

FOREWORD

The *Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life* adopted in 2015 (hereafter “GEPL Recommendation”) provides a clear path for making governments, public administrations, legislatures, and judiciaries more aware of and responsive to the perspectives, interests and needs of both women and men. Making state institutions more sensitive to gender considerations entails more than increasing the number of women in leadership positions: it requires a better understanding of how formal and informal policies, practices and procedures across state institutions can reinforce gender inequalities and gender-based stereotypes, and what can be done to bring about gender equality.

To guide policy makers in implementing the GEPL Recommendation, help them design gender-sensitive public policies and services, and enable women’s equal access to public decision making, the OECD launched the first edition of the [Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality](#) in 2018. It highlighted a range of possible actions to take and pitfalls to avoid in the areas of: institutionalising gender equality and gender mainstreaming; supporting gender balance in all state institutions (executive, legislative, and judiciary) and structures and at all levels; developing and sustaining gender mainstreaming capacity; and establishing inclusive accountability structures.

Since the launch of the first edition of the Toolkit five years ago, OECD countries have made impressive but uneven progress towards gender equality in public life, notably by increasing both leadership commitment to gender equality and the number of legal or binding requirements underpinning gender equality and gender

mainstreaming. Despite this progress, several gaps persist, particularly in institutional capacity and co-ordination for promoting gender equality across government, the collection and availability of gender-disaggregated data, and effective monitoring and accountability. The glass ceiling preventing women’s greater representation in public management and leadership positions remains largely in place, as do societal gender norms and biases.

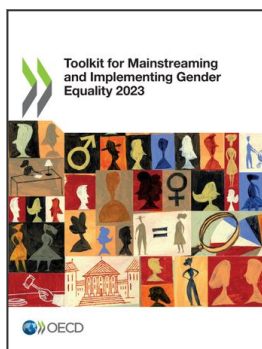
Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a significant impact on health and social and economic well-being globally, has worsened longstanding and deeply rooted gender inequalities across OECD Member countries. It has also accelerated certain trends in the transition of the workplace, such as digitalisation and flexible work, shining a spotlight on the future of work and what it means for gender equality. In recent years, the understanding of gender inequality has expanded to include its overlaps and intersections with other forms of inequality and identity-based discrimination. There is a growing recognition that the effectiveness of policy responses in reducing gender inequality strongly depend on an understanding of people’s intersectional experiences.

This Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality 2023 builds on the 2018 online edition by introducing new data, evidence, concepts, lessons, and good practices from OECD countries. It also incorporates new areas of work, namely infrastructure planning and public procurement, where OECD countries have increasingly integrated gender dimensions.

The Toolkit is designed to support a range of decision-making institutions in their efforts to improve the quality and gender-sensitivity of their internal processes and outputs such as policies, legislation, and services. These institutions include executive leadership and senior managers, gender equality institutions, line ministries, national statistical offices, central civil service management departments, parliaments and local deliberative bodies (e.g. councils, assemblies), parliamentary committees or cross-party caucuses on gender equality/women's affairs, political parties, electoral management bodies, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

The good practices contained in the Toolkit are meant to motivate and inspire people across government and beyond to introduce new and innovative ways to promote gender equality. Acknowledging the importance of learning as an iterative process, the Toolkit should be seen as an organic tool: one that has grown and will grow as more good practices are developed and shared. To this end, it is also hoped that readers of the Toolkit will take the guidance provided and further develop the ideas therein to create truly gender-sensitive public institutions.





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