

Gender budgeting

Gender inequalities are still inherent in many public policy areas, and these are often reinforced through decisions on how public resources are allocated and used. Gender budgeting is a practice that can help ensure that gender equality considerations are systematically taken into account in budget decisions. The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life identifies gender budgeting as a key tool of a system-wide government approach to deliver gender equality outcomes. Effective implementation of gender budgeting can help redress gender inequalities, through raising awareness of how policies included in the budget impact people differently, and prioritising projects that help close gender gaps.

Results from the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey, show that gender budgeting is becoming more popular among OECD countries. Almost half of OECD countries (17) have now introduced gender budgeting, compared to 12 in 2016. Of the 17 OECD countries that have already introduced gender budgeting, more than half have legal provisions underpinning the practice (Austria, Belgium, Canada, Iceland, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Norway, Portugal and Spain). A legal foundation can contribute to safeguarding gender budgeting from fluctuations arising from the short-term economic or political context.

Where countries are in terms of implementing gender budgeting varies. The OECD's exploratory "first pass at a composite index on gender budgeting" is designed to summarise discrete, qualitative information on key aspects of gender budgeting and to help policy makers and the public assess adoption and depth. It intends to capture three different components of gender budgeting: the strategic framework, tools of implementation and the enabling environment in place. Each of these is measured independently allowing countries to assess their performance in each dimension. While implementation tools are essential for gender budgeting, a strong strategic framework and the right enabling environment can help make the practice more effective. In consequence, weightings of the sub-components emphasise the tools of implementing gender budgeting (40%), followed by the strategic framework (30%) and the enabling environment (30%).

The value of a composite index ranges from 0 to 1; a high score in the three dimensions indicates that countries have created a strong strategic framework, have a wide range of tools applied across the budget cycle and a comprehensive enabling environment supporting the practice. Countries have been categorised as having an advanced gender budgeting practice (score 0.9 or above); a mainstreamed gender-budgeting practice (score between 0.5 and 0.9); an introductory gender budgeting practice (score between 0.2 and 0.5); or a threshold gender budgeting practice, where there is limited gender budgeting in place (score below 0.2). The index shows that no countries yet qualify as advanced practice. However, Spain, Canada, Mexico, Korea, Iceland, Sweden, Austria, Japan and Norway have successfully attained a level of gender budgeting practice that can be categorised as mainstreamed. For example, Spain, Mexico

and Iceland each have a national gender equality strategy guiding the implementation of gender budgeting, have legal provisions underpinning the practice, use a broad range of implementation tools and have general availability of gender-disaggregated data.

Further development of the index would entail moving from the availability of frameworks, tools and a supportive environment to an assessment of how well systems of gender budgeting operate and the extent to which that operation is helping achieve overarching gender objectives.

Methodology and definitions

Data are derived from the 2018 OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey. Respondents were predominantly senior budget officials in OECD countries. Responses represent the country's own assessment of current practices and procedures. Data refer only to central/federal governments and exclude the subnational level.

The composite index contains 15 variables. Weightings are based on expert judgement. For further details about the questions used, the weighting structure and the composite calculation see Annex E. The composite index is the result of adding together the normalised scores from the three subcomponents that individually vary from 0 to 1. The variables comprising the index were selected based on their relevance to the concept by OECD experts and have been reviewed by county delegates to the Senior Budgeting Officers Experts Meeting on Gender Budgeting.

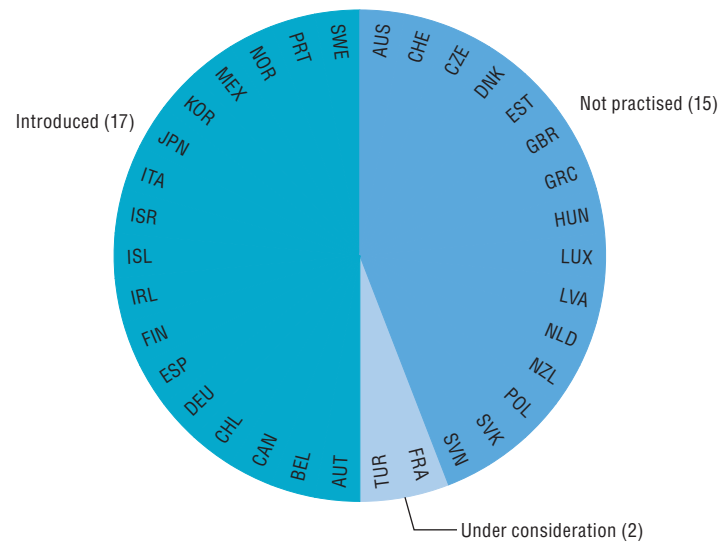
Further reading

- Downes, R. and S. Nicol (2019), "Designing and implementing gender budgeting - a path to action", <https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/designing-and-implementing-gender-budgeting-a-path-to-action.pdf>.
- OECD (2019), *Budgeting and Public Expenditures in OECD Countries 2019*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264307957-en>.
- OECD (2015), *Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life*, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0418>.

Figure notes

- On data for Israel, see <http://doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>. Data for the United States are not available.
- 5.7. France and Turkey report that the introduction of gender budgeting is under consideration.
- 5.8. Only shows data for OECD countries that have introduced gender budgeting. Data for Canada reflects the introduction of the Canada Gender Budgeting Act in December 2018. Information for countries will continue to be updated as new information is collected.

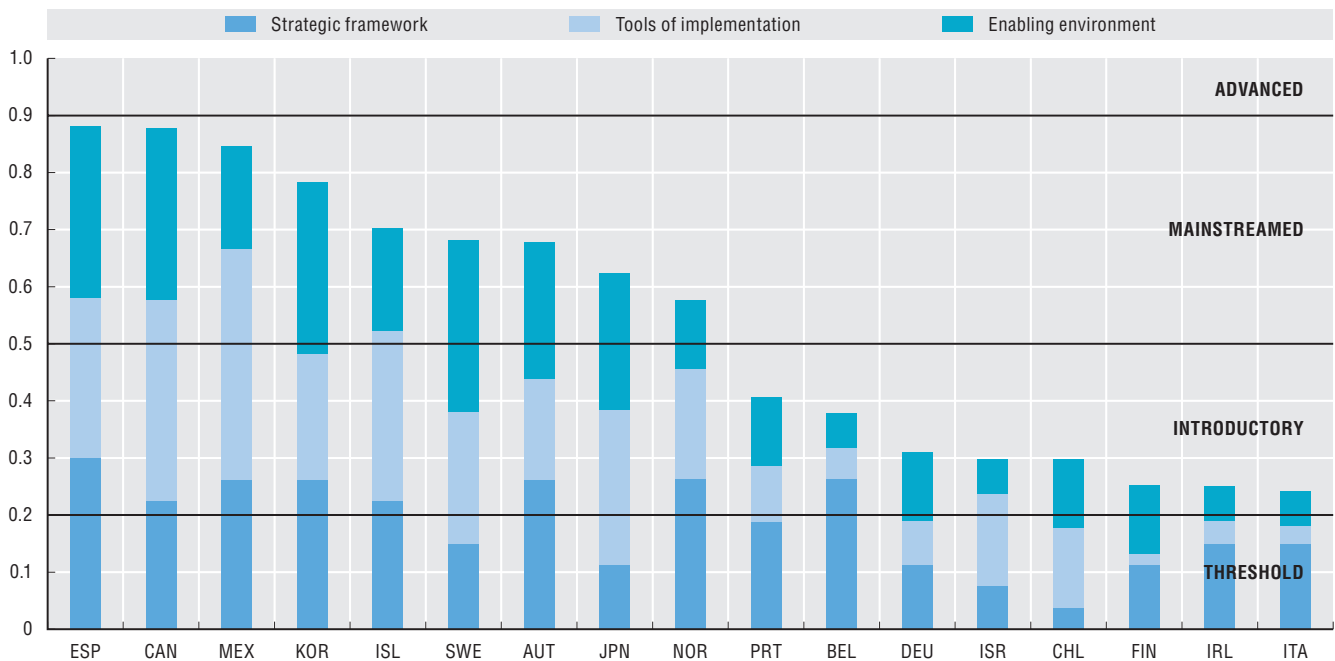
5.7. Existence of gender budgeting, 2018



Source: OECD (2018), OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey.

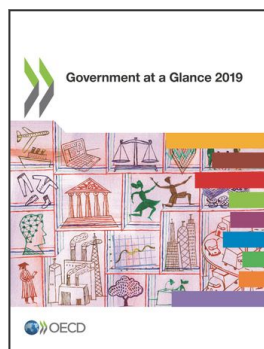
StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934032396>

5.8. First pass at a composite indicator on gender budgeting, 2018



Source: OECD (2018), OECD Budget Practices and Procedures Survey.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934031256>



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