

Annex G. Case studies on governance frameworks to support gender equality

Iceland: Gender mainstreaming and budgeting

Iceland is a global frontrunner in gender equality and can offer leading-edge practices of international interest. The Government of Iceland recognises that gender equality is a continuous process and calls for whole-of-government attention to further boost inclusive outcomes in all policy areas, from education to access to labour markets to environmental protection.

Organisational structure

With the increasing attention given to the gender equality agenda, including in the context of the SDGs, and in recognition of the transversal nature of this issue, there are plans to move the Gender Unit from its current location in the Ministry of Welfare to a new home in the Prime Minister's Office in the beginning of 2019. Also, in 2017, with the renewed political commitment to gender equality in Iceland, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet re-established the Ministerial Committee on Equality.

The main role of the Committee is to coordinate equality issues among ministries and within the government. These issues include, but are not limited to, parental leave (paternity and maternity leave); the elimination of the gender pay gap (implementation of the law on the Equal Pay Standard); the rights of LGBTQ+ people; the combating of sexual violence; and ratification of the Istanbul Convention. The Ministers represented on the Committee are the Prime Minister; the Minister of Social Affairs and Equality; the Minister of Justice; the Minister of Health; and the Minister of Education and Culture. Other ministers participate in the meetings of the Committee on the basis of need and in accordance with the decision of the Prime Minister, who chairs the meetings of the Committee.

Legal frameworks

Several legislative practices in Iceland support the implementation of SDG 5. The current priorities of the government are reflected in the revised Act on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008 and in the Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2019. Additionally, the Agreement of the Coalition Government specifically stipulates gender equality as a national priority.

Gender mainstreaming has been a legal requirement in Iceland for over three decades. It is being implemented through a Parliamentary resolution that approved the 2016-2019 Gender Equality Action Plan, with the Centre of Government providing leadership and support. Other recent legal developments relate to gender quotas, protection against intimate partner violence and the prohibition of gender discrimination in the access to and supply of goods and services, to name a few.

Iceland is also pioneering gender equality through Equal Pay Certification legislation (Jan 1st 2018). This legislation makes Iceland the first country in the world to require companies with 25 or more employees to obtain certification to prove they offer equal pay

for work of equal value regardless of gender. The mechanism for this is an audit by a certified auditor who issues a certificate if the company has been successful in providing equal pay.

Gender Budgeting and Impact Assessments and their link to the SDGs

Another government tool to mainstream gender equality in different SDG commitments is gender budgeting, which was introduced post-crisis in 2009. Gender budgeting has already become enshrined in the public finance framework and is delivering visible progress in terms of its impact on the budgeting process and decision-making.

Iceland has also been using Gender Impact Assessment (GIAs) to identify potential impacts of government decision-making in various areas, including those linked to the SDGs, on women and men from diverse background. For instance, Iceland conducted a GIA of commodity tax including on personal care products that are used by men and women. The results showed that women are charged more than men are for equivalent products and services.

Collecting gender-disaggregated data is also critical to advancing inclusive policy outcomes and Iceland is taking steps to ensure that available gender-disaggregated data is widely disseminated and communicated, mainly through making it publicly available. In addition, a whole-of-government working group on gender mainstreaming has been established by the Ministry of Welfare under the lead of its Equality Unit to develop a plan to introduce and implement system-wide processes and methods or tools to integrate a gender and equality lens within the standard operational procedures for policy-making in all areas affecting the full range of the SDGs and beyond.¹

Kazakhstan: Gender equality efforts at the core of national development goals

There is commitment at the highest political level of the Republic of Kazakhstan to advance gender equality. Over the past decade, Kazakhstan has made important progress in promoting women's empowerment in public life and in advancing gender equality. Kazakhstan has also committed to implementing the SDGs: achieving gender equality and eliminating inequalities between men and women in Kazakhstan is at the core of the country's goal to become one of the 30 most-developed countries in the world.

As part of the SDGs, Kazakhstan committed to adequately finance gender equality initiatives, establish strong transparent and open accountability mechanisms within the government, and utilise high-level comparable gender data in all aspects of gender equality.

Kazakhstan's overall performance in setting a long-term vision and objectives has been impressive. Through the Strategy Kazakhstan 2050, 2030 and 2020, the country lays its roadmap for its policy reforms for the 35 years, which applies to all levels of government and public service.

Kazakhstan first implemented a National Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2006-2016. The Strategy for Gender Equality was accompanied by three action plans in order to ensure its implementation and monitor progress. To succeed the 2006-2016 Strategy for Gender Equality, the government of Kazakhstan then prepared a new Concept on Family and Gender Policy for 2030, which seeks to achieve by 2030 equality of rights, benefits, responsibilities and opportunities for men and women in all areas of social life and to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination.

This new strategy represents an unprecedented opportunity to develop a whole of government approach to achieving gender equality in practice. Unlike the recently expired Gender Strategy 2006-2016, which was based on a stand-alone gender equality strategy, and in accordance with the GEPL Recommendation, the new Concept Policy aims to adopt a dual approach to gender equality by embedding gender considerations in all policies, laws and regulations and specific measures.

In Kazakhstan, gender mainstreaming was articulated within the overall National Gender Strategy 2006-16 which aimed to “introduce gender approaches into the development, realisation and control over implementation of the national legislation, national and local budgets, and state, social and economic programmes” in order to provide the basis for gender mainstreaming.

Kazakhstan is in the process of putting in place elements of ex-ante impact assessment (called “scientific expertise”), including from a gender perspective. A basis for evaluation of the newly developed legislation on gender equality issues has been established. For example, Article 29 of the Law 480-V on Legal Acts (6 April 2016) stipulated that draft legislative acts be accompanied by an explanatory note and a scientific expertise appraisal. The 2016 Government Resolution No. 497 established regulations for Scientific Expertise of the Draft Legislation. The regulations set requirements for the ex-ante assessment of draft laws and provide a general format for conducting scientific expertise. The Regulations require that scientific expertise should reveal the possible harm to fulfilment of gender equality presented by the draft legislation in question, if any, as well as the causes and consequences of such a threat (OECD, 2017^[11]).

Some elements of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) are seeded in the budgetary planning of some public entities. For instance, the State Programme of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan provides for output and outcome indicators to address specific health issues faced by women, and a certain budget is allocated to achieve these output results.

Progress has also been made in the collection of gender-disaggregated data statistics. A gender statistics unit has been established within the Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which annually publishes *Women and Men in Kazakhstan*, a compilation of gender-disaggregated data.

Turning to the institutionalisation of the gender machinery, important strides were made in Kazakhstan with many mechanisms both at the central and at the local levels being established. Elements of a central gender institution can already be found in Kazakhstan: the National Commission on Women’s Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy is an advisory body to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which is directly subordinate and accountable to him. The Commission plays a leading role in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the National Gender Strategy and providing expert advice to other public bodies on issues related to gender equality. The Commission also has a consultative role in the development of the national policy for family and gender equality. It conducts gender analysis of draft legislation and conducts policy research on gender issues.

Finally, Kazakhstan is making efforts to strengthen gender expertise and raise awareness of gender equality among the representatives of public bodies. As such, the Academy of Public Administration under the President is tasked with carrying out regular training sessions on gender equality for government representatives in order to further focus training on the benefits of gender equality and mainstreaming, collection and analysis of gender-

disaggregated data and use of tools for gender-sensitive policy-making, such as GIA and gender budgeting.

Lithuania: Promoting equal opportunities for all

Lithuania has made progress in the field of gender equality in recent years and has adopted laws and programmes to protect the rights of women in the labour market, education and society.

Legal framework

Several legislative practices in Lithuania support the implementation of SDG 5. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania provides the principle of equality for all people and the inherent right to be treated equally with others. The main national legislation describing the advancement of gender equality and mainstreaming is the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (the Law), which is applicable in the areas of employment, education and science, the supply of goods and services and social security.

At the moment, changes of the Law are being considered in order to enable the practical use of temporary special measures. The Law establishes the possibility to apply temporary special measures to achieve gender equality, however, those temporary special measures have to be established by law, which makes this statement invalid in practice. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour coordinates negotiations with other national institutions and other stakeholders in order to prepare the draft of the Law.

As part of the SDG agenda, the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015-2021 (the Programme) was approved by the Government in February 2015. The goals of the Programme are closely related to SDG 5 targets: to promote equal opportunities for women and men in the employment and labour sectors, seek a balanced participation between women and men in economic and political decision-making, enhance the efficiency of institutional mechanisms for the equality between women and men, and promote the integration of the gender aspect in the spheres of availability of education and science, culture, health care, the environment, national defence and justice.

The Action Plan for 2018-2021 (the Action Plan) lays out the implementation of the Programme. It sets out concrete actions, implementation deadlines, responsible institutions, state budget allocations for each action, and assessment criteria. Almost all ministries are included in the implementation of the Action Plan where all priorities are enshrined. Moreover, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour constantly communicates with the Inter-institutional Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which was established in 2000. It consists of representatives of all the ministries and relevant NGOs.

In the Programme, targets and indicators are set to contribute to the implementation of SDG 5 at a national level. The results of the Programme implementation are reported to the Government once a year. Moreover, every five years, an independent external comparative assessment is made of the overall impact of the Programme.

The Programme recognises the role of non-governmental organisations and provides support for their gender equality projects. There are also training initiatives for civil servants, representatives of the judicial system and social partners. Digital tools include the electronic network of women's organisations and the information portal www.lygus.lt.

Institutional frameworks for implementation of SDG 5

At Parliamentary level, the Human Rights Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania initiates and considers, amongst others, draft legislation on gender equality. It also ensures Parliamentary supervision of the activities of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Equal Opportunities, which investigates complaints regarding direct and indirect discrimination, harassment on the grounds of sex and sexual harassment or provides independent and impartial consultations in pursuing the complaints.

At governmental level, the main role is played by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which coordinates gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming in all areas and ensures equal opportunities for women and men in the areas of employment and social protection. Other Ministries contribute to the implementation of the Programme and the Action Plan.

The Inter-institutional Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men coordinates implementation of gender equality programmes, promotes integration of a gender perspective in other programmes and projects, submits proposals and recommendations regarding gender equality policies, and discusses gender equality issues. The Commission is composed of the representatives of all the Ministries and the representatives of women and men organisations, selected and nominated by the NGOs themselves.

Implementation of gender mainstreaming

In Lithuania, a methodology for impact assessment of legislation was approved in 2003. The impact assessment must be conducted when a regulation is changing fundamentally or new regulations on the relations that were not regulated before are introduced. There is a question relevant to gender impact in the chapter on impact for social environment of the questionnaire of this methodology. It is asked whether implementation of the planned legislation should impact employment of women and men, social guarantees (social insurance, health care) of women and men, work and family reconciliation and gender pay gap.²

Mexico: Putting a gender perspective at the heart of public policies

In recent years, the Mexican Government has taken significant steps and made noteworthy progress in promoting gender equality. In 2016, Mexico's president affirmed in his statement to the 71st UN General Assembly that his country had embraced implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a "commitment of the State". Mexico has put a gender perspective at the heart of its national development goals for 2018. The National Programme for Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination against Women (*Proigualdad*) has been introduced as a key part of the National Development Plan 2013-2018. Mexico has been keen to embed gender-equality objectives into the formulation, implementation and oversight of public policies and has thus incorporated gender mainstreaming as a transversal requirement in the realisation of its National Development Plan.

Mexico provides an example of having gender equality objectives in the planning of external activities of line ministries. Given the transversal gender equality objective of the National Development Plan 2013-2018, line ministries work to incorporate gender perspectives in their sector-related strategic planning documents in keeping with the National Development Plan and the gender equality strategy (*Proigualdad*). Examples include the 2013-2018 Sectoral Programmes for Health, Equality for Education, Social Development, Environment and Natural Resources and Financing Development (OECD, 2017^[2]).

A National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, chaired by the President, was established in 2017 as a bonding mechanism between the federal and local governments, civil society, the private sector and academia. Its main purpose is to “coordinate the actions for the design, execution and evaluation of [...] policies [...] for the compliance with the [...] 2030 Agenda.” By proposing priorities, goals, indicators and challenges, the National Strategy for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will incorporate a long-term vision to guide the elaboration of the future National Development Plan 2019-2024.

Mexico has also established a legislative basis for gender mainstreaming, with a view to ensure greater institutionalisation and enforcement. It makes explicit references in its gender equality strategy to gender mainstreaming as an implementation approach, notably in its Budget Law. As part of its gender equality strategy, Mexico has also introduced gender budgeting, with legal provisions and gender impact analysis of the budget as a whole underpinning it.

Government structures and institutional mechanisms are critical to promote gender equality and INMUJERES is the central gender equality institution in Mexico. Its president is engaged in the discussions of the Cabinet Ministers regarding policies that have impacts on gender equality.

Mexico has been taking into account multi-level governance and vertical coordination in order to develop a whole-of-society approach to gender equality and launched an online platform to showcase progress in the 32 states in gender mainstreaming public policies, state budgets, and public accounts. It will also be used in the “next steps” process to help states identify specific future actions they should take to increase their success such as harmonising laws and policies (OECD, 2017^[2]).

Mexico is also keen to further collect gender-disaggregated data, which is required to be used in some cases while formulating policies, government programmes and initiatives, and budget proposals. Turning to Parliaments and Parliamentary committees, the Gender Equality Commission of the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico was a key actor in driving reforms related to combating gender-based violence, and women’s access to health, education and political participation.

Notes

¹ This case study is based on Iceland’s responses to the OECD 2018 Questionnaire *Public Governance dimensions of SDG 5 and other targets with explicit links to gender equality*.

² This case study is based on Lithuania’s responses to the OECD 2018 Questionnaire *Public Governance dimensions of SDG 5 and other targets with explicit links to gender equality*.

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