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GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

CHECKLIST FOR EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNTRIES

EU4GENDER EQUALITY
REFORM HELPDESK

PHASE II



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Why is gender mainstreaming needed in public administration reform?

Gender mainstreaming in public administration reform revolves around three key factors:

- gender balance in decision-making;
- gender-responsive policies, services and budgeting; and
- gender-transformative institutional change within public administrations.

Research by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) shows that promoting equality and diversity at all levels and in all sectors of public administration leads to improved government functioning. It makes governments more responsive and accountable to the diverse interests of the public, enhances the quality of public services, and increases trust and confidence in public organisations.¹

Ensuring that public administrations reflect the population they serve – including its gender composition – can contribute to more inclusive decision-making.

Women's equal participation in public administration and decision-making is also considered a necessary condition for women's interests to be fully considered and properly addressed. As analysis by UNDP demonstrates, power imbalances and gender inequalities at the national level are linked to major challenges – such as unequal access to health services, education, clean water and sanitation, land degradation, and others.² Public administration reforms that fail to address gender inequalities are likely to perpetuate these imbalances.

Why are women under-represented in decision-making positions in public administration?

Explanations for why women are under-represented in decision-making positions are often based on assumptions about women's career choices or lack of expertise. These common assumptions fail to take the impact of systemic gender-based discrimination into account.


The unequal sharing of care and household work, alongside work-life balance considerations, play an essential role in women's career decisions and are also increasingly becoming a concern for some men. Individual capacities, competencies and choices also play a part in the career paths of both women and men, as well as in their willingness and ability to take on responsibilities in both the private sphere and in professional life.

But for women, these are also influenced by broader, systemic socio-cultural gender-based constraints and constructs, including stereotypes about the roles of women and men. Women often highlight the challenges posed by gender stereotypes that portray high-level positions as predominantly held by men, along with informal male-dominated networks that influence recruitment and promotion decisions within bureaucracies.

Gender-neutral laws or policies often end up discriminating against women in public administration as they do not take biological differences (such as pregnancy and breastfeeding) into consideration. Nor do they consider differences that arise due to gender stereotypes and biased attitudes.

¹ UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, *Gender Equality in Public Administration*, 2021.

² UNDP, *Human Development Report 2011: Sustainability and Equity – A Better Future for All*, 2011.



Sexual harassment is another barrier to women's confidence and advancement in public administration. It particularly persists in male-dominated occupations where there is an absence of comprehensive information on the incidence of harassment and a culture of silence/not speaking up. Women are often not aware of how to report incidents or are unwilling to do so because they fear victimisation and because of the difficulty of proving when sexual harassment occurs.

How can public administration reform address gender inequalities and women's under-representation?

Strengthen constitutional legislative and policy frameworks

Comprehensive legislative and policy foundations are the first step towards gender equality. These must align with international and regional frameworks, and incorporate direct references to gender equality in public administration, particularly in terms of decision-making positions.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which is binding for all Member States of the United Nations (UN), calls for the systematic review of existing laws, policies and regulations, including those related to public administration. It calls for the removal of any forms of overt discrimination, as well as the implementation of special measures to correct imbalances. New laws or provisions in existing laws and policies should, according to CEDAW, **proactively advance gender equality and women's equal participation in decision-making**. This includes, for example:

- Reviewing recruitment procedures and identifying disparities in pay and benefits.

- Developing concrete, resourced policy frameworks and implementation plans to address imbalances.
- Developing, enforcing and strengthening laws and policies to prevent and combat sexual harassment.
- Capacity building on how to strengthen gender equality components when drafting and implementing laws and policies.
- Developing policies and systems to disaggregate data, statistics and information based on gender to identify gender gaps and measure change over time.

Why are gender-responsive policies, services and budgeting important?

Public administration has a social responsibility towards every citizen to provide services that respond to their needs and concerns. These differ for different people, as populations are diverse in terms of gender, religion, age, disabilities, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, social status, socio-economic and educational background. Since public administrations must provide services equally to all citizens, a gender-oriented approach to service delivery is essential to meet the population's diverse needs. Such an approach requires gender-responsive policies and budgeting.

The delivery of basic services is crucial for women and girls. A lack of gender-responsive public services is a cause of inequality and a major obstacle to the ability of women living in poverty or in vulnerable situations to exercise their human rights.

Public administration can play a pivotal role in achieving gender equality by providing quality gender-responsive services.

For example, improved, quality and affordable childcare services can increase the opportunities for women and families to seek employment and education by freeing up time that would otherwise be entirely devoted to caring for their children. In this way, quality basic services can significantly reduce women's time burden. Accomplishing these goals does not always require extensive resources. However, implementing gender-responsive budgeting is a necessary step.³

Public service delivery must take into account the different dimensions of the quality of public services – including a human rights dimension of quality from a gender equality perspective. The quality standards applied to public services are grouped into four criteria: **availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability**.⁴

Promote gender-transformative institutional change within public administration

To promote gender-transformative institutional change, ministries and public administration bodies should develop concrete action plans on how to change policies and processes, including staffing and human resources, as well as to address mindsets and institutional cultures.

Ways to change workplace culture include:

- Integrating gender equality and women's empowerment into public administration training programmes, especially for management positions.
- Developing and distributing guidelines on the use of gender-sensitive language.
- Providing mandatory training for all staff to raise awareness of sexual and other forms of harassment, alongside establishing a confidential reporting mechanism and enforcing disciplinary measures.

- Ensuring that the national women's machinery is adequately funded and supporting the designation of focal points within ministries to promote gender equality.
- Fostering collaboration between the ministry or agency responsible for public administration and the government body dedicated to advancing gender equality.
- Engaging male civil servants in efforts to promote gender equality.
- Including the promotion of women's equal participation in decision-making as part of managers' performance evaluations.

Here are some clear **examples of how to implement gender-transformative human resource policies**:

- Using gender-sensitive language in job postings and explicitly encouraging women to apply for senior positions.
- Ensuring that recruitment, promotion and appointment panels in public administrations are gender-balanced and aware of gender equality issues.
- Offering flexible working arrangements and generous parental leave policies.
- Providing childcare facilities or assisting staff members to access affordable, quality childcare services.
- Supporting initiatives such as career development and leadership training for women in the civil service, including career planning and mentoring.
- Fostering the establishment of networks for women civil servants.

³ Rezart Xhelo, "Gender-sensitive Services: Structure, Content, Principles", Webinar on Current Trends of Development and Practices of Gender-Responsive Budgeting at the Global, European and National Levels, Kyiv, December 2020.

⁴ ActionAid, *Gender-Responsive Public Services: Framework*, 2018.



Ways to improve the availability of gender-disaggregated data to support evidence-based policies include:

- Collecting and analysing data on the factors that influence women's participation and leadership in public administration.
- Ensuring that this data is disaggregated by key categories, including gender and age.

Link women's equal participation and leadership in public administration with the broader gender equality agenda

To achieve and maintain a focus on gender equality within public administration reform, it is essential to raise awareness about the significance of women's equal participation in decision-making throughout this process. This awareness needs to extend to a wide range of stakeholders, including legislators, the judiciary, women's organisations, other civil society groups, and the private sector.

Strategies to establish these connections include:

- Supporting women's education and their preparedness for careers in the civil service and leadership roles, with a particular emphasis on young women.
- Developing and implementing national gender equality plans that include specific strategies and mechanisms for execution, particularly regarding gender equality in public administration.
- Strengthening national oversight, monitoring, evaluation and accountability. This can be achieved through the involvement of Ombudspersons' offices and parliamentary committees that advocate for and monitor the integration of gender mainstreaming in public administration.
- Promoting women's leadership through both traditional and social media platforms.

The **next section** includes examples of gender mainstreaming in the **Principles of Public Administration** developed by SIGMA – a joint initiative of the EU and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), principally financed by the EU at the request of the European Commission (EC). The principles are built on existing EU acquis, OECD legal instruments, other international standards, and good practices in EU and OECD countries.⁵

⁵ OECD, *The Principles of Public Administration*, 2023.

Examples of gender-related questions that are relevant to the principles of public administration reform

Strategy

Principle 1: A comprehensive, credible and sustainable public administration reform agenda is established and successfully implemented, fostering innovation and continuous improvement.

Question: Is gender equality clearly and specifically referred to and defined in the public administration reform agenda?

Explanation: The strategic document on public administration reform should include gender-related objectives, targets, actions and indicators to measure progress towards gender equality in public administration (in terms of work-life balance and organisational culture, gender balance in leadership and decision-making, gender equality in recruitment and career progression, and measures against sexual harassment and abuse, among others).

Policy development and coordination

Principle 2: Public policies are coherent and effectively coordinated by the centre of government, and decisions are prepared and communicated in a clear and transparent manner.

Questions: Are public policies coherent with gender equality values and communicated in a gender-sensitive manner? Is the Commission for Gender Equality/Ministry of Women's Affairs involved in the preparation and communication of these policies?

Explanation: Public policies should set clear gender equality goals, detailed actions and measures to achieve them. These could be based on the European Union's (EU) Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025,⁶ the EU Gender Action Plan III (2021–2027),⁷ the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life,⁸ the Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council on combatting violence against women and domestic violence,⁹ and other EU documents. This also relates to principle 1.

Gender-sensitive communication means using inclusive language which promotes gender equality and the equal and fair visibility of women and men. On 27 March 2019, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation CM7Rec(2019)¹⁰ on preventing and combatting sexism. This comprises a set of measures, including measures related to language and communications. The recommendation notes that non-stereotypical communication is an important step to raise awareness, educate and prevent sexist behaviour. The Council of Europe has also developed a Gender-sensitive Communication Checklist¹¹ to support gender-sensitive communication.

⁶ European Commission, "The Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025".

⁷ European Commission, *EU Gender Action Plan III: An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action*, 2020.

⁸ Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CCRE/CEMR), *European Charter for Equality: The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life*, 2006.

⁹ European Parliament and Council of the European Union, "Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combatting violence against women and domestic violence", 2024.

¹⁰ Committee of Ministers, "Recommendation CM/Rec(2019) of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Preventing and Combatting Sexism", 2019.

¹¹ Council of Europe, *Gender-sensitive Communication Checklist*, 2019.



Principle 3: The government plans and monitors public policies in an effective and inclusive manner, in line with the government's fiscal space.

Questions: Are gender equality perspectives integrated in planning and monitoring processes? Does the government monitor allocations for gender equality?

Explanation: Specific resources should be available for the design, application and monitoring of gender equality targets, in addition to the working time assigned to academic, management and administrative staff in this process.

Principle 4: Public policies are developed based on evidence and analysis, following clear and consistent rules for law-making, and laws and regulations are easily accessible.

Question: Does the government ensure that policy development is based on gender statistics, supported by recent and relevant gender-disaggregated data and research?

Explanation: Policy development must include provisions for the collection and monitoring of disaggregated data. It must be evidence-based and grounded on sex/gender-disaggregated data, gathered across all employee categories. This data serves as the basis for the objectives and targets of national equality plans, as well as for indicators and for the continuous evaluation of progress.

Principle 5: All key external and internal stakeholders and the general public are actively consulted during policy development.

Questions: Are consultations organised in gender-sensitive manner that is gender-balanced and inclusive (for example, do they involve women and men from groups living in vulnerable situations, and persons with disabilities, among others? Are they accessible in terms of place and time?). Are women's organisations consulted?

Explanation: Gender-sensitive stakeholder consultation aims to engage the diverse perspectives of different groups of women and men affected by a public policy decision in order to: (i) better define the issues under consideration, (ii) select between different types of solutions and (iii) reach a consensus. In this manner, gender-responsive stakeholder consultation lead to better-informed decision-making processes, the more equitable distribution of resources and improved service delivery.

For instance, for large consultations such as online surveys, town hall meetings, deliberative polls or a citizens' jury may be used. For smaller interventions such as projects or other specific measures, focus groups or key informant interviews may be more suitable.¹²

Principle 6: Public policies are effectively implemented and evaluated, enhancing policy outcomes and reducing regulatory costs and burdens.

Question: Has or will ex-ante and ex-post gender impact assessments of public policies be conducted to evaluate the policies' impact on women and men, including the impact of public allocations?

¹² European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), "Gender Stakeholder Consultation".

Explanation: Gender impact assessment can be defined as an evaluation, analysis or assessment of a law, policy or programme that makes it possible to identify (in a preventative way) the likelihood of a given decision having negative consequences for the state of equality between women and men.

The central question of a gender impact assessment is: does a law, policy or programme reduce, maintain or increase the gender inequalities between women and men?¹³ Gender impact assessments can be undertaken before developing policies or programmes (ex-ante) as well as after their implementation (ex-post).

Principle 7: The parliament effectively scrutinises government policymaking and ensures overall policy and legislative coherence.

Question: Does parliament provide gender expertise/gender impact assessments of policies or legislation?

Explanation: Parliament can adopt special regulations and procedures to provide gender expertise and/or gender impact assessments of policies or legislation.

Public service and human resource management.

Principle 8: The employment framework balances stability and flexibility, ensures the accountability of public servants, and protects them against undue influence and wrongful dismissal

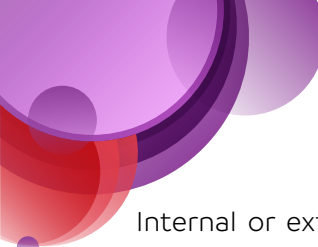
Questions: How does the employment framework protect public servants against gender-based discrimination, gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harassment? Are there independent and efficient resources reporting mechanisms in place?

Explanation: The employment framework should include legal provisions, clear procedures and appeal mechanisms to prevent inequality, discrimination, gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

In 2017, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on combatting sexual harassment and abuse in the European Union. EU institutions are required to take a strong public stance against all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, and create structures and mechanisms that prevent and deal with harassment cases in a confidential and independent manner. They are also required to foster a working environment free of any kind of discrimination, harassment, and divisive and inappropriate behaviour. Procedures to this end can be formal and informal. Informal procedures include confidential counsellors and mediators. Formal complaint procedures should be open to all categories of staff, including trainees and external contractors.

The Directive (EU 2024/1385) of the European Parliament and of the Council on combatting violence against women and domestic violence stresses that sexual harassment at work has significant negative consequences both for victims and employers.

¹³ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), *Gender Impact Assessment: Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit*, 2016.



Internal or external counselling services should be provided to both victims and employers where sexual harassment at work is specifically criminalised under national law. Such services should include information on ways to adequately address instances of sexual harassment at work, as well as on remedies available to remove the offender from the workplace.

Persons with supervisory functions in the workplace, in both the public and private sectors, should receive training on how to recognise, prevent and address sexual harassment at work where it constitutes a criminal offence under national law.¹⁴

Principle 9: Public administration attracts and recruits competent people based on merit and equal opportunities.

Questions: Are there explicit requirements for recruitment, selection and hiring processes to be guided by gender equality principles? Has the recruitment process been reviewed to avoid gender biases?

Explanation: Public administration reform should include clear provisions on non-discrimination – including discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability and whether someone has children, among other characteristics – during recruitment, selection and hiring processes. Public administration may take affirmative action to give preference to persons from groups that are under-represented in specific positions – such as women, men, persons with disabilities, or other groups. It is also important to ensure that the recruitment board is gender balanced.

¹⁴ European Parliament and Council of the European Union, “Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combatting violence against women and domestic violence”, 2024.

Principle 10: Effective leadership is fostered through the competence, stability, professional autonomy and responsiveness of accountable top managers.

Questions: Are top management positions continuously monitored and evaluated in terms of gender balance? Do policies or regulations exist to promote women in top managerial positions? Are there mechanisms in place to measure progress, and analyse and promote action in favour of gender balance among top management positions?

Explanation: Gender balance in decision-making is crucial for good governance. Public administration can take affirmative action to increase women’s representation at the level of top managers. It is also important to promote gender-responsive leadership. This means people – both women and men – using their leadership positions and skills to actively work towards gender equality and women’s rights both in the workplace and through their external activities.

Principle 11: Public servants are motivated, fairly and competitively paid, and have good working conditions.

Questions: Do public sector workforce development and career promotion actions reflect gender equality policies and objectives? Are there outcome-oriented objectives in place to identify and close gender wage gaps and to address the occupational segregation? Have work-life balance policies been adopted and implemented?

Explanation: The EU has introduced a series of legislative acts creating the minimum rights of EU citizens in terms of balancing work with family responsibilities.

The EU Work-life Balance Directive¹⁵ sets out minimum standards for maternity, paternity, parental and carers' leave. It also outlines additional rights, such as the right to request flexible working arrangements.

Principle 12: Professional development, talent and performance management enhance the skills, efficiency and effectiveness of public servants and promote civil service values.

Question: Does professional development include increasing civil servant's competencies on gender equality?

Explanation: The gender competencies of public servants can be reinforced through consciousness raising, knowledge and skills development. This helps them identify and address gender biases.

Organisation, accountability and oversight

Principle 13: The organisation and management of public administration foster accountability, effectiveness and efficiency.

Question: Is accountability for gender equality in terms of the organisation and management of public administration clearly defined?

Explanation: Ministries and public institutions can develop concrete action plans on how to change policies and processes, including staffing and human resources, to promote gender equality and non-discrimination in the workplace.

¹⁵ European Union, "Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU", 2019.


Principle 14: Responsibilities are clearly distributed between levels of government, embracing the principle of subsidiarity and local autonomy, and facilitating inter-institutional coordination with effective oversight mechanisms.

Questions: Is there a whole-of-government institutional framework in place that clearly identifies roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability for promoting and monitoring gender inequalities in public administration? Has a gender equality machinery been set up?

Explanation: Gender equality machinery is an institutional governmental and, in some cases, parliamentary structure set up to promote women's advancement and ensure their full enjoyment of their human rights. Its main function is to monitor and ensure the implementation of the law regarding the principle of non-discrimination and equality between women and men. Certain conditions are necessary for such national machineries to function effectively. These include:

- The national gender machinery should be located at the highest possible level of government, falling under the responsibility of a Cabinet minister.
- Institutional mechanisms or processes are in place that facilitate, as appropriate, decentralised planning, implementation and monitoring with a view to involving non-governmental organisations and community organisations from grass-roots upwards.
- Sufficient resources are allocated in terms of budget and professional capacity.
- The machinery has meaningful opportunities to influence the development of all government policies.¹⁶

¹⁶ United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.



Principle 15: Public administration is transparent and open.

Question: Is information about gender equality (such as gender balance, the gender wage gap, discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace) included in the government's communication with the public?

Explanation: Governments can develop and publish annual reports on gender equality in public administration institutions based on gender-disaggregated statistics, gender audits and surveys.

Principle 16: The parliament, ombudsperson and supreme audit institution effectively scrutinise public administration.

Questions: Is gender equality in public administration monitored and controlled by the parliament, ombudsperson and supreme audit institution? Do these institutions have adequate capacity in terms of gender equality and are they sufficiently resourced?

Explanation: Functions for monitoring and promoting gender equality and non-discrimination in public administration should be included and clearly described within the duties of parliament, the ombudsperson and the supreme audit institution.

Principle 17: The right to good administration is upheld through administrative procedure, judicial review and public liability.

Questions: Are gender equality principles included in administrative procedure, judicial review and public liability? Is the administration assessed from a gender perspective (such as in terms of gender balance, equal pay, work-life balance and non-discrimination, among other issues)?

Do independent courts have gender equality expertise (including on sexual abuse and harassment) when they challenge the lawfulness of administrative acts and actions?

Explanation: Achieving gender equality in public administration demands a commitment to parity – that is, an equal numbers of women and men in all roles and leadership positions across every level and sector. It is imperative that we prioritise the inclusion of women in decision-making positions. Gender equality in public administration requires the establishment of strong, inclusive institutions and cultures. Public administration must enforce recruitment, retention and promotion policies that uphold human rights while ensuring fairness and accessibility for all individuals. The structures and regulations of public institutions must actively promote gender equality and be rigorously implemented to effect real change.¹⁷

Principle 18: A coherent and comprehensive public sector integrity system minimises the risks of corruption.

Questions: Does the public sector integrity system include a gender equality dimension? Do rules and procedures on corruption address sextortion?

Explanation: Sextortion is a form of corruption where power is used to obtain sexual benefits or advantages. Corruption and gender inequality are closely intertwined. Corruption worsens gender disparities, while promoting gender equality can help combat corruption and advance sustainable development.

¹⁷ UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, *Gender Equality in Public Administration*, 2021.

Service delivery and digitalisation

Principle 19: Users are at the centre of the design and delivery of administrative services.

Question: Is the design and delivery of administrative services oriented towards women and men in their diversity – including older persons, persons with disabilities, persons living in rural areas, in poverty and/or in vulnerable situations, and those with limited access to internet?

Explanation: Public administration bodies should disaggregate information by gender and other characteristics (such as age, disability and poverty, among others) when they conduct reviews. This is vital to understand the needs, expectations and experience of diverse end users, and to ensure that gender gaps are addressed during re-design processes.

Principle 20: The public administration delivers streamlined and high-quality services.

Questions: Are services monitored and assessed from a gender perspective? Do women and men from different groups have the opportunity to assess the quality of these services?

Explanation: Public institutions can conduct surveys with questionnaires to determine women's and men's levels of satisfaction with public services, such as transport, infrastructure, education and healthcare, among others.

Principle 21: Administrative services are easily accessible online and offline, taking into account different needs, choices and constraints.

Questions: Are administrative services gender-sensitive and do they take into account the diverse needs of women and men both online and offline? Do women and men have equal access to digital services? Are gender and other barriers addressed, for example for persons with disabilities, persons with limited digital skills and persons who speak non-dominant languages?

Explanation: Public administration bodies should collect gender-disaggregated data and provide regular assessments of women's and men's needs, choices and constraints in terms of accessing administrative services both online and offline.

Principle 22: Digitalisation enables data-driven decisions and effective, efficient and responsive policies, services and processes in the whole of government.

Questions: How does digitalisation help to address gender inequalities and collect gender-disaggregated data? Does public administration promote women's talent and leadership in the digital sphere? Are women from diverse backgrounds involved in the development of user-friendly digital design? Are gendered risks addressed when promoting artificial intelligence (AI)?

Explanation: Women are often excluded from various stages of AI development, which perpetuates the digital gender gap, leading to the under-representation of women in digitalisation processes.

Public financial management

Principle 23: The annual budget is comprehensive and formulated within a credible and rolling medium-term framework, balancing policy needs with fiscal constraints.

Question: Does annual budget documentation include information on gender priorities and budget measures aimed at strengthening gender equality?

Explanation: Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) means gender mainstreaming in the budget process. It involves regularly assessing and analysing the impact of budgets on women and men, corroborated by analysing and adjusting relevant policies to reduce gender inequalities and disparities.¹⁸

To be gender-responsive, the annual budget should include a gender dimension in the budget statement and explanatory documents. In particular, it should include:

- realistic objectives and the establishment of linkages between gender objectives and budget resources;
- gender-related performance indicators in order to monitor progress and identify gaps; and
- gender-/sex-disaggregated data and data on gender gaps.¹⁹

¹⁸ For more information, see: *EU4Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk, Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Information Brief*, 2023.

¹⁹ Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Secretariat, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 2020.

Principle 24: The government supports budget implementation and service delivery by ensuring liquidity in the short- and medium-term.

Questions: Does the government analyse the impacts of budget implementation and service delivery on gender as part of its economic analysis? Does the government provide gender analysis and provide gender-/sex-disaggregated information on service delivery? Does the government include an assessment of gender impacts as part of its evaluations of the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery?

Explanation: Analysis of gender impacts of budget implementation and service delivery can include:

- A needs assessment of women, men and sub-groups within these two categories.
- An analysis of service delivery in terms of whether its quantity and quality corresponds with the diverse needs of women and men.
- An analysis of budget allocations from the point of view of how they correspond to the quantity and quality of services that women and men require.

Principle 25: The government implements the budget in line with estimates and reports on it in a comprehensive and transparent manner, allowing for timely scrutiny.

Questions: Do the government's published reports include information on gender-related expenditure and the impact of budget policies on gender equality? Does the financial report include information on the gendered impacts of policies, procurements and operations?

Explanation: The estimates and reports relevant for this principle can be budget reports, performance reports, or any other type of report prepared by individual entities or a coordinating body.

Regardless of the format, the reports should include information on:

- gender equality outcomes, that is, an overview of progress made in achieving gender equality overall as well as in specific sectors or areas of society, such as education, health, employment, poverty and crime;
- data on gender-related expenditure, that is key data on resources allocated for budget policies targeting gender equality;
- an assessment of the implementation of budget policies and their impacts on gender equality, that is an overview of the findings of ex-post impact assessments and the extent to which the intended outcomes and impacts of policies targeting specific gender issues, or gender equality in general, have been achieved; and
- gender-/sex-disaggregated data on employment in budgetary central government units. Including sex-disaggregated data on employment makes it possible to measure how employment in budgetary central government units is distributed between women and men, which is a key basic indicator of gender equity. Sex-disaggregated employment data that are broken down further by types of position can include sex-disaggregated data on administrative, technical, operational and managerial positions, or other positions as relevant. This type of data facilitates discussions on equal employment opportunities and types of corrective measures needed.²⁰


Principle 26: Public administration bodies manage resources in an effective and compliant manner to achieve their objectives.

Questions: Does the government have the capacity to track gender equality-related expenditure? Have public administration bodies been trained on gender-responsive budgeting and implementation?

Explanation: Budget expenditure targeting gender equality can be grouped in the following ways:

- Specific gender-related equal opportunity programmes, for example public expenditure focusing on paid maternal leave; subsidised child care; programmes designed principally to prevent or respond to gender-based violence; programmes to educate and mobilise men and boys to become advocates against gender-based violence in their communities; and programmes to improve girls' access to and performance in education, with the objective of empowering women and girls while reducing inequalities between boys and girls, and men and women.
- General public services targeted specifically at or used mostly by a specific gender, for example programmes to support high-technology start-ups with specific initiatives to support women tech entrepreneurs; and investment projects to construct new public transport lines that seek to improve women's use of the transport system by providing secure street lightning around metro stations.
- General public services that operate without a specific focus on gender or gender equality, for example, programmes to support local farmers' access to microcredit to purchase agricultural inputs such as pesticides or fertilizers that does not address gender biases in access to or over agricultural inputs; and programmes targeting youth unemployment that does not address the marginalisation of migrant boys.

²⁰ Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Secretariat, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 2020.



Countries with a robust budget classification system can capitalise on such a system to track budgetary expenditure throughout the budget's formulation, execution and reporting cycle. Embedding the classification in the government's chart of accounts (the accounting classification) ensures that every transaction can be presented in the annual budget proposals, and also be reported in accordance with any of the classifications used (administrative, economic, functional, programme) in the government's in-year budget reports and annual financial reports.²¹

Principle 27: Internal audit improves the management of public administration bodies.

Question: Do public administrative bodies regularly conduct gender audits?

Explanation: A gender audit is a tool to check and assess the institutionalisation of gender equality within organisations, including in their policies, programmes, projects and/or their provision of services, structures, proceedings and budgets.²²

Principle 28: Public procurement legislation, including public-private partnerships and concessions, is based on principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, transparency, proportionality and competition, and supported by a sound governance framework.

Questions: Does public procurement legislation promote the principle of gender equality? Does procurement legislation address barriers and challenges that prevent women-owned businesses from accessing and fully participating in local and global value chains?

²¹ Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Secretariat, *Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management*, 2020.

²² European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), "Gender Audit".

Explanation: Gender-responsive public procurement (GRPP) is procurement that promotes gender equality through the purchase of works, supplies or services by public sector bodies. This means that buyers and suppliers look at the impact of all contracted activities related to women's and men's interests and concerns. They then design and deliver contracts in a way that reduces gender inequalities. GRPP may target disparities in the workforce through the delivery of a contract (whether local or remote), in the way a contract is performed, and/or the impact it has on the users or recipients of the goods, services or works purchased. It does not necessarily imply higher costs, but it does require knowledge and capacity.²³

Principle 29: Contracting authorities conduct public procurement operations, including public-private partnerships, efficiently and economically.

Questions: Do public procurement operations provide sensible, actionable measures that corporations can take with their strategic sourcing decisions to evaluate the diversity of their supplier base and to increase the share of women-owned businesses in their procurement operations?

Explanation: To promote the equality and diversity of suppliers, procurement operations should include measures to promote and increase the share of women-owned businesses involved in procurement operations.

²³ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), *Gender-responsive Public Procurement: Step-by-step Toolkit*, 2022.

Principle 30: An independent procurement review system ensures effective, rapid and competent handling of complaints.

Questions: Does an independent procurement review system ensure non-discrimination and gender equality?

Explanation: An independent review system can support gender equality by ensuring that procurement processes are free from bias. This helps create fair opportunities for women-owned businesses and supports gender-responsive policies. By implementing “gender-responsive procurement”, organisations can actively consider and incorporate gender equality into their sourcing decisions.

This approach moves beyond just focusing on cost to also include social and gender impacts. An independent review can monitor the effectiveness of these efforts, verify compliance with anti-discrimination laws, and ensure that the procurement process does not unintentionally reinforce gender inequality.²⁴

Principle 31: All public funds are effectively audited by an independent auditor that provides assurance on the use of public resources and helps improve the functioning of the public sector.

Questions: Does audit scrutiny include the examination of the gender impacts of the budget? Are gender audits included?

Explanation: Audit budget scrutiny should include a review of the gender-related impacts of service delivery programmes. Gender-related scrutiny includes public consultation. Internal organisational arrangements – such as legislature committees, technical support, the expert advice of gender advocacy groups, negotiation procedures, or others – can be employed to ensure effective scrutiny.

²⁴ UN Women, “Gender-responsive Procurement”.

Principle 32: Regional and local governments have resources and adequate fiscal autonomy for exercising their competences, with financial oversight to foster responsible financial management.

Questions: Do regional and local governments assess the impact of their fiscal policy on gender equality?

Explanation: Taxation, public spending, and fiscal policies affect women and men differently and can reinforce existing social and economic inequalities.

It is crucial to analyse how taxes are structured, who bears the burden of these taxes, and how the collected revenues are spent. Each of these factors can either promote or hinder gender equality. Regional and local governments should be equipped to conduct a thorough gender analysis of fiscal policy.²⁵

²⁵ UNDP, *Equanomics Fiscal Policy and Gender Equality Series*, 2025.



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