

# **5** GENDER-SENSITIVE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS

Fostering diversity and equal representation of men and women in the public sector is an essential factor for gender-responsive policies, driving trust in public administration and quality service delivery. To enhance gender equality in public employment, a number of measures and policies need to be undertaken across the areas of access to employment and career development, as well as overall employment and work conditions enabling both men and women to fully contribute to the goals of the civil service. This section of the Toolkit aims to provide executive leadership, senior officials and human resource (HR) managers across public administrations with a strategic framework for enabling and creating gender-sensitive public employment systems, improving leadership and executive accountability; and addressing gender wage gaps and occupational segregation.

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## 5.1. ENABLERS FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS

### Key Provision of the *OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*

Improve the gender equality in public employment, by promoting the flexibility, transparency, and fairness of public employment systems and policies to ensure fair pay and equal opportunities for women and men with diverse backgrounds and experience.

#### 5.1.1. Priority checklist for enablers for gender-sensitive public employment systems

- A. Whole-of-government civil service legislation, policies and values have clear and specific provisions for gender equality

#### 5.1.2. Self-assessment tool

*A. Whole-of-government civil service legislation, policies and values have clear and specific provisions for gender equality*

##### Self-assessment questions

- Is gender equality clearly and specifically referred to and defined in the country's civil service legislation and public employment policies?
- Do the civil service values and principles integrate and promote gender equality in public employment?

##### Why is it important?

Effective public employment gender equality policies and actions require:

- Strong political leadership, vision and commitment to gender equality;
- Whole-of-government civil service legislation and policies with specific provisions for gender equality;
- Civil service values and ethics code embedding provisions for diversity and gender equality.

Strong political leadership, vision and commitment to gender equality are important to set the tone and send a clear message. Government and political leaders should set an example by enhancing gender equality in their own political formations and in parliament's representation, as well as by making nominations that ensure equal access to the political executive, the judiciary, the senior civil service, the supreme audit bodies, etc.

Equal representation of men and women in the public sector is essential for gender-responsive policies and for quality service delivery. Diversity allows for enhanced brainpower, ideas and approaches to identifying and solving problems. Fostering diversity in the public sector could help strengthen trust in government by portraying it as responsible, responsive and legitimate, and may also contribute to national cohesiveness.

A clear definition of gender equality as well as legally bound, clear expectations for a diverse public sector workforce and sound accountability measures are indispensable for gender equal public employment systems.

Strengthening fundamental civil service values and principles - such as merit, diversity, and representativeness - has very likely contributed to the increase in the number of women in public sector employment. Merit-based recruitment and promotion are essential for providing equal access to public employment and opportunities for career development and growth. Establishing institutional safeguards for civil service values and principles and associated accountability mechanisms is an important condition to their sustainability and vitality.

#### What are the key actions to consider?

- Developing a government-wide, compelling, outcome- based vision for gender equality in the civil service, also as part of the broader efforts to promote inclusion and diversity;
- Integrating gender equality perspectives into the development of all civil service and public employment policies, regularly conducting gender-based analyses;
- Ensuring political commitment to civil service gender equality policies by engaging politicians and parliamentarians in the discussion and promotion of civil service gender equality legislation and policies, as well as their contribution to good governance;
- Engaging men and women in developing policies to ensure gender equality within public employment, providing all groups with opportunity to contribute their views;
- When designing civil service legislation and policies, developing a broader vision of diversity and gender equality, including, when appropriate, the examination of a range of other intersecting identity factors (such as age, cultural background, and ability);
- Ensuring that legislation and policy development with regard to gender equality in public employment are evidence-based, supported by recent and relevant data and research;
- Developing and promote policy mechanisms to continuously ensure universally safe, healthy and supportive work environments for all public servants, as well as mechanisms to enforce those provisions to be accessible to all;
- Regularly assessing the implementation of policies to foster gender equality within public employment based on relevant and up-to-date data and information;
- Highlighting the civil service's merit and gender equality principles in public sector branding to attract new talent in public employment and encourage others to follow suit.

#### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- Putting in place legislation and policies to foster gender equality within public employment that go unheeded;
- Piecemeal approaches in public sector gender equality legislation and policy;
- Legislative and policy objectives that are unrealistic or vague;
- Adopting public sector gender equality legislation and policies that are not suited to the specific context of a country, region or organisation. Existing models should stimulate the consideration of new ideas, which countries adapt to their conditions;
- Engaging a limited range of traditional stakeholders, always listening to the same voices and avoiding new views and ideas while developing public sector gender equality legislation, policies and initiatives;
- Limited gender-based analysis skills and absence of mechanisms for monitoring the impact of gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives within the public sector.

### **Box 5.1. Good practice example(s): Policy or legal provisions for gender equality in public administrations**

#### **New Zealand's legal obligation for diversity**

New Zealand has adopted Public Service Act 2020, which replaced the State Sector Act 1988 and provides a legislative framework to enable an “adaptive, agile and collaborative public service”. In order to do so, the legislation draws upon four key enablers: public service culture and behaviour; an updated framework for employment; effective leadership; and a greater range of options for configuring fit-for-purpose public service organisations. More specifically, it recognises the principle that a given cohort of public service officials should reflect the makeup of the society. In this regard, it creates a responsibility for the Chief Executives of departments and Boards of interdepartmental initiatives to foster inclusiveness and diversity in the public administration.

#### **Australian Public Service's Gender Equality Strategy**

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) published its second APS Gender Equality Strategy in 2021. Based on the independent evaluation of the 2016–2019 strategy and consultations with stakeholders and public agencies, it is composed of 6 priority actions areas:

- Action area 1: Leadership and accountability, where leaders are role models, agencies publish gender equality plans, have dedicated resources in place to support the work, and include their gender equality commitments in the agency's material
- Action area 2: Respectful workplaces and empowered people, where agencies prevent gender-based and sexual harassment and discrimination as well as bullying and support victims.
- Action area 3: Shifting gender stereotypes, where diversity in selection processes and opportunities is ensured.
- Action area 4: Flexible ways of working, where all types of flexible work and caring responsibilities arrangements are valued and in place for all employees.
- Action area 5: Gender data, including to better understand the pay gap and tracking gender composition of the Australian public workforce.
- Action area 6: Leveraging our external influence, where Australian agencies are encouraged to drive change beyond the workplace and speak about gender equality in public engagements and in their relations including with suppliers.

The new strategy also foresees the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure progress on gender equality, as part of a wider diversity and inclusion framework. It is aimed at streamlining reporting requirements and builds on existing data collection and analysis mechanisms.

#### **Spain's Gender Equality Plans**

Spain introduced Gender Equality Plans in Central Administration in 2011. So far, three such plans have been adopted. These plans find their basis in the Organic Law 3/2007, which lays down provisions for an effective equality between women and men. The co-ordination for the development and implementation of these plans involves several stakeholders, the key ones being the Secretary-General for Civil Service, the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities, Gender Equality Units across ministries, and trade unions. The Gender Equality Plan, as a strategic plan, is based on a previous, qualitative and quantitative diagnosis, the evaluation of the previous plan outcomes and the analysis of the situation of women in central public administration. It also uses an analysis on gender pay gap to

establish goals, key policy actions, and roles and responsibilities. The third Gender Equality Plan (2020) aims to effectively consolidate equal treatment and opportunities, support work-life balance and co-responsibility, and early detection and comprehensive support for employees in vulnerable situations.

Source: (OECD, 2022<sup>[1]</sup>; Australian Public Service Commission, 2021<sup>[2]</sup>); Information provided by the Government of Spain to OECD in 2021.

## 5.2. LEADERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

### Key Provision of the *OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*

Establish clear institutional roles and responsibilities for promoting gender balance in the public sector, including independent recourse and appeal mechanisms, which should be adequately funded, resourced, and linked to executive teams to ensure their effectiveness.

Raise awareness of gender equality considerations among public sector managers and enhance management and executive accountability to ensure gender balance at all levels and occupational groups, and deal with gender equality issues in workplaces, including through performance management frameworks.

### 5.2.1. Priority checklist for leadership and executive accountability for promoting gender equality in the public sector

- A. Institutional roles and responsibilities for promoting and monitoring gender balance in public employment are well defined, with clear and well-funded lines of accountability
- B. Institutional roles and responsibilities for promoting and monitoring gender balance in public employment are well defined, with clear and well-funded lines of accountability
- C. Independent, efficient recourse and appeal mechanisms exist and are known to all public servants

### 5.2.2. Self-assessment tool

*A. Institutional roles and responsibilities for promoting and monitoring gender balance in public employment are well defined, with clear and well-funded lines of accountability*

#### Self-assessment questions

- Is there a whole-of-government institutional framework with clearly identified roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability for promoting and monitoring gender balance in public employment?
- Do responsible institutions or units have clear mandates to lead gender-related initiatives in the public sector?
- Do responsible institutions have the capacity (adequate and sustained funding, human and material resources, etc.) to execute their mandate?

### Why is it important?

Gender equality objectives in civil service employment can only be realised if all relevant institutional players are assigned clear responsibilities, lines of accountability, and adequate resources.

These institutional players generally include: central structures of civil service management who co-ordinate and monitor human resource management (HRM) procedures and policies across government; individual ministries/agencies/departments/organisations; leadership and senior management in ministries/agencies/departments/organisations; public sector employees; and gender equality support mechanisms.

Central structures of civil service management have a bird's eye view of the management of gender equality in public sector, and can promote gender equality through:

- Developing or proposing gender equality legislation, policies and strategies in public employment;
- Establishing gender-responsive performance appraisal systems (see Section B. Executive accountability for gender equality is clearly defined and embedded in performance management and recognition systems);
- Providing guidance and policy advice (e.g. by toolkits, networks, trainings, etc.) to ministries;
- Requiring clear reporting from ministries/departments/organisations.

At the organisational level, senior management can play an important role in implementing government's gender equality objectives within their workforce and workplace. Central gender equality institutions and support units within ministries/ departments/organisations can provide guidance and advice.

### What are the key actions to consider?

- Identifying roles, responsibilities and clear lines of accountability to advance gender equality in public sector;
- Developing monitoring mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of gender equality objectives across the public sector to ensure gender equal public workforce and workplace.

### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- Positioning gender equality work as a voluntary activity within individual public organisations;
- Limiting gender equality oversight powers of central structures of civil service management;
- Neglecting the development and the training of human resources responsible for gender equality policies and initiatives.

## Box 5.2. Good practice example(s): Institutional responsibilities for gender equality in the public service

### Israel's Dedicated Department of Gender Equality in Civil Service Commission

The Civil Service Commission in Israel has a dedicated Department of Gender Equality, mandated to monitor implementation of government-wide gender equality and mainstreaming policy. The Department evaluates and measures each governmental office's current standing and progress and creates relevant workplans for the advancement of gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and initiatives in each office. Governmental offices and units are required to present their findings to the Exceptions Committee of the Israeli Civil Service Commission. The offices that fall short of their goals of achieving intended gender representation have their recruitment quota cut until a work-plan is presented. The Department of Gender Equality in the Israeli Civil Service Commission conducts two yearly reports comprised of gender indexes, providing a statistical analysis of each governmental office and ministry, as well as the public sector as a whole.

### Canada's Accountability Mechanisms of the Public Service Employment Act

The Public Service Commission (PSC) in Canada, along with the Treasury Board, has broad accountability for overseeing equity in all appointments under the Public Service Employment Act. The Employment Equity Act requires the PSC to identify and eliminate barriers and institute positive policies and practices in the public service appointment system to achieve a representative workforce, focusing on four designated categories: women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities and visible minorities. Accordingly, the PSC manages tools for public service recruitment and provides applicants and managers with a single portal to access all public service job openings. Internally, the PSC holds managers in departments and agencies accountable for employment equity objectives in their accountability statements and performance assessments, and for maintaining their departments in a state of audit-readiness. The PSC also carries executive accountability as it independently reports to the Parliament via annual and special reports.

Source: Information provided by the State of Israel, Department of Gender Equality. Gender Indexes are publicly available <https://www.vanleer.org.il/en/publication/the-gender-index-2020/>; (Government of Canada, n.d.<sup>[3]</sup>; OECD, 2014<sup>[4]</sup>).

*B. Executive accountability for gender equality is clearly defined and embedded in performance management and recognition systems*

#### Self-assessment questions

- Is executive accountability for gender equality in public employment clearly defined in gender-related policies?
- Is it embedded in performance management and recognition systems in public sector organisations?

#### Why is it important?

Well-defined executive accountability mechanisms for promoting and monitoring gender balance at organisational and individual levels not only engage leaders and managers, but also provide a vital incentive for change. In contrast, when gender equality is presented as everyone's responsibility, it may be perceived as no one's responsibility.

Effective accountability reinforces legal provisions in favour of gender equality and equity. In contrast, ineffective accountability may make it difficult for employees to seek recourse in cases of unfair treatment.

Using performance management systems to establish clear accountability at all levels can help overcome gender balance barriers. Integrating targets – such as hiring, development or promotion targets – for gender equality into the performance agreements of senior and middle managers is one way to enhance accountability. Recognition systems can be used to reinforce positive action in enhancing gender equality.

Managers do not always recognise that men and women are treated differently in the workplace and that they face different challenges during hiring and promotion processes. Gender-related training can enhance managers' awareness and can then contribute to the promotion of gender diversity and balance.

Regular reporting on gender issues and the attainment of gender objectives can deepen executive accountability; furthermore, it offers opportunities to rethink and revisit gender equality strategies and actions and to potentially improve gender outcomes. Employee engagement surveys can also provide important insights about executive effectiveness in gender balance initiatives.

Furthermore, noting the trends and transitions in the future of work, such as the digitalisation of the workplace, require an adaptation of managerial skills as well to support change in attitudes and norms in the workplace. For instance, managers can demonstrate support for flexible working arrangements by opting for these themselves. Especially where women are more often working remotely, deliberate efforts can be considered by managers to overcome bias and potential exclusion from networks and career opportunities due to lack of visibility.

#### **What are the key actions to consider?**

- Clearly defining and widely communicating executive accountability;
- Developing gender equality indicators and integrate gender balance targets into the performance agreements of senior and middle managers;
- Using performance management and recognition systems to promote executive accountability for gender balance; develop incentives for meeting gender-balance performance objectives;
- Providing gender-related training to all managers and people carrying accountability for the development and implementation of gender policies;
- Integrating appropriate reporting mechanisms to enhance executive accountability;
- Developing coaching and mentoring programmes to assist executives with gender-related issues;
- Using employee engagement surveys to gather perception data about executive effectiveness in promoting gender equality;
- Ensuring managerial responsibilities and roles are clarified in the contexts of flexible work or remote work, to overcome bias and communication breakdowns;
- Leaders and managers proactively support and role model flexible and remote working in order for individuals and teams to feel comfortable using it themselves.

#### **What are the pitfalls to avoid?**

- Diffusing accountability for gender equality: everyone's responsibility becomes no one's accountability;
- Considering that all managers are aware and knowledgeable of gender biases and their impact on their management activities;



- Not considering the impact of unconscious gendered biases on organisational culture and performance.

### **Box 5.3. Good practice example(s): Executive accountability for gender equality in the public service**

#### **Australia's Public Service Commission for managerial accountability**

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) is the main responsible authority for monitoring progress, and the current Public Service Gender Equality Strategy of 2021-2026 mainstreams and articulates managerial accountability for the pursuit of gender equality across all public institutions. Internally, the Public Service Commissioner requires all government agencies to supply data to the Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) in order to perform its functions under section 41 of the Public Service Act 1999, compile reports and evaluate the state of the Australian Public Service.

#### **Canada**

The Public Service Commission (PSC) in Canada, along with the Treasury Board, has broad accountability for overseeing equity in all appointments under the Public Service Employment Act. The Employment Equity Act requires the PSC to identify and eliminate barriers and institute positive policies and practices in the public service appointment system to achieve a representative workforce, focusing on four designated categories: women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities and visible minorities. The PSC oversees the gender equality commitments through the Management Accountability Framework and Performance Management Agreements of managers in departments and agencies, and holds them accountable for maintaining their departments in a state of audit-readiness.

Source: Information provided by the Government of Canada and Government of Australia to the OECD in 2022 and as part of the OECD (2021), Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (unpublished); (Australian Public Service Commission, 2021<sup>[2]</sup>; OECD, 2014<sup>[4]</sup>).

*C. Independent, efficient recourse and appeal mechanisms exist and are known to all public servants*

#### **Self-assessment questions**

- Are there independent and efficient recourse and appeal mechanisms to enhance gender equality?
- Are those mechanisms communicated to and understood by all civil servants?

#### **Why is it important?**

Efficient oversight mechanisms are important for ensuring that gender equality laws and policies are implemented effectively. They exist in many OECD countries and are often provided by independent institutions, such as human rights commissions, supreme audit institutions, ombudsperson offices or other bodies. They provide independent recourse for complaints related to gender-based discrimination or other injustice to public sector employees and/or to a larger population. Such oversight institutions should not only be entirely independent but must also have sufficient authority over government ministries. Rigorous recourse mechanisms are crucial for the longevity and sustainability of gender equality initiatives, including during political change. They also have to be promoted to and well-known by all public sector employees and executives.

Regular gender-related reporting from oversight institutions, and data and knowledge derived from recourse and appeal cases, can provide evidence for improving gender equality actions and priorities in the civil service.

#### What are the key actions to consider?

- Establishing effective and independent recourse and appeal mechanisms on gender equality in the public sector;
- Promoting a safe climate to use the recourse and appeal mechanisms on gender equality, without repercussions, including the provisions for the protection of individual public employees who report violations of gender equality policies and legislation;
- Developing an awareness campaign of gender equality legislation and policies, including recourse and appeal mechanisms;
- Incorporate questions about the awareness of available gender-related oversight and recourse mechanisms in civil service employee engagement surveys;
- Include the topic of gender equality legislation and policies, recourse and appeal mechanisms in civil service training modules (in-person or e-learning);
- Including data and information about gender-related recourse and appeal mechanisms and corrective measures taken in response to gender discrimination or inequity in HRM reports.

#### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- While developing gender equality policies, focus exclusively on positive action without giving appropriate attention to reinforcement mechanisms;
- Avoiding informing and reporting on the topic of gender-related recourse and appeal mechanisms;
- Underestimating the value of data and knowledge, derived from oversight institutions' reports, to design appropriate improvements to existing gender equality policies and initiatives.



### **Box 5.4. Good practice example(s): Independent recourse and appeal mechanisms for public administration**

#### **Sweden's Independent Government Agency**

In Sweden, the Equality Ombudsman is an independent government agency tasked with protection of equal rights and opportunities for all and accountability to supervise compliance with the Discrimination Act. It is also responsible for eliminating discriminations on grounds of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnic origin, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age. The agency has the mandate to investigate complaints relating to discrimination and harassment, as well as assess how employers, higher education institutions and schools work to prevent discrimination. If needed, and on behalf of the complainant, the Equality Ombudsman also has the power to bring a legal action for damages.

#### **Norway's Independent Oversight Mechanisms**

In Norway, while the Ministry of Government Administration is tasked with examining activities and results of all government agencies related to diversity in the workforce, the responsibility of oversight is shared with the Equality and Discrimination Ombud and Industrial Disputes. The Ombud is an independent agency, with tribunal, promotional and litigation faculties, actively engages in public hearings, provides comments on laws and public plans, engages in public debates, and provides information to the media. The Ombud is free from instructions from the Government as it is obliged to monitor Norway's human rights fulfilment and offer guidance to individuals' employers, and organisations with the vision of contributing to the creation of a society where "power and influence is equally distributed, freedom is available to all, and dignity is inherent to each individual."

Source: (Equinet, 2019<sup>[5]</sup>; The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, n.d.<sup>[6]</sup>; The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, n.d.<sup>[7]</sup>).

## **5.3. GENDER-SENSITIVE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS**

### **Key Provision of the *OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life***

Promote merit-based recruitment; consider positive policies and practices to ensure a balanced representation of men and women in each occupational group in public sector employment; and, develop concrete measures to ensure the effective removal of the implicit barriers within hiring and staffing processes, where appropriate and necessary.

Systematically monitor gender balance in public institutions, including in leadership positions and different occupational groups, through regular data collection, such as the use of employee surveys, and reassess its alignment with overall gender equality objectives and priorities, taking into account the results of evaluations.

### 5.3.1. Priority checklist for gender-sensitive public employment systems

- A. Recruitment, selection and hiring processes are guided by gender equality principles
- B. Workforce development, promotion, and succession planning embed gender equality objectives
- C. Work-life balance and family-friendly policies and practices are available and equally used by men and women, including at the top
- D. Evidence to achieve and sustain gender-sensitive public employment is systematically generated
- E. Implicit barriers to gender equality within public employment systems are removed through affirmative policies and actions

### 5.3.2. Self-assessment tool

A. *Recruitment, selection and hiring processes are guided by gender equality principles*

#### Self-assessment questions

- Is there an explicit requirement for the recruitment, selection and hiring processes to be guided by gender equality principles?
- Are there specific measures in place ensuring the promotion of merit-based recruitment and staffing processes?
- Are public employment recruitment and staffing practices continuously monitored and evaluated for gender balance?

#### Why it is important?

A diverse and gender-balanced public sector is not only more representative, but is also associated with higher productivity and creativity, more sensible policy design, more inclusive policies and programmes, improved public confidence in government and public administration.

Diverse and gender-balanced public sector can also facilitate sector's branding and renewal. While the public sector is seen as more women- and family-friendly than the private sector, evidence suggests the persistence of systemic barriers in hiring and staffing processes. Removing these barriers and promoting merit-based recruitment and staffing processes can help to attract new and more diverse talent at entry, management and leadership levels. Targeted recruitment campaigns can also improve public employment gender balance. Making corporate culture more inclusive of both women and men is important for attracting and retaining public employees.

In many countries, the public sector is the largest national employer. As the developer and implementer of public policies, the public sector has an obligation to act as a model employer, including in promoting gender equality. Strengthening transparency and meritocracy in recruiting and staffing processes will also help increase the number of women in leadership positions and therefore further improve the gender equality in the public sector and beyond.

#### What are the key actions to consider?

- Establishing clear accountability mechanisms in public sector institutions for promoting and respecting gender balance and diversity in recruitment and hiring processes;
- Including gender balance among key objectives in human resources management strategic and operations plans;
- Strengthening transparency and meritocracy in recruiting processes to enable qualified candidates to compete for senior level positions;

- Developing concrete measures to ensure the effective removal of the systemic barriers within hiring and staffing processes, including caregiver bias in employment decisions;
- Considering incorporating gender equality targets or quotas in senior leaders and middle managers' performance agreements for recruitment and retention of employees from groups under-represented in public employment;
- Reporting regularly on meeting recruitment and hiring targets;
- Regularly assessing the public sector workforce for gender balance, in all job categories and levels;
- Actively promoting a diverse public sector workforce to attract new talent to the civil service.

#### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- Insufficient recognition of gender biases in recruitment and hiring processes;
- Omitting to provide free-of-gender-bias specialised training to public sector recruiting and hiring managers.

### Box 5.5. Good practice example(s): Gender equality in recruitment, selection and hiring

#### Chile's Senior Civil Service System

The central senior civil service system, Chilean Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública (ADP), was created in Chile to recruit a professional meritocratic senior management, and conducts hiring based on public competition. The goal behind public competition has been to introduce transparency into the hiring process as a means to enable qualified candidates to compete for senior jobs, and thereby, increase women's representation in these positions. Recent available data supports the positive effects of the system with the percentage of women in public administration decision-making positions having increased from 22.6% in 2003 to 33.2% in 2017.

#### United Kingdom's Use of a Gender-blind Recruitment Platform

The United Kingdom's Civil Service uses APPLIED, a gender-blind recruitment platform. It was developed by the United Kingdom-based organisation, Behavioural Insights Team and uses gendered language detection, readability scorings on job descriptions, bias-free review process, and real-time diversity data and analytics in order to eliminate bias from recruitment processes.

Source: (Apolitical, 2017<sup>[8]</sup>; OECD, 2014<sup>[4]</sup>; Hughes, Kökten Finkel and Howell, 2022<sup>[9]</sup>).

*B. Workforce development, promotion, and succession planning embed gender equality objectives*

#### Self-assessment questions

- Do public sector workforce development and career promotion actions reflect gender equality policies and objectives?
- Do organisations' succession plans promote gender equality action by embedding specific targets for all levels and occupational groups?

### Why it is important?

Workforce development and talent management can be used to disseminate organisational knowledge about gender equality objectives and policies, and share ideas about their implementation. Comprehensive learning programmes and culture change activities can promote a culture of diversity and inclusion, and enhance civil service values and principles.

Workforce development and talent management programmes help employees develop career plans, acquire leadership skills and succeed in increasingly challenging assignments. The most effective ways to support career progression, for both women and men, include leadership development programmes, coaching, sponsorship and mentoring, and increased visibility and exposure to senior leaders.

Making the best use of available talent in the economy in general and in the public sector in particular is important for achieving inclusive growth and boosting competitiveness and resilience. Proactive talent management requires identifying high-potential and high-performing men and women and supporting them in their career paths.

Succession planning (i.e. aligning current talent development with future leadership needs) can play a critical role in breaking the “glass ceiling”. Specific actions, such as target setting, can also foster career aspirations for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups, such as women with disabilities or members of ethnic or racial minorities.

Promotions based on merit, fairness and robust performance measurement frameworks (rather than tenure) can help redress gender inequalities. They can also remove barriers for caregivers, who may be less likely to be identified for leadership development programmes and positions because of evaluation bias.

Workforce development and talent management, promotion and succession planning programmes and initiatives need to be reinforced by well-defined roles and responsibilities.

In recent years, there has been a shift from a professional public service where most public servants have the same career path and learning opportunities, to a public service of professions where different professions are on different career tracks, with clear development opportunities. This transition entails upgrading skills and competencies of public servants regularly to keep up with societal and technological change. In preparing for this transition, governments can identify and factor in gender gaps among various career paths in the public service to ensure that this shift may not advantage any gender over another. Additionally, efforts towards upskilling and reskilling would benefit from a gender lens, to identify gender differences in civil service skills (e.g. skills related to innovation capabilities such as crowdsourcing; strategic orientation such as foresight; and professional expertise) and deliver a more fair and representative public service.

### What are the key actions to consider?

- Developing and reviewing talent management initiatives and succession planning from gender balance perspectives (e.g. focusing on improving the environment in which women work rather than only focusing women; addressing various barriers to women’s access to leadership);
- Promoting gender-balanced selection and participation in leadership and management development programmes;
- Designing policies and leadership development programmes based on evidence and recent research to avoid biases and stereotypes;
- Taking into account gender-specific needs and challenges (e.g. digital gender divide) when designing upskilling and reskilling initiatives.

- Establishing mentoring programmes for women in the leadership pipeline;
- Fostering senior leaders' commitment to gender-balanced workforce development and promotions;
- Defining accountability for gender equality in talent management and succession planning.

#### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- Limited recognition of the existence of unconscious biases and the resultant stereotypes about gender and leadership;
- Insufficient communication on the importance of gender balance in leadership positions;
- Adopting a gender-neutral approach to medium- and long-term planning for transitions in the public sector employment;
- Excluding employees working part-time or on other flexible arrangements from promotion and career planning.

### Box 5.6. Good practice example(s): Career advancement opportunities for women in public administration

#### United Kingdom's Civil Service Diversity Strategy

The 2022-2025 Civil Service Diversity Strategy in the United Kingdom builds on a central learning platform for available training opportunities and allows all public servants 5 days of learning, which can be extended at the discretion of the managers. A new 'learning journey' for senior civil servants is being developed to reflect on different leadership types and routes and train managers accordingly, with diversity and inclusion dimensions included in each journey, as well as an accelerated development programme to allow for high potential employees progress quickly through grades. The programme will be available through open applications and testing.

The strategy also incorporates a "Gender Champion" as one of the six permanent government champions to publicly advocate and model diversity and inclusion at the highest level across all public service, and aims to make that position transformative with a specific portfolio of action items. Gender Champions are then replicated at the department levels, where they can target and deepen specific gender and diversity objectives and actions depending on the departmental priorities, culture and demographics.

#### Swedish Police's Efforts to Facilitate Career Advancement for Women

In Sweden, the Human Resources Department of the Swedish Police undertakes several programmes to facilitate the career advancement of women. This includes the mentorship programme, in which a mentorship co-ordinator sets up a mentorship between a less experienced leader and a more experienced leader, matched by. This programme is intended to support the mentee in skills development (professional and personal), increase knowledge exchange and experience sharing, as well as networking. The Human Resources Department co-ordinates this programme, by training mentors, supporting mentees and sharing information on the programme. Another interesting programme is called "senior management internship" or job-swapping, which involves a short-term internship in a senior management role, for a period of six months to encourage women to gain a basic understanding of a leadership role. This programme has shown great results and translated to several participant women getting over their inhibition and eventually opting for longer-term opportunities in leadership.

Source: Information provided by the Government of United Kingdom to OECD in 2022; Information shared by the Human Resources Department of the Swedish Police with the OECD in 2021.

*C. Work-life balance and family-friendly policies and practices are available and equally used by men and women, including at the top*

#### **Self-assessment questions**

- Do existing policies, workplace practices and culture in the public sector support work-life balance, including at the top levels of management?
- Do family-friendly policies and practices encourage equality between men and women by including incentives for men to take available care leave and flexible work entitlements?

#### **Why it is important?**

Work-life balance policies and initiatives are crucial for developing a diverse public sector workforce and increasing women's employment rates. Offering flexible working arrangements to men and women, mothers and fathers, allows for better family decisions. It also promotes better mental and physical health. Work-life balance policies and flexible working opportunities can improve the public sector's recruitment and retention efforts, and also contributes to higher productivity, leading to better services for citizens. Conversely, work-life conflicts can lead to absenteeism and stress, with excessive direct costs for the organisation. Remote working is an aspect of flexible working, which became possible with the advent of digital communication and collaboration platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated these structural and policy transformation, with working is becoming an increasingly common feature of public administration employment.

Nonetheless, home-based and flexible work, per se, may not address underlying gender inequalities in the workplace, or in the home. Taking advantage of these policies is often seen as detrimental to employees' career aspirations. Consequently, arrangements such as job sharing, part-time work, reduced hours or term-time work, and sick leave to care for a family member, are mostly used by low-paid, predominantly female workers in clerical and lower administrative jobs and are very rarely used at the top level of public sector organisations. A deep cultural change is needed to enhance the use of work-life balance measures by men and senior managers. Gender equality concerns also need to be intentionally integrated and mainstreamed through all of the necessary infrastructure, from training to IT access to evaluation of telework for promotion and retention purposes to health and safety guidelines in the home office.

#### **What are the key actions to consider?**

- Elaborating strategies to change the current perceptions about work-life balance measures at senior management levels, which are used mainly by low-level and low-income groups of employees;
- Developing deeper understanding and responsive actions about the perceptions of detrimental impact of the use of work-life balance measures on employees' career aspirations;
- Incorporating part-time and other time flexibility options in career patterns; ensure that employees who use workplace flexibilities are not penalised for doing so;
- Facilitating continuous support systems for family (child, disabled, elderly) members' care to enable women's and men's full participation in the workforce and empower men to take on more family-related responsibilities;
- Promoting part-time as a temporary rather than permanent solution for employees with family obligations;
- Developing policies and transition paths supporting the move from part-time work to full-time;



- Take into account gender-specific needs and challenges in flexible working arrangements and remote working.

#### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- Insufficiently funded and resources policies and programmes promoting work-life balance;
- Promoting performance management systems which directly or indirectly penalise the employees using part-time work or other family-friendly work arrangements;
- Linking acceptability of work-life balance measures only to lower-level, low-paid positions;
- Indirectly reinforcing gender roles and responsibilities (e.g. only providing 'maternity' leave);
- Assuming that flexible and/or remote work leads to better work-life balance by default;
- Not offering adequate training to employees to utilise the flexible/remote infrastructure (e.g. new software);
- Insufficient encouragement of fathers' equal uptake of available measures.

### Box 5.7. Good practice example(s): Work-life balance and family-friendly policies in public administration

#### New Zealand's Flexible Work Policies

In New Zealand, all employees have a right to request flexible working. Recently, in June 2020, New Zealand's Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission has published guidance on flexible working by default as a resource to help agencies in public services to develop their respective approach to flexible working by default. Developed by the Gender Pay Gap and Pay Equity Taskforce, it draws on extensive collaboration and engagement with the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and its affiliates, public service agencies piloting flexible-by-default practices, and representatives from the Gender Pay Principles Working Group.

#### Sweden's Family-Friendly Work Policies for Civil Servants

In Sweden, legislation makes it possible for senior civil servants and general civil servants to opt for part-time work due to family reasons. Sweden has also introduced a special arrangement called "working time based on trust" which allows senior civil servants to make their own decisions on working time, with the caveat that they cannot be compensated for overtime (as they do not have fixed working hours). Furthermore, all leave conditions are the same for the private and public sectors. Paid parental leave includes a "father's quota" – three months (60 days) of non-transferable parental leave are reserved for each parent. The aim of the amendment to the Parental Leave Act is to achieve a more gender-equal take-up of parental benefit. For civil servants, additional financial support is also provided through collective agreement.

#### France's Implementation of Telework in the Public Service

In France, the Agreement on the implementation of telework in the public service of July 13, 2021, was unanimously signed by the public employers and the nine trade union organisations of the three branches of the public service. Among its measures, the agreement provides public employees with a real right to disconnect or working remotely from a third location. Related to gender equality, it allows for the possibility for close caregivers of pregnant women to be able to ask to benefit from more than three days of telework per week, without the opinion of the occupational physician but subject to the agreement of their hierarchy, if they carry out activities that can be done remotely.

Source: (Kuperus and Rode, 2008<sup>[10]</sup>; State Services Commission, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>); Information provided by the Government of France as part of the OECD (2021), Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (unpublished); (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015<sup>[12]</sup>).

*D. Evidence to achieve and sustain gender-sensitive public employment is systematically generated*

#### Self-assessment questions

- Is there a systemic and systematic approach to data collection and analysis of gender representation and equality in the public sector, including longitudinal studies and comparative analyses with other sectors of employment?
- Are the data collected and the analyses conducted used to better understand gender issues and to develop more effective policy solutions to close persistent gaps?

#### Why it is important?

The systematic collection, monitoring and dissemination of reliable and relevant gender-disaggregated data and statistics are essential for an effective gender-sensitive policy process and informed policy choices. Up-to-date gender-disaggregated data is also crucial for public employment planning, development and training, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on all types of human resources management programmes and initiatives. It is needed for developing ways to promote gender equality and equity in the public sector, to remove systemic barriers in recruitment and promotion processes, to monitor gender equality advances, and to hold public sector institutions and executives accountable.

As the knowledge about gender-related issues improves, data and research categories and definitions can be further refined. Some countries include a range of various intersecting identity factors such as age, education, language, geography, culture and income in their analysis. Such data should narrow the persistent evidence gaps in a number of policy areas, such as gender-based violence, work-life balance practices, entrepreneurship, defence and environment.

Rigorous policy development and implementation processes require quantitative and qualitative data, indicators and methods. Gathering data about employees' perceptions of gender-sensitive issues and initiatives is also crucial. It is important to incorporate questions about gender issues in employee surveys, including identifying women's and men's needs, their motivation and satisfaction with employment conditions and career progression, and their expectations for the future.

Establishing a consolidated gender data and knowledge base and making it available to academic and policy researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders interested in gender equality can improve the understanding and response to gender-related issues and facilitate innovative crowdsourcing solutions.

#### What are the key actions to consider?

- Developing an analytical framework for gender equality issues with requirements for relevant data categories and data sources;
- Including the examination of a range of various intersecting identity factors such as age, education, language, geography, culture and income in the production of gender-disaggregated data;
- Promoting the use of gender-disaggregated data to inform the design and delivery of policies and programmes aiming to close remaining gender gaps in the public sector;
- Establishing a research agenda for systemic studies of gender equality as part of a broader knowledge development agenda on people and organisational management in the public sector;

- Creating open databases, as part of open government initiatives, with gender equality indicators in the public sector to enable crowdsourcing research and analyses.

#### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- Misconception of the data and knowledge needs for the development and the sustainability of gender equality policies and programmes;
- Rely exclusively on ad-hoc data and data sources;
- Approach and study gender equality issues as an isolated topic.

### Box 5.8. Good practice example(s): Collection of data related to gender equality in public service

#### Australian Public Service Employment Database

In Australia, the Public Service Commissioner requires agencies to supply data to the Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) in order to perform its functions under section 41 of the Public Service Act 1999. The data is then used to compile reports and evaluate the state of the Australian Public Service (APS). Information on staffing, including trends in the size, structure and composition of the APS, contributes to research and evaluation work on the changing nature of the APS and the impact of people management policies on the structure of the APS. This, in turn, assists agencies to formulate their people management policies and practices. Since 2020, the data from APSED has been presented in a dashboard. The Australian Public Service Employment Database internet interface (APSEDii) is a dashboard presenting information on workforce characteristics of the APS.

#### United Kingdom's Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard

The Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard in the United Kingdom was created to make it easy for everyone to scrutinise progress by providing current data and a clear narrative for government's diversity and inclusion goals. The dashboard includes, among others, data related to representation of women in the senior civil service by grade and by department. Furthermore, the UK's 2022-2025 Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy aims for developing new and innovative data, in addition to gender disaggregated, to help unpack intersectional features of diversity, for instance social background or career trajectories. Using such data, the strategy aims to measure the civil service workforce diversity by grade, location, department and profession.

Source: (Australian Public Service Commission, n.d.<sup>[13]</sup>; Government of United Kingdom, 2021<sup>[14]</sup>).

*E. Implicit barriers to gender equality within public employment systems are removed through affirmative policies and actions*

#### Self-assessment questions

- Are there mechanisms in place to measure progress, analyse, promote and correct action in favour of gender balance in public employment systems?
- Is evidence-based knowledge of systemic gender-related issues used to promote learning and improvement of public employment systems and to set future directions?

### Why it is important?

Even the best-designed gender equality policies and programmes cannot succeed if their implementation does not include conscious action to eliminate hidden barriers. Historical discrimination against women has created significant mental (often unconscious) barriers, in both men and women, to women's employment and professional fulfilment.

Evidence-based research and knowledge development about systemic gender-related issues and barriers to gender equality is a prerequisite for removing these obstacles.

Research, including public sector employee surveys, can provide important insights about these barriers and their underlying causes.

Reviewing workplace performance evaluation processes and other public employment policies and practices for hidden gender biases is important for achieving expected gender equality outcomes in public employment as well as in general employment.

Running gender bias awareness campaigns and including gender bias modules in public sector training programmes can raise awareness, disseminate knowledge and create a favourable environment for dialogue and culture change. Rewarding units, managers and employees for their efforts to overcome barriers created by gender bias can also help encourage culture change.

Having more women in senior positions can encourage women to take positions with greater leadership responsibilities, and, ultimately, help eradicate gender bias.

### What are the key actions to consider?

- Continuously monitoring and evaluating public employment policies and practices and gender equality outcomes for hidden gender biases;
- Reviewing workplace performance evaluation processes for gender bias and take action to remove those biases;
- Conducting regular assessments of jobs of equal value to ensure pay equity;
- Performing objective and thorough desk audits to ensure pay equality and equity;
- Undertaking research to identify implicit barriers to gender equality and their underlying motives;
- Incorporating questions about gender bias and barriers into public sector employee surveys;
- Providing specific training and coaching on gender equality barriers to public sector managers and employees;
- Enhancing civil service rewarding system and programmes by including awards for action to overcome barriers created by gender bias;
- Promoting public image of women senior leaders in the public sector and their pathways to leadership.

### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- Conceptualising policies and programmes without thoughtful analysis of possible barriers for gender equality;
- Insufficient review of performance management and evaluation practices for gender biases and other implicit barriers for gender equality.

### Box 5.9. Good practice example(s): Efforts to remove implicit barriers to women's employment in public administration

#### Austria's Federal Equal Treatment Act

The Federal Equal Treatment Act in Austria, which was adopted in 1993, includes affirmative action provisions specifically targeting the promotion of women in the public sectors to eliminate the existing under-representation of women, which is defined as less than 50% within a departmental sector or grade level. Ministers are required to legislate affirmative action plans with binding gender targets for their ministries every six years. The quota applies only to top positions in the public sector for equally qualified candidates. The Act on the Advertisement of Vacancies in Austria further stipulates preferential treatment of equally qualified female candidates in public administration units with a percentage of female employees under 50%. Austria has successfully reported an increase from 11% of women in public administration decision-making positions in 2003 to 39% in 2020.

#### Colombia's Quota for Women in Decision-Making Positions

Colombia's adoption of a minimum of 30% quota for women in decision-making positions in 2000, allowed the country to achieve and exceed this commitment in 2020 with women averaging 41% of positions at the director level. Colombia's Quota Law of 2000 (Law 581) is among the rare examples to include sanctions for non-compliance. Article 4 of the law states that any non-compliant public entity is to be sanctioned with a 30-day suspension from office and removal from office if the conduct persists. The Constitutional Court declared the person to be sanctioned is the public officer who made the non-complying appointment. The Department of Public Administration is responsible with the monitoring of the implementation of Article 4, and is required to submit an annual report to the Inspector General's Office, which, in turn, reports and sanctions non-compliant entities.

Source: (Government of Austria, 2023<sup>[15]</sup>; OECD, 2014<sup>[4]</sup>; OECD, 2019<sup>[16]</sup>; Hughes, Kökten Finkel and Howell, 2022<sup>[9]</sup>; OECD, 2020<sup>[17]</sup>; UNDP University of Pittsburgh, 2021<sup>[18]</sup>); Gen-PaCS Database, Austria reported an increase in % women in DM positions from 11.11% in 2003 to 38.99% in 2020.



## 5.4. ADDRESSING GENDER WAGE GAPS AND OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

### Key Provision of the *OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*

Develop both comprehensive and more cause-specific measures to address any gender pay gap in the public sector and horizontal occupational segregation, as appropriate through:

- enacting pay equality and equity laws and regulations, tools and regular pay assessments in public sector institutions, including the identification of the predominantly female and male job classes in the public sector, and the evaluation of compensation differences among them and of the need for adjustments;
- performing regular and objective desk audits, targeting low-paid and/or female-dominated sectors to ensure pay equality and equity, and implementing policy recommendations based on their results; and
- ensuring effective channels of recourse for challenging the gender wage gap in the public sector as appropriate, for example by considering independent complaint and legal recourse mechanisms for non-compliance.

#### 5.4.1. *Priority checklist for addressing gender wage gaps and occupational segregation*

- A. Evidence-based policies and tools are in place to address gender wage gaps and occupational segregation in public sector institutions
- B. Accountability for addressing occupational segregation and closing the gender wage gap

#### 5.4.2. *Self-assessment tool*

*A. Evidence-based policies and tools are in place to address gender wage gaps and occupational segregation in public sector institutions*

##### Self-assessment questions

- Have pay equality and equity laws and regulations adopted in public institutions?
- Is there a strategic plan for addressing gender wage gaps and occupational segregation in public employment?
- Are there outcomes-oriented objectives to close gender wage gaps and to address occupational segregation?

##### Why it is important?

While horizontal occupational segregation and gender pay gaps tend to be lower in the public sector, since job classification and pay schemes help prevent wide wage gaps, they still exist, despite corrective measures undertaken by most OECD countries. These persistent gaps are primarily caused by occupational choices and career patterns, but also women's greater use of family-related leave and part-time work. Therefore, broader and evidence-based policies are needed to address them. Moreover, noting the trends in future of work in public sector employment (see Section C. Work-life balance and family-friendly policies and practices are available and equally used by men and women, including at the top), existing pay and salary structures could also benefit from more flexibility in the future to attract and retain employees with

the new skills required (e.g. through more individualised and flexible sets of terms and conditions to match). Accounting for the existing gender wage gap in the public sector is important during this transition. While pay equality is essential for gender equality, ensuring equal pay for the same work is not sufficient. Many OECD countries have introduced legal provisions to guarantee pay equity, ensuring that work of equal value, requiring similar qualifications, is paid the same. Furthermore, a co-ordinated and whole-of-government response is needed to address remaining challenges in a coherent and effective manner. Trade unions play a key role in supporting more balanced participation by women and men in the public sector working environment, and can also help close the pay gap.

#### What are the key actions to consider?

- Identifying predominantly female and male job classes in the public administration and conduct regular assessments of occupational segregation. Develop relevant evaluation methods, tools and processes;
- Developing whole-of-government approaches to data, research and knowledge needs to conduct pay equity analyses to determine pay inequalities existing in the workplace;
- Developing cause-specific measures to address persisting gender pay gap;
- Approaching the gender pay gap as part of broader diversity and inclusion challenges;
- Developing tools to educate public sector employees and the general public about the gender pay gap and to promote equal pay;
- Increasing pay transparency by sharing the information on gender pay gap with employees, government auditors, and citizens;
- Engaging and encourage employers to examine their own pay practices, identify and possible gender wage discrimination;
- If considering the scope to introduce more flexibility in existing pay structures, taking into account the gender wage gap;
- Ensuring all relevant stakeholders are involved in the design and the implementation of measures to close gender pay gap.

#### What are the pitfalls to avoid?

- Assessment of compensation differences not based on reliable data and measures;
- Developing policy measures and tools to address gender wage gaps which fail to consider the multiple and complex gender employment issues in the public service.



## Box 5.10. Good practice example(s): Equal pay

### Iceland's Equal Pay Standard

Iceland was the first country to implement a mandatory equal-pay system with the objective to enforce legislation which prohibits discriminatory practices based on gender and to close the gender pay gap by 2022. Since 2018, institutions and companies, including the public sector, with more than 25 full-time employees are obliged to prove that women and men are equally paid for the same job. While the Icelandic Equal Pay Standard (IEPS) system was originally a voluntary measure, it is now mandatory to obtain an equal pay certification by showing that wages reflect expertise, responsibility and effort, rather than a gender dimension. If an employer fails to obtain the certification, a fine of up to ISK 50 000 (approximately EUR 400) per day can be imposed.

According to the law, government agencies will be required to document how education, experience, responsibility and other performance factors are valued and incorporated within the pay system. They will all go through an audit to analyse the pay system and salaries. The report from the audit will be published and agencies failing the audit would have to notify employees and union. The legislation allows employees to seek compensation.

### Switzerland's Measures for Wage Equality

The charter was launched in September 2016 by the Federal Councillor and aims to encourage the public sector on the federal, cantonal and communal level to use its authority and partnerships to promote wage equality. More concretely, the public authorities signing the Charter commit themselves on a political (not legal) level to, among other things:

- promote awareness of the Federal Act on Gender Equality (GEA) among employees responsible for wage determination and job evaluation, recruitment, training and promotion; and,
- regular monitoring in accordance with accepted standards to ensure the respect of equal pay within the public administration.

As of 25 October 2017 almost half of the cantons (12 out of 26) as well as all cities with more than 100 000 inhabitants had signed the Charter. The Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) organises an annual conference aimed at renewing the commitment of the public sector actors, sharing good practices and information. In addition, to help the public administration to put into practice the commitment undertaken by the signatories to the Charter, the FOGE is making an internet platform available at [www.equality-switzerland.ch](http://www.equality-switzerland.ch) with all the necessary tools and information: statistics, legal bases, the Logib analysis tool ([www.logib.ch](http://www.logib.ch)), tutorials, helpline, information on workshops, declaration by the tenderer, list of specialists, etc.

### Logib: Equal pay self-analysis tool

Logib is an equal pay self-analysis tool for private and public employers, available in English, German, French and Italian. It enables employers with at least 50 employees to easily check their equal pay practice. It can be downloaded anonymously and free of charge on the internet. The Swiss federal administration, with its more than 35 000 employees, regularly conducts equal pay analyses with Logib.

### United Kingdom's Open-Source Guides to Close the Gender Gap

The UK Government Equalities Office's gender pay gap website has a wealth of useful resources for employers – both public and private sector – to understand and address the gender pay gap. The actions which are outlined are classed as either proven effective, promising, or mixed. The guide on effective



actions is relevant not only to closing the pay gap, but also to career progression and people management.

The six actions classed as proven to close the pay gap are as follows, all of which remain as relevant as ever:

1. Include multiple women in shortlists for recruitment and promotions. Shortlists with only one woman do not increase the chance of a woman being selected.
2. Use skill-based assessment tasks in recruitment. Use performance on those tasks to assess suitability for the role. Standardise the tasks and how they are scored to ensure fairness across candidates.
3. Use structured interviews for recruitment and promotions. Unstructured interviews are more likely to allow unfair bias and influence decisions, even if unintentionally.
4. Encourage salary negotiation by showing salary ranges. Because women are less likely to negotiate their pay, employers should clearly communicate the salary range on offer to help applicants know what they can reasonably expect.
5. Introduce transparency to promotion, pay and reward processes.
6. Appoint diversity managers and/ or diversity task forces to reduce biased decisions in recruitment and promotion, provided they are senior, informed and empowered.

A series of further actions are classed as “promising” – actions which have been introduced by various governments and employers, but evaluations and further evidence are needed to demonstrate their effectiveness:

- Improve workplace flexibility for men and women – especially to encourage take-up by men.
- Encourage take up of parental leave by men.
- Recruit people returning to work after leave.
- Offer mentoring (guidance and advice), sponsorship (support advancement and visibility) and networking opportunities. This may be a useful prong to the strategy – some evidence suggests that such programmes work well for some women but not for others.
- Set and track internal targets – which should be concrete and monitorable.

Note: For more information on the Swiss measures for wage equality, see <https://www.ebg.admin.ch/ebg/fr/home/themes/travail/plateforme-egalite-salariale/engagement-du-secteur-public/charte-pour-l-egalite-salariale-dans-le-secteur-public.html> (in French)

Source: (BBC, 2017<sup>[19]</sup>; Government of United Kingdom, 2021<sup>[20]</sup>; OECD, 2018<sup>[21]</sup>; Government of United Kingdom, Behavioural Insights Team, 2017<sup>[22]</sup>).

## *B. Accountability for addressing occupational segregation and closing the gender wage gap*

### **Self-assessment questions**

- Are there clearly defined roles and responsibilities across the public sector for monitoring and overseeing regulations, initiatives and programmes addressing gender wage gaps and occupational segregation?
- Have effective channels of recourse (e.g. independent complaint and legal recourse mechanisms for non-compliance) for challenging occupational segregation and the gender wage gap in public employment been established?

### **Why it is important?**

Clear accountability mechanisms are critical for addressing occupational segregation and gender wage gap in public institutions. These include responsibility for establishing recourse mechanisms, such as independent complaint and legal recourse, establishing verification mechanisms and performing regular and objective desk audits.

Outcomes-based reporting not only allows progress to be assessed but also provides an opportunity for a critical review of methods and approaches. Annual reports by government to parliament on its progress in addressing occupational segregation and closing the gender pay gap can be an important means for improving gender equality in the public sector. Systematically monitoring gender balance in leadership and management positions and undertaking potential corrective measures to that effect can help close the gender pay gap and align results with the public sector's overall gender equality objectives and priorities.

### **What are the key actions to consider?**

- Defining clear lines of accountability, roles and responsibilities for policy development and for implementing, monitoring and overseeing initiatives and programmes addressing gender wage gaps and occupational segregation;
- Establishing appropriate mechanisms of oversight and reporting on occupational segregation and gender pay gaps progress;
- Ensuring availability of effective channels of recourse in challenging the wage gap;
- Providing tools, information and advice for developing and implementing monitoring and reporting measures;
- Using reliable statistical data for monitoring and overseeing gender pay equity initiatives and programmes;
- Including occupational segregation and gender pay gap in gender audits across government departments.

### **What are the pitfalls to avoid?**

- Limited involvement of unions and other employees' representation associations in the development of policies, regulations and initiatives to address occupational segregation and close gender pay gap;
- Underestimating the importance of clear communication and transparency to engage managers and employees in positive action;
- Underestimating potential opportunities in public sector reform initiatives to reduce gender gaps (including gender wage gaps and occupational segregation) in the public sector.

### Box 5.11. Good practice example(s): Australia's Oversight Mechanisms for Gender Equality Strategy

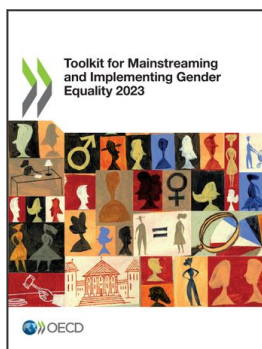
The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) oversees the progress and reporting of the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategies. As part of its external accountability, the APSC itself remains responsible to the executive branch and reports to Parliament. Each financial year the Public Service Commissioner reports to Parliament on the state of the Australian Public Service (APS). The overall purpose of the State of the Service (SOS) Report (including workplace diversity) and the APS Statistical Bulletin, is to maintain public confidence in the integrity and accountability of the APS. The commission also provides a quantitative gender report to Senate.

Source: Information provided by the Government of Australia to the OECD in 2022.

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