

Inclusive policy making

Open and inclusive policy making is transparent, evidence-driven, accessible and responsive to as wide a range of citizens as possible. It strives to include a diverse number of voices and views in the policy-making process, including traditional cultures. To be successful, these elements must be applied at all stages of the design and delivery of public policies and services. While inclusive policy making enhances transparency, accountability and public participation and builds civic capacity, it also offers a way for governments to improve their policy performance by working with citizens, civil society organizations (CSOs), businesses and other stakeholders to deliver concrete improvements in policy outcomes and the quality of public services.

Gender impact assessments (GIAs) are one kind of tool that policy makers can use to assess, according to gender-relevant criteria, the impact that new legislation or policies may have on women and relative to men. Building awareness and understanding among policy makers of the potentially different effects of policy choices on men and women is key to inclusive policy making in various domains. Nevertheless, seemingly gender-neutral policy decisions can have effects, whether intentional or not, on women's chances of becoming equal participants in society. They may make it more difficult for them to find employment, secure an education, start a business, meet the needs of their family, or ensure their human rights. For example, a workplace regulation that permits both parents to take leave to care for a sick child is more likely to affect women as primary caregivers. GIAs can be conducted *ex ante* (e.g. before the proposed law or policy has been approved or gone into effect) and *ex post* (e.g. following implementation). According to the OECD Survey on Gender Public Policies and Leadership, *ex ante* evaluations are more commonplace. Of the OECD responding countries, for instance, 84% (16 countries) reported having requirements for *ex ante* GIAs on primary legislation compared to 37% (7 countries) for *ex post*. In general, however, it seems GIAs are not routine elements of policy making; the majority of responding countries reserve GIAs for primary and secondary legislation rather than for policies and programmes.

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is arguably the best known form of gender impact assessment. GRB inserts a gender perspective at all stages of the budgetary cycle: it aims to avoid "gender-blind spending" and improve the effectiveness of government programmes by identifying gender-disproportionate consequences of spending appropriations. Just over half of the responding countries (10) reported having requirements for GRB. Belgium, Finland, France, Israel, Korea, Mexico, Norway, the Slovak Republic, Spain and Sweden reported always conducting such evaluations for the central/federal budgets.

Citizen consultation is a second way for governments to open the policy-making process to citizens. The OECD *Guidelines on Open and Inclusive Policy Making* state that all citizens should have equal opportunities and multiple channels to access information, be consulted and participate. Every

reasonable effort should be made to engage with as wide a variety of people as possible. To accomplish this, governments in OECD countries are exploiting the power of new information and communication technologies (ICT) to increase awareness and participation. The use of ICT tools in consultation varies extensively across countries, and take-up on the part of citizens remains, on average, low in countries of the European Union. According to Eurostat's *Information Society Statistics* (database), on average, less than 10% of citizens had reported using the Internet to take part in an online consultations or voting to define civic or political issues (e.g. urban planning, signing a petition). The propensity to use online tools for consultation or voting was highest in the Nordic countries.

Methodology and definitions

Data refer to 2012 and draw upon country responses to questions from the 2011 OECD Survey on Gender Public Policies and Leadership. Respondents were predominately senior budget officials in OECD member countries. Responses represent the countries' own assessments of current practices and procedures. Data refer only to central/federal governments.

Indicators on citizens and businesses are collected from Eurostat's *Information Society Statistics* (database) which evaluates the share of citizens and businesses using the Internet for online consultations or voting to define civic or political issues (e.g. urban planning, signing a petition). Data are collected by national statistical offices based on Eurostat's annual Model Survey on ICT Usage and E-Commerce in Businesses and annual Community Survey on ICT Usage in Households and by Individuals.

Further reading

OECD (2012), *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264179370-en>.

OECD (2009), *Focus on Citizens: Public Engagement for Better Policy and Services*, OECD Studies on Public Engagement, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264048874-en>.

Figure and table notes

8.9: Data are not available for Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.


8.10: Data unavailable for Australia, Canada, Chile, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

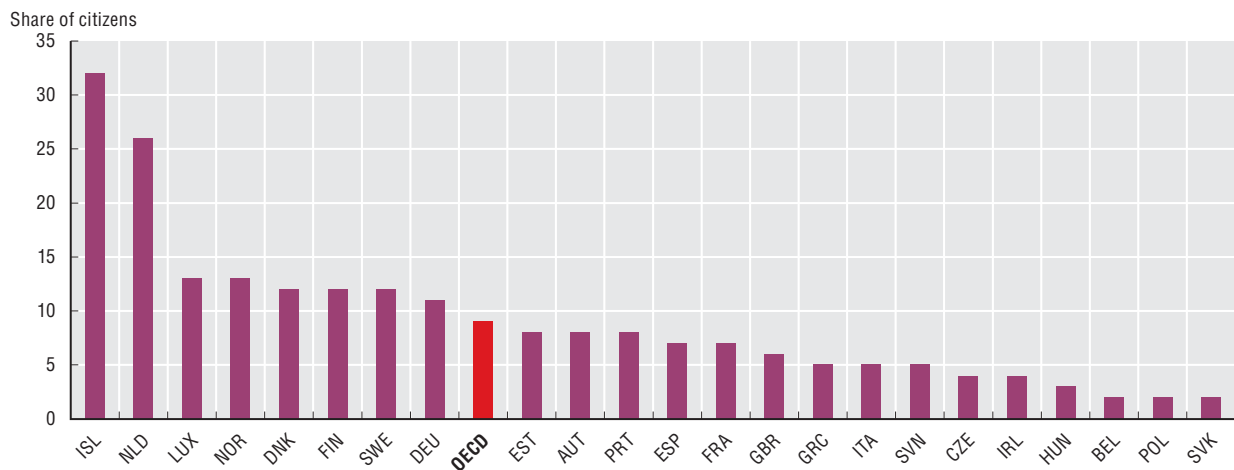
8.9. Requirements for gender impact assessments at the central/federal level of government (2011)

	Requirements for ministries/departments/agencies to conduct gender impact assessments (<i>ex ante</i>)			Requirements for ministries/departments/agencies to conduct gender impact assessments (<i>ex post</i>)			Requirement to undertake gender-responsive budgeting at the central level
	Primary legislation	Subordinate regulation	Government programmes and initiatives	Primary legislation	Subordinate regulation	Government programmes and initiatives	
Australia	◇	◇	■	◇	◇	◇	◇
Belgium	○	○	■	○	○	○	●
Chile	■	■	■	◇	◇	◇	○
Czech Republic	■	■	■	■	■	■	◇
Finland	●	■	■	■	■	■	●
France	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
Germany	●	●	●	◇	◇	◇	◇
Greece	■	■	■	■	■	■	○
Ireland	■	◇	■	◇	◇	◇	◇
Israel	●	●	◇	■	■	■	●
Korea	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Luxembourg	●	●	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇
Mexico	■	◇	■	◇	○	■	●
New Zealand	■	■	■	◇	◇	◇	◇
Norway	●	◇	■	●	●	■	●
Slovak Republic	●	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇
Spain	●	●	■	◇	◇	◇	●
Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Switzerland	●	◇	◇	○	○	○	■
Total OECD							
● Yes, always	10	6	3	3	3	2	9
■ Yes, sometimes	6	5	11	4	4	6	1
○ No, but planned	2	2	1	3	4	3	2
◇ No, not planned	1	6	4	9	8	8	7


Source: 2011 OECD Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932943685>

8.10. Percentage of individuals who have taken part in an online consultation or voting



Source: Eurostat, Information Society Statistics (database).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932942925>



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