 2015^[13]). Moreover, diversifying leadership positions not only increases access to decision-making roles for women, but can also result in positive cultural impacts such as challenging stereotypes and generating trust in public institutions, as well as feed-forward effects that encourage women to participate in public life.

Equitable and Evidence-informed Policy-making

40. A sound knowledge base and analysis, including both quantitative and qualitative data, of where the country stands in terms of gender equality are crucial for defining gender equality objectives, designing a strategic plan, setting policy priorities and sequencing, and measuring their potential impact. In parallel, it is equally important to understand the human and financial resources required to meet the identified gender equality needs.

41. Moreover, advancing gender-sensitive policy outcomes calls for the consideration of differentiated needs, concerns and circumstances of women and men at all stages of the policy process and across all policy sectors. Integrating evidence-based assessments of gender impacts and considerations into various dimensions of public governance (for example, public procurement, public consultation and service delivery management) and decision-making, and at early stages of all phases of the policy cycle (for example, by aligning ex ante assessments of gender impacts with broader government-wide policy development processes, such as regulatory impact assessment), can help ensure that such considerations are adequately reflected throughout the policy cycle. In addition, sound evidence and analysis are essential for creating accountability mechanisms to ensure governments are meeting gender equality goals and objectives.

42. High-quality, easily accessible and understandable evidence and data disaggregated by gender-related factors provide the foundation for this exercise. OECD research demonstrates that the collection of sex-disaggregated data is rare across members (OECD, 2019^[11]). Gender-differentiated data and information needs to be available for policy makers to be able to assess the situation and develop appropriate, evidence-based responses and policies. Such data needs to be collected and analysed within the policy-making process, ideally covering several years to track changes and take corrective action. Without such data, it is difficult to understand the impact of gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and initiatives or the consequences of policies. It would be important for data on gender equality and mainstreaming in a country to be easy to access and allow results to be tracked against national and international targets and benchmarks.

43. In establishing a sound knowledge base, it is crucial to involve a wide range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to ensure it is comprehensive and reflects expertise and insights from different policy areas. Academics and civil society organisations, including NGOs and women's groups, can serve as allies in gathering information about the potential or actual impact of government policies, and would be important to be consulted regularly. Surveys, interviews, reviews, opinion polls and benchmarking are also effective methods for obtaining and analysing data on gender equality policies, as well as desk review, household interviews, focus group discussion. Building public servants' awareness and expertise through information campaigns and training is also important.

44. In establishing and strengthening the knowledge base, there is a significant role for national statistics or data bureaus, as well as knowledge centres or centres of excellence that help bring together data and research from diverse sources, including government reports, grey literature, and academic work.

Whole-of-government Co-ordination

45. As defined by the Australian Public Service (APS), a whole-of-government approach “denotes public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues.” (Government of Australia, 2004^[14]) Coordinated whole-of-government approaches have become particularly pertinent over the past two decades due to the increase in crosscutting, multi-dimensional policy challenges as well as the exponential growth in the number and size agencies and autonomous bodies. According to an OECD survey on Centre of Governments (CoGs), for example, 59% of countries surveyed reported an increase in the number of cross-ministerial policy initiatives since 2008, before the full effects of the 2008 financial crisis were felt (OECD, 2014^[15]).

46. Whole-of-government coordination is necessary for achieving gender equality objectives because gender equality itself is a complex public governance issue. Gender inequality is a structural inequality—it is embedded across governance systems, public policies and social and economic life. In effect, all public issues are issues that concern gender equality. Gender mainstreaming strategies can help to identify the differential impacts of policies across the whole of government and engage all departments and agencies in addressing change. In addition, no single institution has sufficient capacity and agency to address it alone; a range of institutions working in silos cannot effectively eliminate gender gaps and discriminations. As such, gender equality strategies and policies require an institutional framework “establishing clear roles, responsibilities, mandates and lines of accountability of key governmental and oversight bodies.” (OECD, 2016^[16]) Without clear roles and responsibilities backed up by accountability mechanisms, gender equality simultaneously becomes everyone’s problem and no one’s problem. Effective implementation, therefore, requires robust “vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for policy coherence across governmental bodies and levels of government that involve relevant non-governmental stakeholders.” (OECD, 2016^[16])

47. Accordingly, to ensure whole-of-government lives up to its name, it needs to meaningfully involve the full range of public institutions, notably CoGs, including finance departments, central gender equality institutions, and all line departments, including those concerned with issues not traditionally associated with gender, such as transportation, industry and innovation, and environment. Engaging CoGs signals the importance of gender equality as a national goal and policy practice, enhancing accountability and facilitating buy in. Moreover, central gender equality institutions, those bodies primarily responsible for supporting the government’s agenda to advance society-wide gender equality goals, have an important role in ensuring that public policies, programmes and budgets account for gender considerations. They also have a key role in ensuring policy coherence with respect to gender equality strategies across the whole of government. Central gender equality institutions can also provide support to the rest of the government by providing gender expertise and advice, including through the development of guidelines, tools and trainings. As for policies specifically targeting gender equality, they can undertake a critical management role and facilitate coordination across the government.

Innovation and Change Management

48. Innovation and change bring both challenges and opportunities with respect to gender equality. Throughout the world, governments are being asked to do more with less, and technological changes are changing the way we work and interact. Public sector innovation is thus an essential component of sound public governance. The Policy Framework notes, “Public-sector innovation is about introducing and implementing new ideas whose impact help promote and improve sound public governance by reinforcing the strategic agility and forward-looking nature of the state. It is about how to introduce, and how to respond to, discontinuous change while promoting citizen-centred approaches in the design and implementation of public services.” (OECD, 2019^[11])

49. Although much is still being learned about how best to create the conditions for innovation, and the skills, capabilities, tools and resources needed to undertake it successfully, there is a role for the central government to create the conditions for it to emerge. As the Policy Framework notes, research has found that “the main innovation enablers in government are linked to factors related to how people are managed, whether internal regulations work, the role of budgets in creating space for innovation, how project management practices can be designed to deal with risks, and how to create safe spaces to experiment” (innovation labs and units) (OECD, 2019^[11]).

50. All of these dimensions implicate gender equality. It is therefore essential that innovation and change management strategies be established with a gender perspective. For example, the beta-skills model for public sector innovation, developed by the OECD, is premised in six “core” skills that enable innovation, including iteration, data literacy, user-centricity, curiosity, storytelling, and insurgency, and can

be refined by integrating gender considerations into all of these skills. This would also include using gender-sensitive processes for identifying when and where innovation is required.

51. Moreover, harnessing innovation necessitates a diverse and equitable public sector workforce. This not only serves to generate a diversity of ideas, but also changes the ways in which individuals participate in the workplace. It can therefore work towards ensuring that everyone feels safe to seek out, explore, and express new ways of doing things.

52. With respect to change management, a key challenge for governments is to sustain legitimacy while enhancing support for reforms despite political and policy roadblocks or bottlenecks. Effective change management aims to keep the momentum for reform going, while overcoming opposition to change, whether internal or from the public. In the public sector, this is especially difficult as simultaneous change processes often occur at once. The OECD report “Making Reform Happen” suggests that success in change management often depends on the existence of an electoral mandate, effective communication, sound institutions and leadership, prioritisation and sequencing of reforms, and how effectively reform agents interact with opponents to the reforms being pursued (OECD, 2010^[17]). Importantly, integrating men and women and civil society groups into this process can help identify necessary changes, and establish and maintain buy in and trust in both processes and outcomes.

Box 3.1. Proposed Policy Actions

- Establish a whole-of-government strategy for gender equality that includes both gender mainstreaming and targeted measures, and that is developed in collaboration with stakeholders and civil society organisations and is supported by highest levels of government;
- Integrate the gender equality consider into the country’s overall development strategy;
- The whole-of-government strategy should involve the CoG, central gender equality institutions, and all line departments, with clearly articulated goals, roles, responsibilities, and expectations; it should include measurable outcomes, benchmarks and indicators that are designed from a gender-sensitive perspective, and are systematically monitored and reported on;
- Ensure that each organisation has the capacity to fulfil their responsibilities with respect to gender equality, including in applying GIAs to its policies, budgets and programmes and ensuring effective accountability frameworks to use GIAs; Ensure that senior leadership it itself gender-balanced and reflective of the population;
- Create an accessible sound gender-sensitive knowledge base that includes both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as input from civil society groups;
- Strengthen capacity of national data centres and establish, where appropriate, create centres of excellence or knowledge centres;
- Innovation and change management systems are designed from a gender equality perspective.

Box 3.2. Self-assessment questions

- Is our gender equality strategy supported by senior leadership? Does senior leadership have a significant role to play in ensuring the implementation and accountability of the gender equality strategy?

- Is our leadership representative of the broader population? Are gender equality goals reflected in our recruitment programs for senior leaders?
- How is our gender equality data collected and monitored? Is our gender equality strategy linked to clear goals and measurable outcomes, benchmarks and indicators? How does the strategy link with the use of GIAs?
- Does our gender equality strategy reach across the whole of government? Is there a clearly defined role, and adequate capacity, for our gender equality institutions?
- Do our innovation and change management strategies account for gender equality?
- Do we have the capacity to identify and absorb trends, address underlying shifts, and track potential gender-related changes?

4 Problem Identification, Policy Formulation and Design

Overview

53. Policy formulation and design are the processes in which problems are linked with not only potential solutions, but also to broader governing priorities and commitments. It thus requires policymakers to respond to identified problems, analyse solutions, identify and set goals and objectives, and choose appropriate instruments. Taking into account gender equality considerations during these processes is not just a matter of procedure; it is also essential to ensure gender-equal policy outcomes.

Problem Identification and Policy Design

54. Policymaking is often seen as public problem solving, involving choices between both values and tools. As problem solvers, then, it is essential that policymakers have a firm grasp of the problem, its potential solutions and anticipated effects. As easy as this sounds, identifying problems and analysing and assigning solutions are complex and challenging tasks, necessitating an understanding of the various interests involved and potential implications and effects across men and women. How we identify problems is not gender neutral. Indeed, the ways in which problems come to light, who gets to define them, whether or not they get onto the government's agenda, as well as the evidence we use to track, monitor, and evaluate problems and, subsequently, their solutions, and the language we use to discuss them, reflect (often implicit) bias.

55. For these reasons, integrating gender-sensitive data and evidence from the earliest stages of decision making (e.g. problem definition) can help ensure that such considerations are adequately reflected throughout the policy cycle. Relatedly, it is necessary to consult with stakeholders early and often, starting as soon as problems are identified. Moreover, ensuring that participatory or collaborative processes are inclusive, not just in terms of who participates, but also how, is essential in working towards gender equality. This means, for example, ensuring that processes accommodate the particular needs of nursing parents or people living with disabilities, and taking care to schedule meetings at times that do not conflict with religious minorities' holidays or daily practices. It might also mean that participants are provided interpreters to effectively engage with policymakers, and providing policymakers with gender- and cultural-sensitivity training. These measures will be reinforced by actively recruiting a gender-balanced and representative workforce. Participation from experts and citizens can refine how problems are understood and action upon, thereby improving policy design and outcomes, and strengthen the legitimacy of and trust in public decision-making and institutions.

Management Tools

56. In the policy formulation and design stage, management tools constitute means to enhance public sector skills and capacity for policy design. They can serve as direct channels for policy implementation such as is the case of digital learning platforms. Some of the key management tools to improve the quality

of policy design and therefore, to shape policy outcomes are (1) **strategic planning**, (2) **skills for developing policy**, (3) **digital capacities**. Ensuring that these tools are gender-sensitive will go a long way towards achieving inclusive policy outcomes.

a) Strategic planning

57. Strategic planning is an inherent aspect of functioning public governance (Bryson, 2018^[18]). It can help improve decision-making processes by focusing attention on the most crucial issues and challenges. It can also underpin accountability around the achievement of strategic priorities. To be inclusive, strategic planning – at the government, ministerial and programmatic levels – needs to integrate gender equality objectives in both content and process.

58. In addition, addressing gender inequality more directly requires a well-designed strategic plan that aims to provide a policy umbrella under which gender mainstreaming and targeted initiatives meet to advance society-wide goals for gender equality (OECD, 2018^[19]). An effective strategy will incorporate realistic and measurable goals and targets and embed commitments to use policy instruments such as budgeting, regulations and procurement to achieve them. Ideally, the legal framework of a country will underpin a strategy, establishing mandates, requirements and affirmative actions in support of the gender equality goals.

59. The strategic planning process – for gender equality and more broadly in all policy areas – should also factor in potential behavioural pitfalls that may discourage or disrupt implementation. These may include, for example, underestimating the time or resources needed to accomplish a task. Overly ambitious targets may generate frustration among public servants, or an abundance of output indicators may redirect focus from getting results where they matter the most. This is especially problematic in sectors not often associated with gender equality, reinforcing the need to integrate gender equality into all strategic planning processes.

b) Skills for developing policy

60. With increasing complexity of both the contexts in which policies are made and the broader environment in which problems are identified, governments need to identify the necessary skills for policy formulation and design. With persistent and, in some cases, rising inequality, gender expertise is essential. The Policy Framework identifies three essential skill sets for civil servants:

- Defining policy problems;
- Designing solutions;
- Influencing the policy agenda

61. Together, these skill sets require an ability to analyze both research and political contexts, and make recommendations accordingly. They implicate the creation of core competencies; a sound knowledge base; recruitment and training; and performance management systems. It is thus crucial to ensure that these dimensions are gender-sensitive.

62. Establishing core competencies related to gender is essential for creating strong institutions with the capacity to implement gender equality strategies. It also signals the importance of gender-sensitive analysis, enhancing its legitimacy and buy in. As noted above, creating a sound knowledge base necessitates not only the collection of qualitative and quantitative data along gender lines, but also consultative mechanisms that invite input from key stakeholders and citizens' groups. This ensures sound and inclusive decision-making, and facilitates trust in public institutions, processes, and decisions.

63. Facilitating gender expertise within public institutions requires attention to recruitment and training systems. This entails not only ensuring substantive expertise in gender analysis, but also ensuring representation of women in key decision-making and leadership positions. Relatedly, integrating gender

expertise into performance management systems not only signals its importance within the broader scope of public priorities, but can also ensure ongoing awareness and training.

c) Digital capacities

64. Digital tools are transforming the way public institutions work. Digital tools generate better access to information, for both policymakers and citizens, thereby enhancing evidence-informed policy and transparency, and helping to facilitate participatory and collaborative policymaking processes. They can also result in faster, more efficient public service delivery, contributing to more positive exchanges between citizens and government, and changing expectations regarding public service delivery.

65. Digital technologies show much promise in furthering gender equality goals, fostering economic and financial inclusion, bolstering solidarity movements and voice, increasing access to information, and expanding service delivery in fields such as health and education, for example. At the same time, however, OECD research demonstrates that many governments are ill-equipped to use digital technologies, often due to a lack of training, and the persistent digital gender divide has hampered gender equality initiatives (OECD, 2018_[20]). As a result, a key recommendation for sound gender inclusive public governance is a secure political commitment to the digital governance agenda that integrates gender equality, and aims to close the digital gender divide.

66. In creating a digital governance agenda, it is important to pay due attention to gender equality issues. The OECD (2018) report on *Bridging the Digital Gender Divide* identifies limits to access, affordability, lack of education as well as inherent biases and socio-cultural norms that curtail women and girls' ability to benefit from the opportunities offered by the digital transformation. In addition, girls' relatively lower educational enrolment in those disciplines that would allow them to perform well in a digital world (e.g. science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] and information and communication technologies [ICTs]), coupled with women's and girls' limited use of digital tools and relatively scarcer presence or activity on platforms – e.g. for business purposes – suggest a potential scenario of widening gaps and greater inequality, especially in disadvantaged areas. If one adds to this the fact that women receive comparatively less financing for their innovative endeavours and are often confronted with “glass ceilings” curbing their professional ambitions (especially so in tech industries), the picture that emerges is far from positive and points to a vicious circle that could lead to a widening of digital gender divides (OECD, 2018_[20]).

67. Empowering women in the digital era entails putting in place a number of interrelated and complementary policies, including initiatives such as increasing awareness of the digital gender divide and addressing stereotypes; strengthening women's participation in STEM and in high-technology sectors, as well as women's digital and soft skills; fostering women's entry and re-insertion in the labour market and entrepreneurship; using digital tools to address the digital divide; addressing cyber violence towards girls and women and online security; fostering evidence-based gender-related policy.

68. In addition, research demonstrates that digital technology is not neutral. For example, artificial intelligence systems that are increasingly relied upon to make decisions in the areas of social policy, immigration, and criminal justice systems often have built in biases that further marginalise women^{xii}. Ensuring that no one is left behind, therefore, would require extensive analysis to identify and understand the implications of the digital transformation for groups who are differentially positioned in society, which should be reflected in the digital governance agenda.

Policy Instruments

69. Policy instruments refer to the various tools governments have at their disposal to address public problems. They typically include interventions such as law, regulations, taxation, expenditure, exhortation, and organisational measures such as state-run monopolies, public-private partnerships, and arms-length

or independent organisations. A key part of policy design, then, is connecting proposed solutions to effective instruments.

70. Research demonstrates, however, that policy instruments are not neutral in application or impact. For example, delivering social policy initiatives through the tax system has been shown to further marginalise people with low income, many of whom are racialised women or people living with disabilities (Bakker, 2011^[21]). On the other hand, however, little research has been conducted that investigates how existing tools can be used to further gender equality goals. Attending to both of these dimensions is essential for sound public inclusive governance.

71. Towards this end, the OECD GEPL Recommendation highlights the importance of integrating evidence-based assessments of gender impacts and considerations into various dimensions of public governance (for example, public procurement, public consultation and service delivery management) and at early stages of all phases of the policy cycle (for example, by aligning ex ante assessments of gender impacts with broader government-wide policy development processes, such as regulatory impact assessment).

a) Regulatory policy and governance

72. Regulatory practices may serve as an important tool for moving gender equality forward. As noted in the OECD's *Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance*, "fair, transparent and clear regulatory frameworks serve...as a *sine qua non* basic condition for dealing effectively with environmental and equality challenges in a society" and "well-designed regulations can generate significant social and economic benefits which outweigh the costs of regulation, and contribute to social well-being" (OECD, 2012^[22]). The OECD also concluded that "Laws and regulations are essential instruments, alongside taxing and spending, that help governments, businesses, and citizens achieve policy objectives including economic growth, social welfare and environmental protection." (OECD/Korea Development Institute, 2017^[23])

73. Regulation is a complex task that involves a cycle of activities. As noted in the OECD document on Inclusive Government, while different authors define the cycle in different ways, they all reflect some variation on the three main activities defined by the OECD^{xiii}: make – operate – review, which are elements in a continuous cycle that may function sequentially or concurrently. OECD data demonstrates that only one dimensions of this cycle has been regularly used to advance gender equality, namely, the application of Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) to Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), , most often at the "make" or "review" stages of the regulatory cycle. Indeed, in 2017, 30 out of 35 member countries assessed the gender impacts of regulations, up from 13 out of 35 in 2008 (OECD, 2019^[1]).

74. The inclusion of GIA in RIA is an important part of advancing gender equality. Yet further steps would need to be taken to work towards a gender-sensitive approach to public governance. For example, in previous reports, the OECD has recommended strengthening the use RIAs with improvements in institutional frameworks in support of RIAs, and more even application and implementation (OECD, 2015^[24]). In addition, ensuring that RIAs include GIAs can further support gender equality goals. However, it is necessary to ensure that GIA moves beyond just gender to encompass the full range of intersecting factors.

75. It is also necessary to consider how all aspects of the regulatory cycle can be leveraged to greater advantage in the achievement of more substantive levels of gender equality. This can include, for example, decisions on where regulations are needed; ex ante and ex poste evaluations of the impact of regulations, including the implementation and enforcement, on gender equality; stakeholder engagement; and ongoing monitoring and evaluations of regulatory practices. Previous work by the OECD has discussed how a gender lens can be applied to the regulatory reform principles, including in commitment to regulatory reform and identification of gender-specific regulatory barriers to economic activity, trade and investment.^{xiv}

76. As noted by the OECD, integrating a gender lens across all phases of the regulatory cycle will require both legal mechanisms, such as making GIA mandatory, and regulatory requirements, such as the use of diverse stakeholder consultation and inclusion during all parts of the regulatory cycle (OECD, 2019_[11]). Some examples of adopting a gender-sensitive approach to the broader regulatory cycle include: consultation and inclusion of those impacted by regulation at all stages of the cycle, making gender equality considerations a key part of what is done (i.e., not just an add-on), and providing opportunities for participation. Gender equality can be enhanced when all regulatory practices include:

- Planning that incorporates gender equality considerations
- Consultation with all impacted men and women at each stage in the regulatory cycle
- GIA as part of RIA
- Quality control practices are equally supportive of men, women, boys and girls
- The inclusion of gender equality as part of all monitoring and regulation fitness checks
- The incorporation of gender equality in evaluation at all parts of the regulatory cycle, beyond RIA

77. In addition, it is important to build leadership for gender equality among regulatory authorities and oversight bodies, and to ensure that such entities consider gender equality in all aspects of their work. In so doing, it is necessary to embed clear and easy to understand gender equality standards/goals in the approach to regulatory oversight, to evaluate regulatory practices to ensure they are supportive of gender equality, and design and implement training programs help staff understand the role and importance of applying gender equality to regulatory practices. It would be important for these organisations to also be committed to a gender-balanced representative workforce.

b) Budgetary governance

78. The OECD Policy Framework notes, “The budget reflects a government’s policy priorities and translates political commitments, goals and objectives into decisions on the financial resources allocated to pursue them, and on how these financial resources are to be generated. It enables the government to establish spending priorities related to the pursuit of its strategic objectives and to proceed with a sequencing of initiatives that takes into account the availability of financial resources as defined in the fiscal framework.” (OECD, 2019_[11])

79. At present, there is a vast and growing amount of evidence that demonstrates the potential of budgets to further equality objectives^{xv}. The OECD defines gender budgeting as, “the systematic application of analytical tools and processes as a routine part of the budget process, in order to highlight gender equality issues and to inform, prioritise and resource gender-responsive policies.” (OECD, 2019_[11]) Effective gender budgeting requires integrating a gender perspective into all aspects of the budgeting cycle, and includes ex ante, concurrent, and ex poste gender assessments, and ensuring an enabling environment to support the development of a sound gender budget.

80. Ex ante analysis can help identify gender-related needs in different policy areas, as well as the gender-specific impact of policies along gender dimensions. This allows policymakers to target resources more effectively to promote gender equality and ensure that policies do not negatively affect equality.

81. Concurrent gender assessments of the budgeting process can enhance transparency by informing citizens about how the government is using its budget to improve gender equality. Setting gender-related performance targets in different areas of spending also allows stakeholders to track the government’s progress in achieving its objectives. Applying an intersectional perspective to the allocation of resources over the course of the year is important to ensure that gender equality is being promoted and implemented across all areas of government.

82. During the ex post phase (after implementation), the government and its oversight institutions typically consider the extent to which the budget has achieved its intended outcomes, including those

related to gender equality. Lessons from these assessments can feed into future budget decisions to improve the way the budget is used to achieve gender quality outcomes.

83. The quality of gender budgeting practices can be improved by creating a supportive, enabling environment. Clear leadership, together with co-ordination mechanisms, ensure that gender budgeting practices and procedures are aligned across government. The collection of sex-disaggregated data allows more accurate gender assessments and more targeted policies. Similarly, citizen engagement can also ensure that gender-sensitive policy-making better reflects the needs of the population. Parliamentary engagement ensures that there is oversight of the government's gender budgeting practices and that the government is held to account for its stated objectives. "Gender tagging" of budget lines also improves accountability, as stakeholders can track resource allocation towards gender goals.

Box 4.1. Proposed Policy Actions

- Integrate gender analysis early and often across all aspects of the policy cycle, including when engaging in strategic planning, identifying skills for developing policy, and enhancing digital capacities;
- Establish gender perspectives and maintain using consultative mechanisms that invite both experts and civil society organisations to participate early and often throughout the policy cycle;
- Consider ways to further gender equality goals with existing policy tools, including regulatory practices and budgetary governance, such as extending the application of a gender lens across all stages of the regulatory cycle and more sustained and ongoing monitoring of the budgeting cycle;
- Apply a gender perspective (in consultation with experts and civil society organisations) to all elements of the regulatory and budgetary cycles as well as to the use of digital tools.

Box 4.2. Self-assessment questions

- How does my organisation/government respond to public problems? Do we consider the ways in which various groups are differently impacted?
- Have we integrated a gender perspective into current management tools, such as strategic planning, skills for policy development, and digital capacities? Have we made changes in response to applying that perspective?
- What policy instruments and government tools do we most often rely on? Have we considered the gender impact of these instruments and tools? Have we made changes in response to that analysis? Have we considered how we might further gender equality goals with those instruments and tools? Have we established an implementation and evaluation framework that will help us track progress towards these goals?

5 Policy Implementation

Overview

84. Policy implementation requires policymakers to translate their decisions into action. In the previous sections of this framework, a number of factors essential for effective implementation were discussed, including policy tools, leadership, effective co-ordination, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms and innovation. Successful implementation, as noted in the OECD Policy Framework, also necessitates an understanding of broader political context, and acknowledging that national governments no longer hold a monopoly on service delivery. To be sure, national governments are often working in multilevel governance contexts, and with private sector and civil society groups to implement policies. Research on policy implementation suggests that the original goals of policy can be altered during the implementation phase, especially in complex contexts (Mazur, 2016^[25]).

85. This is especially relevant with respect to gender equality policy. Noted above, the OECD GEPL Recommendation promotes a dual-focused gender equality strategy that includes both gender mainstreaming and targeted equality measures. With respect to implementation, this requires attention to the implementation of the gender equality strategy itself, as well as the adoption of a gender-sensitive approach to implementation across the whole of government.

86. Approaching the implementation process with a gender-sensitive perspective is a key element of inclusive public governance. Yet research demonstrates that in controversial policy areas, including gender equality, governments are reluctant to fully implement policies that challenge the status quo, and are more likely to rely on “symbolic” measures, such as vague policy statements, that lack clear objectives and related outputs (Mazur, 2016^[25]). OECD research on gender equality policies substantiates this finding, demonstrating that both gender mainstreaming strategies and targeted measures are often poorly implemented (OECD, 2019^[11]). Establishing strong leadership, a sound institutional framework with clear roles and responsibilities, adequate capacity and resources to meet goals, and monitoring and oversight mechanisms are essential for effective implementation of gender equality policies. This requires focus on both management and performance.

87. In addition, gender mainstreaming requires governments to apply a gender lens to all policies and programs, including budgets, at all stages of the policy process. This entails that all policy processes, regardless of whether or not they are directly related to gender equality, including problem identification, policy formulation and design, implementation, and evaluation, are gender-sensitive. Gender-sensitive implementation can leverage existing processes and relationships to further gender equality goals. This can include measures such as consultative and participatory mechanisms for both service providers and recipients, integrating gender knowledge as a core competency, and establishing results frameworks based on gender and sex-disaggregated indicators with which to monitor and measure progress.

Management

a) Public service leadership, capacity and skills for implementation

88. As noted previously in this framework, commitment matters. Political commitment and leadership at the highest levels of government is crucial because it signals to the rest of government that gender equality is a priority. In return, this puts positive pressure on line ministries to demonstrate better results on gender equality, which makes them more likely to take gender-sensitive approaches to governance more seriously. Without high-level commitment, it becomes difficult to generate buy-in across the administration, and broad buy-in is essential to effective implementation considering the crosscutting nature of gender inequalities.

89. Effective leadership also requires establishing a sound implementation framework for gender equality policy. This includes the creation of a broad gender equality strategy, including setting a rationale, action plans, priorities, timelines, objectives, expected outcomes and/or targets, and effective policy planning across the whole of government for promoting gender equality. In addition, establishing clear roles, responsibilities, mandates and lines of accountability of key governmental and oversight bodies in implementing gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives have been shown to bolster policy outcomes.

90. In addition, it is crucial to enhance the capacities, skills, and resources for addressing gender equality in public institutions and decision-making. This requires the development and maintenance of gender-related capacities and skills across all representatives of public institutions, including senior leaders, both elected and appointed, elected officials, public servants, members of the judiciary, and front-line service providers such as police officers, educators, healthcare workers, etc. Relatedly, it is necessary to build the capacity of gender equality institutions to facilitate a consistent response at appropriate levels of government and to develop, implement and monitor gender-sensitive programmes and policies throughout the government, based on gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators, will work to ensure that civil servants have the knowledge, time, and resources necessary implement gender equality policy, without growing frustrated. These skills should also include the ability to work in collaborative partnerships with gender experts across and outside of public institutions, and the ability to commission and contract services from partners who will work toward shared gender equality goals.

b) Better service delivery through digital government

91. The diffusion and adoption of new digital technologies has altered citizens' expectations regarding the governments' ability to deliver public services that respond to their needs. This presents a challenge to governments, as it requires the digital transformation of the government itself. From a gender equality perspective, this requires a sound understanding of the needs and fears of particular communities of men and women with respect to digital technology. Some groups remain concerned about the role of digital governance in their private lives. It also requires attention to the potential differential impacts with respect to gender. As noted previously, increasing use of digital technology in decision-making and service delivery contexts needs to be monitored for potential gender biases that are reinforced by such technologies, and governments need to adopt policy measures aimed at closing the digital gender divide.

92. The new dynamics generated by the digital age require a strategic approach that integrates gender equality to the design and delivery of public services that includes, among other things, digital government. To better shape public governance outcomes and public service delivery, the OECD recommendation on Digital Government Strategies recommends conducting early sharing, testing and evaluation of prototypes with the involvement of expected end-users, as well as ensuring the availability of a comprehensive picture of on-going digital initiatives to avoid duplication of systems and datasets. From a gender perspective, this requires sex-disaggregated data, engaging a group of male and female end-users, including, and especially, those who are reluctant to use or have limited access to digital technology, in order to tailor services to meet the needs of both men and women (OECD, 2014^[26]).

c) Public Procurement as a strategic lever to pursue policy objectives

93. Public procurement refers to the many ways in which governments acquire goods and services using a range of contractual arrangements and purchasing tools. It is a significant tool accounting for 29% of OECD Member Country expenditures and approximately 12% of GDP.^{xvi} It brings government and a very large number and range of vendors together to set the terms and conditions of supply arrangements and, when well-designed, procurement can be used to advance important social objectives such as gender equality as well as environmental and other objectives (which are generally referred to as the secondary objectives of procurement).

94. Given this scope, exploring ways in which contracting and purchasing expenditures and vendor relationships can be used to promote the achievement of greater gender equality has the potential to help all nations realise greater progress. This approach to procurement has been referred to as “socially responsible public procurement” in which “public authorities can give companies real incentives to develop socially responsible management” including the application of gender equality (European Commission, 2010_[27]).

95. Despite the fact that, at present, the application of gender considerations in procurement policy and practice is rare across OECD members, there is significant potential in using public procurement to advance gender equality. For example, public procurement has tremendous potential to impact social and environmental objectives while also ensuring effectiveness, efficiency, and value for money in the operations of government and fairness to the vendor community. Indeed, the Commonwealth has noted that applying a gender perspective to procurement policy is important to “ensure equitable access and provide benefits from diversifying the supply chain. Increasing the opportunities for more economic agents, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage in the delivery of goods and services can result in improved outcomes for the alleviation of poverty and increasing gender equality, given that women-owned businesses are disproportionately located in this sub-sector of the economy.” (Kirton, 2014_[28]) This in turn could reduce barriers to women’s participation in the economy, scale up gender-smart procurement in the private sector, and encourage transparency (Chatham House – The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2017_[29]). Thus, integrating gender analysis into all stages of the procurement cycle will contribute to gender equality goals.

96. There are a number of ways to integrate gender equality into public procurement, including the inclusion of social criteria, as well as the inclusion of gender specific conditions into the contract. It is also helpful to consider the action bidders have taken in their commitment to gender equality outcomes (European Commission, 2010_[27]). We can also distinguish between public procurement for the promotion of gender equality, integration of social criteria into the requirements for contracts (such as gender equality considerations) and mechanisms to ensure that public procurement practices provide equal access to various types of companies and non-governmental organisations, including those headed by females. Notably, procurement can be used as a vehicle for supporting the advancement of businesses owned by women (e.g., by removing barriers to their participation in the procurement process, by assisting in the establishment and development of women-owned businesses through programs aimed at providing financial supports, training, mentorship, etc. as is seen above in the supplier development/pre-contract engagement stage).

97. Harnessing the potential of public procurement in the pursuit of gender equality requires a number of measures. Strong leadership, for example, is essential, in articulating the role and importance of gender equality in procurement, and in securing the tools and resources needed for success. Similarly, organisations need to build transparency and accountability among leaders for their use of public procurement in support of gender equality, and to do more to collect data and report on their results. In addition, establishing a sound institutional framework, supported by legislation and policy that clarifies regulations, roles and responsibilities, is necessary to ensure equal footing for all potential participants. Grounding requirements in legislation, regulations and principles, issuing guidelines, providing detailed

information on how wage equality is measured, and requiring compliance letters is an effective tool to communicate gender equality goals with respect to procurement. Moreover, public servants using a gender-sensitive approach to procurement would require effective training, and have access to guidelines for evaluating proposals. Monitoring, reporting, and evaluation systems are also effective tools to strengthen implementation, transparency, and accountability.

98. Moving forward, it is important to develop a definition of value for money that places a greater focus on the achievement of both financial **and** social value. There is social and economic value to society when public procurement helps women-owned businesses succeed, when there are equal opportunities for all to easily put forward a bid and be considered as a supplier to government, etc. When secondary social objectives are applied to procurement there may be additional costs to taxpayers however, what is needed is clear justification of these costs in terms of their overall benefit to society and the greater economic good. In this way, the manner in which value for money is understood can be extended beyond simple bottom line budget numbers for specific program areas to a more comprehensive view in which broader benefits are documented and the value to society is illustrated along with budgetary value. It would also be important to consider the cost of not including gender equality considerations.

d) Public-Private partnerships (PPPs) and public-civil partnerships

99. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and public-civil partnerships allow partners to share policy implementation functions, expanding capacity for service delivery. The OECD defines PPPs as, “long term agreements between the government and a private partner whereby the private partner delivers and funds public services using a capital asset, sharing the associated risks. PPPs may deliver public services both with regard to infrastructure assets (such as bridges, roads) and social assets (such as hospitals, utilities, prisons).”

100. From a gender equality perspective, PPPs can be an innovative approach to furthering gender equality objectives. Research, however, identifies important concerns with respect to PPPs^{xvii}. For example, research from the health policy field reveals that gender mainstreaming has been poorly implemented throughout such arrangements (Hawkes, S., Buse, K., & Kapilashrami, A., 2017_[30]). Similarly, research from the voluntary sector demonstrates that PPP governing boards and leadership positions tend to be dominated by men (Johnston, 2017_[31]). It is therefore essential to approach such partnerships with a gender perspective.

101. Towards this end, PPPs can bolster gender equality processes and outcomes in a number of ways: First, it is important to build gender equality into the institutional framework, establishing clear roles and responsibilities throughout the network, as well as appropriate oversight and accountability mechanisms. This includes the establishment of a gender-balanced governing board, and ensuring that leadership positions are awarded with gender equality in mind. Second, similar to public procurement processes, selection processes for PPPs can be grounded in not only value for money, but also social value, taking into account the goals and objectives of the partnership, employment and social benefits for both men and women. Third, budgeting processes would need to be approached from a gender-sensitive perspective. Finally, PPPs can be established not only with private sector organisations, but also with civil society organisations. Collaborating with community groups is an important way to integrate gender perspectives into the design, delivery, and management of public services.

e) Agile and innovative approaches to policy and service delivery

102. Innovation is critical to find new solutions and approaches to deal with complexity. In this context, governments are approaching policy implementation and service delivery from an innovative and agile approach, which focus on principles such as simplicity, quick iteration, and close collaboration with citizens. These approaches, similar to the other tools discussed in this section, have potential to further gender equality goals, if approached from the gender perspective. For example, agile approaches based on

collaboration, for instance between civil servants responsible for planning the delivery of a policy or service and potential users, allow for regular interactions with both men and women to discuss progress and integrate feedback to ensure that the needs of all citizens are met. These approaches can also create a regular feedback loop that enables continuous improvements with respect to gender during the implementation process.

103. Additional agile and/or innovative approaches for implementation and delivery can be utilised in ways that drive gender equality forward. For example, project management tools such as results frameworks and critical path analysis can help clarify gender equality goals and objectives and roles and responsibilities, as well as identify gaps in existing frameworks and resource allocations. Crowdsourcing can serve to bring in communities to the policy process that might otherwise remain invisible. It can also introduce new perspectives, serving as an important tool with which to generate and process data and information quickly. Digital networks and communities of practice across the civil service can help to establish a community of gender expertise, share best practices, and work to scale up projects, services and trainings that take into account gender issues, from piloting to broader implementation. Co-creation, co-production and co-delivery, as well as user-centred design methods, can engage many users in creating innovative solutions as a way to identify and respond to gender needs, and to build ownership and secure greater tolerance for eventual setbacks.

104. Other approaches, such as innovation labs and behaviour insights methods, can be important tools for generating information and developing new ways of approaching gender equality. Innovation labs can experiment with novel approaches and potential solutions aimed at addressing gender equality. For example, new approaches to data collection, including the use of social media, and innovative approaches to policy analysis and design, such as foresight analysis and design thinking, offer considerable promise in reshaping the government-citizen interface and generating new ideas about solutions to inequality.

In addition, the influence of underlying attitudes, cultural norms and gender stereotypes cannot be overlooked when designing and implementing interventions to advance gender equality. Underlying stereotypes, cultural norms, and biases can undergird persistent gaps even when (as in much of the OECD) the educational achievements of girls and boys have been equalised, legal barriers to participation have been largely eliminated, violence against women is prohibited, and governments have put equal rights legislation in place. Indeed, new approaches such as behavioural sciences can help focus on underlying norms and attitudes that influence gender equality. Such approaches can also help identify and weed out ineffective policies and initiatives. Although actions taken by OECD members that are shaped by behavioural insights are relatively rare, they are taking root in a number of countries, with some establishing behavioural insights units to assess and experiment with new approaches to gender equality. Moreover, behavioural approaches bring the possibility of identifying effective, often low-cost, solutions without resorting to additional rules or sanctions. Another part of the attraction, which is especially important in the context of gender inequality, is grounding reforms and interventions in a good understanding of the beliefs and associations that everyone has, that are unconscious and automatic, that affect how people behave. Such reforms can generate buy in because they avoid blaming and shaming that might otherwise hinder support for interventions and create hostility.

f) A strategic approach to the implementation of the SDGs

105. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established on the principle of “leave no one behind”, aiming to secure a healthy and prosperous future for all by 2030. This implicates a gender-sensitive approach to sustainable development that addresses social, economic, and environmental determinants. Indeed, gender equality is both an explicit SDG, and a crosscutting principle for the realisation of the entire SDG framework. The SDGs thus complement an already significant framework of international instruments relating to gender equality.

106. The ambitious plan includes 17 goals and 169 targets, representing a significant implementation challenge for all countries, irrespective of income levels. Governments will need to develop comprehensive solutions to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs by 2030. Given the centrality of gender equality in the SDG framework, aligning SDGs with gender equality strategies will potentially ease the implementation challenges. Implementation thus requires a strategic whole-of-government approach that makes use of budgeting, procurement, and regulatory tools. From this perspective, and as discussed previously, ensuring that budgeting, procurement, and regulatory processes are designed from a gender perspective can assist in ensuring adequate implementation of the SDGs. In addition, the SDGs can assist in the creation of strategic gender equality plans, and provide support for equality initiatives.

Monitoring Performance

a) Monitoring government-wide policy priorities

107. Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are vital for ensuring that gender equality strategies achieve their intended impacts. Monitoring assesses progress, improves decision-making, allows programmes to be adjusted for greater impact, and enhances accountability and institutional learning. It also helps policy makers understand where resources are needed.

108. Monitoring government-wide policy priorities has become one of the Centre-of-Government's (CoG) major responsibilities to ensure that operational and strategic objectives are reached and policies are implemented in an effective and co-ordinated manner. The CoG bodies are key actors in providing leadership, and steering the implementation of cross-cutting goals. The CoG takes almost exclusive responsibility for co-ordinating the preparation of Cabinet meetings and policy co-ordination across government. This makes the CoG a critical player in advancing society-wide gender equality goals. In particular, the CoG can contribute to clarifying what the line ministries are expected to do in advancing gender equality, establishing effective accountability and performance frameworks, and ensuring that a gender equality lens is mainstreamed in all government decision-making processes.

109. It is important to make the distinction between gender equality institutions that are located within the CoG and explicitly mandating CoG institutions to oversee the implementation and rigour of gender mainstreaming efforts, including gender impact assessments. For example, in Canada, central agencies (i.e. the Privy Council Office, Treasury Board Secretariat and Department of Finance) provide a "gatekeeper" function by ensuring that requirements in relation to gender-based policy analysis are upheld, as well as a "challenge" function with regard to the questions of analytical rigour and quality.

110. Central gender equality institutions refer to government bodies primarily responsible for supporting the government's agenda to advance society-wide gender equality goals. Historically, delivering specific programmes related to women's empowerment remains one of the main responsibilities of central gender equality institutions. However, given the cross-cutting nature of gender equality policy, they also play an increasing role in ensuring co-ordination with governmental stakeholders and diverse civil society representatives. Research demonstrates that these institutions can have a positive effect on policy processes and outcomes when situated in or close to the CoG^{xviii} because it helps ensure that they are closely engaged in the policy-making process. Moreover, nurturing a strong relationship between the CoG and gender equality institutions is essential for creating the whole-of-government approach necessary for the realisation of gender equality. At the same time, however, arms-length advisory bodies can play a positive role in monitoring government-wide gender priorities, and can serve as an intermediary between government and civil society. They are therefore an important part of gender equality accountability mechanisms.

111. Monitoring government-wide policy priorities also requires developing and implementing evaluation, measurement and accountability frameworks and indicators and collecting data to regularly assess and report on performance of gender equality and mainstreaming strategies, initiatives, public

policies and programmes at appropriate levels of government. Importantly, it requires mainstreaming gender into the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of all strategies, policies and programmes, not only those specifically focused on gender equality. In addition, actively promoting gender and sex-disaggregated data dissemination and ensuring affordable, effective and timely access to performance information on gender equality and mainstreaming, which allows for tracking results against targets, monitoring progress towards socio-economic development and for comparison with international and other benchmarks, can result in better policy outcomes. Moreover, increasing co-ordination among data collecting and producing bodies and collaboration with relevant stakeholders can lead to developing better gender impact indicators, as well as enhance trust and legitimacy in public decision-making.

b) Monitoring financial performance and budget execution

112. As discussed earlier in this framework, systematic and continuous monitoring of the budgeting process is essential to ensure that gender equality objectives are being met. Monitoring financial performance and budget execution with respect to gender can provide evidence on what is working and what is not, enabling the reallocation of resources as necessary. As noted in the previous section, establishing clear and measurable targets and indicators is essential in tracking performance. In addition, collaborative processes and feedback mechanisms are important tools through which to assess impacts on men and women. Towards this end, budget offices and supreme audit institutions can play a key role in monitoring and reporting on progress towards gender equality goals, and can hold governments to account in meeting these objectives.

c) Measuring regulatory performance and ensuring implementation

113. In the Policy Formulation and Design section of this framework, the potential for regulatory instruments to further gender equality goals was discussed. Monitoring regulatory performance is a critical tool to ensure that gender goals are met. Doing so can help identify barriers and improve regulations. This requires a sound institutional framework that includes oversight institutions that for the regulatory process and its impact on gender equality.

d) Building robust gender-sensitive governance indicators

114. As discussed above, monitoring performance is essential to ensure that gender equality goals are being actively pursued and met. This requires establishing, from a gender perspective, clear goals, and identifying appropriate measurable targets and indicators with respect to gender equality. In addition, it would be important to approach governance indicators, including various input, process, output and outcome/impact indicators, from a gender-sensitive perspective. From a gender perspective, it is crucial to ensure that adequate resources have been allocated (input), that communities of men and women have been, and continue to be, consulted (process), that the quantity, type, and quality of public services are adequate to meet stated objectives (output), and that the program is having the desired impact over time (outcome). Central to this is making sure that sex-disaggregated data is collected, monitored and reported, and that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Box 5.1. Proposed Policy Actions

- Ensure leadership is committed to gender equality and representative of population;
- Understand and mitigate gender impacts of digital technology in service delivery;
- Approach procurement and PPPs from a gender perspective, including the consideration of using these tools to achieve social goals;
- Ensure everyone's needs are identified and met through the use of innovative and agile tools;
- Use a gender perspective to design budgeting, procurement, and regulatory processes and to further the implementation of SDGs;
- Ensure that CoG includes gender equality as cross cutting government priority, and that gender is integrated in strategic planning, coordination and monitoring mechanisms;
- Bolster capacity of national gender equality institutions;
- Monitor financial performance, budgeting and regulatory processes from a gender perspective;
- Establish clear performance goals, targets and indicators for gender equality strategy;
- Ensure that all governance indicators are gender sensitive.

Box 5.2. Self-assessment questions

- Has our gender equality strategy been thoroughly implemented? Does our implementation strategy include clearly defined roles and responsibilities, indicators and measurable outcomes, and oversight institutions? Are the indicators and outcomes designed from a gender perspective? Do departments and civil servants know what is expected, and do they have the resources to meet those expectations? Where are the gaps?
- Have other strategies been gender mainstreamed? Do these strategies include gender-specific indicators and outcomes?
- Do present management systems incorporate a gender perspective? Are our leaders recruited and trained with respect to gender equality goals? Are they representative of the population? Are the various tools we use, including digital technology, procurement, PPPs, and agile and innovation tools, approached from a gender perspective? Have we considered aligning SDGs with our gender equality strategy?
- Is gender equality integrated into our monitoring systems, including those for budgeting and regulatory practices? Does the CoG recognise gender equality as a national, cross cutting goal? Does our national gender equality institution have the capacity to influence policy-making and resource allocation and to oversee our progress with respect to gender equality and inclusion? Does our gender equality strategy include a clear set of gender-related goals, targets and indicators? Are our governance indicators gender sensitive?

6 Policy Evaluation

Overview

115. Policy evaluation is the structured and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed policy or reform initiative. The aim is to determine, *inter alia*, the relevance and fulfilment of objectives along with the initiative's efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, analysing linkages between policy interventions and effects. It strives to create deeper understanding of observed policy success or failure as an end in itself and as a means to correct course and improve performance to enhance results and outcomes. It is through evaluation that policymakers and citizens can determine if policies are meeting their objectives and furthering gender equality goals.

116. Policy evaluation is therefore an essential tool for democratic inclusive governance, providing an important learning mechanism for public institutions and civil society. It also serves as an important tool for both transparency and accountability, thereby facilitating legitimacy and trust in public decision-making and institutions. From a gender perspective, this requires an evaluation of gender equality strategies, including gender mainstreaming efforts and targeted measures. It also necessitates the integration of a gender perspective into all evaluation functions across the whole of government, as required by an effective gender mainstreaming system.

117. Policy evaluation needs to be considered during the policy design stage in order to ensure that the necessary information and data required for effective policy evaluation can be collected during the implementation phase. However, evidence demonstrates that monitoring and evaluation systems are under-utilised with respect to gender equality (OECD, 2019^[11]). Indeed, OECD research reveals that gender impact assessments (GIAs) are most commonly applied *ex ante* during the policy formulation and design stages. Limited application of GIAs, especially in the *ex post* phase, as well as their focus on gender as a single variable, at the evaluation phase may obstruct the understanding about whether legislation and budgets serve the intended goals and whether they equally benefit men and women, making it difficult to build on the lessons learnt.

118. Strengthening GIAs, including their expansion beyond simply gender, at the evaluation stages of the decision-making cycle can help to more accurately assess the impacts of government decisions on women and men. Countries can reap the benefits of GIAs if such requirements are supported by criteria to ensure the quality and rigour of the analysis. For example, in 2019, the Canadian government launched a primer for integrating gender plus analysis, which considers a range of intersectional factors, into policy evaluation, that includes questions and suggestions to consider for each stage of evaluation (Government of Canada, 2019^[32]).

119. Within this context, the OECD's GEPL recommends that members, "Strengthen the evidence base and systematically measure progress towards gender equality performance, based on gender impact indicators and measurable outcomes, by:

- Developing and implementing evaluation, measurement and accountability frameworks and indicators and collecting data to regularly assess and report on performance of gender equality

and mainstreaming strategies, initiatives, public policies and programmes at appropriate levels of government. Consider building capacity of public institutions based on these evaluations.

- Actively promoting data dissemination and ensuring affordable, effective and timely access to performance information on gender equality and mainstreaming that allows for tracking results against targets, monitoring progress towards socio-economic development, and for comparison with international and other benchmarks.”

Institutional Framework for Policy Evaluation

120. Meeting the recommendation of the OECD GEPL necessitates a sound institutional framework for policy evaluation. Robust policy evaluation systems can benefit from clearly designated institutional actors with a well-defined mandate and specific resources to oversee and/or carry out policy evaluation. Evaluation units within public institutions, as well as national gender equality institutions can play a central role in co-ordinating and implementing evaluation processes. Moreover, supreme audit institutions can play a critical role in the evaluation process through their audits, evaluations and advice, thus holding governments to account for the use of public resources. In addition to evaluating policies and programmes on a performance or value-for-money basis, they can act as an “evaluator of evaluators” in government by auditing the effectiveness of a gender-sensitive evaluation system and those responsible for it.

Promoting Quality and Use of Evaluations

121. Promoting quality and use of evaluations requires nurturing a gender-sensitive evaluation culture throughout public institutions. Doing so requires leadership, training and skills development, and data. To ensure the production of quality evaluations, attention would need to be given to both quality control, for example, orienting evaluation reports towards deliverables, and quality assurance, for example, orienting evaluation reports towards process. Both of these dimensions require clear evaluation frameworks that identify goals and measurable outcomes, as well as an adequate skills base that includes stakeholder and civil society engagement to ensure that gender evaluations are targeted properly and that recommendations for improvement are practical, user-centred and needs-based.

122. Evidence shows that the use of evaluations in decision-making is linked with reporting to senior levels of government, and co-ordinating mechanisms that promote the sharing and use of evidence produced by evaluations (OECD, 2019^[11]). Strong leadership across all stages of the policy cycle is central to achieving gender equality goals. Moreover, promoting a culture of sharing and learning can encourage continued use of evaluation.

Reviewing Impact of Regulations

123. Noted above, use of gender analysis in the area of regulation has been primarily ex ante, focused on determining potential differential impacts of regulations. Ensuring equitable impacts necessitates ex poste analyses that assess the ways in which regulations are experienced between men and women. Expanding and strengthening gender analysis in this area can be achieved by incorporating ex poste gender analysis into regulatory frameworks. In so doing, it would be important to consult different groups of men and women.

Box 6.1. Proposed Policy Actions

- Establish an institutional framework for gender equality evaluations and for gender-sensitive evaluations across the whole of government, with clearly assigned roles and responsibilities, and necessary resources with which to carry out evaluation responsibilities;
- Build the capacity for evaluation units to integrate a gender lens to all evaluations, including, but not limited to, training in gender-sensitive policy evaluation and data collection;
- Facilitate an evaluation culture with respect to gender equality policy, by integrating senior leadership, knowledge mobilisation, and a sound knowledge base;
- Expand and strengthen gender-sensitive analysis and impact assessments across the regulatory cycle.

Box 6.2. Self-assessment questions

- At what stage of the policy cycle do we begin to think about evaluation? How does this help or hinder the achievement of gender equality?
- Do we use GIAs at the evaluation stage? Are they intersectional?
- Do we have adequate capacity and resources to oversee or undertake evaluations from a gender perspective? Do we collect data on differential impacts across various groups?
- Does my institution have an evaluation culture with respect to gender equality? Are gender-sensitive evaluations encouraged and used by senior leaders in decision-making processes? Does my organisation have adequate gender expertise with which to carry out gender evaluations? Do we share data and results?
- Are the intended goals and objectives of my institution's gender equality strategy clear, and are they tied to clear and measurable indicators and outcomes?

References

- Bakker, I. (2011), *Changing macroeconomic governance and gender orders: The case of Canada*, New York: Routledge 38-50. [21]
- Bryson, J. (2018), *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations : a guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement*, https://books.google.fr/books/about/Strategic_Planning_for_Public_and_Nonpro.html?id=kXK7rQEACAAJ&redir_esc=y (accessed on 25 September 2018). [18]
- Chapman, S. and N. Benis (2017), “Ceteris non paribus: The intersectionality of gender, race, and region in the gender wage gap”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, Vol. 65, pp. 78-86, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2017.10.001>. [4]
- Chatham House – The Royal Institute of International Affairs (2017), *Gender-smart Procurement Policies for Driving Change*, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/Gender-smart%20Procurement%20-%202020>. [29]
- European Commission (2010), *Buying Social – A Guide to Taking Account of Social Considerations in Public Procurement*, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6457&langId=en>. [27]
- Galinsky, A. (2015), *Maximizing the gains and minimizing the pains of diversity: A policy perspective.*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691615598513>. [13]
- Goetz, A. (2007), “Political Cleaners: Women as the New Anti-Corruption Force?”, *Development and Change* 38(1), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/44838082_Political_Cleaners_Women_as_the_New_Anti-Corruption_Force (accessed on 14 January 2020). [8]
- Government of Australia (2004), *Connecting Government: Whole of Government Responses to Australia’s Priority Challenges*, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/default/files/connectinggovernment.pdf>. [14]
- Government of Canada (2019), “Integrating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into Evaluation – A Primer”, <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/evaluation-government-canada/gba-primer.html#H-07>. [32]
- Hawkes, S., Buse, K., & Kapilashrami, A. (2017), “Gender blind? An analysis of global public-private partnerships for health”, *Globalization and health*, 13., <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-017-0249-1>. [30]
- International Development Research Council (2018), *Feminist Open Government: Addressing Gender Equity Challenges in Open Government Co-Creation Processes*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/fogo-main-report_web.pdf. [10]
- Johnston, K. (2017), “A gender analysis of women in public–private–voluntary sector ‘partnerships’.”, *Public Administration*, 95(1), 140-159, <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12288>. [31]

- Kahn, P. (2012), "The Politics of State Feminism: Innovation in Comparative Research edited by Dorothy E. McBride and Amy G. Mazur", *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, Vol. 33/1, pp. 91-93, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1554477x.2012.640618>. [12]
- Kirton, R. (2014), *Gender, Trade and Public Procurement Policy: Kenya, India, Australia, Jamaica.*, The Commonwealth Secretariat, <http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/news-items/documents/Gender,%20Trade%20and%20Public%20Procurement%20Policy.pdf>. [28]
- Mazur, A. (2016), *Toward the Systematic Study of Feminist Policy in Practice: An Essential First Step*, *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, <http://dx.doi.org/DOI:10.1080/1554477X.2016.1198210>. [25]
- MSCI (2014), *Executive Summary: 2014 Survey of Women on Boards*, <https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/b08aa5c0-5304-4f6c-975f-83a0a6414838>. [9]
- OECD (2019), *Fast Forward to Gender Equality: Mainstreaming, Implementation and Leadership*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/q2q9faa5-en>. [1]
- OECD (2019), "Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance", (*Internal working document*), [https://one.oecd.org/document/GOV/PGC\(2018\)26/FINAL/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/GOV/PGC(2018)26/FINAL/en/pdf). [11]
- OECD (2018), *Bridging the Digital Divide*, OECD Publishing. [20]
- OECD (2018), *Gender Equality in Canada: Mainstreaming, Governance and Budgeting*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264301108-en>. [19]
- OECD (2017), *Recommendation of the Council on Public Integrity*. [6]
- OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>. [3]
- OECD (2016), *2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264252820-en>. [16]
- OECD (2015), *OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264238770-en>. [24]
- OECD (2014), *Centre Stage: Driving Better Policies from the Centre of Government*, OECD Publishing. [15]
- OECD (2014), *OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies*, OECD Publishing. [26]
- OECD (2014), *Women, Government and Policy making in OECD Countries : Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth*. [2]
- OECD (2012), *Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance*, ., OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/governance/regulatory-policy/49990817.pdf>. [22]
- OECD (2010), *Making Reform Happen: Structural priorities in time of crisis*, OECD Publishing. [17]
- OECD/Korea Development Institute (2017), *Improving Regulatory Governance: Trends, Practices and the way Forward*, OECD Publishing Paris. [23]

- Stensöta, H. (2018), *Gender and Corruption: Historical Roots and New Avenues for Research*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70929-1> (accessed on 14 January 2020). [7]
- Stivers, C. (1994), *The listening bureaucrat: responsiveness in public administration*. [5]

ⁱ Public governance consists of formal and informal arrangements that determine how public decisions are made and how public actions are carried out. Sound public governance, in particular, refers to when the exercise of public authority and decision-making serves the public interest. Accordingly, sound public governance constitutes a *sine qua non* condition for pluralist democracies to give effect to the respect for the rule of law and human rights.

ⁱⁱ World Bank (2019), Population, female (% of total population), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.ZS>

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example, UN Women (2013), *Economic Empowerment of Women*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/12/un%20women_ee-thematic-brief_us-web%20pdf.pdf?la=en; UN Women (2015), *The Global Study on the Implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1325*, [http://peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UNW-GLOBAL-STUDY-1325-2015%20\(1\).pdf](http://peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UNW-GLOBAL-STUDY-1325-2015%20(1).pdf); Holter, ØG (2014), “‘What’s in it for Men?’: Old Question, New Data”. *Men and Masculinities*, 17(5) 515-548

^{iv} OECD, Female share of seats on boards of the largest publicly listed companies, <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54753>

^v The latter, adopted and led by the Public Governance Committee

^{vi} OECD (2019), *Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance* [[GOV/PGC\(2018\)26/FINAL](#)]

^{vii} Broker, T., Harris, D., Prawito, T., & Smith, L. M. (2018). The relationship of corruption to economic activity in the OECD. *International Journal of Business Excellence*, 16(3), 286-303.

^{viii} Rehg, M. T., Miceli, M. P., Near, J. P., and Van Scotter, J. R. (2008), Antecedents and outcomes of retaliation against whistleblowers: Gender differences and power relationships. *Organization Science*, 19(2), 221-240. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0310>

^{ix} Open Government Partnership, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/gender/>

^x See, for example, Patnaik, A. (2017). Reserving time for daddy: The consequences of fathers' quotas (December 17, 2017), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2475970> or <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2475970>.

^{xi} UN Climate Change (nd), *Introduction to Gender and Climate Change*, <https://unfccc.int/gender>, accessed January 8th, 2020; UN Migration (nd), *Gender and Migration*, <https://www.iom.int/gender-and-migration>, accessed January 8th, 2020; UNAIDS (2012), *Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on Women, Girls, and Gender Equality*, https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/JC2368_impact-economic-crisis-women_en_0.pdf

^{xii} For example, see Tonry, M. (2019). Predictions of dangerousness in sentencing: Déjà vu all over again. *Crime and Justice*, 48(1), 439-482. <https://doi.org/10.1086/701895>

^{xiii} OECD (2013), *Principles for the Governance of Regulations – Public Consultation Draft*, www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory.../Governance%20of%20Regulators%20FN%20.docx.

^{xiv} OECD (2008), *Policy Brief – Measuring Regulatory Quality*, *OECD Observer*, April, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/Policy%20Brief%20-%20Measuring%20Regulatory%20Quality.pdf>.

^{xv} See, for example, Elson, D. (2016), Gender Budgeting and Macroeconomic Policy, in *Feminist Economics and Public Policy*, J. Campbell and M. Gillespie (eds), Routledge, 27-37.

^{xvi} *OECD Support on Public Procurement*, <http://www.oecd.org/gov/public-procurement/support/>.

^{xvii} See, for example, Elisabeth Prügl and Jacqui True (2014), Equality means business? Governing gender through transnational public-private partnerships, *Review of International Political Economy*, 21:6, 1137-1169, DOI: [10.1080/09692290.2013.849277](https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2013.849277)

^{xviii} See, as examples, Goetz, A.M. (2003), National women's machinery: State-based institutions to advocate for gender equality. In *Mainstreaming gender, democratizing the state? Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women*, S. Rai (ed). Manchester University Press, 69-95; see also McBride, D. and A. Mazur (2012), *The Politics of State Feminism: Innovation in Comparative Research*, Temple University Press.