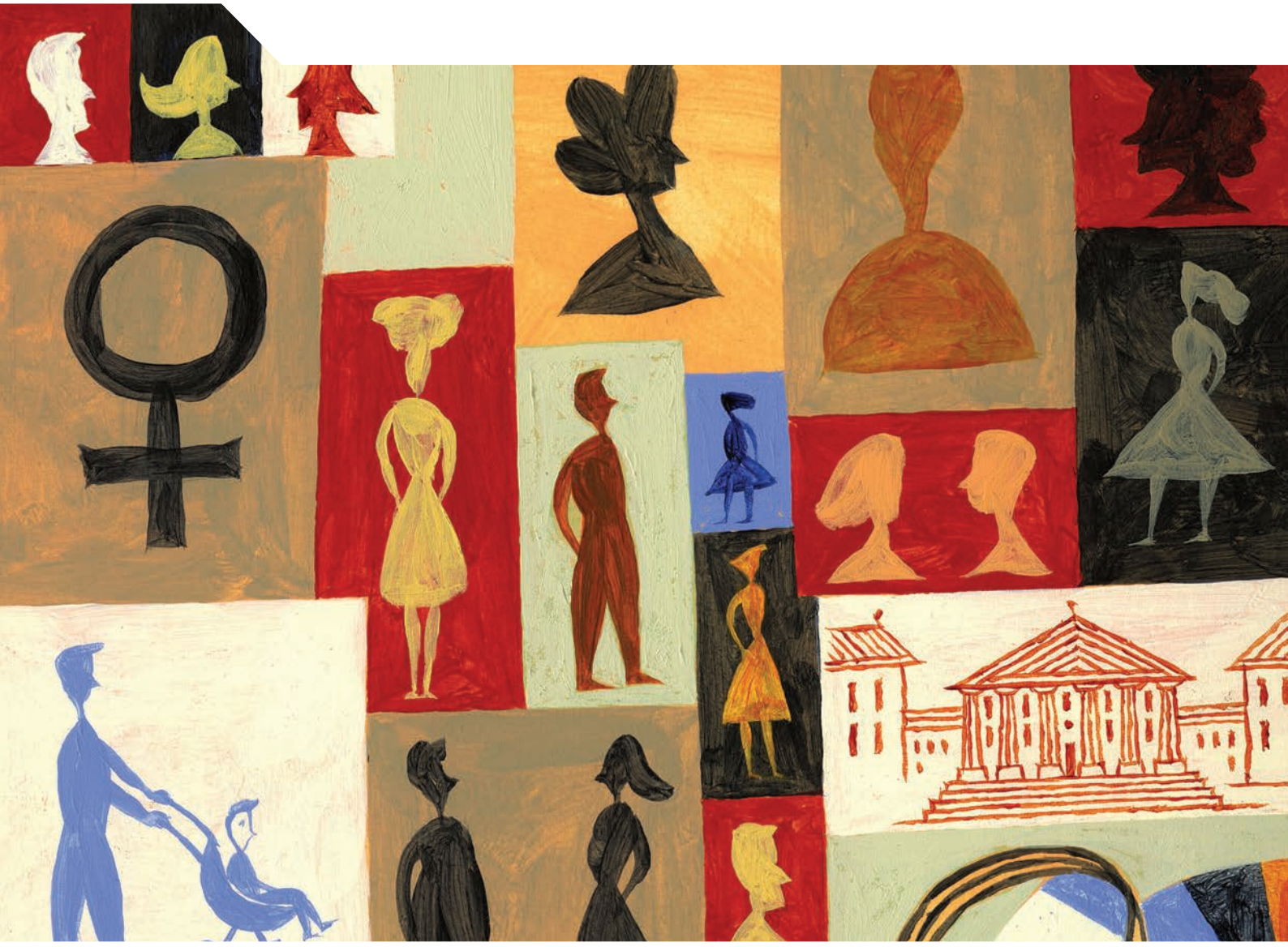
OECD Review of Gender Equality in Colombia



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Foreword

With its disproportionate impact on women and girls, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated structural gender inequalities in Colombia. Working in sectors hard hit by the crisis, Colombian women have been more vulnerable to job loss than men. Similarly, lockdown measures and school and childcare facility closures imposed an increased burden of unpaid work on women, while exposing them to a higher risk of domestic violence.

As it recovers from the COVID-19 crisis, Colombia can seize this opportunity to make progress in achieving gender equality goals and closing gender gaps. Addressing gender inequalities can strengthen the country's resilience to future shocks, promote more inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and help achieve broad societal goals, such as increasing levels of trust in institutions and strengthening democracy. At the time of the publication of this report, the government of Colombia just approved a law for the establishment of a Ministry for Equality and Equity, with the aim to reinforce the country's institutional framework and capacities for gender equality and mainstreaming. Going forward, it will be important to ensure that promoting gender equality remains a priority of the government's agenda, despite increased economic, environmental and geopolitical pressures.

Building on the progress that Colombia has recently made, this report proposes ways to strengthen policy and institutional frameworks and government capacities to promote gender equality at both the national and subnational levels. It assesses the policy and institutional frameworks for gender equality, including the systems in place to mainstream gender considerations into the policy- and decision-making cycles and to harness government tools (such as regulations, budgeting and public procurement) strategically. It also examines the country's institutional capacities for responding to crises in a gender-sensitive manner, with a view to integrating a gender perspective in Colombia's emergency management processes.

This report was prepared as part of a six-year co-operative project between the government of Colombia and the OECD to promote institutional efficiency and sound public governance in the country. It was developed at the request of Colombia to further support gender equality, based on previous work conducted within the project. The objectives of this project build directly on the recommendations developed in the in the context of the project in 2019 (in the OECD Public Governance Scan of Colombia) and in 2020 (in the OECD Report "Gender Equality in Colombia: Access to Justice and Politics at the Local Level") to enhance institutional efficiency and government effectiveness in gender equality. The work also promotes a recovery pathway from the COVID-19 crisis that facilitates the economic and social empowerment in Colombia of women from diverse backgrounds.

The project is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), in line with the agency's objectives to encourage democratic governance, strengthen environmental policy making, enhance peace and security through citizen participation, guarantee human rights, strengthen democracy, and increase the capacity to govern. The project builds on the OECD Gender Initiative, including the 2013 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship and the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life, as well as on the work advanced by the OECD Working Party on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance.

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The Report was overseen by Tatyana Teplova and co-ordinated by Pınar Güven (OECD Policy Analyst). Major drafting contributions were provided by Dilanthi Amaratunga (Chapter 6), Ana Valentina Aponte (Chapter 2), Jacobo Garcia Villarreal (Chapter 5), Kinkini Hemachandra (Chapter 6), Clara Patricia Martin (Chapter 2), Giulia Morando (Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5), Scherie Nicol (Chapter 5), and Alejandra Saffon (Chapter 3). Annex A was prepared by experts of the Colombian Observatory for Women (Ana Valentina Aponte and Clara Patricia Martin). Erika Bozzay, Kenza Khachani, and Ana Maria Ruiz Rivadeneira provided inputs and comments to Chapter 5. The OECD also thanks Nina Guibère, Sebla Ayşe Kazancı, and Erin Kelleher for their contributions. The authors also appreciate the suggestions and recommendations of experts of the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (Alessandro Goglio and Sarah Kups), the OECD Development Centre (Pierre De Boisséson, Alejandra Maria Meneses and Hyeshin Park) and the OECD Centre for Tax Policy and Administration (Michelle Harding). Victoria Elliott edited the manuscript. Editorial assistance and administrative support were provided by Melissa Sander.

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Executive Summary

In recent decades, Colombia has made considerable efforts to encourage gender equality as an important enabler of inclusive growth and national well-being and to promote gender mainstreaming through institutions, policies and tools. However, despite progress, persistent gender gaps still limit greater equality and stronger economic growth. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities, with differential effects on certain population groups, and economic and social impacts falling disproportionately on women and girls.

To address these gaps, in recent years Colombia has adopted a normative framework protecting women's rights, legislation enabling greater representation of women in public administration and in politics, and measures to combat gender-based violence. Colombia also became the first country in the world to formally acknowledge the economic contribution of unpaid care work with a specific law. In February 2022, the Constitutional Court decriminalised abortion up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. The country recently adopted a new national public policy on gender equality for women under CONPES (National Council on Economic and Social Policy) document 4080 of 2022, aiming to co-ordinate efforts across the whole of government and establishing a vision to guarantee women's equality and non-discrimination. A stand-alone section on women's rights was also included for the first time in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2022. Furthermore, recent institutional reforms include the establishment of the Legal Commission for Women's Equity in the Congress and the commitment to strengthen the Presidential Council for Women's Equality (CPEM). Aiming to further reinforce its institutional framework for gender equality, in January 2023 the government approved a law for the creation of a Ministry for Equality and Equity. At the subnational level, the government has promoted both the inclusion of gender provisions in Departmental and Local Development Plans as well as the creation of a secretariat (or at least a division, programme or liaison with the Office of the Presidential Counsellor for Women's Equality) in charge of gender issues in departments and municipalities across the country. Colombia has also taken steps to encourage the adoption of an intersectional approach in the production of data for gender-sensitive policy making.

Still, there is scope to further strengthen institutional capacities and capabilities to promote a more coherent and co-ordinated approach to gender mainstreaming in Colombia, encourage gender-sensitive policy making, and make the country more resilient to future shocks and crises. With the CPEM guiding the implementation of gender equality policy across the government, Colombia could enhance the integration of gender perspectives into policy making, promote a strategic use of government tools, and foster results-oriented strategic planning. As observed across OECD Member countries, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown light on long-standing and deeply rooted gender inequalities and the difficulties of integrating a gender perspective in emergency management processes. It has also highlighted the importance of gender equality and gender-sensitive policy making for an inclusive and sustainable recovery. Since it is facing growing economic, environmental and geopolitical pressure, closing existing gender gaps would also allow Colombia to achieve more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

This report assesses four key pillars of governance for gender equality, by analysing strengths and areas for further improvement:

- strategic planning for gender equality policy;
- a whole-of-government approach to promoting gender equality;
- use of public governance tools to achieve gender equality objectives; and
- an inclusive and gender-sensitive emergency preparedness framework.

In particular, the review highlights some areas where further efforts could underpin greater gender equality outcomes.

First, building on legal requirements and the vision set by the National Public Policy on Gender Equality, a standard approach to the implementation of gender mainstreaming could be further developed. Such an approach could clarify expectations for national and subnational governments in terms of integrating a gender perspective in ministerial and departmental strategic policy planning. In preparing any future gender equality-related policy, government institutions could identify a set of high-level and results-oriented goals as the frame of reference for policy action, prioritisation of resources and accountability. Developing a homogenous set of indicators to follow progress in closing gender gaps, as identified through high-level goals, could facilitate monitoring and evaluation of policy outcomes over time.

Second, consideration could be given to strengthening the capacities of the CPEM to lead the adoption of gender mainstreaming, as well as to provide expertise and support to line ministries and subnational entities for implementing the gender equality policy and developing sectoral and departmental strategies. In parallel, the mandate of the centre of government could be formalised to provide advice and challenge the public administration to incorporate gender considerations into the design of policies, programmes, initiatives and budgets. At the ministerial and subnational levels, to reinforce Colombia's whole-of-government institutional framework, there may be scope to strengthen and standardise the internal structure for gender mainstreaming and to enhance capacity, while improving horizontal and vertical co-ordination.

Third, the government could consider adopting a staged approach to promote the systematic use of gender impact assessments (GIAs), an underused tool in Colombia in absence of legal or policy requirements to implement it. To this effect, the collection, use and exchange of data disaggregated by gender and other characteristics should be increased. Similarly, a gradual approach could be followed to further develop gender budgeting by encouraging wider use of the budget tracer, Colombia's core gender budgeting tool, developing the methodology to identify policies that have a positive, negative, or neutral/unknown impact on women's equality, and taking mitigating budget allocation measures as needed. The existing regulatory and strategic framework on public procurement could be reviewed to amplify the mechanisms and tools used to incorporate gender considerations, and their implementation could be reinforced. Additional actions could also be taken to strengthen the institutional framework for gender-sensitive infrastructure to promote consistency and policy coherence across the whole of government.

Finally, legal provisions or measures could be introduced to incorporate gender sensitivity and inclusiveness within Colombia's disaster risk management (DRM) system. Using the existing legislative DRM set-up and commitments stemming from ratification of international frameworks on disaster risk reduction, the government could integrate gender considerations into DRM and continue raising awareness across public institutions, while making progress towards achieving its gender equality objectives.

1 Assessment and recommendations for improving gender equality in Colombia

This Chapter outlines the main findings of the OECD assessment and summarises key policy recommendations aimed at supporting ongoing efforts in Colombia to ensure gender-sensitive policy and decision making. OECD recommendations have been designed to support Colombia's government actors in leveraging the experience of other OECD Member countries and relevant OECD standards to achieve their strategic gender equality objectives and promote sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

1.1. Introduction

This report assesses four key pillars of Colombia's governance for gender equality, by analysing strengths and identifying areas for further improvement. It examines strategic planning for gender equality policy, a whole-of-government approach to promote the gender equality policy, using government tools to achieve gender equality objectives, and an inclusive and gender-sensitive emergency preparedness framework. Based on OECD standards, such as the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (OECD, 2016[1]), and on the experience of other OECD Member countries, this Chapter summarises key policy recommendations to support ongoing efforts in the country to ensure gender-sensitive policy and decision making through gender mainstreaming.

1.2. Improving strategic planning for the gender equality policy

The government of Colombia in recent years has made efforts to anchor a medium-term, whole-of-government vision for gender equality in key strategic documents and to raise awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming across the public administration at both national and subnational levels. Sound legal requirements mandate that the national government adopt gender criteria in policies, decisions and actions and to ensure that governmental institutions have adequate instruments to implement them. The renewed National Public Policy on Gender Equality sets a vision and medium-term general objectives for gender equality in Colombia that are aligned with the policy lines expressed in the cross-cutting chapter on Women's Equality included in the National Development Plan 2018-2022. However, scope remains for promoting a standard approach to the implementation of gender mainstreaming, and challenges arise in translating whole-of-government objectives into ministerial and departmental strategic plans that risk limiting progress on gender equality on the ground. Gaps also remain in monitoring and evaluating policy outcomes over time. To improve its strategic planning for gender equality, the government of Colombia could:

- With the support of the National Planning Department (DNP) and the CPEM, develop protocols/processes, standard methodologies and guidance for the law-making, regulatory and policy cycle. Such guidance would clarify the expectations for the national and subnational governments on adopting gender mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve national gender equality objectives and to encourage analysis of all public policies from a gender perspective.
- Ensure adequate mandates and capacities for the stakeholders (DNP, line ministries and subnational governments) tasked with monitoring whole-of-government compliance with Law 823 of 2003, mandate the adoption of gender criteria in policies, decisions and actions and ensure that the institutions responsible have adequate instruments to implement them.
- Identify high-level and result-oriented goals to guide the development of future policies on gender equality. Outline clear objectives and targets in relation to those high-level priorities and clarify roles, responsibilities, resources and lines of accountability.
- Establish requirements for line ministries to develop gender mainstreaming action plans and to regularly report on progress. Scale up the Ministry of Energy's good practice in conducting sectoral studies to build ministerial plans with a gender focus.
- Enhance the use of statistical data in designing, planning, implementing and delivering public policies and services, including in areas not explicitly linked to gender equality.
- Develop a homogeneous set of indicators across government institutions to monitor and evaluate progress in closing gender gaps, as identified through high-level goals.
- Encourage co-ordination between central, departmental and municipal levels of government on strategic planning. Assess the use of information portals to determine the demand from central entities and their use in strategic planning and decision making at the local level.

- Support departmental governments in the planning process through capacity building and knowledge sharing.
- Increase the resources of the CPEM to work on a strategy to follow up the implementation and impact of gender policies at the subnational level.

1.3. Reinforcing the whole-of-government approach to promote gender equality policy

The Centre of Government (Presidency and Vice-Presidency; National Planning Department, NDP; Ministry of Finance; Administrative Department of the Public Service, DAFP) plays a foundational role in the promotion of the gender equality policy, with the DNP tasked with helping to incorporate a gender approach in sectoral policies, plans and programmes. The CPEM, as the main central governing body for the gender equality policy, has advisory and consultative functions. Still, there is room to reinforce Colombia's whole-of-government institutional framework and capacities to promote gender equality and to seize opportunities to improve implementation of related objectives. At the ministerial level, there is scope to strengthen and standardise the internal structure for gender mainstreaming and to enhance capacity. Similarly, at the subnational level, it could be beneficial to promote standard institutional set-ups and reinforce the organisational structures and capacities provided for gender equality objectives. Whole-of-government co-ordination could also be enhanced, to create synergies and policy coherence and improve information sharing. Moving forward, the government of Colombia could consider the following recommendations:

- Strengthen the capacities of the CPEM to a) promote the gender equality agenda and lead implementation of gender mainstreaming in public administration both at the national and subnational level, in co-ordination with other CoG bodies; b) provide expertise and support to line ministries and subnational entities, in co-ordination with the DNP, for implementation of the gender equality policy and the integration of the gender perspective into sectoral plans and strategies. At the time of the publication of this report, the government of Colombia approved a law for the creation of a Ministry of Equality and Equity, with the aim to reinforce the country's institutional architecture and capacities for gender equality and mainstreaming in the medium term.
- Formalise the mandate of the Centre of Government (especially the National Planning Department and the Ministry of Finance), in close co-ordination with the CPEM, to provide advice and challenge the public administration to incorporate gender considerations into the design of policies, programmes, initiatives and budgets as appropriate.
- Further clarify the expectations for line ministries, departmental governments and municipalities in applying gender mainstreaming. On this basis, adopt the most appropriate institutional set-up (e.g., gender units, champions or task forces) accompanied by adequate capacity to allow for the integration of gender perspectives in sectoral and local policies and programmes.
- Strengthen horizontal and vertical co-ordination mechanisms and help to operationalise them by assigning a steering role to the CPEM that, with adequate resources, could co-ordinate, guide and monitor the implementation of gender equality activities and measures.
- Continue raising awareness and developing gender competence and skills in staff of line ministries with the support of the DAFP and in close co-operation with the CPEM and the other CoG institutions.

1.4. Leveraging government tools to achieve gender equality objectives

Operational tools to promote gender equality, *ex ante* and/or *ex post* gender impact assessments (GIAs) are rarely undertaken in Colombia, since there is no legal or policy requirement to implement them. Nevertheless, various mechanisms exist for consulting citizens in the early stages of policy making, and line ministries are formally required to consult with stakeholders in the preparation of regulations. Legal foundations and institutional arrangements underpin the operationalisation of gender budgeting and provide a strong basis for ensuring its sustainability in the long term. The budget tracer is the core gender budgeting tool for activities that support women's equality. Scope remains, however, to implement it more systematically in different sectors and levels of government, and its information, although it improves transparency around the amount of money invested for women's equality, does not influence decisions on resource allocation to progress on gender-related objectives. Colombia also employs some basic measures to encourage gender-sensitive public procurement. Still, the existing regulatory and strategic framework on public procurement could be reviewed to amplify the mechanisms and tools used to incorporate gender considerations, and their implementation could be reinforced. More efforts could also be made to strengthen the institutional framework for gender-sensitive infrastructure to promote consistency and policy coherence across the whole-of-government. In general, the absence of data and evidence, the lack of co-ordination, and the limited accuracy of existing data are the main challenges to the strategic use of all government tools for gender-related purposes. To address these gaps, the government of Colombia could:

- Adopt a staged approach to promote the systematic use of GIAs, including: 1) engaging communities and gender experts in public consultations, developing sector-specific needs assessment and analysis in line ministries, identifying major laws with potential for high impact on gender equality, and the planning of audits of data sources and publications; 2) developing a guiding framework for GIA implementation; 3) introducing a binding legal requirement to conduct GIAs for all policies, programmes and regulations.
- Promote the collection and dissemination of data disaggregated by gender and other characteristics on a systematic basis and enhance their use in designing, planning, implementing and delivering gender-related public policies and services. Improve the exchange of data between national entities and promote characterisation by gender of statistical exercises.
- Invest in cross-cutting training to improve the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data across the government. Set up systems to facilitate the conversion of administrative records in statistical records.
- Adopt a staged approach to further developing gender budgeting, including by: 1) encouraging wider use of the budget tracer, reinforcing institutional capacity, supporting selection of gender performance indicators and increasing the availability of gender-disaggregated data; and 2) developing the methodology for the budget tracer to help identify policies that have a positive, negative, or neutral/unknown impact on women's equality, introducing programme budgeting and creating an inter-agency group to ensure regular co-ordination.
- Strengthen leadership commitment to promote gender-sensitive public procurement.
- Expand the scope of the regulatory and strategic framework for gender-inclusive public procurement, beyond simply encouraging suppliers to add women to their staff.
- Facilitate use of tools and mechanisms to incorporate gender considerations in public procurement through stakeholder engagement and support activities.
- Monitor the impact of recent reforms and support gender-responsive infrastructure. Adopt formal methodologies to integrate gender considerations in infrastructure project planning and appraisal.
- Enhance the use of data to increase awareness of and promote political consensus on the benefits of gender-responsive infrastructure. Anticipate data needed to evaluate the progress of

implementation. Develop strategies to ensure that data can be reused for planning and investment decision making. Promote whole-of-government co-operation.

1.5. Building an inclusive and gender-sensitive emergency preparedness framework

Colombia has worked in recent years on developing a national disaster risk management (DRM) structure to improve the country's resilience to disasters and interconnected risks. The national government has introduced programmes to strengthen the role of women in DRM, but legal provisions or measures could be introduced to support an inclusive, gender-sensitive DRM system. Leveraging the existing legislative DRM set-up and commitments stemming from ratification of international frameworks on disaster risk reduction, Colombia could integrate gender considerations into DRM, while making progress towards achieving its gender equality objectives. The following recommendations might be considered:

- Strengthen the mechanisms for monitoring enforcement of existing legal provisions on gender-sensitive disaster risk management (DRM), including laws on DRM and global frameworks on inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM.
- Make changes to existing DRM legislation as appropriate, to make it more inclusive and gender-sensitive.
- Raise awareness of the importance of adopting an inclusive, gender-sensitive DRM across the whole of government, as well as in NGOs, civil society and local communities.
- Continue mainstreaming gender considerations in the work of both national and subnational entities, acknowledging the importance of gender equality as a multi-dimensional and cross-cutting policy issue.
- Increase women's empowerment through capacity-building activities, such as special training on DRM for women and women-led organisations in local communities, encouraging them to participate in all stages of the DRM cycle.
- Explore mechanisms to ensure stable financial support for DRM, especially at the local level, and channel resources to departments and municipalities that report funding limitations, to help them strengthen their DRM systems and integrate a gender equality perspective.

References

OECD (2016), *2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264252820-en. [1]

2 Gender equality in Colombia: A snapshot of gaps and opportunities

This Chapter gives a brief overview of the status of gender equality in Colombia. In recent years, the country has registered significant progress towards gender equality, but wide gaps and imbalances persist between women and men. The Chapter aims to shed light on current gender inequalities in educational and labour outcomes, while illustrating differences in the distribution of unpaid and care work between Colombian women and men, as well as the persistence of gender-based violence in the country. In this context, the Chapter discusses the importance of gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive decision making as a government strategy to help narrow remaining gaps between women and men.

2.1. Closing gender gaps by gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive policy making can promote sustainable, inclusive economic growth

2.1.1. Gender-sensitive policy making can assist recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and achieve better outcomes for all

In recent years, Colombia has undertaken actions to address existing gender inequalities. As shown by the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) (OECD, 2019[1]), the country has very low levels of discrimination against women in social institutions: women have the same legal rights as men to own, use and make decisions over their land and non-land assets, as well as to be head of household, inherit, enter marriage, initiate and finalise divorce, and acquire, change and confer their nationality (OECD, 2019[2]). As for its legislative frameworks, Colombia has enacted a number of laws addressing women's economic empowerment, their inclusion in the labour market, their political participation, public management with a gender equity approach (UN Women, 2018[3]), as well as their reproductive rights (Republic of Colombia, Constitutional Court, 2022[4]). As shown in Chapter 3, Colombia has also recently reinforced its public policy framework for gender equality, by adopting a new national public policy on gender equality for women (CONPES[1] document 4080 of 2022). A stand-alone section on women's rights was also included in the National Development Plan 2018-2022.

However, despite progress on the policy side, persistent gender gaps still limit equality and economic growth. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities in the country, with differential effects on certain demographic groups, the economic and social impact falling disproportionately upon women and girls (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]). As in many OECD countries, these gaps continue to prevent women of diverse backgrounds from fully participating in economic, public and political life – a prerequisite for stronger and vibrant democracies, increased levels of trust in public institutions (OECD, forthcoming[6]) and sustainable and inclusive recovery.

As it bounces back from the COVID-19 crisis, Colombia can seize this window of opportunity for progressing towards gender equality goals and closing existing gaps. Gender mainstreaming, as a strategy for integrating a gender lens in policy making, can help governments make better decisions to drive gender equality objectives forward (OECD, 2021[7]). Promoting a co-ordinated and strong whole-of-government commitment, with clear, effective mechanisms for translating policies, programmes, services and budgets into concrete benefits for all women and men, has the potential to address specific issues more effectively. These include women's leadership in public decision making, gender-based violence and sector-specific barriers to gender equality, at the same time promoting inclusive growth and stronger democracies. However, growing economic, environmental and geopolitical pressures increase the likelihood that gender equality may become less of a priority on the government's political agenda, and risks increasing gender gaps. In this challenging context, it is important to continue to promote gender equality to deliver sustainable and better outcomes for all.

2.1.2. A positive relationship has been noted between gender equality and economic growth

The economic literature has sought to explain the major determinants of economic growth and development, and their interactions. Some innovative models have emerged, incorporating gender equality and helping to explain uneven economic growth on the basis of gaps in access to the labour market, education, health, and political participation, among other things. Various indicators can be used to measure gender (in)equality in different policy areas. For example, labour force participation gap, women's share of the labour force, and wage gap can be considered to capture gender inequality in employment. Likewise, gender gaps in school and university enrolment, educational attainment and student performance can help measure disparities in education. Women's participation in politics can instead be

assessed by analysing, for instance, the share of women in national parliaments and in ministerial positions, as well as the percentage of women candidates running for elected offices.

Some studies have found a positive relationship between economic growth and gender equality, as measured by a comprehensive index developed using the methodology of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap (Tena, 2009[8]).

Other studies have focused on specific variables related to the labour market, to assess the impact of gender gaps on per capita output (Volart, 2004[9]). Some analyses of Latin American countries have assessed the relationship between economic growth and gender shifts in the labour force, measured as the participation of women in the labour market. The results suggest that women's greater participation in the labour force and greater income-generating opportunities for women have a positive effect on aggregate demand, investment and growth (Vásconez Rodríguez, 2017[10]). Similarly, emerging evidence shows that increased gender equality in the workforce can have strong positive effects on GDP growth and bring productivity gains (Nicol, 2022[11]).

Other research has focused on educational inequalities, which lead to wage gaps that inhibit economic growth. Better-educated women can participate to higher-value economic activities (Lee, 2010[12]). Some studies have shown that education helps reduce the gender wage gap, by generating greater increases in women's pay and by exerting a positive effect on economic growth (Khan et al., 2016[13]). Other studies have found that gender gaps in education have a direct effect on countries' economic growth, as expressed in investment, labour force and population growth (Klasen and Lamanna, 2009[14]).

Some research has focused on the long-term impact of various policies to reduce gender inequality and their effect on economic growth, showing how progress in gender equality may depend on externalities that infrastructure creates by restricting women's allocation of time and bargaining power and having a substantial impact on long-term growth, as well as on educational and health outcomes (Agénor and Canuto, 2012[15]).

Other studies have found that a higher proportion of women enrolled in primary schools, an increase in women's life expectancy at birth, greater participation of women in the service sector and more female representation in the national parliament can generate an increase in economic growth (Mishra, Mishra and Sarangi, 2020[16]).

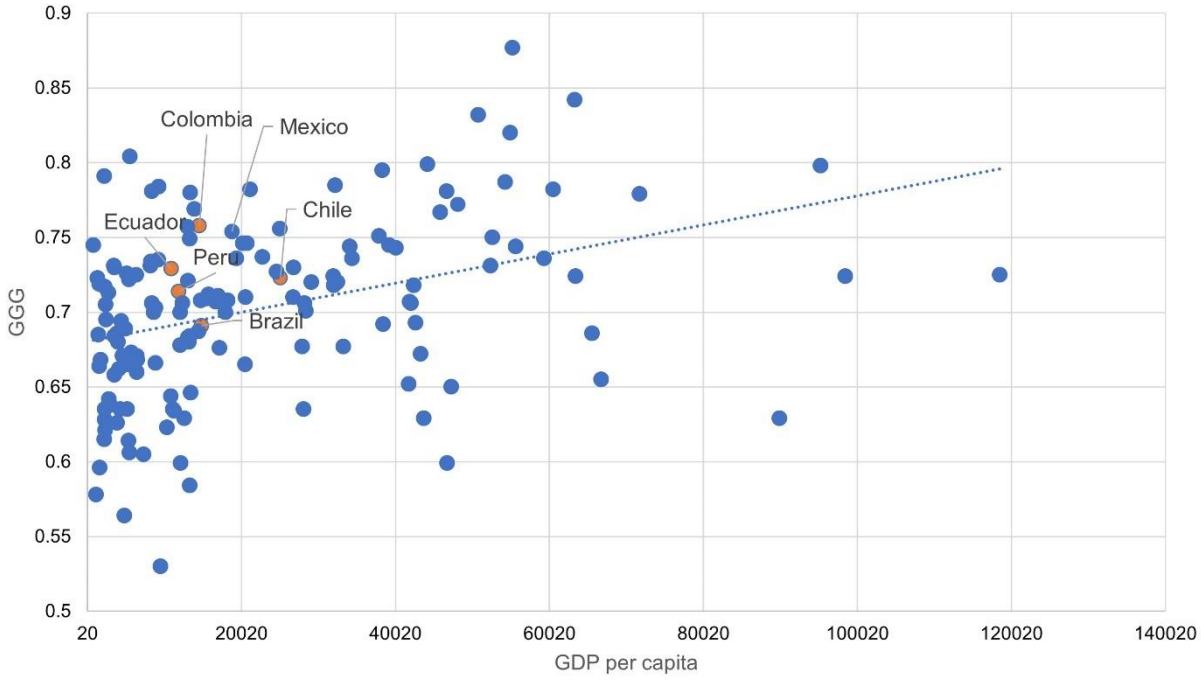
Finally, other research on the topic has shown that industries with higher female representation grow faster in countries that are more gender equal, suggesting that policies designed to ensure a level playing field for women are not only a matter of human rights, equity and social justice, but also increase economic growth (Bertay, 2020[17]).

2.1.3. Gender indicators show a positive correlation with GDP per capita

Inclusive societies that ensure greater equality in all demographic groups on average show better economic performance. When inclusion and equality are pursued and guaranteed, and prosperity is more equally distributed, citizens actively participate in generating value and knowledge, and economies grow faster (McKinsey, 2021[18]).

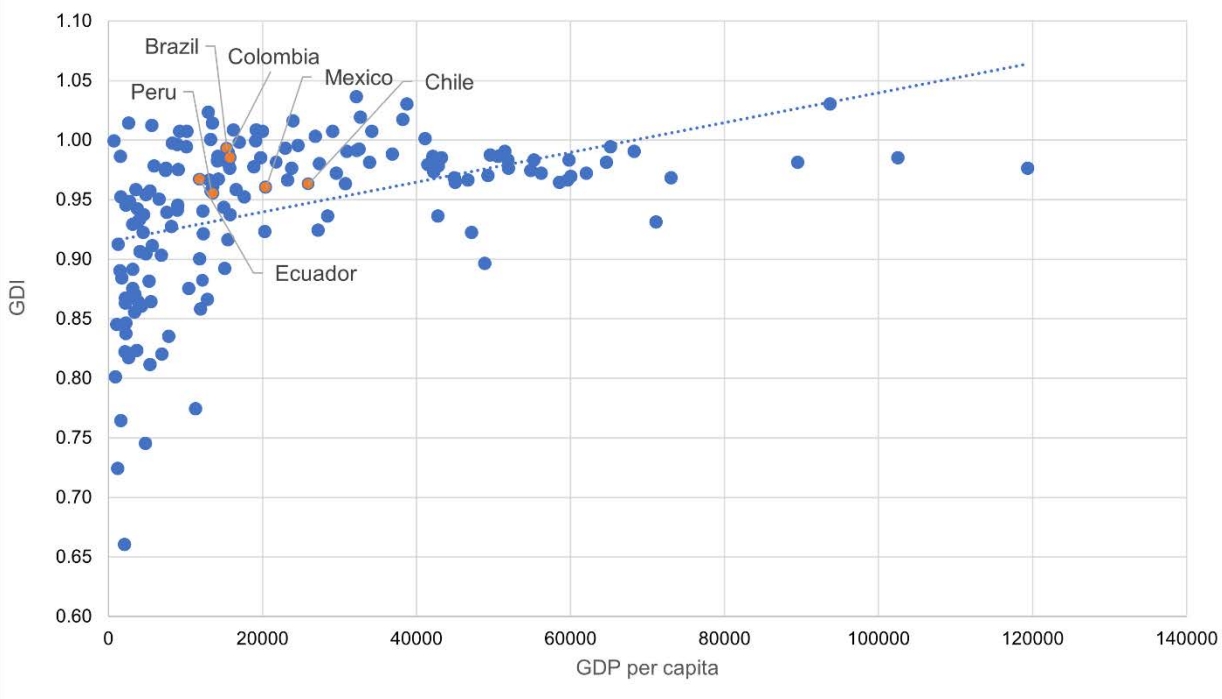
International indicators such as the Global Gender Gap Index (Figure 2.1) and the Gender Development Index) show that countries with higher GDP per capita also tend to have smaller gender gaps. Conversely, a negative relationship between the Gender Inequality Index and the GDP per capita is noted since countries with higher scores in this indicator register greater gender inequalities (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.1. Relation between GDP per capita and Global Gender Gap Index (GGG)



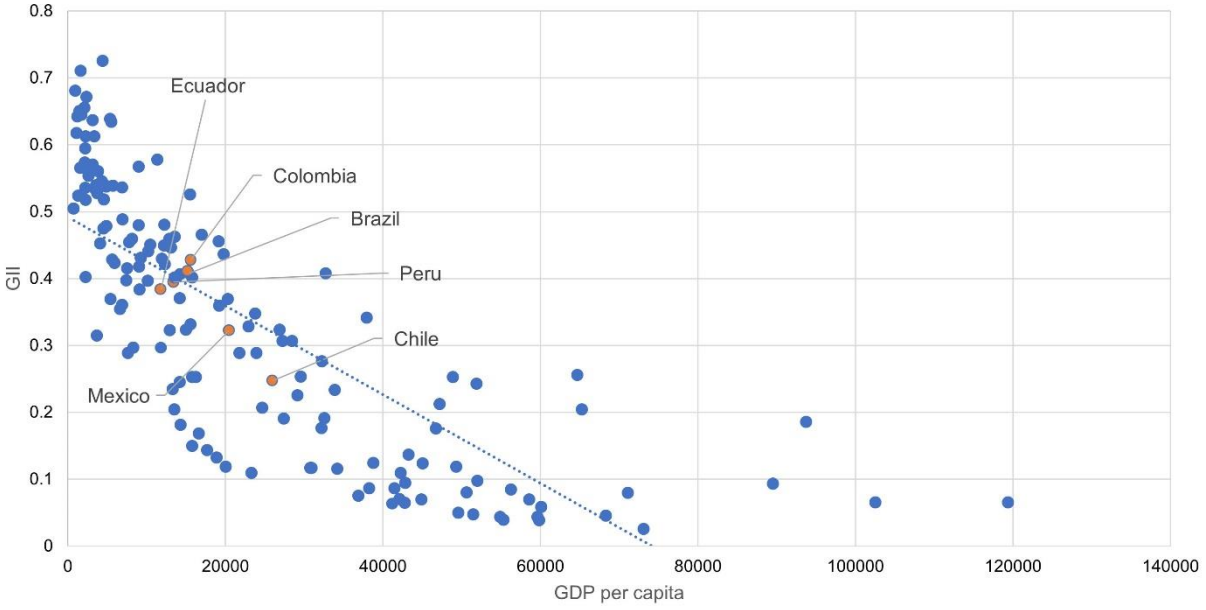
Source: Research based on data from the (World Economic Forum, 2020[19]); https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality/ (UNDP, 2020[20]); https://www.undp.org/ and (World Bank, 2020[21]); https://data.worldbank.org/.

Figure 2.2. Relation between GDP per capita and Gender Development Index (GDI)



Source: Research based on data from the (World Economic Forum, 2020[19]); https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality/ (UNDP, 2020[20]); https://www.undp.org/ and (World Bank, 2020[21]); https://data.worldbank.org/.

Figure 2.3. Relation between GDP per capita and Gender Inequality Index (GII)



Source: Research based on data from the (World Economic Forum, 2020[19]); https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality/ (UNDP, 2020[20]); https://www.undp.org/ and (World Bank, 2020[21]); https://data.worldbank.org/.

2.2. Demographics

According to the most recent national census, *Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda*, in 2018, Colombia recorded a total population of 44.2 million people, with women accounting for 51.2% of this figure and almost one-quarter (23.8%) of the country's inhabitants living in rural areas. Colombia has a high degree of ethnic diversity. While 88.8% of its population does not self-identify as belonging to an ethnic group, about 90 Indigenous populations coexist in the country: 6.8% of African descent, 4.4% Indigenous, in addition to a certain number of others who are Raizal, Palenquero or Roma (ONU Mujeres, DANE and Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2020[22]).

A key demographic trend that emerges from available data in Colombia is the increase in women's life expectancy. In the last 14 years, life expectancy has risen steadily, by more than three years for both men and women, with women living on average seven years longer. Among Latin American countries, the estimated life expectancy of Colombian women (80.0 years) is exceeded only by Chile's (82.4 years).

As a consequence, women currently make up 55.5% of the total Colombian population of age 65 and above (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]). In addition, estimates suggest that in 2050, women of 65 and older may even account for 22.8% of the total population, compared to 5% today (ONU Mujeres, DANE and Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2020[22]).

People living in rural areas tend to be concentrated in the younger age groups, with those under 20 accounting for 37.2% of women and 36.9% of men (DANE, 2021[23]). The rural population is also ageing, however, given the increase in rural-urban migration and the reduction in the birth rate. This translates into a predominantly female population in urban centres, with men remaining in rural areas to work mainly in the primary sector (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, 2019[24]).

Overall, fertility rates in Colombia dropped significantly between 1965 and 1990, from 6.5 to 3.2 children per woman on average. Since then, they have continued to decline, but at a slower pace, to 1.9 births per woman in 2020. Fertility rates have fallen in all age groups, but the reduction has been relatively smaller

for mothers of 15 to 19 years old, dropping from 85 to 75 births for every 1 000 adolescents between 2000 and 2015. Still among OECD countries in 2020, Colombia registered the highest adolescent fertility rate, with 63 births for every 1 000 mothers of 15 to 19, compared to 21 births on average in the OECD area (World Bank, 2022[25]). Fertility rates also vary widely between departments, with women in rural areas having more children on average than those in urban centres. For example, in 2018 in Vaupés, women had 5.2 births on average, compared to only 1.5 in the capital district of Bogotá (ONU Mujeres, DANE and Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2020[22]).

One factor affecting women in Colombia has been its 60-year internal armed conflict (OECD, 2020[26]), whose impact was felt most by rural populations (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]). The conflict has resulted in more than 250 000 deaths, mostly among civilians, and forced displacements, with women and girls accounting for 51% of the total (World Bank, 2020[27]).

2.3. Women's access to education

In Colombia, enrolment rates in primary education are comparable, at 93% for both girls and boys, but drop sharply thereafter (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]). As in other OECD countries, girls represent the majority (52.3%) of the students graduating from upper secondary general programmes. However, in a departure from other countries in the OECD, girls (54.6%) are more likely than boys to pursue a vocational track at the upper secondary level in Colombia (OECD, 2021[28]).

In line with the patterns across the OECD, more women than men attain tertiary degrees in Colombia. In 2021, 34.5% of women between the ages of 25 to 34 achieved a tertiary qualification, compared to 26.5% of men in the same age group (OECD, 2022[29]). Still, tertiary attainment shows significant regional disparities, with the region of Nariño counting only 15% of tertiary graduates among adults of 25 to 64, compared to 35% in the capital district of Bogotá in 2020 (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]).

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that among the countries and economies represented, Colombia has one of the largest gender gaps in mathematics and science performance, favouring boys (OECD, 2019[30]). Using academic proficiency as a key predictor of educational and professional choices, PISA findings suggest that fewer girls than boys in Colombia would consider a career in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields. The dearth of women in STEM is an urgent problem worldwide, with deep-rooted causes in gender-related career expectations for boys and girls, and in entrenched stereotypes perpetuated and transmitted by families, schools and society as a whole (OECD, 2018[31]). Gender stereotypes strongly influence the way children shape their identities and imagine their educational and professional paths (Brussino and McBrien, 2022[32]). In Colombia, social and cultural norms, as well as biases in parents' attitudes and expectations, appear to play a key role in associating scientific careers with men rather than with women (ONU Mujeres, DANE and Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2020[22]). Women in Colombia now represent 31% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes and 20% in information and communication technologies, figures that are better than or in line with the OECD average (OECD, 2021[28]).

2.4. Women in the labour market

Colombia's labour force has low female participation rates, with around half of all women of working age (15 to 64) in employment in 2020. This figure is significantly lower than for men (8 out of 10), leaving an employment gender gap of close to 25 percentage points (p.p.), exceeding the OECD average by almost 10 p.p. (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]).

Between 2015 and 2021, women were over-represented in certain sectors, accounting for a majority of people employed in: accommodation and food services (68.4%); arts, entertainment and recreation (67.6%); public administration and defence (62.2%); professional, scientific and technical activities (56%); and financial and insurance activities (55.6%) (DANE, 2020[33]). Similarly, in the same period, more than 75% of total female employment was concentrated in five sectors: trade and vehicle repair (21.7%); public administration and defence, education and human health care (16.9%); arts, entertainment and recreation (14.6%); accommodation and food services (12%); and manufacturing (11.6%). Women held a significant proportion of the jobs most affected by social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sector suffering the greatest contraction was trade and vehicle repair, with a loss of more than 474 000 jobs and women accounting for 56.2% of that total. The arts, entertainment and recreation sector registered nearly 390 000 fewer people employed, of which 81.8% were women. The drop in employment in the manufacturing industry was also significant, with 315 000 fewer people employed – 70.4% of whom were women (DANE, 2020[33]).

In October 2020, acknowledging the importance of involving women in economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, the national government issued a Presidential Directive (No. 11) committing to generating employment for women in sectors such as clean and sustainable growth projects, as well as to including vulnerable women in social programmes and reinforcing income and entrepreneurship among rural women (Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2020[34]). Box 2.1 provides a brief overview of gender-sensitive measures adopted by the national government to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Box 2.1. Gender-sensitive measures as part of 2020 Colombia's Reactivation Plan

In 2020, a strategy called "Colombia is reactivated with women" (*Colombia se reactiva con las mujeres*) was adopted as part of Colombia's Reactivation Plan framework. It includes two axes, focused on mitigation and on economic reactivation, the first aimed to protect the most vulnerable groups of women and encourage equality, and the second focusing on entrepreneurship as a mechanism for generating formal and quality jobs.

The Solidarity Income (*Ingreso Solidario*) programme was created as part of the mitigation axis, for households living in poverty and financial vulnerability. It provided monthly cash transfers in Colombian pesos of COP 160 000 (approximately USD 42.7) to vulnerable households, prioritising single mothers and rural women. During the pandemic, the government also augmented existing cash transfer programmes, such as "Families in Action" (*Familias en Acción*), "Youth in Action" (*Jóvenes en Acción*), and "Senior Colombia" (*Colombia Mayor*). The national housing policy also prioritised women in conditions of vulnerability, with four main programmes promoted by the Ministry of Housing, "Decent House" (*Casa digna*), "Decent Life" (*Vida digna*), "Owners' hotbed" (*Semillero de propietarios*) and "My House Now" (*Mi casa ya*). Meanwhile, a Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development housing programme for rural women allocated subsidies for building new homes or improving existing homes. Moreover, to deal with the pandemic, the national government created the Formal Employment Support Programme (*Programa de Apoyo al Empleo Formal*, PAEF), which subsidises 40% of men's wages and an additional 10% of women's wages. The government reported that thanks to this measure, more than 1.7 million women were able to keep their jobs.

As part of the economic reactivation axis, Colombia passed the Entrepreneurship Act (Law 2069 of 2020), with targeted actions to promote women's entrepreneurship. These included the establishment of the Women Entrepreneurs Fund *(Fondo Mujer Emprende)*, an initiative to promote, finance and support entrepreneurship by women, both through training and through strengthening their businesses. The fund is managed by iNNpulsa, Colombia's government agency in charge of entrepreneurship and innovation policy, with an initial allocation of COP 20 billion (~USD 5.3 billion). In 2021, it launched the first call for proposals under a programme called "Núcleo E – Mujer" to grant non-reimbursable co-

financing resources to empower women financially in rural areas. In addition, the Entrepreneurship Act introduced measures to encourage the participation of enterprises led by women in Colombia's public procurement system. In partnership with the private sector, the Office of the Vice President also launched an initiative, Entrepreneurial Women's Route (*Ruta de la Mujer Emprendedora*), to accelerate growth among women-owned businesses by providing business advice and training. In 2021, this was piloted in Bogotá and Cartagena, with plans to extend its operation to the rest of the country with help from the Chambers of Commerce and the Confederation of Chambers of Commerce (Confecámaras).

Source: (DAPRE, 2021[35]; iNNpulsa, 2021[36]; Vicepresidencia de la República, 2021[37])

The existing socioeconomic and regional differences in educational attainment illustrated in the previous Section translate into similar gaps in labour participation (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]). Employment rates are lower among individuals from disadvantaged households and those living in rural areas. Likewise, the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were especially severe for Colombian women with lower levels of education (CPEM, 2020[38]).

As is typical in both Latin America and in OECD countries, around 40% of women who are employed work part-time, compared to 10% of men (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]). Despite the efforts to reduce female informal employment in major cities, this phenomenon still represents a challenge for the Colombian labour market. Between 2007 and 2021, the share of women employed in the informal economy was always higher than that of men. As data from the Large Integrated Household Survey (*Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares*, GEIH) shows, from March through May 2022, 44.7% of all women and men who made up the labour force in the country's 23 main cities and metropolitan areas were employed as informal workers (DANE, 2022[39]). Regional differences also exist, with the share of informal workers higher in Sincelejo (66.1%) and Cúcuta A.M. (65.2%) and lower in the capital district of Bogotá (34.3%) in the same trimester.

Finally, as of 2020, women also owned fewer micro-businesses than men (36.3%), 27.5 p.p. less than their male peers (63.7%) (DANE, 2021[40]).

2.5. Women and the care economy

As elsewhere in the world, women are responsible for a large share of domestic and care activities in Colombia. This means that they cannot contribute as much to the economy as men, given the restrictions on their time that prevent them from pursuing education or working (ONU Mujeres, DANE and Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2020[22]).

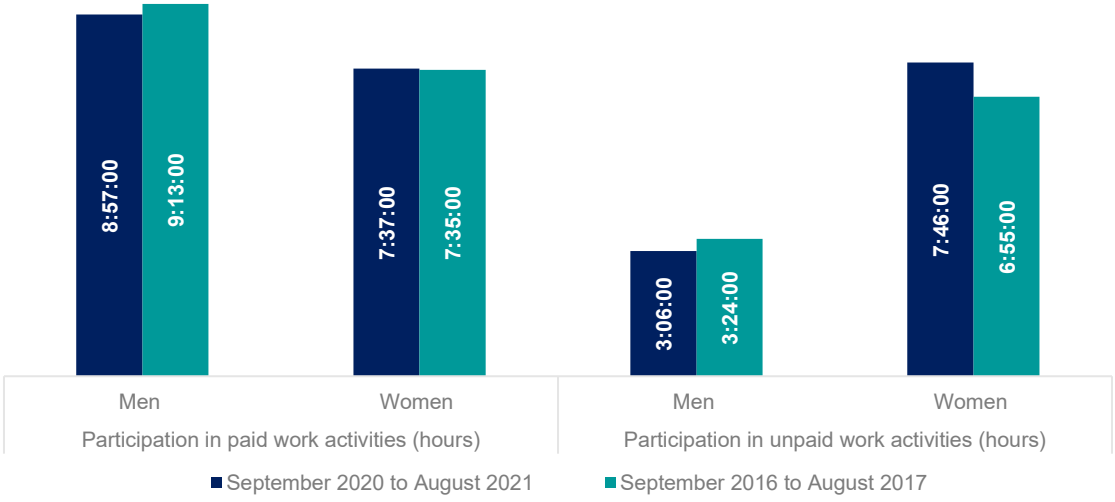
Colombian women spend 22 more hours per week than men on unpaid care and housework, significantly more than the OECD average of 15 hours (OECD, 2023, forthcoming[5]). This still the case even though Colombia was the first country in the world to formally acknowledge the economic contribution of unpaid care (OECD, 2017[41]). The historical invisibility of unpaid domestic and care work is closely linked to the fact that it has long been considered a natural extension of the role of women in society, shaped by social norms, gender beliefs (Ferrant, 2014[42]), customary practices, and traditional attitudes and stereotypes (OECD, 2020[43]). Recognising this problem, Colombia has made progress in recent years in measuring unpaid domestic and care tasks, both in terms of pay and of time spent, through the Care Economy Satellite Account (*Cuenta Satélite de Economía del Cuidado*), which the DANE has prepared since 2012.

When it was last measured, in 2017, unpaid domestic and care work made an important contribution to the economy. Estimates suggest that such activities exceeded COP 332.5 billion (~USD 112.7 billion) in 2017, a 20.6% share of the economy's total production that year. This was double the production of the construction sector and exceeded that of the public administration, defence, education and health sectors, as well as the production of wholesale and retail trade that year.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, from September 2020 to August 2021, the participation of men and women in housework increased, thanks to lockdown measures and restrictions on mobility that forced many people to spend most of their time at home. According to the 2021 National Survey of Time Use (*Encuesta Nacional de Uso del Tiempo*) produced by the DANE, 90.4% of women participated in unpaid activities of this type, as compared with only 63.4% of men. The time women dedicated to unpaid activities during this period increased by almost one hour more than between September 2016 and August 2017. Additionally, women spent 4 hours and 40 minutes more on unpaid care each day than men. Meanwhile, men spent 1 hour 20 minutes more than women on paid work. In this respect, the participation of women was lower than that of men, and also lower than in the same period between 2016 and 2017, which exacerbated problems of economic dependence and reduction of income. While 35% of women participated in paid work, the percentage of men engaging in these activities was 53.3% (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4. Colombian women spent more time on unpaid activities during the COVID-19 pandemic

Average paid and unpaid work per day, by gender



Source: Based on data from (DANE, 2020[44]), Encuesta Nacional de Uso del Tiempo (ENUT), https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/pobreza-y-condiciones-de-vida/encuesta-nacional-del-uso-del-tiempo-enut#:~:text=En%202020%2D2021%2C%20a%20nivel,horas%206%20minutos%20en%20promedio.

2.6. Gender-based violence in Colombia

Gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls is an urgent global issue. Worldwide, nearly one-third of women have experienced intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence, or both, in their lifetime (WHO, 2021[45]). This problem is widespread in all regions of the world, including the most economically developed.

In recent years, Colombia has passed a series of laws to address gender-based violence. However, many women still experience violence in their everyday life at home. In 2021, 210 femicides were reported in the country (ECLAC, Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021[46]). According to the Colombian Institute of Forensic Medicine, 23 798 cases of sexual violence were reported in 2017, 85% of them against women (an increase of 11.2% over 2016). In three-quarters of these cases, the aggressor lived in the same household as the victim (OECD, 2020[26]). According to the data available,

cases of gender-based violence are much higher in urban areas, representing 92.5% of the total in 2021 (Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses, 2020[47]).

Gender-based violence in Colombia is highly influenced by stereotypes, discrimination and socioeconomic conditions (OECD, 2020[26]), and can take various forms, affecting women in the family (domestic violence and marital rape), in the community (sexual violence, trafficking and femicide) and with respect to their reproductive rights. As in other countries in the region, *machismo* – defined as a form of hyper-masculinity, which valorises dominance and violence (Nuñez et al., 2016[48]) – plays a key role in shaping masculine and feminine norms and behaviours (OECD, 2020[43]).

Colombia's 60-year internal armed conflict worsened the situation in the country, with violence against women used by the state and illegal armed groups as a "strategy of war". The armed conflict normalised the use of violence in many layers of society (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2020[49]) and significantly affected the safety of women and girls. However, official figures on the extent of sexual violence against women during Colombia's armed conflict are still lacking. Entities such as the Attorney General's Office have an important role to play, especially in investigating this issue as a systematic practice during the armed conflict (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2019[50]).

The available data shows that Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women were disproportionately victims of sexual violence and internal displacement during the armed conflict, also accounting for the majority (65.5%) of murders of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian citizens (UN Women, 2018[51]). In addition, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women are reported to experience multiple forms of discrimination (Salamanca, 2017[52]), although the Final Peace Agreement includes gender-responsive provisions for Indigenous women in the peace process.

2.7. The impact of gender equality in the economy

2.7.1. Macroeconomic policy is not gender-neutral

Monetary policy

Monetary policy in Colombia mainly focuses on controlling inflation and achieving the maximum level of sustainable growth and employment (Banco de la República, 2022[53]). However, it is not gender-neutral in its transmission, with differential impacts on women and men (UN Women, 2015). Both expansionary and contractionary monetary policy can have an impact on gender equality in the following ways:

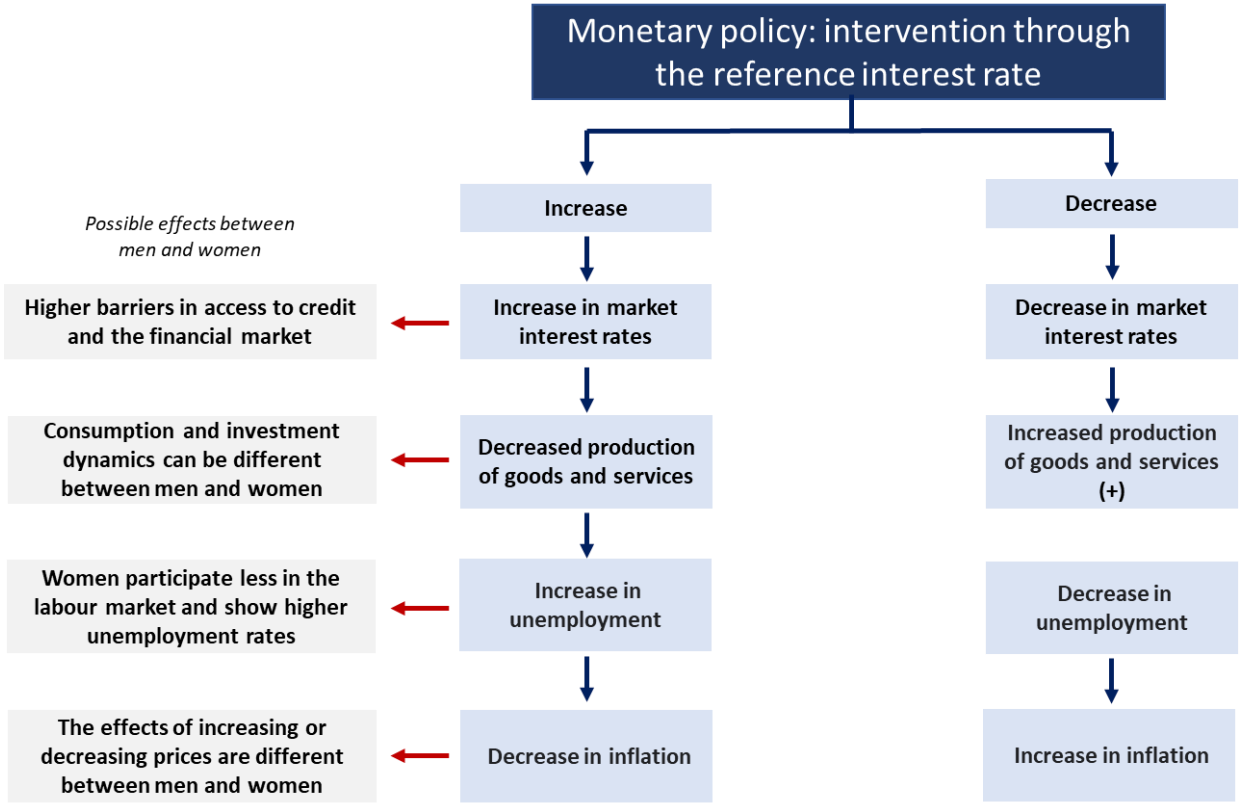
- **Women have lesser access to credit and finance, with more pronounced gaps among rural women**. According to the Colombian Women's Observatory, only 4.9% of women applicants obtained a loan to start a business in 2017, 4.2 p.p. below men (9.1%). The situation is less favorable in the rural sector, with only 9.1% of loans granted to women by the Agricultural Sector Financing Fund *(Finagro)* in the rural agricultural sector between 2011 and 2020.

  Credit institutions tend to view women, especially micro-entrepreneurs, as less credit-worthy for loans, a perceived risk reflected in higher interest rates. In a context of contractionary monetary policy, with market interest rates increasing, women are likely to have fewer incentives and to face greater barriers than men in accessing credit (Figure 2.5) (Banco de la República, 2021[54]).
- **Gender gaps in the labour market are high**. As noted previously, the participation rate of women in the labour force is lower than that of men, with less than half of women of working age being employed between 2001 and 2020. Additionally, women have a higher unemployment rate than men, and these gaps became even more pronounced in the pandemic. In 2020, the unemployment rate for women was 20.4%, 7.7 p.p. higher than for men (12.7%).

Contractionary monetary policy typically leads to loss of employment, and, given existing inequalities, greater negative effects on women than on men. However, it is worth noting that, even if employment is promoted as a result of an expansionary monetary policy, it does not factor in higher participation of women in the labour market to facilitate access to these new jobs (Figure 2.5).

- **Higher levels of inflation translate directly into a reduction of purchasing power**. An increase in inflation is defined as a substantial increase in prices, which directly impact household spending, especially the spending of the most vulnerable. The percentage of people living below the poverty line fell after 2008 to about 26% in 2018, but this trend was reversed in 2019. This was further exacerbated by the pandemic: in 2020, the percentage of people living below the poverty line had increased from 35.7% in 2019 to 42.5%. Women were among the demographic groups facing the highest levels of poverty, with 43.4% below the poverty line in 2020. This suggests that an increase in inflation, which normally follows expansionary monetary policy, has serious negative effects on women, to the extent that the percentage of poor women in the country is high (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Possible effects of monetary policy on men and women in Colombia



Source: Author's own elaboration on the basis of data from the (Central Bank of Colombia, 2022[55]), Central Bank of Colombia, https://www.banrep.gov.co/es.

The role of taxation in promoting gender equality

Tax policy measures can influence gender outcomes by affecting, for example, women's participation in the labour market, their investment choices, as well as their incomes, wealth and consumption patterns (OECD, 2022[56]). Gender bias in tax systems can be explicit or implicit, depending on whether tax systems clearly use gender as a criterion to differentiate tax treatments, or produce different effects on men and

women by interacting with societal and economic gender differences (Stotsky, 1996[57]). For example, explicit gender bias and discrimination occur when tax structures differentiate explicitly between men and women, as mandated in specific provisions of the law or regulations. On the other hand, implicit gender bias arises when gender-neutral tax systems that treat women and men equally interact with gender differences in behaviour and economic characteristics, such as paid employment, involvement in the unpaid care economy, asset ownership and consumption expenditure (Barnett and Grown, 2004[58]). In these cases, it is particularly important to assess the impact of specific tax laws on men and women, scrutinising their ostensible gender neutrality and understanding how they affect different groups of the population.

For instance, personal income tax and its design features can create disincentives to participating in the labour force for second earners, often women, rather than for primary earners or single individuals. The progressivity of the revenue taxation can reduce the tax burden on categories with lower wages, with positive effects for women, who tend to be paid less than men. Finally, tax administration processes can also have different impacts on men and women, by favouring access for either gender or being used more in practice by women or by men. Similarly, compliance aspects can have positive or negative effects on women, depending on the programmes they target or whether they differ based on an individual's gender (OECD, 2022[56]). In light of these considerations, the OECD recognises that integrating gender perspectives in the design of tax policy, by preventing adverse effects on the distribution of income and wealth, can significantly help increase inclusive growth (OECD, 2017[59]).

Evidence highlights the need for gender-disaggregated data to promote use of a gender lens in taxation in Colombia (Ávila-Mahecha, 2019[60]). Going forward, improving the availability and quality of gender-disaggregated data is vital for including the impact of taxes on gender equality as a key dimension of Colombia's tax policy.

The macroeconomic impact of transportation infrastructure and its role in closing gender gaps

Developing transport infrastructure can be a key factor in closing gender gaps, with significant macroeconomic impact. Transport infrastructure reduces the time spent by women on domestic tasks, increasing productivity and time spent on paid work (Government of United Kingdom, 2017[61]). Increased mobility options offer greater access to jobs that may be better paid (Lozano and Luque, 2020[62]). As noted in Chapter 5, commuting time is more of a consideration for women than for men in deciding to quit a job. Women who have an hour of commuting time are 29.1% more likely to leave their current job than if they have a 10-minute commute, as against 23.9% for men (OECD, 2021[63]).

Infrastructure development is one of the main generators of employment, and if it is developed with an equity lens, it can translate into new job opportunities for women (see Chapter 5). It also generates higher incomes for households, facilitating consumers' access to goods and services, and potentially offering greater and more stable household income (Government of United Kingdom, 2017[61]).

The risk of exposure to violence on transport services and public spaces deters economic participation of women, costing the global economy USD 8 trillion annually (Government of United Kingdom, 2017[61]). Developing infrastructure that provides adequate safeguards from violence against women can also improve their economic opportunities. Since women account for half of the users of transport infrastructure, including them in planning and decision making in transport projects allows for the development of infrastructure that considers their perspective, and can lead to greater empowerment (Government of United Kingdom, 2017[61]).

In Colombia, only 6.4% of the workforce in the construction sector is female. Of the 27 Fourth Generation (4G) concessions, only 13.1% of employees at the construction stage are women (Lozano and Luque, 2020[62]). To encourage greater participation of women in the sector, Presidential Directive No. 11 included

a gender approach for developing projects for the Fifth Generation of Concessions. This stipulated a minimum percentage of female personnel, in stages: 10% in pre-construction and construction, 30% in operation and maintenance and 30% in management teams throughout the project[2] (ANI, 2021[64]). If successfully achieved, the 5G infrastructure will set a new benchmark for gender-sensitive infrastructure in Colombia. To realise such potential benefits, the new administration has the opportunity to align long-term infrastructure plans with gender mainstreaming policies, a challenge prevailing in 71% of OECD countries.

2.8. Reinforcing institutions and capacity for gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive policy making can close gender gaps

As indicated in the previous Sections, gender equality is a key enabler of inclusive growth and national well-being. Colombia has made considerable efforts to address gender inequalities. However, relevant gaps still persist in key policy areas, such as education, in the labour market, in the care economy, as well as in relation to the prevalence of gender norms and gender-based violence. As seen across the OECD, the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia has thrown into relief these long-standing inequalities, with women disproportionately affected by the economic and social fallout from the crisis. The differentiated impact of the crisis on certain groups of the population has indicated the importance of a holistic, intersectional approach to understanding diversity between individuals (OECD, 2021[7]). The recovery from the COVID-19 crisis offers a crucial window of opportunity for addressing persistent gaps in Colombia, by strengthening the policy and institutional framework and government capacity and introducing gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive policy and decision making.

If gender equality awareness is built into all government institutions, policies and policy processes, more equitable outcomes can be achieved, contributing to good governance (OECD, 2018[65]). A strategy of gender mainstreaming, applying a gender equality lens to all government action, can help governments make more inclusive decisions and improve the fairness and responsiveness of policy delivery. This can also increase public trust (OECD, 2017[66]), reinforcing democracies and encouraging inclusive growth.

In 2019, the OECD identified a need in Colombia to improve co-ordination between national and subnational governments on strategic planning, through policy dialogue and exchange (OECD, 2019[67]). The OECD Report “Gender Equality in Colombia: Access to Justice and Politics at the Local Level” recommended adopting gender-inclusive policies in national and local governments, by gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and enhanced co-ordination of resources (OECD, 2020[26]).

Building directly on these recommendations and on OECD standards, including those proposed in the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation in Public Life (OECD, 2016[68]), this Review aims to support the national government’s efforts to promote gender equality, and to help it co-ordinate both horizontally and with the departmental governments and municipalities on gender equality policy. By assessing strengths, challenges and opportunities, the Review proposes ways to strengthen institutional frameworks and increase government capacities to improve gender equality in Colombia at all levels and to promote gender-sensitive policy and decision making. Providing a way forward with strategic, action-oriented policy recommendations, it can help align policy objectives across national, departmental and municipal levels with national development policy, and to achieve gender equality. Finally, reflecting on the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and girls and assessing the institutional capacities for responding to crises in a gender-sensitive manner, the Review also promotes a recovery from COVID-19 that enables economic and social empowerment of women of diverse backgrounds. It is organised as follows:

- **Chapter 3**: An assessment of Colombia’s approach to strategic planning for its gender equality policy and the alignment of the objectives set out in the national policy on gender equality and the National Development Plan (NDP).

- **Chapter 4**: An overview of the whole-of-government framework for gender equality and mainstreaming in the government, analysing the roles, responsibilities, capacities, and capabilities of governmental stakeholders. The Chapter also assesses the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for horizontal and vertical co-ordination to promote the gender equality agenda.
- **Chapter 5**: An analysis of the strategic use of government tools and processes, such as gender impact assessments (including infrastructure policy), budgeting and public procurement, to promote the government's gender equality agenda. The Chapter also discusses challenges and opportunities in collecting gender-sensitive data and evidence for gender equality purposes.
- **Chapter 6**: An assessment of the current legislative and strategic frameworks related to disaster risk management and gender equality, highlighting challenges, as well as enablers and opportunities to further apply a gender lens to disaster risk management.

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Notes

[1] CONPES documents are so-called because they are approved by the National Council on Economic and Social Policy, the Executive Branch's Cabinet Committee on economic and social policy, on which all ministries have a seat.

[2] In the pre-construction, construction, operation and maintenance stages, technical operation assistants, machinery operators, teachers, supervisors and general workers, among others, are included. The management team is made up of persons in the concessionaire with administrative functions and decision-making capacity, such as the legal representative, the members of the Board of Directors and senior executives, among others.

3 Strategic planning for gender equality policy in Colombia

In recent years, the Government of Colombia has made efforts to incorporate a medium-term, whole-of-government vision for gender equality into key strategic documents. This Chapter assesses its approach to strategic planning for gender equality policy on one hand, and how the general strategic planning considers gender dimensions on the other hand. It also considers the alignment of the objectives set forth in the National Development Plan and in the national policy on gender equality. It reviews the participation of various stakeholders in the design of gender equality objectives, as well as the framework in place for their implementation and monitoring. The Chapter also analyses strategic planning and implementation systems for gender equality at the subnational level in the departments of Huila and Boyacá. In conclusion, a series of policy recommendations is provided to address existing challenges and support the government in achieving its vision and building a results-oriented strategic plan.

3.1. Introduction

Strategic planning is a powerful tool for implementing a government's gender equality policy, by providing a systematic, structured and co-ordinated approach to its aims. Strategic plans that incorporate gender equality considerations can support governments in their efforts to close gender gaps by setting a clear rationale and defining priorities, timelines, objectives, targets and expected outcomes on gender equality. To be effective, the strategic plan must reflect the needs of different groups in society. It also requires collective commitment and ownership by all governmental actors (OECD, 2018[1]), to integrate gender equality objectives at governmental, ministerial and programmatic levels. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been increasingly recognised that pro-active and effective government action is needed and that integrating a gender perspective in strategic planning can help close systemic gender gaps.

The OECD recommends adopting a dual approach, combining clear gender equality goals, supported by a strategic framework, with gender objectives and considerations integrated into government strategies in such areas as national development, environmental protection, transport, etc. Gender-sensitive decision making that engages the whole of government, including all policy sectors and branches of government, can help move the gender equality agenda forward (OECD, 2021[2]). If gender-related goals are not fully integrated into government action and reflected in other broader country strategic documents, they risk being marginalised and insufficiently implemented (OECD, 2018[1]).

Various factors determine the effectiveness of strategic planning for gender equality policy (OECD, 2017[3]):

- a clear vision for gender equality anchored in key government documents;
- an assessment of where the government stands on its goals for gender equality and which interventions are needed to achieve its vision;
- a results-oriented strategic plan to achieve the gender equality vision endorsed by senior leadership, and developed in consultation with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

All 30 respondents to the 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance, including Colombia, have an active strategic framework dedicated to gender equality, either in the form of an overarching strategy (27 respondents) or of a strategy for specific gender equality issues (3 respondents) (OECD, forthcoming[4]). Box 3.1 offers some examples of strategic frameworks for gender equality in OECD countries.

Box 3.1. Examples of strategic planning for gender equality across the OECD

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic's Strategy of Gender Equality for 2021-2030, developed by the Department of Gender Equality, sets out measures to promote gender equality for central bodies of state administration and other relevant state authorities. It is divided into eight chapters focused on key thematic areas: work and care; decision making; safety; health; knowledge; society; external relations; and institutions. Each provides an overview of gender equality in its specific area and identifies gaps, as well as strategic goals, relevant measures, indicators and entities responsible for implementing them. Intersectionality is a cross-cutting principle of the Strategy, with some measures specifically aimed at groups that face discrimination on multiple fronts (e.g. migrant women, women with disabilities, Roma women, etc.).

Spain

In March 2022, the Spanish Council of Ministers approved the Third Strategic Plan for the Effective Equality of Women and Men 2022-2025, which sets out the policy agenda for gender equality for the

2022-2025 period. The Plan is structured around four main lines of action: 1) good governance, to move towards a more inclusive and democratic model of government, aiming to ensure that all public policies are gender-sensitive; 2) economy for life and the fair distribution of wealth, against the feminisation of poverty and precariousness, to promote measures for decent employment and the reduction of wage and pension gaps, as well as joint responsibility for care; 3) lives for women free from male violence, with the aim to strengthen institutional co-ordination and response systems for early detection and comprehensive care for victims of violence by a partner or former partner, sexual violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking; 4) a country with effective rights for all women, including measures to respond to the needs of women who suffer from multiple or intersectional discrimination.

United States

In 2021, the US federal government adopted the first-ever national gender strategy, the "National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality". It was designed to guide strategic planning and budgeting, policy and programme development, measurement and data, and management and training, and involves a variety of actors at the federal, state and local levels as well as civil society, the private sector, foreign governments and multilateral institutions. Structured around ten strategic priorities, it emphasises a cross-cutting, intersectional approach. The Gender Policy Council, also created in 2021 to promote gender equity and equality in domestic and foreign policy development and implementation, is made up of nearly all members of the Cabinet and federal agencies and the heads of other White House offices. The plan is for each federal agency to identify its priority goals and, in liaison with the Gender Policy Council, what it intends to accomplish over the next one to three years. Each agency is developing at least three priority goals to move the strategy forward, to be followed by plans for implementation, which were due to be finalised in July 2022. At least one of these goals is intended to be achievable within current authorities and resources. The Council is set to play an important role as a co-ordinating body for government-wide implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. The Gender Policy Council will co-ordinate with other components of the Executive Office of the President, including the Domestic Policy Council, the National Security Council, the National Economic Council, the Climate Policy Office, the Office of the Vice President, the Council of Economic Advisers, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Office of the United States Trade Representative. To implement the strategy, it also intends to partner with multilateral institutions and support other global efforts to promote gender equity and equality. The Gender Policy Council works with the Office of Management and Budget, collaborating with agencies to identify primary areas of focus, programmes and policies for review for consistency with this strategy.

Source: (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, 2021[5]; The White House, 2021[6])

The following Sections review Colombia's approach to strategic planning for the gender equality policy at national and subnational levels, including through gender mainstreaming. They assess the alignment of objectives established in the national policy on gender equality with the National Development Plan, while analysing the extent of the participation of relevant stakeholders in strategic planning, as well as the framework for implementation and monitoring of gender-related objectives. They also provide an overview of the strategic planning and implementation systems in selected subnational governments. Actionable policy recommendations are proposed to tackle existing challenges and support the government in strengthening its strategic frameworks for gender equality.

3.2. Strategic planning for gender equality policy in Colombia

Colombia has made important strides in anchoring a medium-term vision for women's equality in key government documents. Since 2003, a legal requirement (under Law 823) has committed the national

government to adopt "gender criteria in policies, decisions, and actions in national and decentralised public agencies" as well as to adopt administrative measures and instruments required for its implementation. To promote gender equality, the National Public Policy on Gender Equality was recently renewed, and gender-related considerations have been incorporated into the National Development Plan and, to some extent, in sector-specific strategic planning.

3.2.1. Gender equality objectives in Colombia's National Public Policy on Gender Equality

In 2012, the national Government adopted the Guidelines for the Gender Equality National Public Policy, which set a ten-year framework for the national public policy of gender equity for women and for eradicating violence against women in Colombia until end of 2022. On this basis, the National Policy on Gender Equality (CONPES 161)[1] was approved in 2013, including a three-year Action Plan that remained in force until 2016.

CONPES 161 has seven main objectives, including:

- eliminating practices that reproduce and reinforce violence and intolerance against women, with the goal of building a peaceful and democratic society;
- providing opportunities to promote economic autonomy, access to land, housing, financing of production, technical assistance and training;
- promoting women's participation in decision-making positions;
- strengthening the gender perspective in the health system, to improve access to and the quality of sexual and reproductive health services for women;
- promoting pedagogical practices that mainstream the gender approach in the education sector and incorporate the gender variable in their institutional processes;
- launching a comprehensive plan to guarantee women's right to a life free of violence;
- promoting the adoption of gender mainstreaming by all public entities.

More recently, Colombia formulated the second phase of the national gender equality policy for women, approved in April 2022, which sets out a vision and objectives to be achieved by 2030 (Box 3.2).

Box 3.2. Public policy on gender equality for women: towards sustainable development in Colombia (CONPES 4080 of 2022)

Published in April 2022, CONPES 4080, also based on the 2012 Guidelines for the Gender Equality National Public Policy, which are still in force, sets a vision and objectives for gender equality in Colombia to be met by the year 2030. CONPES 4080's main objectives are:

- increasing women's economic autonomy, eliminating existing barriers and giving continuity to the policies already in place for this purpose;
- developing strategies to strengthen women's leadership, to make progress towards parity at national and subnational levels, and strengthen women's role in community scenarios;
- improving the physical and mental health of women, to provide them with a better quality of life;
- strengthening policies to prevent and comprehensively address violence against women, to ensure them a life free of violence;
- implementing Resolution 1325 to strengthen women's leadership role in peace building and security-related affairs;

- strengthening the institutional framework to mainstream the gender approach in strategic matters to achieve women's equality.

The Vice President's Office, the CPEM and the National Planning Department (DNP) reported working closely and articulately to ensure alignment and an overall governmental vision for this CONPES. As underlined during the OECD fact-finding mission, while formulating the new policy, the DNP, supported by the CPEM, has also taken into account several OECD's recommendations, including in increasing institutional capacity.

Despite the fact that CONPES does not have specific budgets allocated from the national budget, the government has projected resources needed both for implementing the CONPES 4080 Action Plan and for carrying out all governmental programmes with an impact on women.

Source: Information provided by the government of Colombia in 2022; (CONPES, 2022[7]), Política Pública de Equidad de Género para las Mujeres: Hacia el Desarrollo Sostenible del País (Public Policy on Gender Equality for Women: Towards the Sustainable Development of the Country), https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/4080.pdf.

3.2.2. Gender equality objectives in the National Development Plan 2018-2022

In addition to the National Public Policy on Gender Equality, Colombia has taken steps in the past few years to integrate gender considerations in other key strategic documents of the government. The National Development Plan 2018-2022 (NDP), presented in 2018, included for the first time a dedicated chapter on women's rights called "Pact for Women's Equality". The NDP has legality, equality, and entrepreneurship and productivity as its main pillars, developed as structural Pacts (*Pactos Estructurales*). The Pact for Women's Equality is instead cross-cutting (*Pacto Transversal*) and based on three dimensions: the economic dimension (overcoming poverty, the care economy, inequality in the workplace); the political dimension (women in positions of power and decision making); and on the dimension of physical integrity (violence and sexual and reproductive rights). Its main objectives or policy lines are:

- strengthening the gender institutional framework for women in Colombia;
- promoting education and economic empowerment to eliminate gender gaps at work;
- committing to articulation and co-responsibility in the care economy;
- encouraging women's political participation;
- promoting sexual and reproductive rights;
- guaranteeing women's right to a life free of violence;
- empowering rural women as agents of transformation;
- ensuring equity for women in peace building.

Under these broad objectives, the NDP includes specific targets, such as "reducing to 16.7% the monthly income gap average between men and women" and "reducing to 15.2% the percentage of pregnancy in adolescents" (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2018[8]).

OECD interviews with key stakeholders have shown that the existence of this dedicated chapter as a core part of the NDP has increased the visibility of gender equality objectives. It has also given the National Planning Department (DNP) greater influence on government entities in implementing gender-related commitments and targets.

The NDP 2018-2022 requires the CPEM to develop a second phase of the National Policy on Gender Equality for Women. To ensure continuity with CONPES 161 of 2013 and to incorporate the latest developments (e.g. the current National Development Plan and its Pact for Women's Equality) and recently identified needs and challenges of women in Colombia (e.g. rural women's needs and women's main

challenges after the COVID-19 pandemic), the national government issued a new CONPES on gender equality while drafting this Review, as explained in Box 3.2 above.

At the time of the publication of this report, the national government just approved the National Development Plan 2023-2026 including a specific chapter on women and integrating a gender approach throughout its other pillars.

3.2.3. Aligning gender equality goals in the National Public Policy on Gender Equality and the NDP 2018-2022

Having a national public policy on gender equality (CONPES 161 and CONPES 4080), supported by the Pact for Women's Equality as part of the NDP, added a number of advantages. The objectives set out in those documents are generally aligned. The CPEM (in charge of co-ordinating CONPES 161) and the DNP (which co-ordinates the NDP) have worked closely over the years to ensure alignment in implementing these objectives. These documents have also complemented each other: the 2012 Guidelines for the Gender Equality National Public Policy (valid for ten years), allowed for continuity in gender equality objectives over various administrations, while the Pact for Women's Equality has helped align gender equality objectives with government priorities in the most recent presidential mandate. The NDP and its Pact for Women's Equality has been enacted as law, although CONPES 161 and 4080 have not. The NDP also has assigned resources for its implementation, while CONPES 161 and 4080 have no budget of their own but include only an indication of the funds needed for the execution of their Action Plans, to be provided by each government institution involved in the implementation of the gender equality policy.

3.2.4. Gender mainstreaming as a strategy for implementing gender equality objectives

As explained above, Law 823 of 2003 requires the government to consider "gender criteria in policies, decisions, and actions in national and decentralised public agencies'' as well as to adopt the administrative measures and instruments required for its implementation. CONPES 161 defines gender mainstreaming as the integration of a gender approach in all policies and programmes of government institutions, but also as designing policies and targeted actions to close gender gaps. Similarly, CONPES 4080 recognises gender equality approaches as key tools which help understand and overcome structural gender inequalities, by supporting the development of transversal actions to tackle existing gaps.

In the past few years, Colombia's gender mainstreaming approach has focused on targeted actions to eliminate gender discrimination and gender gaps in certain areas, rather than mainstreaming gender in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of all public policies and budgets.

The OECD finds that all 20 public entities interviewed showed some level of awareness of gender mainstreaming and a willingness to promote gender equality in their decision-making sphere. This can be attributed to the active engagement of the CPEM under the Vice Presidency and the DNP, as well as to the strong political will expressed in the NDP 2018-2022 and to the existence of a gender policy, both of which highlight the cross-cutting nature of a gender-based agenda as a shared responsibility for the whole of government. This atmosphere of awareness and willingness is an important foundation for Colombia's gender mainstreaming efforts.

3.2.5. Sector-specific planning and implementation of the gender strategy

Under Law 823 of 2003 (Article 4), the national government, to adopt gender-based policies and strengthen the institutions managing their implementation, is charged with adopting administrative measures giving responsible institutions adequate tools to implement policies, and to promote the use of gender indicators in gathering statistics. The OECD, however, finds that in practice line ministries do not have a standard approach toward implementing this article, and gender equality objectives remain isolated. An evaluation of CONPES 161 in 2016 by the Inter-sectoral Co-ordination Commission for the Implementation of the

National Gender Equity Public Policy also noted challenges in reflecting national gender equality objectives in line ministries' mission, routine strategic planning and operations (Proyectamos Colombia, 2016[9]).

In future, gender equality objectives laid out under the national gender equality policy, the NDP 2018-2022 and future plans should be systematically translated into ministerial and departmental strategic plans, adequately resourced, and linked to staff performance indicators (including those for senior managers).

Different ministries and levels of government have varying perceptions of the goals of gender mainstreaming. For example, gender analysis does not appear to play a part in the policy-making process. Some entities reported to the OECD during the fact-finding mission that more co-ordination is necessary between the NDP, the Public Policies for Gender Equality and institutional/sectoral actions.

The CPEM and the DNP have already taken steps to support line ministries in this respect, for example issuing the Guide for the Inclusion of the Gender Approach in the Planning Cycle of Public Policies (see Box 3.3).

Box 3.3. Mechanisms for gender mainstreaming at a sectoral level

To continue to close gender gaps in Colombia, the DNP has introduced various strategies to reinforce the use of a gender approach in institutional planning and budgeting. With this goal in mind, the DNP has developed the Guide for the Inclusion of the Gender Approach in the Planning Cycle of Public Policies and for the Use of the Budget Tracer for Gender Equality. The tracer is a tool that helps public institutions track investment and operating resources aimed at closing gender gaps.

To embed the gender perspective in planning and budgeting in different economic sectors, the DNP (with the support of USAID and UN Women) has developed complementary Sectoral Planning and Budgeting Guides. These have been validated and shared with the Commerce, Industry and Tourism, ICTs and Mines and Energy sectors. The DNP is now working on guides for the Housing, Transport and Environment sectors, as well as on guides for local governments, to include the gender approach in the planning cycles at a subnational level.

Source: Information provided by the government of Colombia in 2021.

The OECD has identified a good practice used by the Ministry of Energy, which could be scaled at the national level. In 2019, the Ministry conducted consultations on gender equality in the mining and energy sector, then designed gender-based guidelines for the sector to support strategic planning and budgeting. As a result, the Ministry launched the guidelines in 2020, and with the private sector, drafted a Sectorial Action Plan, as well as an Action Plan regarding the Equipares Seal (*Plan Acción Equipares*). Both plans include indicators, short-, medium- and long-term objectives, activities, results and follow-up mechanisms. The Ministry also recently began a sectoral study with a wide range of stakeholders from the sector and representatives from civil society, academia and government at national and subnational levels, to conduct a full analysis of the situation of women in the mining and energy sector, as noted in Chapter 5.

3.2.6. Intersectional approach

Intersectionality refers to the understanding that the multiple aspects of individuals' identities intersect and combine in a way that exposes them to different, often overlapping forms of exclusion or discrimination. Intersectional analysis allows for an enhanced awareness of the significant diversity between individuals who make up any given population or group in policy making. It is increasingly recognised as a strategy for addressing gender inequalities.

In OECD countries, in particular since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been increasingly acknowledged that an intersectional approach can enhance awareness of the significant diversity between individuals who make up any given population or group in policy making for holistic gender equality (OECD, forthcoming[4]).

Colombian stakeholders interviewed by the OECD reported that it is challenging to use an intersectional approach to design policies to improve women's lives and close gender gaps, given the difficulties in identifying the specific characteristics and needs of a given population. This can be due, they said, to the lack of disaggregated data or the absence of an inclusive approach. In any case, without an intersectional approach, discrimination faced by certain groups (such as women with disabilities) risks being overlooked.

Governmental stakeholders also reported including a group of diverse women in the CONPES and NDP's consultative processes. An intersectional approach was particularly evident in the participatory process with non-governmental stakeholders in developing CONPES 4080, for which 662 women from across the country were consulted. This group included representatives of different ethnic groups, women living in rural areas and urban areas, women from the LGBT community and women with disabilities. The government also promoted an intersectional approach in drafting CONPES 4080, considering targeted studies on specific populations (i.e. studies on the LGBT community) and by considering development of other CONPES and policies for specific populations (i.e. CONPES for children and adolescents, now under way).

3.3. Citizen consultation and needs assessment for strategic planning

3.3.1. Consultation with key stakeholders in strategic planning

As recognised by the 2017 OECD Recommendation on Open Government, stakeholder participation increases government accountability, broadens citizens' empowerment and influence on decisions, builds civic capacity, improves the evidence base for policy making, reduces implementation costs, and taps wider networks for innovation in policy making and service delivery (OECD, 2017[10]). In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and facing pressing new global challenges, building constructive public debate and engagement is fundamental to gain buy-in from citizens and stakeholders on urgent policy decisions (OECD, 2022[11]). This in turn helps increase trust in government, fight mis- and dis-information and reinforce democracy.

Colombia has a legal framework for involving non-governmental stakeholders in the policy process. The Statutory Law on Citizen Participation (Law 1757 of 2015[2]) stands out as a good practice (OECD, 2019[12]). However, while consultation at the early stages of the design of the Departmental Development Plans (DDPs) has become common practice, in the evaluation phase active engagement of stakeholders, including citizens, NGOs and representatives of the private sector and the media is less common (OECD, 2019[12]).

In fact, Colombia has made progress by implementing different mechanisms to guarantee the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the policy cycle. However, this progress is largely concentrated in early stages in communicating the overall gender vision. Further effort could be made to incorporate these mechanisms in the DDPs and local gender policies and to include a strategic planning lens.

Alongside the development of the 2012 Guidelines for the Gender Equality National Public Policy, a Support Group (*Grupo de Apoyo*) was created, including representatives from the national government and from women's organisations, to achieve a consultative process.

Thanks to this participation, the making of CONPES 161 involved a wide range of non-governmental stakeholders. This process was also adopted for the mid-term evaluation of CONPES 161. At this stage, the government heard from a significant number of women and women's organisations that they were not

aware of the CONPES. Respondents also reported that few women leaders had participated in its design and that those who did knew little of its adoption and implementation. The report concluded that while some key women's organisations had taken part in the process, the participation of smaller and local ones was limited. It also found that the limited knowledge of the CONPES among women's organisations might be due to institutional weakness on the part of the institutions in charge of promoting and implementing this gender policy (Proyectamos Colombia, 2017[13]). Box 3.4 describes the consultation processes the government established in setting up the new national gender equality policy.

Box 3.4. Consultation for the making of CONPES 4080 of 2022

Learning from past consultation processes, the government of Colombia identified a three-stage consultation process for the making of National Council for Economic and Social Policy (CONPES) 4080 of 2022, including: i) discussions with line ministries and economic sectors; ii) a participatory process with non-governmental stakeholders; and iii) the validation process for the publication of the CONPES. The overall consultation process lasted over a year and was led by the CPEM and the DNP (which worked hand in hand in drafting the CONPES), with the support of UN Women.

The first phase of the consultation process was led by 55 national entities, including those that belong to CONPES. Consultation with the entities included formulating a first diagnosis (integrating gender-based data from all institutions involved) to establish a clear picture of women's situation in the country. The entities involved also participated in the making of indicators for each activity proposed in the CONPES and were able to identify activities for which inter-institutional co-ordination is needed. The entities reported that this process was useful for avoiding duplication of activities among themselves and including in CONPES 4080 activities already addressed by other policies or laws.

Colombian authorities also reported including in the making of the CONPES 4080 a wide representation of subnational and rural women's organisations, as well as private sector representatives, through different strategies such as: initial surveys that allowed for better characterisation of the women involved; regional tables and virtual and in-person workshops. Results of the consultation process with non-governmental institutions were also considered for the discussions between institutions.

Finally, the DNP reported that the draft of the CONPES was validated by all stakeholders included in the consultation process.

Source: Information provided by the government of Colombia in 2022.

CONPES are policy documents designed to strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration among line ministries. This requires articulation, co-ordination and prioritisation of commonly identified goals.

CONPES 161 and 4080, like every other document of this kind, have been produced by the Superior Council on Economic and Social Policy – the Executive Branch's Cabinet Committee on economic and social policy led by the president, in which all ministries have a seat. As shown in Chapter 4, CONPES also includes (with the right to vote) the vice president, the director of the Administrative Department of the Presidency and the director of the DNP.

Although CONPES documents take a national approach, the government distributes them at a subnational level when that is considered necessary. This was the case for CONPES 161, which was disseminated by the CPEM at a subnational level after its adoption, according to stakeholders interviewed.

Regarding the NDP 2018-2022, according to Articles 240 and 241 of the Constitution, the National Planning Council (composed of representatives, elected by the president, of subnational institutions, as well as of representatives from the economic, social, ecological, community and cultural sectors) is in charge of

leading discussions for the making of the NDP. Subnational governments should also adopt Local Planning Councils, which, together with the National Planning Council, compose the National Planning System. Furthermore, subnational governments, as well as line ministries (including the DNP) and the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, should also participate actively in the making of the NDP.

The national government used several participatory mechanisms to disseminate the content of the NDP, including the Pact for Women's Equality. They included the National Planning Council (Law 152 of 1994), a space for social dialogue constituted by representatives of civil society (at local, regional and national levels), where members help formulate, monitor and evaluate policies for the NDP and exercise citizen control over public management.

The NDP's consultation with ethnic communities has to be conducted through the process of Prior Consultation,[3] since the NDP is enacted as a law. Both the government and the Congress must ensure that laws and decrees are accepted by its many diverse communities (through Prior Consultation) before they are implemented, and must also obtain the consent of these communities. Laws or decrees require the Constitutional Court to conduct prior consultation with Roma, Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquero people and Indigenous communities to be deemed constitutional.

3.3.2. Prior assessment of needs to identify evidence-based gender objectives

Governments have finite resources, so to achieve the impact intended, gender equality objectives must have the backing of robust analyses detailing where a country stands on gender equality, based on various indicators (OECD, 2017[3]). This can be done through the stakeholder consultations discussed above and also through the collection and analysis of data, evidence and research. A 2016 study led by the CPEM focused on the existing institutional arrangement for gender mainstreaming and the incorporation of the gender approach in planning and budget processes. It showed that of 32 departments, 11 (44%) reported not having diagnoses on gender inequality, 16 (50%) reported inclusion of this base information and 5 (16%) did not specify whether gendered frameworks were used (Proyectamos Colombia, 2016[9]).

At the local level, governments carry out needs assessments in an inclusive consultation process including both governmental and external stakeholders. No standards for this are in place, however, and each department develops the process according to its own considerations, based on the principle of subnational governments' autonomy.

Both the CONPES 161 of 2013 and the NDP provide a situation analysis/needs assessment. For the design of CONPES 161, a consultation process was carried out by the government (based on the Support Group's recommendations), from March 2011 to August 2012, with more than 2 000 women across the country. Primary information was collected at these meetings on issues that affect women, and proposals were made to address them. Based on this input and on the analysis of secondary information (mainly provided by the National Statistics Office, DANE), the government drafted an assessment that the CPEM used to draft the first version of the gender policy. It was then sent for feedback to the different national entities that would be held accountable for its implementation (Alta Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2012[14]).

To develop the NDP, the DNP gathered gender-based administrative records from various public entities and other secondary information (mainly provided by the DANE). This information was built into an analysis of the current situation of women in Colombia in the Bases of the Development Plan (*Bases del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo*).

Moving forward, these developments should be backed up with stronger, co-ordinated information systems, as well as by unified indicators to create a situation analysis. The aim would be to help identify evidence-based priorities and progress tracking in gender equality. The government has taken a first step in this direction by producing unified, gender-based indicators, which are reportedly being used to build an analysis of women's situation in Colombia in the design of the new CONPES 2023-2030 (Box 3.5).

Box 3.5. Building supporting indicators: a good first step

Indicators are useful for analysing and classifying data to increase accuracy. In 2020, the Colombian Observatory of Women, with the support of the World Bank, UN Women, DANE and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), launched a platform with indicators for seven axes (demography and population; health, sexual and reproductive rights; a life free of violence; power and decision making; education and information and communication technologies, or ICT; peace building and economic autonomy). At present, 48 indicators are available. Although these indicators are an important step in collecting and analysing data on women in Colombia, the Colombian Observatory notes that the existing indicators could be improved to increase accuracy, and that new ones could be created. One of the challenges the Observatory faces lies in identifying and receiving administrative records disaggregated by gender from all entities, at the national and the subnational levels. This complicates the disaggregation of the gender-based data the Observatory already has, considering other variables (i.e. migration status). Scope also remains to improve a monitoring and evaluation system for the existing indicators at the Observatory. While they are helpful for assessing gender equality in Colombia and supporting gender equality analysis, these indicators are not formally linked to the current national gender equality policy. The OECD interviews also revealed that these indicators are not systematically aligned with the gender indicators developed as part of SINERGIA.

Source: Information provided by the government of Colombia in 2021.

3.4. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan

3.4.1. Roles and responsibilities for implementing the strategic plan

The CONPES 161 Action Plan (2013-2016) and the more recent National Development Plan 2018-2022 assign roles and responsibilities to national entities (including line Ministries). This makes it possible for actions developed by these institutions to respond to a common purpose, while being framed within clear action lines. There is thus a clear link between the Action Plan of CONPES 161 and the effectiveness of programmes and projects implemented by national entities (Proyectamos Colombia, 2016[9]). However, roles and responsibilities were not specified at the institutional and individual staff level in the CONPES 161 Action Plan. This issue has been addressed in the CONPES 4080 Action Plan, where specific institutions are clearly assigned to each action and the institutions responsible for follow-up and reporting on the progress of each activity to the SisCONPES (Box 3.6) are also clearly identified.

3.4.2. Framework for tracking performance

CONPES 161 establishes a set of objectives, while its Action Plan specifies the scope and main actions needed to achieve them. However, these objectives are mainly not supported by baseline indicators and clear targets for gauging progress in gender equality outcomes.

The Colombian government has made an effort to create follow-up/monitoring mechanisms for implementing the CONPES (e.g., its Action Plan), such as the SisCONPES system and the Control Panel (*Tablero de Control*) for national entities involved in the implementation of the gender policy (Box 3.6). Although they are not binding, these follow-up mechanisms have been an improvement. In 2017, entities reported facing difficulties in incorporating them into the SisCONPES and thus, reporting to them relatively infrequently (Proyectamos Colombia, 2017[13]). Still, stakeholders interviewed in 2021-2022 reported to the OECD that these technical limitations were resolved.

Box 3.6. The SisCONPES System

SisCONPES is an online system opened for public consultations in charge of the DNP, to follow up on implementation of CONPES documents. The DNP has used this tool to track implementation of CONPES 161 of 2013 and of its Action Plan and produced six follow-up reports from 2013 to 2016. The CPEM was in charge of implementing this tool to follow up on the activities developed by the 33 national entities held accountable for implementing the CONPES 161 (Action Plan). Only half of these entities, however, reported indicators for the Control Panel mechanism, which measures results only sporadically.

Source: (Proyectamos Colombia, 2017[13]), Evaluación institucional y de resultados con enfoque participativo de la Política de Equidad de Género para las Mujeres, de acuerdo con lo previsto en el CONPES 161 de 2013, http://www.equidadmujer.gov.co/ejes/Documents/Evaluacion-Equidad_de_Genero-Conpes_161.pdf.

Given that these mechanisms follow up on the CONPES' Action Plan, their effectiveness could also be compromised when the Action Plan runs on a shorter time frame than the policy. This was the case with CONPES 161 Action Plan, which ended in 2016 and was not extended, while the policy continued to be implemented.

Another monitoring mechanism is to be implemented when the regulations for the creation of the National System for Women are approved by the national government. This was created by the NDP 2018-2022, to monitor implementation of the gender policy. This system is also called to disseminate the policy at a subnational level.

The inclusion of the Pact for Women's Equality in the National Development Plan 2018-22 has allowed the Pact to include baseline and target indicators, a requirement that applies to all chapters of the NDP. According to the DNP, SINERGIA[4] has proven to be a key tool for overseeing the progress of gender indicators for the National Development Plan, not only in terms of its compliance but also in terms of the activities carried out by the responsible entities. In interviews, however, stakeholders reported challenges in negotiating indicators with the national institutions responsible for implementing gender objectives and activities in the NDP. As a result, there are not enough indicators at present to measure every gender-based activity in the NDP, and some indicators used in SINERGIA are not the correct type of indicator, complicating monitoring of certain activities in the NDP.

As with CONPES 161, the renewed National Public Policy on Gender Equality (CONPES 4080) has very few indicators linked to specific targets to gauge progress in gender equality outcomes over time. The majority of the indicators included in its Action Plan allow to evaluate the level of implementation of specific strategies and programmes.

At the subnational level, the DNP's national monitoring and evaluation system, SINERGIA, has a specific evaluation tool for information on objectives formulated in the National Development Plan that have a local impact (SINERGIA Territorial). The information and data collected with SINERGIA Territorial is used to inform departments. It also provides some guiding principles for monitoring to help departments monitor their planning instruments, and in particular, their department development plans (OECD, 2019[12]). However, despite these efforts (including the creation of toolkits to improve monitoring processes in departments and municipalities, as highlighted in Box 3.9), most departments monitor outputs (i.e. whether a planned bridge was built), while monitoring of outcomes is limited (i.e. whether the capacity-building activity implemented resulted in better conditions for women in a given area). More importantly, few departments currently have evaluation capacity (OECD, 2019[12]). This could hinder the monitoring and evaluation at a subnational level of activities included in local development plans designed to closing gender gaps, as well as the effective integration of a gender dimension in local policies and programmes.

3.5. Strategic planning for gender equality at subnational level

The cross-cutting Pact for Women's Equality has benefited from being a core pillar of the NDP and from its legal requirement to reflect NDP goals in departments' strategic planning. Under the Organic Law of the Development Plan (Law 152 of 1994), National, Departmental and Municipal Development Plans are to be designed for a four-year period. Co-ordination is among the principles of this Law, according to which "the planning authorities of the national and subnational order must guarantee that there is due harmony and coherence between the activities they carry out within them and in relation to the other local entities for the purposes of formulating, executing and evaluating their development plans". Planning processes for women's equality, at a national and at a local level, should thus be articulated and linked to the guidelines of CONPES 161 (Proyectamos Colombia, 2016[9]).

Planning at the department level is regulated by law. Departments are key actors in charge of implementing local strategies codified in planning instruments such as Departmental Development Plans. Several vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms (*Contratos Plan*, Agreements for Prosperity, Association of Departments) allow departments to co-ordinate their planning objectives with those of the national government (OECD, 2019[12]).

As for incorporating gender provisions of the NDP in the Departmental Development Plans (2020-2023), subnational stakeholders reported during the OECD fact-finding mission that Departmental Development Plans (DDPs) are usually aligned with the NDP and that gender provisions have effectively been incorporated in the latest DDPs.

In 2020, the CPEM carried out an analysis to verify that goals, programmes and projects for improving the quality of life of women had been incorporated in the DDPs. To achieve this, the CPEM used several criteria, such as whether the NDP's gender provisions had been incorporated in the DDPs, as well as the international standards, national laws and international commitments on gender equality. According to this report, all Departmental Development Plans (2020-2023) included a series of goals, programmes and projects designed to close gender gaps, some with specific budgets. However, limited information is available on the implementation of these provisions (CPEM, n.d.[15]). As mentioned in an earlier Section of this Chapter, the DNP has also introduced a mechanism to monitor implementation of gender provisions in DDPs (through SINERGIA Territorial) encountering certain limitations on the monitoring of outputs. Going forward, an assessment of the implementation of DDPs could help measure the impact of gender policies at a local level.

CONPES 161, as a policy document with a national approach, does not establish direct responsibilities for departments (*Gobernaciones*). After it was disseminated to stakeholders, most departments created their own gender policies with the support of the CPEM, through guidance documents and capacity-building activities (OECD, 2020[16]). A number of examples are illustrated in Box 3.7 and Box 3.8. However, no follow-up has been carried out on their implementation. Reported challenges, such as limited institutional capacity and human and financial resources, uneven political will to promote gender equality, and limited co-ordination between departments and the national government, have hampered implementation of subnational gender policies and the anchoring of whole-of-government gender equality vision at the subnational level.

Box 3.7. Gender frameworks in the Department of Huila

The departmental strategy for Huila is laid out in the "*Huila Crece*" Departmental Development Plan (DDP). It sets forth activities in 7 out of 8 policy lines/objectives (except for one on women and peace building) included in the NDP on gender affairs, most of them in the framework of strengthening the gender institutional framework for women.

As for the Gender Policy, the Mechanism for the Advancement of Women in the department (*Gobernación*) is the Office for Women, Children and Adolescence and Social Affairs, which is attached to the Governor's Office. Representatives from this local government reported to the OECD that their DDP is aligned with the Policy Lines in the National Gender Policy (CONPES 161). They also reported that they were included in the making of the new gender policy.

Source: Information provided by the government of Colombia and by the subnational government of Huila in 2021.

Box 3.8. Gender frameworks in the Department of Boyacá

The "Social Pact for Boyacá" Departmental Development Plan establishes activities in all of the eight policy lines/objectives included in the NDP on gender affairs, most of them within the framework of strengthening the gender institutional framework for women.

As for the Gender Policy, the Mechanism for the Advancement of Women in the department (*Gobernación*) is the Directorate for Women and Social Inclusion, located under the Secretariat for Social Integration, which addresses all vulnerable groups and minorities. Representatives of this local government reported that they were included in the making of the new gender policy, where they plan to focus on rural women. They also reported using DNP's Territorial Kit for the making of their current DDP, aiming to incorporate provisions on the Pact for Women of the NDP.

Source: Information provided by the government of Colombia and by the subnational government of Boyacá in 2021.

Departments interviewed by the OECD (Huila and Boyacá) showed awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming. This could be attributed to the active engagement of the CPEM and of the National Planning Department with subnational entities, but also to the participatory process during the preparation of the DDPs.

At a local level, Community Councils (Law 70 of 1993) for Black communities, as well as the District Consultative Commissions, are mechanisms to enable participation in the design and implementation of local plans and policies (mostly regarding land issues). Furthermore, the National Planning Council (Law 152 of 1994) is a space for social dialogue constituted by representatives of civil society (at local, regional and national levels) to intervene in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies regarding the NDP and exercising citizen control over public management.

3.5.1. Tools for aligning strategic planning for gender equality at various levels of government

Colombia has made progress in adopting mechanisms to strengthen vertical co-ordination between the national and departmental governments and to align planning processes at every level of government. Departments surveyed by the OECD reported that they had received support from the national government in the form of training, guides and funds for projects related to Departmental Development Plans, including those on gender equality. This has contributed to more effective implementation of local development plans and is granted throughout the different phases of their DDPs, mostly through guides like the DNP's KiTerritorial and Following-up Kit. The DNP also assisted subnational governments in creating development plans with a virtual platform, *Portal Territorial*. This platform follows good practices for Municipal or Departmental Development Plans and tools to achieve the UN Sustainable Development

Goals. Although this information includes gender-based data, it is not easily accessible and is not regularly updated (OECD, 2021[17]).

Box 3.9. Mechanisms for promoting vertical co-ordination

Territorial Planning Kit (*Kit de Planeación Territorial*). This kit is made up of guides, formats and explanatory videos to facilitate the formulation of Departmental and Municipal Development Plans. It has been updated with the most recent developments in terms of gender, based in the Pact for Women included in the NDP. It is organised into four units:

- Unit 1 – Strategic lines. Based on the proposals set out in the Programme of Government, this Unit provides material to define the strategic lines to guide the management of the municipality or department in the next four years.
- Unit 2 – Diagnosis. Provides guidelines to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the territory for each strategic line of the Municipal or Departmental Development Plan. The DNP also reported to the OECD on incorporating Terridata indicators into this kit, to provide them with access to sex-desegregated data. However, there is no evidence of the effective use of these indicators by the departments.
- Unit 3 – Strategic Plan. Organises interventions proposed by the administration in line with the goals of each of the policies, programmes and projects by the local government.
- Unit 4 – Multi-year investment plan. Presents the information necessary to propose the strategies and financing plans of the programmes defined in the Municipal or Departmental Development Plan.

Following-up Kit (*Kit de Seguimiento*). This kit is made up of four units aimed to strengthen the understanding and scope of a monitoring system for Departmental and Municipal Development Plans:

- Unit 0 – Protocol. Includes the general guidelines for the use of the kit, such as the main institutional, instrumental and conceptual elements to consider before the design and implementation of the follow-up system.
- Unit 1 – Enlistment of Conditions for Follow-up. Defines guidelines for processes of data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Unit 2 – Design of the Monitoring System. Defines guidelines for establishing a structure, system or monitoring model according to the needs and institutional context of the local entities.
- Unit 3 – Implementation of the Monitoring System. Presents the methodological and operational conditions that must be guaranteed to implement the system of monitoring, to produce pertinent and timely information for decision makers. The Following-up Kit is supported by other thematic guides, such as the Financial Kit, which, among other things, presents planning and programming processes of the results-oriented budget cycle.

Source: (OECD, 2021[18]), Practical Tools for Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation System at the Sub-National Level, https://www.oecd.org/gov/colombia-toolkit-en-def.pdf.

As for capacity building, the departments surveyed reported receiving periodic training from the DNP on how to use the planning tools mentioned above. However, as the OECD has noted in the past, training activities should take into account the differences in resources and capacity between subnational governments if they are to be effective (OECD, 2021[17]).

As noted, the national government has also moved forward on instituting and disseminating the gender policy. As a result, most departments in the county created their own gender policies with the support of the CPEM (through guidance documents and capacity-building activities).

Overall, to enhance coherence in national and subnational gender mainstreaming policies towards a whole-of-government strategy, Colombia's departments have taken significant steps to strengthen capacity at an institutional level, and to include at least one person in every *Gobernación* in charge of gender affairs. Departments have also improved their governance practices and strengthened their administrative capacity for strategic planning, including improving their information systems, encouraging citizen participation in their planning processes and linking development plans to a monitoring strategy (SINERGIA). The national government has thus helped support departments to align planning processes. Challenges remain, however, in ensuring unified and pertinent indicators and needs assessments at the local level, as well as anchoring the gender-based departmental vision in strategic planning and consolidating strategic planning processes based on results.

3.6. Road map with policy recommendations

CONPES 161, CONPES 4080 and the NDP have a clear focus and provide direction for both the public sector and citizens. They also include co-ordinated and well-defined gender objectives. There is a general and increasing awareness in Colombia of gender equality and the mainstreaming strategy in governmental institutions both at the national and subnational levels.

However, challenges are likely to emerge as a result of the weak objectives and indicators for measuring these outcomes. The NDP, with its cross-cutting Pact for Women's Equality, the CONPES 161 and the CONPES 4080 all include indicators. However, the CONPES 161 and the CONPES 4080 have few indicators linked to specific targets to gauge progress in gender equality outcomes over time, and no resources are assigned for their implementation. This reduces the measures' effectiveness and also their monitoring and evaluation, which is already limited at the national level and even more so at a subnational level. Indicators and strategic planning logic are also missing in line ministries and economic sectors. There is a bottleneck in translating the whole-of-government gender equality objectives to ministerial plans to outline how ministries can help achieve them.

The NDP has baseline and target indicators overseen by SINERGIA, which has proven to be an efficient tool. These indicators, however, are not aligned with those of the Colombian Observatory of Women (OCM). Indicators in the NDP do not measure every gender-based objective and activity in the Plan and some indicators, by nature, are not appropriate for measuring certain activities. At a subnational level, gender-based indicators are not always aligned with the national government's, and although they are measured through SINERGIA Territorial, most departments monitor outputs and not outcomes. Evaluation capacity, meanwhile, is still mostly absent in most departments.

Improvements are needed to assess clearly where the government stands on its gender equality goals and on which interventions are necessary to achieve its vision and build a results-oriented strategic plan.

3.6.1. Statutory requirements for gender mainstreaming

- To strengthen implementation of Article 3 and Article 4 of Law 823 on gender mainstreaming, the National Planning Department (DNP) and the Presidential Council for Women's Equality (CPEM), in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, could consider **developing protocols/processes, standard methodology and guidance that can be applied to the law-making, regulatory and policy cycle**. This guidance would be a complementary tool for the budget tracer, with the goal of achieving gender equality objectives through all decision-making levers. This guidance document could be an integral part of the new National Policy on Gender Equality (CONPES) document,

establishing a renewed public policy for gender equality or any future policy in this area. The guidance should clarify the objectives of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving national gender equality objectives (see the next Section on strategic planning), setting standards and methodologies, as well as clarifying the expectations for the national and subnational governments to implement Articles 3 and 4 of Law 823.

- The guidance should also consider, as appropriate, the **development of methodologies for the analysis of all public policies from a gender perspective**. Such guiding documents can also guide the CPEM in executing its annual reporting requirement to the Congress in compliance with the provisions of the Law 823. While this is already done in the area of tagging the spending decisions (see the Section on gender budgeting in Chapter 5), there is room to expand it to decision making in the design and implementation of laws and public policies.
- **Ensure sufficient mandates and capacity of the stakeholders** tasked with monitoring the whole-of-government compliance with Articles 3 and 4 of Law 823. The aspect of resources and capacities is further explored in Chapter 4.

3.6.2. Strategic planning and monitoring for gender equality policy: Integrating a gender lens

- In preparing any future policy in the area of gender equality, consider **identifying a set of high-level and result-oriented goals that policy makers can focus on** as the authoritative frame of reference for policy action, prioritisation of resources and accountability.
- To underpin its implementation, **ensure that the future gender equality strategy outlines clear objectives and targets in relation to the high-level priorities**, and that it clearly identifies roles, responsibilities, resources and lines of accountability for the whole of government, ideally accompanied by a data strategy. The Action Plan for the CONPES, where all this is considered, should also have the same time frame as the policy.
- Consider **establishing requirements from line ministries to develop gender mainstreaming action plans,** with a view to achieving gender equality objectives as defined by the current or any future public policy on gender (as set out in CONPES 161 and 4080 and in the NDP), and to regularly report to the CPEM and the DNP (e.g. through monitoring surveys) on progress. Such requirements can also facilitate and feed into the annual reporting requirement to the Congress, complementing the gender budget tracer.
- **Strengthen the evidence base for gender-sensitive policy making**, by enhancing the use of statistical data in designing, planning, implementing and delivering public policies and services, including in areas not explicitly linked to gender equality.
- Consider **scaling up the Ministry of Energy's good practice by conducting sectoral studies** to gather gender-based data and to communicate the gender policy vision, as well as to build sectoral or ministerial strategic plans with a gender focus.
- Consider **developing a homogeneous set of indicators across government institutions** to track and assess progress in closing gender gaps, as identified through high-level goals. Having a set of robust indicators regularly updated and aligned with the objectives of the country's gender policy and national development plan would allow for better evaluation of their efficiency and effectiveness, as well as make it easier to track and assess results. Consider greater alignment between the indicators developed by the Colombian Observatory of Women and indicators used as part of SINERGIA to facilitate results-based management in gender equality policy. Enhancing cross-silo co-ordination, as well as co-ordination with the DNP, relevant national line ministries and the DANE (National Statistics Department) on indicator work is essential.

- Consider **strengthening co-ordination between the central, departmental and municipal levels of government** on strategic planning, including by creating additional fora for exchange and policy dialogue.
- **Provide additional capacity-building and knowledge-sharing support for the planning process in departmental governments**, including in monitoring and evaluation, while taking into account the differences in subnational governments' resources and capacities.
- Consider **strengthening the CPEM in human and financial resources to implement a strategy for following up on the implementation and impact of the national gender equality policy** at a subnational level. An assessment of the implementation of DDPs would be desirable, to measure the impact of gender policies at the local level.
- Consider **assessing the use of the information portals**, to determine the demand from central entities and their use in strategic planning and decision making at the local level.

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Notes

[1] CONPES documents (so-called because they are approved by the National Council on Economic and Social Policy, the Executive Branch's Cabinet Committee on economic and social policy, on which all ministries have a seat) are an expression of intent on government policy and are not formal legal instruments.

[2] The objective of Law 1757 is to promote, protect and ensure the different modalities and mechanisms of citizens' right to participate in the political, administrative, economic, social and cultural spheres in Colombia. Article 2 stipulates that any development plan must include specific measures aimed at promoting participation of all people in decisions that affect them and support the different forms of organisation of society. Similarly, the management plans of public institutions should explicitly propose the way in which they will facilitate and promote the participation of citizens in their areas of responsibility. The law also created the National Council for Citizen Participation to advise the national government on defining, developing, designing, monitoring and evaluating public policy on citizen participation in Colombia. This law also defines participatory budget practices as a process for ensuring equitable, rational, efficient, effective and transparent allocation of public resources that strengthens the relationship between the state and civil society.

[3] Prior consultation is a fundamental right (Law 21 of 1991) enshrined in the International Labour Organization's Convention 169 on Indigenous and tribal peoples. This right enables ethnic groups to decide on measures (legislative and administrative) or projects, works and activities conducted in their territories. It seeks to protect the cultural, social and economic integrity of ethnic groups and give them the right to participate in the decision-making process when they are located in the area of influence of any governmental project, work, activity or legislative or administrative measure, subject to consultation under the law.

[4] The 1991 constitution establishes the obligation to monitor and evaluate national policies, and the DNP has created a monitoring and evaluation system for key national policies and programmes called SINERGIA. This system, led by the DNP, provides performance information on whether and how public policy objectives are being attained. Through SINERGIA, citizens can also follow up on the government's performance, helping to build trust in government.

4 A whole-of-government approach to promote gender equality policy in Colombia

Gender equality objectives can only be achieved if public administrations are equipped with the capacities and capabilities to put them into practice. In recent years, Colombia has made strides in reinforcing its whole-of-government institutional framework and its capacities to promote gender equality. This Chapter provides an overview of its institutional design for gender mainstreaming from a whole-of-government perspective. It assesses the roles, responsibilities, capacities and capabilities of the governmental stakeholders that make up the institutional framework for promoting gender equality at the national level and also discusses the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for horizontal and vertical co-ordination. It goes on to outline the design and structure of the subnational gender machineries in the departments of Huila and Boyacá. Action-oriented policy recommendations are then proposed to strengthen the institutional set-up, with a view to making progress towards the country's gender equality objectives.

4.1. Introduction

Gender equality is a complex, cross-cutting and multidimensional public policy issue which requires the participation and co-ordination of all government actors, as well as of relevant non-governmental stakeholders. The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (hereinafter the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation) promotes the adoption of a whole-of-government approach as the most effective strategy for making progress in the area of gender equality (OECD, 2016[1]). Building on evidence and good practices, it emphasises that this approach requires committed leadership, sound institutional design, efficient co-ordination mechanisms and adequate capacities and capabilities for gender mainstreaming at appropriate levels of government. Co-ordinated whole-of-government approaches have become especially relevant in the last 20 years, with the increase in transversal and multifaceted policy challenges, and in the number and size of state agencies and autonomous bodies (OECD, 2021[2]).

Institutional design for the promotion of gender equality includes the roles and mandates assigned to central gender equality institutions as "bodies primarily responsible for supporting the government's agenda to advance society-wide gender equality goals". It also involves the Centre of Government (e.g. the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Finance), data-producing bodies such as national statistics offices, line ministries and public administrations at various levels of government (including in areas not traditionally associated with gender, such as environment, transportation, procurement, planning and economic development), and other delivery partners specific to each country's context (OECD, 2021[2]). Accountability and oversight mechanisms – such as independent commissions, audit institutions and parliamentary committees – also play a key role, as they help identify needs, gaps and challenges in meeting gender equality goals, and encourage compliance with gender equality policies.

The following Sections assess the robustness of the institutional design and whole-of-government approaches for promoting gender equality outcomes in Colombia, highlighting good practices and proposing next steps to strengthen the institutional set-up, with a view to making progress towards national gender equality objectives.

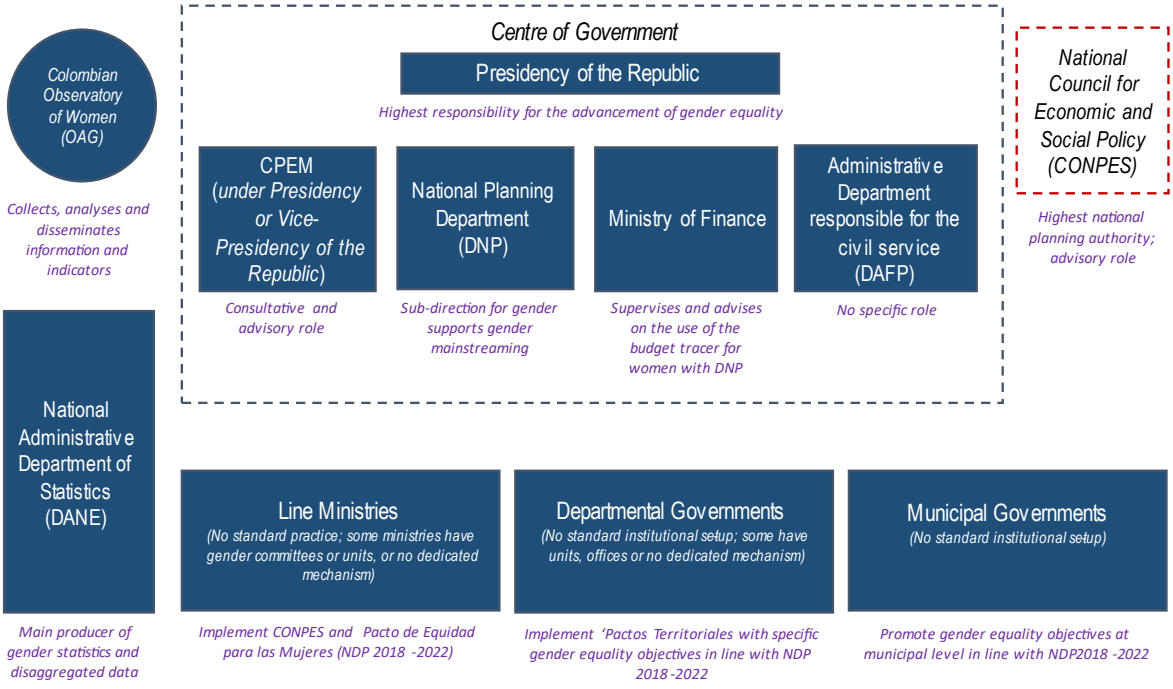
4.2. An overview of the institutional framework for promoting gender equality in Colombia

In recent years, Colombia has made an effort to reinforce its whole-of-government institutional framework to promote gender equality, including through gender mainstreaming at both national and subnational levels. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, this framework refers to:

- a central gender equality institution (the Presidential Council for Women's Equality, or CPEM), located at the Centre of Government, with consultative and advisory functions;
- the Colombian Observatory for Women (OCM) attached to the CPEM, as a tool for collecting, analysing and disseminating both information on Colombian women and relevant indicators on gender equality in the country;
- a Centre of Government, made up of: the Presidency of the Republic, which has the highest responsibility for the promotion of gender equality; the National Planning Department (DNP), which supports the incorporation of a gender approach into sectoral policies, plans, programmes and projects; the Ministry of Finance, which supervises and advises on the use of the budget tracer for women, to identify public funds used to support women's equality in Colombia;
- the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (CONPES), Colombia's most important policy co-ordination and policy-integration institution in the government, which acts as an advisory body on all policies related to national economic and social development, including gender equality;
- line ministries that implement gender policies within their areas of responsibility;

- departmental governments that lead their local gender equality agendas in line with the objectives of the National Development Plan;
- municipal governments that promote gender equality objectives at the local level;
- the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Colombia's main source of data disaggregated by gender and by other identity factors;
- accountability from the Congress.

Figure 4.1. Institutional design and mandates for gender mainstreaming in Colombia



Source: Developed by the OECD, 2022.

4.2.1. Colombia's central gender equality institution: the Presidential Council for Women's Equality

Central gender institutions are key pillars for the promotion of the government's gender equality agenda (OECD, 2019[3]). Delivering specific programmes for the empowerment of women has historically been one of the main responsibilities of central gender equality institutions across the OECD. However, given the cross-cutting nature of gender equality policy, momentum has been growing in recent years to expand their mandate and allow them to play a more significant role in ensuring co-ordination with governmental stakeholders and civil society. In several OECD countries, central gender equality institutions assist line ministries in integrating gender considerations into policy analysis by developing specific tools and guidelines, as well as into sectoral strategic planning, by highlighting the relevance of gender issues. For example, the Division for Gender Equality in Sweden works closely with other government agencies and

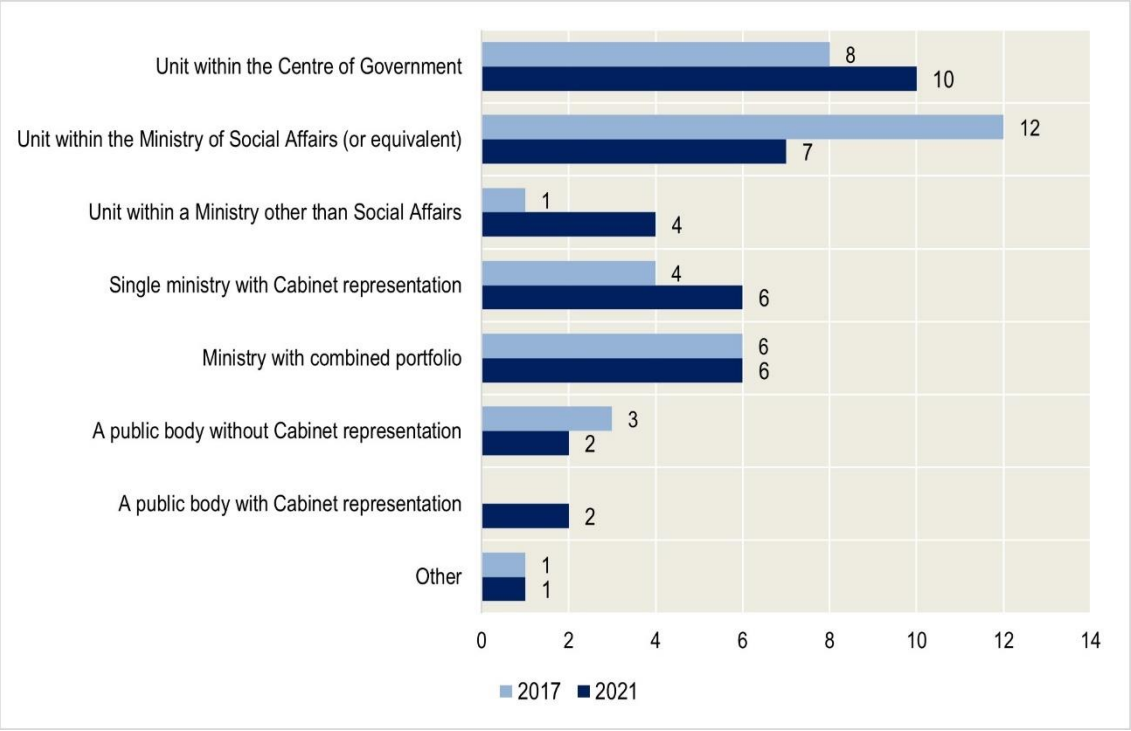
provides them with support and knowledge to achieve national gender equality goals. As part of their mandate, central gender equality institutions can also lead the implementation of gender equality policies and programmes, make policy recommendations and give advice to other government bodies, conduct policy research on gender issues, and monitor the implementation of governmental gender initiatives. In some instances, other responsibilities include supporting capacity building in line ministries for gender mainstreaming, guiding the development of gender-disaggregated data, and reviewing the quality of gender analysis for draft legislation, regulations, policies and programmes (OECD, 2019[3]). More recently, OECD analysis has highlighted the role played by the central gender equality institutions in bringing a gender perspective to the decision-making table after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2021[4]). Central gender equality institutions can also play a key role in supporting the strategic use of some government tools, such as gender impact assessments, gender budgeting, infrastructure and public procurement, by providing expertise and guidance to responsible line ministries and agencies. For example, Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada, the Canadian institution leading key policy initiatives on issues affecting women and girls, is tasked with guiding the government's implementation of its tool for gender and intersectional analysis (GBA+) through capacity and advice (OECD, 2018[5]). Similarly, as explained in Chapter 5, in Belgium, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men released a manual and checklist in 2018 on gender-sensitive public procurement for federal staff managing public procurement contracts (OECD, 2021[6]).

Across the OECD, there is no standardised blueprint for the institutional design of central gender equality institutions. Given the varied nature of governmental set-ups, administrative culture and specific contexts, OECD countries have experimented with different structures to implement and co-ordinate strategic objectives for gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Although the positioning of these institutions in government structures can send a strong signal of political commitment to the gender equality agenda, no single template can be suggested, as the effectiveness and robustness of the institutional set-up depend both on the high-level profile of central gender institutions and on adequate capacities to carry out their mandate. Certain elements are necessary, though, to ensure they function effectively.

Central gender equality institutions may be a separate ministry, paired with other portfolios in a single ministry or located in the office of the head of government or state. Figure 4.2 shows institutional arrangements commonly used in OECD countries. Since data was first gathered on this topic in 2011, units in the Centre of Government (CoG) have become more common (10 countries) in the OECD area, while units on gender equality in ministries of social affairs (or equivalent) continue to be among the more common arrangements (7 countries).

Figure 4.2. Central gender equality institutions in OECD countries (2021)

Number of respondents



Note: 2021 data provided by 38 respondents, 2017 data provided by 36 respondents.
Source: Information collected by OECD based on desk research and data from the 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

In Colombia, the central institution with responsibility for the government's gender equality policy is the Presidential Council for Women's Equality (*Consejeria Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer*, CPEM). Initially created in 1999 to support the development of approaches to address gender-based violence (GBV), the CPEM has progressively expanded its areas of work, covering aspects related to economic empowerment, health, peace and security, and institutional strengthening. Currently, as established by Decree 1784 of 2019, its main functions include: providing advice on the design of policies, plans, programmes and projects for the promotion of gender equality; ensuring co-ordination and policy coherence; and establishing follow-up mechanisms to comply with domestic legislation and international treaties and conventions related to women's equity and gender mainstreaming. As the main governing body for the gender equality policy, the Council provides the government with advice on how to promote women's equality and progress in closing the existing gender gaps.

Since its establishment in 1999, the CPEM has been located under the Vice Presidency or the Presidency of the Republic. Created to replace and expand the mandate of the National Direction for Women's Equality, the CPEM was placed under the co-ordination of the Office of the Director of the Administrative Department of the Presidency (DAPRE) between 1999 and 2019. Since then, following Decree 1784 of 2019, it has been attached to the Vice Presidency. Similar institutional structures across the OECD countries are illustrated in Box 4.1.

Box 4.1. Examples of central gender equality institutions located under CoG

In the **Czech Republic**, the central gender equality institution responsible for the co-ordination of the gender equality agenda is the Gender Equality Department, located in the Office of the Government. The department serves as Secretariat of the Government Council for Gender Equality, a governmental advisory body in this area established in 2001, and co-ordinates activities in the field of gender mainstreaming. Similarly, in **Italy,** the Department for Equal Opportunities, attached to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, is in charge of designing, co-ordinating and monitoring policies and initiatives for the promotion of equal opportunities, including gender equality. The department acts as an operational unit and is normally led by a minister without portfolio. Besides its main functions, the department is also responsible for the collection and organisation of relevant data and information, as well as for co-ordination with the central and local administrations and other public entities in the field of equality and equal opportunities.

Source: Information provided by the government of the Czech Republic and by the government of Italy in 2021.

The strategic choice of having the CPEM directly attached to the Vice Presidency of the Republic indicates the government's recognition of the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda as a cross-cutting priority. Placing the CPEM at the Centre of Government has helped ensure it has a steering role, as well as the mandate to engage line ministries, departmental governments and municipalities in mainstreaming gender considerations in their work.

In its current configuration, the CPEM is formally led by a Presidential Counsellor, as are Colombia's other High Commissioner's Offices and Presidential Councils. The Presidential Counsellors work on advancing government initiatives under the National Development Plan's priority policy pillars in their areas of responsibility, as well as the President's own programming priorities. Presidential Counsellors are part of the Presidency of the Republic, and their budget depends on the Administrative Department of the Presidency. Their status thus differs from that of a minister, who is a member of the executive, sits in the Council of Ministers, and has resources guaranteed by the annual national budget. Under Decree 823 of 2012, however, the President of the Republic can summon the directors of administrative departments and other officials to participate in the Council of Ministers. This is the case for the Presidential Counsellor for Women's Equality, who attends all meetings of the Council of Ministers (currently led by the President, and including the Vice President and 18 ministers), usually without decision-making powers except on gender equality-related issues.

As noted above, the CPEM is essentially an advisory institution. The OECD finds that there is scope to increase the CPEM's ability to support the effective implementation of the Law 823 of 2003 across the public administration. According to this Law, the national government shall apply "gender criteria in policies, decisions, and actions in national and decentralised public agencies'', as well as adopt all the administrative measures and instruments required for its implementation. The CPEM has limited resources to facilitate and monitor implementation of this requirement, with six full-time positions, funded by the state budget. Other positions or activities are funded by international co-operation or ensured through service contracts, where possible. The CPEM does not have a dedicated budget to invest in projects, facilitate gender mainstreaming, and act as knowledge broker across the public administration. Only recently has a trust (*Patrimonio*) been created to allow the CPEM to develop projects aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurship as part of the efforts to mitigate the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women. The OECD baseline assessment (2016-18) found that a limited resources and limited authority often restrict the central gender institutions' ability to facilitate gender mainstreaming across the government (OECD, 2019[3]). These challenges, which came to the fore during the COVID-19 crisis

(OECD, 2020[7]), have prompted some governments to allocate increased resources to gender equality institutions.

Given the growing responsibilities assigned to the CPEM, the government of Colombia could consider strengthening the entity by assigning it a broader mandate as well as adequate capacities, capabilities, and resources. In the medium term, a dedicated public entity/or department on gender equality could support the CPEM in carrying out its mandate. Box 4.2 provides examples of good practices across the OECD in this respect.

Box 4.2. Good practices in central gender equality institutions in OECD countries

Canada

Canada has had a minister responsible for the status of women since 1971. Currently, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth leads Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), an official department of the federal government. The mandate of WAGE is to promote equality with respect to sex, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression through the inclusion of people of all genders, including women, in Canada's economic, social, and political life. Its responsibilities include leading the implementation of Gender-based Analysis Plus (Canada's tool for gender and intersectional analysis) across the federal government; providing expert advice and strategic support to federal departments and agencies in the development of policies, programmes and legislation related to gender equality, including gaps in health research and care; and sharing research and policy expertise with the organisations and other levels of governments that have the levers to address gender equality issues.

Iceland

In Iceland, a special institution under the administration of the Prime Minister, the Directorate of Equality, is responsible for administering all matters concerning gender equality covered by the Act on the Administration of Matters Concerning Equality No. 151/2020. The Directorate monitors the implementation of the act, provides advice and proposes measures on equality to the Prime Minister and other authorities, and gathers and disseminates relevant information through surveys, reports and research. Responsible for equality affairs in the country, the Prime Minister's Office also oversees the work of the Gender Equality Complaints Committee and the Gender Equality Fund, which complement the mandate of the Directorate of Equality. In particular, the Gender Equality Complaints Committee acts as an independent and autonomous entity that assists individuals, enterprises, institutions and non-governmental organisations whose rights have been violated, while the Gender Equality Fund supports projects and research to promote gender equality. The Department of Equality, another entity in the Prime Minister's Office, co-ordinates the equality agenda and conducts policy-related work.

Sweden

In Sweden, the Division for Gender Equality under the Ministry of Employment is responsible for co-ordination and development of the country's gender equality policy, including gender mainstreaming. It is also in charge of administering the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, established in 2018, which helps implement Swedish gender equality policy. Its main functions include co-ordinating, monitoring and providing support and knowledge to achieve national gender equality goals. It also works closely with other government agencies, municipalities, regions, civil society, businesses and industry.

Source: (Government of Canada, n.d.[8]; Government of Iceland, n.d.[9]; Government of Sweden, n.d.[10])

At the time of the publication of this review, the government of Colombia just approved a law (Law 2281 of 2023) for the creation of a Ministry of Equality and Equity, which is expected to assume the functions of

the CPEM in the medium term and reinforce the country's institutional architecture and capacities for gender equality and mainstreaming.

Colombian Observatory of Women (OCM)

Supporting the CPEM, the Colombian Observatory of Women (*Observatorio Colombiano de las Mujeres*, OCM) gathers, analyses and disseminates information on the situation of women living in Colombia. Created by Law 1009 of 2006, at a time when such data and statistics were not collected, the Observatory now provides information on women in Colombia, divided into seven main clusters: demography, economic autonomy, health and reproductive rights, gender-based violence, decision making, education and information and communications technology (ICT), and peace building. It also produces regular publications on gender-related topics. To gain access to gender-disaggregated data needed to inform indicators and publications, the OCM has agreements with both the National Planning Department (DNP) and the National Department of Statistics (DANE). The OECD finds that its limited resources represent the main challenge to the sustainability and impact of the Observatory. The OCM currently has four full-time professionals: a statistician, a gender analyst and a platform engineer, as well as a co-ordinator relying on international funds. In light of its supporting role to Colombia's central gender equality institution, the OCM could benefit from greater resources to carry out its activities. Box 4.3 provides details on similar initiatives to promote the dissemination of statistics on gender equality in OECD countries.

Box 4.3. Observatories and institutes that promote the dissemination of data on gender equality in OECD countries

Set up in December 2021 by **Luxembourg**'s Ministry of Equality between Women and Men, the Equality Observatory (*Observatoire de l'Egalité*) aims to provide relevant data to develop political strategies, support the work of gender equality professionals, as well as analyse and follow up on the developments in gender equality in Luxembourg. The Observatory centralises data collected by different administrations and organisations in seven priority areas: domestic violence; employment; decision making; work-life balance; education; income; and health. It maintains a public website with information on the evolution of gender equality. In **Spain**, the Institute of Women, an autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Equality, regularly updates a database called "Women in Figures" (*Mujeres en cifras*) including a set of indicators to assess gender equality in different areas of life. Since 2022, videos and infographics are published on a monthly basis to share statistics and raise awareness on existing gender inequalities. The Institute of Women also collaborates closely with the National Institute of Statistics to prepare an online publication called "Women and Men in Spain" (*Mujeres y Hombres en España*), which provides a selection of the most relevant gender indicators allowing to consistently assess the situation of women in several social and economic fields.

Source: (Government of Luxembourg, Ministry of Equality between Women and Men, (n.d.)[11]), Observatoire de l'Egalité; https://observatoire-egalite.lu/, information provided by the government of Spain in 2023.

4.2.2. Observatory 'Everyone's Colombia'

Created in 2021 by the Ministry of Interior and the Colombian Institute of Technical Standards and Certification (ICONTEC), the Observatory 'Everyone's Colombia' (*Colombia de Todos*) aims to monitor and follow up on acts of discrimination in the country, with the goal of reducing them. The Observatory's activity is thus not limited to racial discrimination, since it also monitors and follows up on acts of discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, opinion or political participation, and disability. Funded by the Ministry of the Interior, it is intended to help the government of Colombia

meet its 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 5 (on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls) and SDG 10 (on social, economic, and political inclusion for all). Officially launched by the national Government in May 2022, the Observatory advises the Ministry of Interior on those matters, proposing actions to tackle various forms of discrimination, helping formulate public policies and working to reduce cases of discrimination in Colombia by issuing a seal of non-discrimination. Human resources assigned to the Observatory as well as its related work plan were due to be determined in the second semester of 2022.

4.2.3. The role of the Centre of Government in promoting gender equality in Colombia

The Centre of Government (CoG) bodies play a key role in leading and steering the implementation of cross-cutting goals (OECD, 2019[3]) (OECD, 2019[3]). The CoG is also a key actor in realising society-wide gender equality objectives. OECD evidence shows that the involvement of the CoG in gender equality governance is one of the key success factors to embed gender mainstreaming initiatives in the public administration. In particular, the CoG could play a pivotal role by providing strategic guidance and oversight on the implementation of gender equality objectives, while empowering central gender institutions to work with all public sector entities to drive change. In addition, the CoG can clarify what line ministries are expected to do to improve gender equality, develop clear and simple measurement and evaluation of executive performance, and remove barriers to implementation. The CoG can also encourage the strategic use of government tools (such as gender impact assessments, gender budgeting, infrastructure and public procurement) by providing oversight, establishing rules, and challenging line ministries to comply with them. Finally, engaging CoG can highlight the importance of gender equality as a national goal and policy practice, while encouraging accountability and facilitating buy-in. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, CoGs across the OECD also played an important role in co-ordination and strategic planning, the use of evidence to inform decision making, and the communication of decisions to the public (OECD, 2020[12]) The Canadian institutional set-up represents a good practice of CoG commitment in promoting the gender equality agenda (Box 4.4).

Box 4.4. Centre of Government's involvement in gender equality governance in Canada

In Canada, the Centre of Government, made up of the Privy Council Office, the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Department of Finance, plays a leadership role in engaging federal departments in gender mainstreaming efforts. Central agencies exercise a "gatekeeper" function, in making sure that the requirements for gender-based policy analysis are met, as well as a "challenge" function in terms of analytical rigour and quality assurance. The Privy Council Office has the mandate to support the implementation of GBA+, Canada's tool for gender and intersectional analysis, and requires that all departments and agencies consider its application in their work, while challenging them on the use of GBA+ in the usual policy development process. The Department of Finance develops and implements policies in the economic, fiscal, tax, social, security, international and financial sectors, drafts the federal budget and leads the implementation of gender budgeting. Finally, the Treasury Board Secretariat makes sure that GBA+ is integrated into the Treasury Board Submissions, Departmental Plans, Departmental Results Frameworks and reporting, and is also responsible for introducing gender policies for federal public institutions and for increasing the representation of women in top-level positions in the government.

Source: (OECD, 2018[5]), Gender Equality in Canada: Mainstreaming, Governance and Budgeting, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264301108-en.

In Colombia, the CoG has a foundational role in the area of the promotion of the gender equality policy. It includes the Presidency and the Vice Presidency of the Republic, the National Planning Department (DNP), the Ministry of Finance and, to a limited extent, the Administrative Department responsible for the public service (DAFP). The following Sections analyse their role and responsibilities on the promotion of gender equality in Colombia. The role of the Ministry of Finance is discussed in Chapter 5.

Presidency and Vice Presidency of the Republic

The office of the President of the Republic (*Presidencia de la República*) in Colombia represents the CoG, which oversees and co-ordinates the implementation of the President's agenda. Its main functions include providing guidance and oversight to formulate and execute the government's policy priorities, in particular as they relate to the NDP, which is issued every four years and outlines the national objectives, programmes, goals, as well as planned investments for the government's term of office. As highlighted in Chapter 3, a strong political commitment to gender equality has been expressed in the formulation of Colombia's National Development Plan 2018-2022: Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022: Pacto por Colombia, Pacto por la equidad), which for the first time includes an entire chapter dedicated to women's equity.

As established in Decree 1714 of 2018, the Vice Presidency of the Republic is responsible for certain missions and special assignments delegated by the President and grouped into thematic blocks along the three axes of the NDP: legality, entrepreneurship and equity. In this framework, the Vice Presidency is in charge of issues of women's equity and provides support to the President of the Republic, who has the highest responsibility for the promotion of gender equality.

National Planning Department (DNP)

The National Planning Department (*Departamento Nacional de Planeación*, DNP) is Colombia's CoG institution, which develops, co-ordinates and supports short-, medium- and long-term planning in Colombia, while guiding the public policy cycle and managing allocation of public investment. The DNP co-ordinates the formulation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Plan and other policies, including those concerning gender.

Since 2013, the DNP has had a specific subdirection for gender located under the Directorate for Social Development, which is in charge of guiding the design of public policies that promote gender equality, diversity and gender mainstreaming, non-discrimination and respect for sexual diversity, and for carrying out follow-up and evaluation. The establishment of a subdirection for gender is a critical step signalling political commitment to the gender equality agenda, and highlighting the government's intent to mainstream gender considerations in public investment and other policy areas.

In co-ordination with the CPEM and the Ministry of Finance, the subdirection also supports the incorporation of a gender approach into sectoral policies, plans, programmes and projects, with specific guidelines for each sector. However, like the CPEM, it has limited resources (only three full-time employees) to carry out its mandate, restricting the scope of its action and impact on gender mainstreaming. OECD interviews have established that in many instances, success in mainstreaming gender considerations across line ministries has depended on the political will of each institution. DNP's subdirection has organised sectoral workshops to raise awareness and encourage entities to adopt a gender approach in formulating their policies and programmes, although this remains limited, as noted below.

Administrative Department of the Public Service (DAFP)

The Administrative Department of the Public Service (*Departamento Administrativo de la Función Pública*, DAFP) is the technical, strategic and transversal entity of Colombia's national government in charge of

managing civil servants and human resources, public management and evaluation, internal control, risk management, as well as organisational development, institutional strengthening and transparency. The 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation notes the importance of government capabilities for gender mainstreaming at all levels of government, for example, through training, engaging experts and disseminating relevant data and information. The National Plan for Training and Capacity Building 2020-2030 (*Plan Nacional de Formación y Capacitación 2020-2030*) provides guidelines for building and improving skills and performance of Colombian human talent in the public sector. However, there is no framework at present that identifies skills and capacities for public officials relevant for gender mainstreaming. As part of its mandate to improve the performance of civil servants, the DAFP could increase its key role in support of capacity building and managerial accountability for gender equality and mainstreaming, in co-ordination with the CPEM and other CoG institutions.

4.2.4. Gender mainstreaming structures in line ministries

Promoting gender equality is a whole-of-government effort, requiring the involvement of all government institutions. Line ministries have a key role in mainstreaming gender considerations, in integrating them into their routine functioning, decision-making processes and management structures. To ensure effective implementation, co-ordination and sustainability of a gender equality and mainstreaming strategy, adequate institutional mechanisms should be established in all public institutions, including ministries and public agencies. As noted in the OECD 2015 Gender Recommendation, it is important to "ensure the capacities and resources of public institutions to integrate gender equality perspectives in their activities". Governments could consider, for example, identifying gender equality focal points across public bodies; investing resources in training and promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres to produce gender-sensitive knowledge, leadership and communication; ensuring the collection of gender-disaggregated statistics in their areas of responsibility; and providing clear guidelines, tools, communication and expectations to public institutions in this area (OECD, 2016[1]).

As noted in Chapter 3, Colombia's Law 823 of 2003 mandates that all national public institutions, including line ministries, incorporate gender considerations into their policies, decisions and actions. Reinforcing the institutional framework for gender mainstreaming has been a major priority of the Colombian government in recent years. This has been reflected in a co-ordinated effort to create specialised offices or units across key public entities at the national level.

However, no standard practice is in place in the ministries' internal structure for gender mainstreaming, and capacity remains uneven. In 2019, a strategy adopted by the CPEM called for the creation of gender groups at entity level, to accelerate the pace of sectoral reforms. OECD interviews revealed, however, that in some cases, these groups remained symbolic. A strong leadership at the ministerial level has been an important factor for the success of these initiatives. For example, the DANE has reported that it has benefited from the strong engagement of its leadership to help incorporate a gender perspective in its work. As explained below, the DANE has made significant efforts to improve the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data at national level, supported by its leadership's interest and commitment.

Some line ministries in the public administration now have their own gender committees (such as the Ministry of Transport) or units (such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; the Ministry of Labour; and the Ministry of Justice) tasked with implementing specific projects related to gender equality. Others (such as the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, ICT) have no dedicated units or offices, but report developing their programmes with a gender perspective.

In accordance with stakeholder discussions, line ministries' capacities could be strengthened to allow for a more effective integration of gender perspectives in their sectoral policies and programmes. Line ministries could adopt the most appropriate institutional set-up, with well-defined roles and responsibilities, as well as adequate knowledge and resources to carry out their mandates. Box 4.5 shares good practices from Canada, Czech Republic and Sweden.

Box 4.5. Examples of gender mainstreaming structures in line ministries in OECD countries

Canada

In Canada, federal line departments have gender-based analysis as one of their main responsibilities and are expected to set up adequate governance structures to this effect. In particular, a gender responsibility centre leads, supports and monitors the implementation of the country's gender-based analysis, GBA+, and acts as liaison with the Government of Canada GBA+ network. The structures also include an intra-departmental network or working group dedicated to GBA+, as well as a senior-level gender-mainstreaming champion at the managerial level.

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, gender focal points, also known as gender equality co-ordinators, are established in each ministry to oversee the gender equality agenda and implement gender mainstreaming in their areas of responsibility. The Department of Gender Equality, the central gender equality institution, is in contact with the gender focal points and organises regular meetings to inform them of relevant developments in the agenda. In 2018, the government issued the Standard of the Gender Focal Point (GFP) Positions to facilitate co-ordination on gender equality issues across different ministries and to strengthen the role of the GFPs, by clearly defining their duties and competences, as well as the qualifications and requirements for the position.

Spain

In Spain, the Organic Law 3/2007 on effective equality between women and men establishes bodies to enhance the mainstreaming and co-ordination of the principle of equal treatment and opportunities. In particular, the law prescribes the creation of equality units within each ministry as a key organisational instrument to ensure effective mainstreaming, as well as to monitor the application of equality legislation through reports and gender impact assessments of legislative and regulatory bills or plans.

Sweden

In Sweden, all line ministries are in charge of gender mainstreaming in their areas of responsibility. A gender focal point within each ministry co-ordinates and supports gender mainstreaming efforts by developing an annual action plan. The focal point, who is often the Budget Officer of the line ministry, also attends meetings of the intra-ministerial working group on gender mainstreaming in the government offices.

Source: (OECD, 2018[13]), OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality, https://www.oecd.org/gov/toolkit-for-mainstreaming-and-implementing-gender-equality.pdf; Information provided by the government of the Czech Republic in 2021; information provided by the government of Spain in 2023.

4.2.5. Mechanisms for horizontal co-ordination of gender mainstreaming

Gender equality work spans a wide range of policy areas, and sound co-ordination mechanisms must be put in place to foster policy coherence across governmental bodies and levels of government. Meanwhile, the involvement of relevant non-governmental stakeholders should be encouraged to promote an inclusive, comprehensive coverage of gender equality issues (OECD, 2018[13]). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of strengthening whole-of-government co-ordination to address complex emergencies, given the time-sensitive and cross-cutting nature of crises (OECD, 2021[2]).

In recent years, Colombia has made progress in creating structures for horizontal co-ordination in order to implement policies and laws, notably the National Gender Equality Policy and the National Development Plan. Most entities at national level reported having a formal co-ordination mechanism and/or established formalised practices to co-ordinate policies and programmes related to gender equity.

Inter-sectoral Coordination Commission for the Implementation of the National Gender Equity Public Policy

Under Decree 1930 of 2013, representatives of all ministries, the CPEM and other national entities (the DNP; Presidential Department of Social Prosperity; Colombian Institute of Family Welfare; Administrative Department of Public Function; and presidential counsellor for human rights and international affairs) have a seat in the Inter-sectoral Coordination Commission for the Implementation of the National Gender Equality Public Policy, which aims to co-ordinate, harmonise and promote the Gender Equality Public Policy and Action Plan.

However, as seen in the 2017 Evaluation Report on the implementation of the CONPES 161 of 2013, the commission is a space for accountability in sharing the progress made on gender equality, rather than a forum for strategic co-ordination to guarantee implementation of the CONPES Action Plan. As the report shows, this is mainly due to the limited decision-making power of the participants, who are appointed by the participating entities, and to the CPEM's inability to convene the highest-level representatives of each entity in the Commission (Proyectamos Colombia, 2017[14]). Additionally, according to the stakeholders interviewed in the fact-finding mission, the Commission, which in principle should meet every three months, has not held sessions for more than four years.

The Commission is due to be replaced by the National Women's System (*Sistema Nacional de Mujeres*), set up in the National Development Plan 2018-2022, although, in the absence of a decree to regulate it, it is not yet in operation. It is intended to become the participatory mechanism co-ordinating implementation of the gender policy in Colombia and will aim to strengthen the channels of articulation and dialogue between the different public and private entities to guarantee women's rights. It would also aim to include issues of women's equality in the agendas of public and private entities (Presidency of Colombia, 2021[15]). A similar system also exists in Mexico, as shown in Box 4.6.

Box 4.6. Mexico's National System for the Equality between Women and Men

Established by the General Law for the Equality between Women and Men of 2006, Mexico's National System for the Equality between Women and Men (*Sistema Nacional para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres*) is a co-ordination structure that promotes and supports strategies for implementing the national policy on gender equality. It ensures co-ordination among the entities of the federal public administration, state authorities, Mexico City, the municipalities and various social groups, with the aim of promoting and ensuring equality between women and men.

Source: (Government of Mexico, n.d.[16]), Sistema Nacional para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres; https://www.gob.mx/inmujeres/acciones-y-programas/sistema-nacional-para-la-igualdad-entre-mujeres-y-hombres-259068, information provided by the government of Mexico in 2021.

CONPES

The National Economic and Social Policy Council (*Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social*, CONPES) is Colombia's highest national planning authority, providing advice to the government and the President of the Republic on policies concerning national, economic and social development. Created by Law 19 of 1958, it co-ordinates and guides the governmental entities in charge of the economic and social

policy, studying and approving documents on general policy development. The CONPES is responsible in particular for reviewing the National Development Plan (NDP) before it is linked to the national budget statement and presented to the Congress for approval by the Ministry of Finance. The DNP acts as its executive Secretariat. As established by Decree 2148 of 2009, the CONPES is chaired by the president and has as permanent members the vice president, all ministers, the director of the Administrative Department of the Presidency of the Republic, the director of the National Planning Department and the director of the Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation.

As explained in Chapter 3, in 2013, the CONPES co-ordinated the drafting of the CONPES Social 161, the most recent public policy document on gender equality in Colombia.

Inter-institutional Committee of the Gender Affairs Observatory

Led by the CPEM, the Inter-institutional Committee of the Gender Affairs Observatory aims to guide the OCM to "identify and select a system of gender indicators, categories of analysis and monitoring mechanisms to make critical reflections on policies, plans, programmes, regulations, jurisprudence for the improvement of the situation of women and gender equality in Colombia". Recently reactivated by the CPEM and the DNP, this mechanism is considered key for gender mainstreaming and consolidating gender-based indicators.

Sectorial Gender Committees

Colombia has three special Committees in the sectors of Commerce, Industry and Tourism; Transportation; and Mines and Energy. In stakeholder discussions, the institutions reported that the Committees, which meet periodically and are composed of high-level representatives in the sectors, express the political will of these sectors on gender affairs and constitute a good practice for the co-ordination and implementation of gender issues in strategic sectoral commitments. In this sense, they also help integrate a gender lens in sectoral strategies and specific programmes. For example, the Committee for Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment in the Commerce, Industry and Tourism sector has established strategic lines for 2021-2022 aiming to strengthen female entrepreneurship and enhance women's managerial skills, to increase their participation and leadership at the corporate level in the sector.

Participatory mechanisms

As noted in Chapter 3, the National Planning Council is a space for social dialogue by representatives of civil society, which can thus intervene in formulating planning policies and especially the NDP. However, stakeholder discussions have revealed that co-ordination between governmental institutions and civil society is still limited, potentially weakening implementation of the gender equality strategy. Still, there seems to be increasing awareness of the importance of creating mechanisms to consult citizens throughout the policy cycle. Bogotá's Administration has created a participatory mechanism of governmental institutions, social partners and civil society (Box 4.7).

Box 4.7. Women's Consultative Council in Bogotá

Created by the Decree 224 of 2014, Women's Consultative Council (*Consejo Consultivo de Mujeres*) serves as an advisory body to analyse, conceptualise and formulate policy recommendations on the issues concerning the Public Policy for Women and Gender Equity, which aims to eradicate inequalities and discrimination experienced by women.

The Council is composed of counsellors (civil society elected representatives), representatives of the district administration, local mayors and the mayor of Bogotá. The counsellors present the needs,

interests and demands of women in this forum. The administration subsequently reports on the actions and developments implemented to respond to these needs or demands. Members also present proposals regarding the Public Policy on Gender Equality.

The Council is currently composed of 41 counsellors elected through an electoral process for a period of three years, which may be repeated a maximum of two times. Counsellors represent the different sectors of the city, as well as women from diverse ethnic groups and women with disabilities.

Source: (Secretaría Distrital de la Mujer, 2014[17]), Decreto 224 de 2014 "Por medio del cual se actualiza el Consejo Consultivo de Mujeres, y se dictan otras disposiciones", https://www.sdmujer.gov.co/sites/default/files/2021-02/normas/Decreto_224_de_2014.pdf

In assessing the effectiveness of the overall co-ordination efforts across the government for gender equality, OECD finds that despite past efforts and willingness to operationalise existing mechanisms, whole-of-government co-ordination remains very limited. According to the responses provided to the OECD 2021 Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance by Colombia (hereinafter, the 2021 GMG Survey), the main challenges in co-ordinating gender-related policies and or/programmes horizontally across government entities include the limited impact of past co-ordination efforts and the lack of appropriate structures for co-ordination, as well as a lack of structures or arrangements to exchange data and information between public institutions. As noted by several stakeholders, Colombia would benefit from strengthening the existing co-ordination mechanisms for gender equality and mainstreaming among line ministries by assigning a clear leading role to the CPEM. In addition, Management and Performance Institutional Committees (*Comités de Gestión y Desempeño Institucional*), included in all ministries by law, could be a useful mechanism for improving this co-ordination, but only if committed to discussing gender issues. In the OECD area, several countries have set up mechanisms for co-ordination across the central/federal governments. Box 4.8 highlights some examples. Their experience could also inspire Colombia to reinforce its horizontal co-ordination mechanisms.

Box 4.8. Examples of horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for gender equality

Austria

Since 2013, Austria has been implementing a performance-informed budget management that requires ministries and high-level institutions to incorporate up to five gender-related outcome objectives in their budget chapters. These objectives must be based on a gender analysis that identifies challenges and issues to be addressed and must include specific activities for implementation, as well as quantitative indicators for measuring progress. To support this effort, the government has introduced an inter-ministerial co-ordination mechanism within the performance budgeting framework to ensure the promotion of gender equality. The Federal Performance Management Office (FPMO) in the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service, and Sport oversees this co-ordination process, which involves consulting, leading implementation, and monitoring progress towards gender equality objectives.

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the Government Council for Gender Equality co-ordinates the main directions of ministerial policies in the area of gender equality, identifies current problems and evaluates effectiveness of measures to achieve gender equality. According to its mandate, the Council currently has 31 members who represent the central organs of public administration, especially ministries (at the level of deputy ministers), non-governmental sector and academia, and is chaired by a member of the government who is responsible for the agenda of gender equality.

Spain

Regulated by Royal Decree 1370/2007, the Inter-ministerial Commission for Equality between Women and Men actively supervises integration of the principle of equality in actions taken by the central government, while co-ordinating with line ministries on policies to promote gender equality and tackling gender-based violence. The commission co-ordinates and oversees preparation of the government's periodic report on application of the equality principle in all its actions, as established by Spain's Organic Law on Equality, and monitors and guides the development and implementation of the gender impact reports and other actions of the equality unit established at ministerial level. Representatives of all line ministries have a seat on the Commission, which convenes at least twice a year.

Switzerland

Led by the Federal office for the equality between women and men (BFEG), the Inter-departmental committee for the 2030 Equality Strategy co-ordinates Switzerland's 2030 Equality Strategy in the federal administration of the country. The committee, which meet twice a year, is made up of representatives of the offices concerned.

Source: Information provided by the government of Austria in 2023; information provided by the government of the Czech Republic in 2021; information provided by the government of Spain in 2021; (Government of Spain, n.d.[18]), Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado,, Royal Decree 1370/2007, 19 October, regulating the Interministerial Commission for Equality between women and men; information provided by the government of Switzerland in 2021.

4.2.6. National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)

Data is a strategic asset for policy makers to identify gender biases and inequalities and proactively make inclusive policy choices. The availability of high-quality, easily accessible and understandable evidence and data is of utmost importance for governments willing to achieve their gender equality objectives and outcomes. As stressed in the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation, countries should strengthen their evidence base, actively promote data dissemination and increase co-ordination among bodies that collect and produce data and collaborate with relevant stakeholders. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of quality data for policy making and for reacting in a timely way to unexpected crises (OECD, 2021[2]). National statistics offices and bureaus play a key role in this respect, since they ensure the production and dissemination of relevant data and statistics disaggregated by gender and by other identity factors as a basis for supporting informed policy decisions.

DANE is Colombia's national institution charged with ensuring the availability and quality of strategic statistic information, as well as of leading, planning, executing, co-ordinating, regulating and evaluating the production and dissemination of official information. In particular, as established by Decree 262 of 2004, its main functions include: defining and producing the strategic statistic information needed at national, sectoral and local levels to support planning and decision making; establishing technical norms for the production, processing and dissemination of data; drafting the National Statistical Plan and co-ordinating its implementation; and encouraging the use of statistics.

Currently, the DANE supports line ministries in their gender mainstreaming efforts by providing them with relevant data and statistics. As noted in Chapter 5, the DANE in recent years has made significant efforts to improve the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data at the national level. The establishment of a new "differential and intersectional group" at the managerial level is intended to encourage the collection of statistics with intersectional and differential approaches.

The DANE could enhance its role producing data to support assessment of gender impacts across sectors as Colombia carries out systematic gender analyses of policies, programmes, regulations and budgets. Greater co-ordination should be ensured between the DANE, line ministries and departmental and

municipal entities to encourage the exchange of data and information. These recommendations are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

4.2.7. Oversight and accountability mechanisms

Sound accountability and oversight mechanisms can support governments in making gender mainstreaming initiatives successful and sustainable and in ensuring that gender equality remains a legislative priority. In OECD countries, various levels of accountability are enabled by independent institutions such as parliaments, or independent oversight institutions such as independent commissions, equality bodies, Ombudsman's offices, and supreme audit institutions (SAIs).

These mechanisms can play both a pre-emptive and a recourse role. They can encourage compliance with gender equality policies, pinpoint deficiencies and challenges in fulfilling gender equality goals, and help provide neutral and objective evaluations on the impact of the efforts of government actors. Oversight and accountability institutions can also play a significant role in communicating to citizens about gender equality outcomes, gender mainstreaming strategies and gender equality concerns, such as violence against women and the gender pay gap. In Sweden, for example, an audit by the supreme audit institution has revealed the existence of barriers to gender mainstreaming and helped to remove them, resulting in a reform of its gender mainstreaming structures. Box 4.9 provides further details.

Box 4.9. Swedish National Audit Office's audit on gender equality initiatives

In 2014-15, after an increase in resources for specific gender policy measures, the Swedish National Audit Office audited the government's gender equality initiatives. The purpose of the audit was to assess conditions making the results of specific gender policy measures sustainable and leading to permanent improvements. The aim was also to evaluate whether the government's design and management of the initiative was effective, and if there was an institutional framework for acting on the results so that they could be sustained over time. The 2015 Swedish National Audit Office report stated the need for an institutional structure that strengthens gender equality work and helps ensure a long-term approach and sustainability. It called for a more robust structure for good gender governance, strengthened gender mainstreaming in the administrations, as well as improved conditions to make results from temporary initiatives permanent.

Source: (OECD, 2019[3]) Fast Forward to Gender Equality: Mainstreaming, Implementation and Leadership, https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa5-en.

Parliaments and parliamentary committees can provide checks on various government entities and support the sustainability of gender equality reforms during phases of political change, while independent monitoring mechanisms, such as dedicated commissions, can support recourse for complaints related to gender-based discrimination or other forms of injustice, and oversee implementation of the government's gender equality commitments.

In Colombia, the Legal Commission for Women's Equity (*Comisión Legal para la Equidad de la Mujer*), established by Law 1434 of 2011 and made up of members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate, encourages and promotes the adoption of national policies to improve the situation of women in Colombian society and eliminating all forms of discrimination. Among its main functions, the Commission has the mandate to elaborate legislative proposals to ensure the realisation of human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of Colombian women, with the support of women's associations and groups, think tanks and other human rights organisations. In doing so, the commission also exercises political oversight on state entities in relation to the formulation and development of gender equality plans,

programmes and policies. In addition, it contributes to disseminating information on the current legislation and on the strengthening women's rights through public hearings, meetings, symposia, working groups and seminars.

Moreover, as described comprehensively in Chapter 5, the government is mandated to submit a consolidated report on expenditures targeted towards women's equity to the Congress every year, to promote accountability on the use of public resources for gender-related objectives.

4.3. Institutional set-up for gender equality and mainstreaming in selected subnational governments

A whole-of-government approach to gender mainstreaming calls for effective co-ordination mechanisms at all levels of government, including at the subnational level. Local entities provide a wide range of services that have the potential to close or widen gender gaps, and their proximity to citizens allows them to gain a deeper understanding of the population's needs.

As established in the country's Political Constitution, the territory of Colombia is divided into 32 departments (*departamentos*) and a capital district (*distrito capital*), the city of Bogotá. Each department is led by a governor (*gobernador*) and by a departmental assembly (*asamblea departamental*). Departments are further divided into municipalities (*municipio*), led by a mayor (*alcalde*) and a popularly elected municipal council (*concejo municipal*). The governing bodies of departments and municipalities are elected for a four-year term.

Departments in Colombia have a mandate to pursue gender equality objectives in line with the national gender equality policy and the National Development Plan. However, as already observed across the national government in Colombia, the subnational level has no standard institutional set-up for gender mainstreaming. Departments in Colombia may have a specific secretariat, a subsecretariat, a gender office or no dedicated unit at all, relying sometimes only on a single employee in charge of gender equality issues.

This Section provides details on the design and structure of the gender machineries of two of Colombia's departments, Boyacá and Huila, which were indicated and selected by the CPEM for the purposes of this review.

4.3.1. Boyacá's gender mainstreaming structure

The department of Boyacá organises leadership, co-ordination and articulation of its gender equality agenda through the Directorate for Women and Social Inclusion, located under the Secretariat for Social Integration, which addresses all vulnerable groups and minorities. In particular, the Directorate promotes the inclusion of all women of the department and, to this effect, works on strategies and projects designed to increase women's economic autonomy and political participation, close the digital gender gap, fight stereotypes, prevent gender-based violence and provide technical assistance to rural women.

With a significant share of the population of Boyacá made up of women living in small rural villages, the Secretariat for Social Integration devotes special attention to gender-related issues and co-ordinates with the other Secretariats in the department to promote gender mainstreaming. For instance, it collaborates closely with the Secretariat for Planning to manage the budget tracer for women, and runs initiatives with the Secretariat for Agriculture benefiting rural women. To ensure that the gender topics are mainstreamed in the work of all the secretariats, an advisor on women, inequality and poverty issues works as a liaison and provides guidance and targeted training to officials, including to the Government Council where the Secretaries and the governor sit together. Exchanges have revealed that having a Secretariat for Women with its own budget could increase the impact of the local projects for Boyacá's women; however, given the lack of local resources, the creation of such a body is not anticipated for the time being.

At municipal level, the Secretariat for Social Integration ensures support and advice on gender-related issues to all the 123 municipalities of Boyacá on an ongoing basis, while also helping them in the implementation of policies and actions addressing women. In particular, it provides trainings and technical assistance for gender mainstreaming and ensures co-ordination thanks to liaison officers appointed locally. The Secretariat for Social Integration has strived to create liaison offices in each local municipality, despite of their budgeting difficulties. As underlined at the bilateral meetings, this has represented a noteworthy achievement that has encouraged mainstreaming of gender issues at municipal level as well.

4.3.2. Huila's gender mainstreaming structure

The Department of Huila promotes its gender equality agenda through the Office for Women, Children, Adolescence and Social Affairs, which is in charge of implementing strategies and actions to encourage women's empowerment and to address GBV. Gender mainstreaming is encouraged through to the Inter-institutional Committee to co-ordinate implementation of the public policy for gender equality (CICIPEG), made up of representatives of the departmental government, as well as of three representatives of Huila's women, who give voice to the needs and views of the local female population. The committee meets every four months and follows up on the actions and policies included in the department's Development Plan 2020-2023 called "Huila grows" (*Huila crece*), to keep track of the gender equality achievements. This also helps identify and evaluate the contributions of each project to closing gender gaps. As noted in interviews with relevant stakeholders, in 2022, a specific request to create a Secretariat devoted to gender issues was to be submitted to the General Assembly of the State of Huila. This is likely to increase the capacity of the department for advancing its gender equality agenda.

At the local level, the Governor's Office has communicated with the 37 municipalities of the Department through a unit that gives the mayors' offices with advice on gender issues. In December 2021, the Office for Women, Children, Adolescence and Social Affairs established a new departmental Council for Women with consultative functions, involving women of Huila and representatives of the municipalities, to encourage co-ordination and monitoring of local gender public policy.

4.3.3. Mechanisms for vertical co-ordination between national and subnational levels

At subnational level, co-ordination with the CPEM depends on whether the local entity has a secretariat, a subsecretariat, a gender office or no dedicated unit at all.

For example, the CPEM is the main strategic counterpart of the Secretariat for Social Integration and the Directorate for Women and Social Inclusion of Boyacá's Department, as it accompanies them in the process of closing gender gaps and helps them look for alliances with the private sector and other entities.

Exchanges have shown that the lack of resources across the full spectrum of the institutional set-up in Colombia is also true of subnational entities, as they rely on the resources from the national government. This makes it important to conclude agreements with private organisations to achieve the departments' gender-related objectives.

As the 2021 GMG Survey showed, barriers due to different administrative cultures, the lack of appropriate structures for co-ordination, and the lack of political will/leadership at the subnational level are the main challenges reported in co-ordinating gender-related policies and/or programmes between the central government and the subnational entities. Box 4.10 highlights some examples of structures for vertical co-ordination in OECD countries.

Box 4.10. Examples of vertical co-ordination mechanisms for gender equality

Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, Decree No. 41115 of 2018 sets out the structures and mechanisms for the co-ordination and implementation of the National Policy for Effective Equality between Women and Men (PIEG 2018-2030). At the local level, the decree states that the Regional Development Councils (COREDES) shall implement local and regional plans and actions linked to PIEG 2018-2030 through their Regional Social Intersectoral Committees.

Switzerland

The Swiss Conference of the Delegates for Equality promotes exchanges between the Confederation, the cantons and the municipalities on issues of equality. Its aim is to establish a sustainable, coherent equality policy in Switzerland.

Source: Information provided by government of Costa Rica in 2021; information provided by the government of Switzerland in 2021.

4.4. Road map with policy recommendations

- Consider **strengthening the capacities of the CPEM** to a) promote the gender equality agenda and lead the implementation of gender mainstreaming across the public administration at both national and subnational levels – in co-ordination with other CoG bodies; b) provide expertise and support to line ministries and local entities (in co-ordination with the DNP) in relation to the gender equality policy and to integrating the gender perspective in sectoral plans and strategies. At the time of the publication of this report, the government of Colombia approved a law for the creation of a Ministry of Equality and Equity, with the aim to reinforce the country's institutional architecture and capacities for gender equality and mainstreaming in the medium term.
- Consider **formalising the mandate for the Centre of Government** (especially the National Planning Department and the Ministry of Finance), in close co-ordination with the CPEM, to provide **advice and challenge the public administration** to incorporate gender considerations, as appropriate, into the design of policies, programmes, initiatives and budgets.
- Given the finite resources of the public sector, consider further **clarifying the expectations for the line ministries** in applying gender mainstreaming to implement Law 823 of 2003 and high-level priority goals for gender equality (see Chapter 3). These expectations could, for example, include:
  - developing a result-oriented strategic plan, setting a clear rationale, priorities, timelines, objectives, targeted actions and expected outcomes in each ministry;
  - undertaking gender analysis;
  - ensuring access to qualitative and quantitative data and information;
  - engaging in consultations with relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to promote inclusive, comprehensive coverage of gender equality issues on a systematic basis;
  - ensuring effective co-ordination with the CoG, with other line ministries and with the data-collecting and data-producing bodies.
- On this basis, and as appropriate, line ministries could **consider the most appropriate institutional set-up** (e.g. gender units, champions or task forces) and identify adequate capacities to allow for the integration of gender perspectives in their sectoral policies and programmes. The

OECD has identified certain elements to enhance the effectiveness of those mechanisms, such as:

- ensuring that specialised gender expertise is available in public institutions;
- demarcating roles, mandates and responsibilities clearly;
- providing line ministries with sufficient capacity (training and knowledge) and resources (budget and staff) to implement gender initiatives and analyse the gender impacts of their work.

Similar approaches, as noted above, could be introduced in departmental governments and municipalities as appropriate.

- Consider **strengthening various co-ordination mechanisms (inter-ministerial and vertical co-ordination with the territorial entities)** to encourage synergies and policy coherence, as well as to improve information sharing. The CPEM could be assigned the leading role for operationalising these mechanisms, along with the necessary resources to co-ordinate, guide and monitor the implementation of gender equality activities and measures.
- Continue **developing gender competence and skills in the staff of line ministries,** with training and awareness campaigns to promote knowledge of gender-related issues and adequate skill sets. As part of its mandate to improve the performance of public servants, the DAFP, in close co-ordination with the CPEM and other CoG institutions, could undertake a key role to support building capacity and managerial accountability.

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5 Leveraging government tools to achieve gender equality objectives in Colombia

This Chapter examines how specific government tools and processes, including gender impact assessments (also in the area of infrastructure policy), budgeting and public procurement, are used strategically in Colombia to promote the government's gender equality agenda and achieve its related goals. It offers an assessment of achievements, challenges and gaps and provides guidance on how the government could encourage the strategic use of these tools to attain its gender equality objectives. To this end, it gives an overview of the current state of play on the application of gender analysis in policy making, while assessing existing challenges in the collection and use of gender-sensitive data.

5.1. Introduction

To achieve meaningful gender equality, governments must ensure that policies, regulations and other strategic tools of public governance are free of structural and systemic biases and stereotypes embedded in their baseline. Policy instruments are not neutral in application or impact. Research has shown that delivering social policy initiatives through the tax system can further marginalise low-income people, many of whom are women from ethnic minorities or people with disabilities (Bakker, 2011[1]). UN analysis has also demonstrated that most of the budget measures taken by governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic lacked gender-sensitivity, and that only few of those gender-sensitive measures were designed to address women's economic security and unpaid care (Zrinski, 2021[2]).

Applying a gender-sensitive lens to policies in areas such as infrastructure, budgets, regulations and procurement has the potential to improve gender equality outcomes. Indeed, it can help support women's economic empowerment by redressing the structural inequalities that slow progress down. Governments are increasingly using such tools and decision-making levers strategically to promote more gender equal and inclusive societies (OECD, 2019[3]), especially in recovering from the COVID-19 crisis, which has exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities.

For example, regulatory decisions have played a key role in designing immediate, medium- and long-term responses to the pandemic, which increased the need for trusted, evidence-based, internationally co-ordinated and well-enforced regulation. Requiring countries to adapt regulations or introduce new ones, the COVID-19 crisis and recovery also offer the opportunity to reinforce a gender perspective in the regulatory policy cycle, including through gender analysis. Similarly, gender budgeting can facilitate informed decision making and mobilise public policies and resources towards transformative investments, with the aim of advancing the gender equality agenda and supporting recovery efforts that lead to a more equitable society. As part of recovery policies, public procurement can also be used to promote gender equality, by ensuring that women-led businesses receive timely information on procurement opportunities and can compete for bids on equal footing with ones owned by men (OECD, 2021[4]).

This Chapter analyses how gender impact assessments, budgets, public procurement and infrastructure are used as strategic tools to realise the government's gender equality goals in Colombia. The following Sections analyse strengths and challenges and propose a series of actionable policy recommendations, as a way to increase the effectiveness of these tools and realise greater gender equality.

5.2. Gender impact assessments

5.2.1. Introduction

The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (hereinafter, the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation) calls for the integration of evidence-based assessments of gender impacts and considerations into various dimensions of public governance and across all phases of the policy cycle (OECD, 2016[5]). Gender impact assessments (GIAs) are a powerful instrument for delivering greater gender equality in all aspects of government policy. The COVID-19 crisis, forcing governments to take prompt action to address the challenges posed by the pandemic, has shed further light on the need to apply a gender analysis in policy development (OECD, 2022[6]).

GIAs have the potential to identify negative gender impacts on women and men from diverse backgrounds, allowing policy makers to adopt corrective measures to remove or counterbalance any unintended negative effects in a timely manner, as well as to build on lessons learnt and feed future policy development cycles.

However, GIAs can only be as effective as the quality of the data, evidence and analysis that goes into them. As laid out in the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation, it is important to strengthen the evidence

base supporting gender-sensitive policy making and governance, to promote data dissemination, increase the co-ordination among data collecting and producing bodies, and encourage collaboration with relevant stakeholders to develop better gender impact indicators. The move towards data-driven, innovative and digital governments, also accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis, offers a window of opportunity to expand the availability of reliable and timely data on gender equality in different policy fields (OECD, 2022[6]).

This Section provides an overview of the scope for gender impact assessment in policy making in Colombia, while assessing the availability and use of data and information to support evidence-driven and gender-sensitive policy making and governance.

5.2.2. Gender impact assessments as a tool for gender mainstreaming

GIAs are widely used across the OECD to analyse policies throughout their lifecycle, to identify and evaluate their potential or actual gender-specific impact. There is no single blueprint for the process or methodology GIAs involve; indeed, a variety of approaches can be used to assess the gender equality-related impacts of a policy decision. While some countries have established requirements to undertake gender impact assessments as a separate analysis to accompany regulatory impact assessments (RIA), others have requirements to complete gender analysis as a component of a unique RIA. Box 5.1 describes different practices in GIA across the OECD.

Box 5.1. Examples of GIA practices in OECD countries

Austria

In Austria, all new laws, regulations, major investments, and procurement contracts have to undergo a regulatory impact assessment which sets objectives with clear indicators and milestones and evaluates the desired outcomes in different policy areas, known as impact dimensions. As part of the process, the gender dimension considers whether the outcome of the law, regulation, investment or contract has expected substantial consequences on gender equality or not, and if so, a thorough assessment must be conducted. After five years, the expected indicators and milestones are compared to the actual situation, and the evaluation of the impact on gender equality is included in the annual evaluation report on regulatory impact assessments. This report is then submitted to parliament. The findings from this process are used to identify opportunities for more effective measures to achieve the desired objectives, reduce costs, and minimise unintended effects.

Belgium

In Belgium, gender impact assessment is embedded in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) law, enacted in 2013, which establishes preliminary assessment for regulatory projects in social, economic and environment fields as well as on public authority. The analyses included in RIAs touch on 21 different transversal themes. However, four of them are subject to more in-depth analysis: gender equality; policy coherence for development; administrative expenses; and SMEs. The assessment of the impact of regulation proposals on women and men is carried out through a “gender test”, which consists of five open questions on the impact of the proposal on women and men, grouped in three phases (situation analysis, identification of foreseen impacts and compensatory measures). After the assessment, the draft proposal must be adjusted to minimise any negative impact, as in the provisions of the 2007 Gender Mainstreaming Law.

Canada

In Canada, Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is used as an analytical tool to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programmes and

initiatives. The tool, initially called GBA, was developed in 1995 after the Canadian government committed to gender mainstreaming all legislation, policies and programmes as part of the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action. In 2011, it was rebranded GBA+ to take into account diverse identity circumstances, including race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability. The commitment to GBA+ is a shared responsibility across all federal departments and agencies, which are required to provide evidence that they have taken GBA+ considerations into account and to report relevant findings in their Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board Submission. The tool can be used to inform the entire policy process, from research and early investigation through to the development of options and strategies, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and communication.

Spain

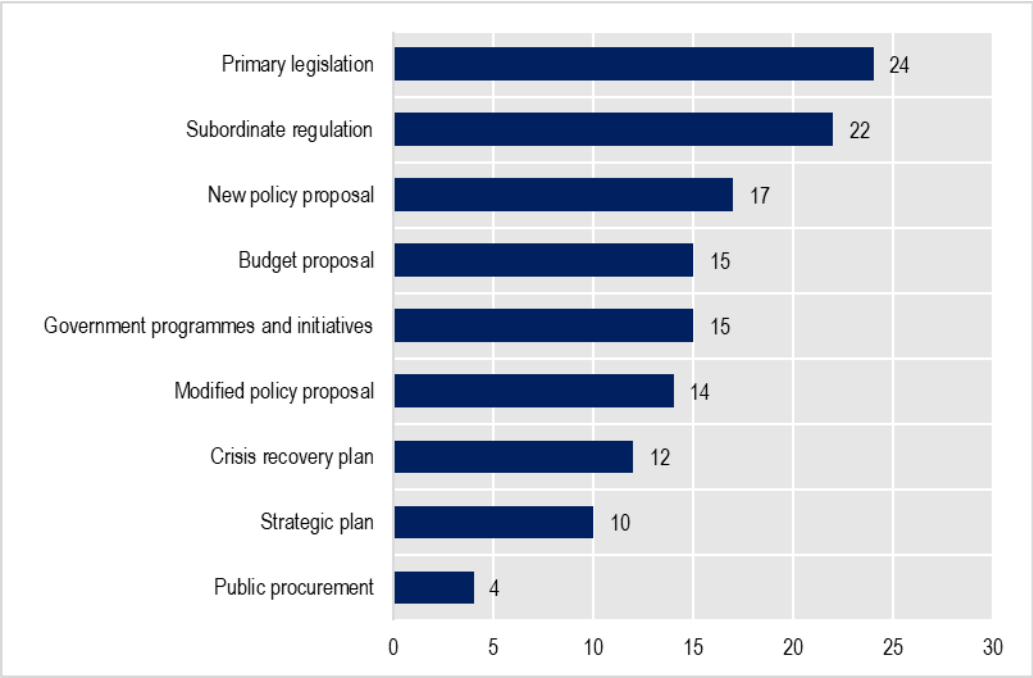
In Spain, the Equality Act of 2007 stipulates that all draft provisions of a general nature and plans with particular economic, social, cultural and artistic relevance submitted for approval by the Council of Ministers include a report on their gender impact. The Equality Act also instructs the government to implement existing legislation to incorporate *ex ante* gender impact assessment of regulatory proposals. The GIA reports aim to analyse and assess the results of the adoption of the legislative and regulatory proposals from the perspective of eliminating inequalities and helping to achieve equal treatment and opportunities between women and men, based on indicators on the current situation, results anticipated and their impact. Royal Decree 931/2017 includes provisions on the Regulatory Impact Analysis Report of laws, royal decree laws, legislative royal decrees, and regulatory proposals, including the *ex ante* gender impact assessment report that accompanies the General State Budget Bill. In addition, norms and regulations may also be subject to an analysis of the results of their implementation if they meet specific criteria identified by Royal Decree 286/2017, which include relevant gender impact.

Source: Information provided by the government of Austria in 2023; information provided by the government of Belgium as part of the 2021 GMG Survey; (OECD, 2018[7]), Gender Equality in Canada: Mainstreaming, Governance and Budgeting, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264301108-en; information provided by the government of Spain as part of the 2021 GMG Survey and in 2023.

In recent years, GIAs have gained momentum in decision making and are now among the most widely used tools for gender mainstreaming in OECD countries. A total of 26 out of 34 respondents to the 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (hereinafter, the 2021 GMG Survey) report having a formal requirement for GIAs as of 2021, with at least 6 countries introducing/revising the scope of GIA requirements since 2017 (OECD, 2022[6]). Findings of the 2021 GMG Survey indicate that 20 out of 26 (77%) respondents have requirements to conduct *ex ante* GIA, and just 4 (15%) to conduct *ex post* GIA. Moreover, only 4 respondents (15%) reported having requirements to conduct continuous GIAs. GIAs can be conducted for a range of decision-making instruments, including those pertaining to policies, budgets and programmes. Figure 5.1 shows the types of decisions subject to GIA across the OECD.

Figure 5.1. Types of documents for which GIA requirement exists

Number of respondents



Note: Total number of respondents is 27.
Source: 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey).

Formal requirements to conduct GIAs do not inherently resolve implementation gaps. Despite recent progress, integration of GIAs into routine policy making across the OECD is limited. According to the 2021 GMG Survey, the most commonly reported challenges are the perception of GIAs as a tick-box exercise, the absence of binding requirements and the lack of expertise of policy makers. Notably, more than a quarter of respondents report that the lack of readily available gender-disaggregated data is a key barrier. To be truly effective, GIAs require robust mechanisms for checking their quality. Some OECD countries have introduced standards for quality of their GIAs, including optional training for civil servants and verification of application of GIAs by the central gender equality institutions and central governments (OECD, 2022[6]).

Colombia has no legal requirement to carry out *ex ante* or *ex post* GIAs. Public institutions at the national level do not conduct regular gender impact assessments in the development and/or evaluation of policies, programmes and projects. RIA, based on the framework provided by the National Development Plan 2018-2022 and the CONPES document 3816 of 2014, is carried out mostly for technical regulations and undertaken very rarely in the case of other subordinate regulations. The National Planning Department (DNP) establishes an annual agenda for the evaluation of policies and programmes, and some of these exercises may also include a gender focus. For example, in 2020, the DNP published the results of the impact assessment of the Free Housing (*Vivienda Gratuita*) programme, which also included an analysis of differential impacts by gender and of consequences on gender-based violence (GBV). Discussions with relevant Colombian stakeholders also revealed a common awareness in government entities of the need to make progress on this score.

Academia and civil society organisations, including NGOs and women's groups, can be precious allies in gathering information on the potential or actual impact of government policies, and they should be consulted regularly (OECD, 2018[8]). More broadly, involving citizens and wider stakeholders in the policy

cycle is fundamental in delivering better policy outcomes, strengthening trust in public institutions and reinforcing the democratic mandate for urgent and sometimes difficult decisions that need major buy-in (OECD, 2020[9]). Various mechanisms are already used in Colombia to consult citizens in the early stages of policy making, which could contribute to *ex ante* assessments of gender impacts of policy proposals. As laid out in Law 152 of 1994 establishing procedures for the elaboration, approval, execution, evaluation and control of the country's development plans, all planning authorities at national, regional and territorial level are to ensure citizens' participation in the analyses and discussions of their planning projects. In particular, as set forth by Article 342 of the Political Constitution, the Law also defines the composition and functions of the National Planning Council, which represents a space for social dialogue integrated by representatives of civil society and intervenes in the formulation of planning policies, thus also exercising some form of citizen control over public management. Line ministries in Colombia are also formally required to consult with stakeholders in the preparation of regulations. SUCOP (*Sistema Único de Consulta Pública*), a digital platform intended to centralise stakeholder engagement practices across all government entities, was recently introduced to facilitate the participation of the general public in the process of consultation during the rule-making process (OECD, 2021[10]). Such practices provide an important foundation for a sound knowledge base and building a gender approach in policy making, by bringing in the diverse views and needs of citizens.

With the support of UN Women, the DNP is working on a pilot programme to integrate a gender focus into evaluating national public policies and programmes in 2022. UN Women is developing an indicator and assessment guide to assist the DNP in conducting evaluations with a gender perspective. As exchanges revealed, the DNP finds it especially challenging to identify the issues and phenomena to be monitored through key indicators. The lack of information can also be an obstacle to identifying and understanding problems, an indispensable element for evidence-based decisions at all levels of policy making.

In the short term, Colombia could reinforce its public consultation practices by engaging with citizens and other relevant stakeholders to acquire a wider and deeper understanding of potential issues for women of diverse backgrounds. On this basis, line ministries could undertake needs assessments and analysis in their respective sectors and identify primary laws of potentially high impact on women to examine them against the objectives of the National Gender Equality Policy and in the National Development Plan. At this stage, the CPEM and the DANE, with the support of the OCM, could play a steering role in auditing the country's data sources and publications to better understand existing gender gaps.

In the medium and in the long term, the government could develop a guiding framework for implementing GIAs, to ensure that all actors involved have the necessary knowledge, skills, capacities and resources to conduct meaningful and effective assessments. At this stage, following the example of an increasing number of OECD countries, the government could consider introducing a binding requirement to conduct GIAs for all policies, programmes, regulations and budgets, supported by criteria to ensure the quality and rigour of the analysis. A solid evidence base for gender-sensitive policy making should be built, improved and ensured over time. The following paragraphs provide details and analysis in this respect.

5.2.3. Data for evidence-based policy making

Data informs government action, feeds the policy-making process, and is crucial for delivering appropriate, evidence-based policy responses and outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of quality evidence for policy making, especially in the context of volatile, multidimensional and complex challenges (OECD, 2021[11]). Policy making and decision making supported by quality evidence and data can result in more effective public interventions and trust in public institutions and science (OECD, 2017[12]).

Gender-disaggregated data and evidence are an essential precondition for meaningful gender impact assessments at all stages of the policy-making process. *Ex ante* and *ex post* GIAs should rely on both quantitative data and qualitative insights – disaggregated by gender and other identity factors and drawn

from various sources – to assess the prevalence of a phenomenon in the areas of a policy or legislative measure, as well as to systematically highlight the differences between women and men.

Across OECD countries, bottlenecks in generating and using data, however, are a significant barrier for GIAs and, more broadly, for implementing gender equality policies.

In responding to the 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance, Colombia reported various challenges impeding the systematic production, availability, accessibility, quality and use of statistics disaggregated by gender. In line with the responses of other OECD countries, these barriers include: i) the limited accuracy of existing data; ii) the lack of financial and human resources across the central level of government; and iii) a lack of co-ordination mechanisms between the national statistical office, the central gender institution and the line ministries. Similar gaps were also noted in exchanges with Colombian stakeholders across the government during the fact-finding mission.

Further disaggregation of data is needed

Collecting disaggregated data is important for understanding the specific needs and experiences of diverse groups of people. The availability of disaggregated data allows policy makers to: explore unseen trends, identify vulnerabilities, detect challenges and pinpoint successful policies and strategies. The use of disaggregated data is also critical for policy makers who wish to assess the effectiveness of public services and adapt them to the needs of specific groups of society.

Several public entities in Colombia note particular limitations in the availability of gender data disaggregated by other characteristics, such as rural status, ethnic origin, disability, and migrant status. The scarcity of such data has been described as a key barrier to inclusive decision making at various stages of the policy cycle.

Efforts have been made to improve the collection and use of data disaggregated by gender and other characteristics at the national level. In March 2019, the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) created a new “differential and intersectional group” at the managerial level to fill gaps in the collection of statistics with intersectional and differential approaches. Bilateral discussions have emphasised the critical role played by the DANE’s leadership in enhancing the collection of disaggregated data. The “differential and intersectional group” of ten professionals (a co-ordinator, four economists, a psychologist, an anthropologist, an administrative assistant and two external advisors), is now funded by DANE’s technical direction and is the official point of contact for UN Women, which has been supporting the government's efforts to close existing information gaps in gender statistics.

As explained in Chapter 4, the DANE regularly develops a National Statistical Plan, which is the main statistical planning instrument of the country and contains strategic guidelines for the production and dissemination of statistical information. Other OECD countries count on similar plans to organise their statistical activities. In Spain, for example, the National Institute of Statistics is responsible for drafting the National Statistical Plan which covers a four-year period and is approved by royal decree. The Plan specifies the statistics that have to be compiled during that period by the General State administration or by any other of its dependent bodies, as well as the statistics to be developed with the participation of the autonomous communities and the local governments. An *ex ante* gender impact assessment is also carried out during the preparation of Spain’s National Statistical Plan, taking into account the requirements set forth in the Organic Law 3/2007 on effective equality between women and men.

In 2020, following the stipulations of the National Statistical Plan (*Plan Estadístico Nacional – PEN 2017-2022*), the DANE published a guide on intersectional and differential approaches for the national statistics system, as well as for private and public companies in Colombia. The guide, which contains recommendations on ways to include differential approaches in data collection, is accompanied by an official legal resolution (1448 of 2020) mandating that entities take action in this regard. Box 5.2 offers further details on the guide.

Box 5.2. DANE's Guide for differential and intersectional focus in the National Statistics System

Published in December 2020, the Guide for the inclusion of the differential and intersectional focus in the statistical production of the National Statistics System (*Guía para la inclusión del enfoque diferencial e interseccional en la producción estadística del sistema estadístico nacional*) encourages the collection and use of data disaggregated by gender and by other factors, to make the diversity of the Colombian population visible and to inform public and private decision making for reducing inequality.

Law 1448 of 2011, known as the Victims' and Land Restitution Law, introduced the concept of a differential approach as a guiding principle for state entities in policies for victims of the Colombian armed conflict. The Law calls for collection of relevant information at higher levels of disaggregation for decision making. The DANE's guide responds to this need, providing conceptual, normative and methodological guidelines to promote the adoption of the differential and intersectional focus in the production and dissemination of statistical data. Its primary goal is to improve analysis of the diversity of the Colombian population. The tool highlights the importance of collecting data disaggregated by such variables as gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, geographic location, educational level, socioeconomic situation, victim status, migrant status, access to health and social security services, health status, rural status and other characteristics. Considering their intersection allows for analyses of gaps and situations of vulnerability.

The guide is intended for the DANE and all the public and private entities in Colombia that produce statistics and make up the National Statistics System (*Sistema Estadístico Nacional*). It can also be helpful for groups that use statistics on a daily basis, such as policy makers, academia, civil society, organisations, private sector entities, scientific communities, students and journalists. It is also intended to serve as reference for the statistical offices of other countries interested in generating their versions of guidelines on this subject.

Source: (DANE, 2020[13]), Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadísticas (DANE), Guía para la inclusión del enfoque diferencial e interseccional en la producción estadística del sistema estadístico nacional, https://www.sen.gov.co/files/sen/novedades/20201014/2020_10_09_GUIA_EDI.pdf

Evidence shows that some OECD countries have put in place legal or binding requirements to ensure that all data collected and disseminated by the government is disaggregated. In Spain, for example, the Organic Law 3/2007 on effective equality between women and men includes a similar provision. All surveys and censuses now administered by the DANE that use individual people as the unit of analysis allow for disaggregation by gender and include specific questions or variables to this effect. These include the National Survey on Time Use (*Encuesta Nacional de Uso del Tiempo*, ENUT), carried out every three years, which allows for collection of statistics on the gender division of labour in Colombia. As reported in the responses to the 2021 GMG Survey, data disaggregated by gender in Colombia are collected in such areas as general public services, defence, public order and safety, economic affairs, housing and community, health, and education.

Scope remains, however, to enhance the collection of data with an intersectional approach. For example, as discussions revealed, information on the situation of rural women was extremely limited before 2010. Today, the entities attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Colombia report collecting data on rural women that is disaggregated by gender but that does not consider such characteristics as migrant status and age. Progress has been made since the Directorate for Rural Women was set up in the Ministry, but many statistical exercises still do not differentiate by gender. Estimates provided by the Ministry suggest that more than 20 programmes in the agricultural, fishing and rural development sectors still lack this disaggregation.

A lack of resources for the gender equality agenda limits the availability and use of disaggregated data

As noted in Chapter 4, line ministries and other public agencies in Colombia face significant limitations in the availability of human and financial resources dedicated to gender affairs. This has a significant impact on the readiness and use of relevant data and evidence for policy making. As a result, it is challenging to collect, analyse, apply and disseminate gender-disaggregated data in a timely manner, especially in the absence of legal requirements.

Needs assessments and information on the situation of women in their respective sectors is scarce in national entities. In 2016, a study led by the CPEM focused on the institutional arrangements for gender mainstreaming and incorporation of a gender perspective in planning and budget processes. It found that of 35 entities assessed at the national level, 19 (54%) reported having no competence for diagnoses on gender inequality, 12 (34%) did not use this type of assessment, and 4 (12%) provided no information on the subject (Proyectamos Colombia, 2016[14]). However, such good practices as the Ministry of Energy's sectoral studies, which summon a range of stakeholders to gather gender-based data on the sector, could be replicated in other ministries or sectors with the help of CPEM and the DNP (Box 5.3).

Box 5.3. Collecting gender-based data through sectoral studies

In 2021, the Ministry of Mines and Energy carried out a sectoral study, with the support of international organisations, to gather data and design a precise assessment of the situation of women in Colombia's mining and energy sector.

Following the 2019 Guidelines for the Gender Equality Policy of the Mining and Energy Sector and using the United Nations' Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP) tool, the ministry collected information from 71 institutions in the sector to establish goals based on concrete data and to prioritise activities and responsibilities responding to the sector's needs.

This exercise was also useful to sensitise representatives of this predominantly masculine sector on gender equality issues. The study was also intended to be used in the near future to update the sectoral gender policy, in a bottom-up strategy.

Source: (Ministerio de Minas y Energía, 2020[15]), Ministerio de Minas y Energía, Estudio sectoral de equidad de género para el sector Minero-Energético, https://www.minenergia.gov.co/documents/10192/24274643/ESTUDIO+SECTORIAL+G%C3%89NERO+SME+2020.pdf.

Meetings made clear that data integration is a major challenge faced by the DANE. Integration of data from different sectors is fundamental, particularly in covering such topics as gender-based violence. Converting administrative records into statistical records requires a high level of specialisation and storage capacity, and the DANE could benefit from increased funding and capacity for such work. Investing in cross-cutting training would also be beneficial, to increase the number of professionals able to collect, manage and store data.

In general, as noted in previous Chapters, Colombia would benefit from strengthening gender mainstreaming at the national and subnational levels. Institutions with enough qualified personnel are needed to ensure the systematic production, availability, accessibility, quality and use of statistics disaggregated by gender and other variables. Similarly, subnational administrations (*gobernaciones* and *alcaldías*) could make further efforts to gather data and statistics on the needs of women (especially rural women) in each jurisdiction, and also on the beneficiaries of projects, actions and policies introduced by local authorities.

Limited co-ordination restricts the exchange of data and information between institutions

Line ministries depend significantly on the DANE as their main source of data. Although some ministries also produce data, national entities could benefit from further co-ordinated exchanges of information. Bilateral meetings have revealed that no centralised system currently exists to store administrative records on the situation of rural women.

This is also the case for data on violence against women, and the fragmented information systems on gender-based violence leave room for improvement. Previous OECD work (OECD, 2020[16]) recommended strengthening the alignment between the data and service processes of the DNP and the DANE. This could tackle regional disparities and improve women's access to justice, in particular for victims of violence, and lead to appropriate planning and provision of legal and justice services. According to the DANE, entities' reluctance to share information is one of the main challenges to accessing data on gender-based violence. The CPEM could play a bridging role in this respect.

Similar limitations are observed at the local level. Colombia could benefit from enhancing the availability of data disaggregated by gender and by other identity factors, and facilitating line ministries' access to data. With due respect to issues of privacy, sharing data that has been collected by the DANE and by other entities should be encouraged, both horizontally and between national and subnational institutions, as a systematic element of the policy-making process.

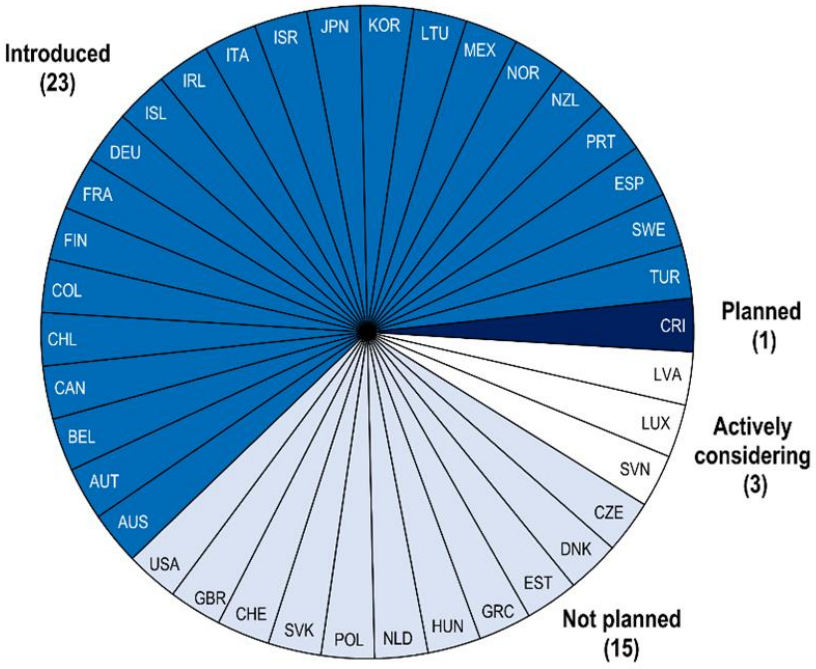
5.3. Gender budgeting

5.3.1. Introduction

Governments have increasingly come to realise that the budget process is a powerful tool for delivering on national policy goals. Dealing with horizontal policy objectives such as gender equality in the budget process offers an opportunity to influence government-wide policy making and deliver on outcomes in a way that might not otherwise be feasible.

The "power of the purse" is gaining recognition as a way of ensuring that gender equality be systematically taken into account in tax and spending decisions. Data from 2022 shows that 61% of OECD countries now practice gender budgeting (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2. OECD countries that practice gender budgeting



Source: (OECD, forthcoming[17]), 2022 Survey on Gender Budgeting.

Gender budgeting is not a separate budget for policies concerning women. Instead, it aims to incorporate gender equality concerns in the decision-making process by:

- raising awareness that many budget proposals have implications for gender equality (whether or not their primary objective is gender-related);
- encouraging the tabling of gender-sensitive budget proposals;
- using the budget process to secure adequate resources for national gender equality goals.

The OECD publication *Designing and Implementing Gender Budgeting* sets out a framework for an effective and enduring gender budgeting practice. This includes the following elements:

- **strategic framework**: the political commitment and governance arrangements for gender budgeting, including the legal framework, institutional roles and responsibilities and national gender equality goals;
- **implementation tools**: the tools that are used to apply a "gender lens" at various stages of the budget process – *ex ante*, concurrent and *ex post*;
- **an enabling environment**: the supportive elements that help ensure a more effective gender budgeting practice, including gender-disaggregated data, capacity building and parliamentary oversight (OECD, 2019[18]).

The following Sections outline the current state of play in gender budgeting in Colombia, considering each of these elements.

5.3.2. The strategic framework for gender budgeting

A strategic framework for gender budgeting outlines why it exists, what it aims to achieve and how it is implemented. In assessing the strategic framework for gender budgeting in Colombia, this Section

considers how far gender budgeting is supported by political commitment and legal foundations, strong institutional arrangements and clear national gender equality goals.

Political commitment and legal foundations

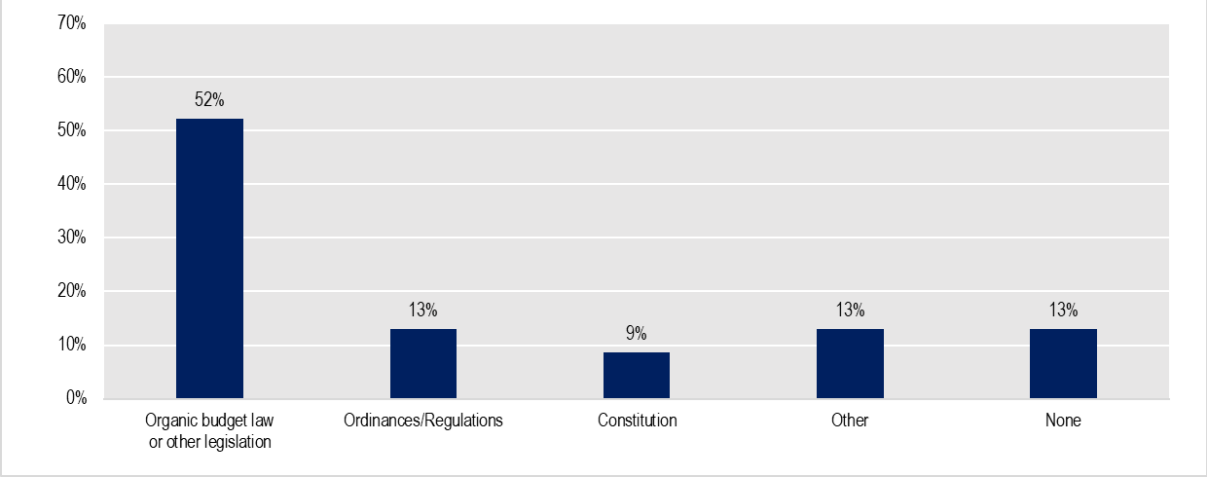
A number of international and domestic forces have provided impetus for the introduction of gender budgeting in Colombia. At the international level, Colombia is party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and recognises that both the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals aim for the inclusion of a gender dimension in budget decision making. As part of the 2013 Santo Domingo Consensus, Colombia, with a number of other Latin American and Caribbean countries, agreed to include gender as a cross-cutting objective in the allocation of public funds. In addition, in 2015, the OECD's Public Governance Committee recommended that Colombia consider integrating a gender dimension into all phases of the budget cycle.

Gender budgeting in Colombia has several foundations:

- CONPES 161 of 2013 states that the government should identify a methodology that adds a gender lens to the public spending process. It also asks government entities to incorporate a gender dimension into their annual planning and budget processes.
- Law 1753 of 2015, National Development Plan 2014-2018, requires the DNP and the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MHCP) to design a mechanism that allows government entities to include a gender dimension in annual planning and budget processes.
- Law 1955 of 2018, National Development Plan 2018-2022, sets out the requirement for a budget tracer for the equity of women. It also requires the DNP and the MHCP to prepare a report on allocations using information from the budget tracer, to be presented to Congress by the following April. The DNP must also use the budget tracer to identify projects relevant to gender equality in its Annual Operational Investment Plan. Furthermore, the law establishes gender units in government entities with responsibility for promoting gender-sensitive budgets and states that the DNP, the MHCP and the Central Bank should add a gender dimension to their macroeconomic models.

These legal foundations provide a strong basis for ensuring the sustainability of gender budgeting in the longer term. They also put Colombia on a par with the majority of OECD countries that also practise gender budgeting, and have a legal framework underpinning it (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3. Legal basis for gender budgeting in OECD countries



Source: (OECD, forthcoming[17]), 2022 Survey on Gender Budgeting.

Institutional arrangements

Strong institutional arrangements with clear roles and responsibilities for key actors underpin the operationalisation of gender budgeting. In Colombia, Article 221 allocates responsibility for the budget tracer for women's equity, the main gender budgeting tool, to the DNP (responsible for planning) and the MHCP (responsible for public finances).

In the DNP, responsibility for the budget tracer for women's equity lies with the subdirectorate for gender, set up in 2013. The subdirectorate is responsible for incorporating a gender approach into planning, in liaison with the MHCP and the Presidential Council for Women's Equity (CPEM). Although the subdirectorate sits within the Directorate for Social Development in the DNP, its work is transversal. It has three staff members, which, as mentioned in Chapter 4, limits its ability to provide guidance to all government entities on integrating a gender approach into planning.

In the MHCP, responsibility for the budget tracer lies with the Directorate of the General Public Budget. Four people on this team work on the tracer, although this is just one element of their work. As with the DNP, this limits the MHCP's scope of action for implementing the tracer.

Both the DNP and the MHCP work closely with CPEM on gender budgeting. The report to Congress with information from the budget tracer is consolidated by CPEM, using information gathered by the DNP and the MHCP. This joint institutional approach facilitates a collective effort in implementing gender budgeting. Co-ordination has been strong to date, even though no formal co-ordination mechanisms are in place. This may partially be due to the budget tracer's status as a new initiative, and over time, there is a risk that this co-operation may wane. An inter-agency working group could ensure that regular communication continues between the relevant entities. 30% of OECD countries that practice gender budgeting report having such a group (OECD, forthcoming[17]). An example is provided in Box 5.4.

Box 5.4. Example of an inter-agency working group: Iceland

Iceland's Gender Budgeting Committee

Iceland's Gender Budgeting Committee was set up, and is led by, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in a formal co-operation with the Ministry of Welfare. The committee includes representatives of all the ministries and the Centre for Gender Equality. It meets regularly and is responsible for preparing the implementation programme for gender budgeting. Similarly, steering groups in all the ministries are responsible for gender budgeting in each ministry.

Source: (Downes and Nicol, 2020[19]), Designing and implementing gender budgeting – a path to action, 10.1787/689198fa-en.

National gender equality goals

Gender budgeting is most effective where clear national gender equality objectives have been laid out. As noted in Chapter 3, in March 2013, the Colombian government approved a National Policy on Gender Equality (CONPES 161) that aims to co-ordinate efforts across the whole of government to guarantee women's equality and non-discrimination. It sets out seven fundamental gender equality goals. Five of these goals were used as a basis for setting the categories in the budget tracer for women's equity. The other two are administrative goals, rather than policy goals (e.g. to promote gender mainstreaming by public entities).

While drafting this Review, the government of Colombia developed a new national public policy for gender equality (CONPES 4080), published in April 2022. The categories in the budget tracer for women's equity are also likely to be updated to reflect the new goals contained in the policy.

The National Development Plan 2018-2022: Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity also includes a chapter, "The Equity Pact for Women", setting out specific targets for women's equity, for which the Presidency of the Republic has allocated COP 5.4 trillion. These targets are broadly aligned with the goals for women's equity in the National Policy on Gender Equality, although the direct read-across could be more clearly delineated, to help ensure policy alignment and ensure clarity of focus for the gender budgeting initiative.

5.3.3. Implementation tools

Gender budgeting tools can be used to embed gender considerations in the overall context of the planning and budget process systematically. This Section reviews the gender budgeting tools used by the government of Colombia to bring a "gender lens" to the budget process. Three main tools are used for gender budgeting: i) the budget tracer for women's equity, ii) gender budget statements to Congress, and iii) the integration of a gender dimension into the planning process. As noted above, the government of Colombia will also shortly be adding a gender perspective to evaluation.

The budget tracer for women's equity

The budget tracer for women's equity was created through Article 221 of Law 1995, relating to the National Development Plan 2018-2022. Its purpose is to identify public funds being used to support women's equity. It is able to show how much of the budget is allocated to the promotion of gender equality across different areas, and levels, of government.

The budget tracer has three stages. During the first stage, the user identifies actions, programmes or policies that help support women's equity. In the second stage, the user identifies the resources associated with the activities identified in the first stage, and their source of financing. In the third and final stage, users identify the specific goal these resources target. The five possible categories are shown in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4. Budget tracer for women's equity: categories



Note: There is also a subcategory, "Institutional Development and Cultural Transformation", that can be used to highlight actions to strengthen the government's capacity to respond to any of the five categories above.
Source: Developed by the OECD, 2022.

In addition, the user identifies whether the action helps achieve any additional goals, e.g. those set out in the NDP 2018-2022, the Sustainable Development Goals, or a sectoral plan.

The users of the budget tracer are policy managers at all levels of Colombia's public sector. As with any budget tagging tool, it is important to ensure that users tag their activities accurately. The DNP and CPEM have been working with government entities to build capacity in this regard, but resources are limited. It has been helpful for DNP and CPEM to have gender "champions" to work with in some national entities, and it could be helpful to have such allies in every ministry, as well as within entities at the local level.

Of the 32 sectors and 190 entities in the Colombian public sector, 23 sectors and 40 entities reported budget allocations designed to help achieve equity for women in 2021. If sectors and entities do not report such budget allocations, it is largely because they have not identified relevant investments. This may evolve, as capacity is built in government entities and greater understanding is achieved of how a broad range of activities can impact women's equity.

The vast majority of activities included in the tracer were investments (99.6% in 2021), with the remainder related to operating expenses. The total budget identified as contributing to women's equity using the tracer over the period 2019-2021 is shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Budget contributing to activities supporting women's equity, 2019-2021

Millions of dollars	2019	2020	2021
Investment funds	350.1	876.2	851.0
Operating expenditure	4.6	3.4	3.8
Total	354.7	879.6	854.8

Source: (Colombian Observatory of Women, 2021[20]), Second Report to the Congress of the Republic – Budget Tracer for Women's Equity (2021), https://observatoriomujeres.gov.co/archivos/publicaciones/Publicacion_142.pdf

In the period 2019 to 2021, the budget total identified as supporting women's equity using the tracer has increased substantially. This is likely to be driven by better understanding among government entities of how to identify relevant activities using the tracer, as well as increased take-up of government programmes supporting women. As for how much was allocated to each category in the budget tracer, the majority of funding was allocated to "Economic autonomy and access to assets" (84.4% in 2021), with a further 14.9% allocated to "Life free of violence".

A key benefit of the budget tracer is that it helps ensure that investments in women's equity are not reduced or eliminated without due cause. If funding allocated to one of the five categories in the tracer is reduced, a mechanism flags that the change in funding must be checked by the DNP. The DNP checks that the reduction is justified and that the reduction for that activity is proportional to reductions in other areas.

The tracer is also being used by the Supreme Audit Institution to analyse how entities are spending their resources. It is particularly helpful to inform the institution of the funding being allocated to UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.

Overall, use of the tracer has raised awareness across the government of actions that are being taken to help close gender gaps.

Gender budgeting statements to Congress

The information from budget tagging in OECD countries is often presented in a consolidated gender budget statement. This is also the case in Colombia. Article 96 of Law 2008 of 2019 stipulates that the Budget Bill include an annex with information from the budget tracer on spending targeted to women's equity. Published around July/August annually, it shows allocations for women's equity for the upcoming budget year.

A second report must also be presented to Congress by April and includes information on allocations for women's equity for the previous budget year. There have been two reports so far, one in 2020 and one in 2021 (see Figure 5.5). A third was due to be published in April 2022.

Figure 5.5. Reports to Congress on the Budget Tracer for Women's Equity in 2020 and 2021





Source: (Colombian Observatory of Women, 2020[21]; Colombian Observatory of Women, 2021[20])

The reports have been well-received by Congress. The Commission on Equality, a bicameral commission in Congress, holds a special session at which the report is presented, with the DNP, MHCP, CPEM and relevant ministries in attendance.

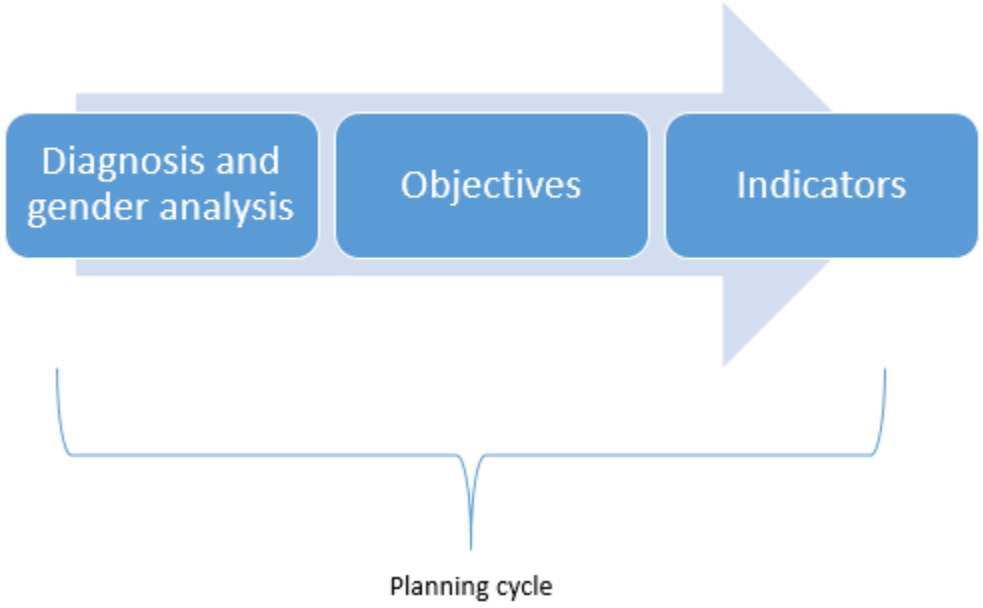
A key challenge related to the publishing of these reports is that the allocations for women's equity for the previous year are usually much higher than those programmed for the forthcoming year. This can cause confusion among parliamentarians, the obvious interpretation being that there has been a reduction in funding for activities to support women's equity. In reality, the allocations are lower as a result of the reluctance of entities to tag activities as being relevant for women's equity until the money has been spent. Hopefully, such hesitancy will be reduced in time.

These reports could be further elaborated upon as gender budgeting is developed. The Mexican gender budget statement for example, in addition to a gender allocations report, includes a general gender budget statement, a gender impact analysis of specific budget measures, a gender equality progress statement and gender impact analysis of the budget as a whole (OECD, 2019[18]).

Integration of gender dimension to planning and performance monitoring

Colombia has made concerted efforts to include a gender dimension in the planning cycle. Government entities are encouraged to undertake gender needs assessments to better understand gender gaps and needs in a given area. The findings are then used as a basis to identify objectives in relation to gender gaps, and indicators to track progress (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.6. The integration of a gender dimension in the planning cycle in Colombia



Source: Developed by the OECD, 2022.

Integration of a gender dimension into planning at the local level in Colombia has been particularly successful. As noted in Chapter 3, all 32 departments include a chapter on women or gender equality in their Departmental Development Plans. A key challenge now is to replicate this success at the municipal level, where progress is slower.

The long-term goal of integrating a gender dimension into the planning cycle is to improve the selection of performance objectives and indicators on gender equality for different budget programmes.

Gender focus to evaluation

As gender performance objectives are embedded in government programmes, a gender perspective in evaluations should naturally follow. This ensures that programmes and policies are evaluated on how effectively they have met their gender equality objectives. Lessons from these evaluations can inform budget decisions on whether or not to continue funding certain programmes, or to make funding contingent on certain design changes.

As noted earlier, the DNP is working on a pilot programme to integrate a gender focus in the evaluation of national public policies and programmes in 2022. The goal is for at least one evaluation with a gender focus to be conducted each year. Colombia might like to consider Austria's practice of incorporating a gender perspective into performance audits (see Box 5.5).

Box 5.5. How Austria has integrated a gender perspective into performance audit

The Austrian Court of Audit is the supreme audit institution for Austria, responsible for both financial and performance audits. Internal guidelines specify that each performance audit should consider complementary questions in the area of gender equality. This includes questions such as:

- Is the gender objective relevant?
- Is there sufficient gender-specific data?
- How appropriate is the level of ambition for measures and indicators?
- What is the impact on society?
- Are women and men appropriately represented in the governing bodies?

For example, an audit of "Agricultural Investment Subsidies and its Outcomes" as part of Austria's rural development programme found that gender equality was not systematically covered by the programme, that just 30% of the monitoring committee members were women (despite rules of procedure aimed at gender-balanced representation), that gender-specific investment needs were not analysed even though women predominantly had smaller farms than men, and that programme data was not systematically reported and analysed from a gender perspective.

Other audits with a gender perspective include: Gender Health in Austria (2015), Compensatory Allowances under Pension Insurance (2015), The Introduction of Outcome Orientation in Selected Federal Ministries (2016), and Gender Aspects in Income Tax Law (2017).

Source: (Downes and Nicol, 2020[19]), Designing and implementing gender budgeting – a path to action, https://doi.org/10.1787/16812336.

5.3.4. Enabling environment

Gender budgeting is most effective where there is a supportive enabling environment. In assessing the environment for gender budgeting in Colombia, this Section looks at the extent to which there is clear guidance as well as training and capacity development for government staff, systematic availability of gender disaggregated data, appropriate IT tools, civil society engagement and a modern budgetary framework.

Guidance, training and capacity development

To increase openness and understanding on gender budgeting throughout the public sector, it is helpful to have details and instructions on the application of gender budgeting in the annual budget circular, as well as training and capacity development to help to institute practices over the long term.

In Colombia, instructions on how to use the budget tracer are provided in the Budget Circular. Specifically, officials are reminded of the duty to identify relevant allocations in the IT systems and use the budget tracers available to identify the focus of resources.

In addition, investment in training has been made, as well as capacity development for government staff on how to use the budget tracer for women's equity. This has included workshops, online courses and face-to-face technical support sessions on gender-focused planning and budgets, as well as the use of the budget tracer, for different national administrative sectors. The lead agencies for the budget tracer have noted a need for further capacity development, particularly at the regional and local level. However, this is challenging to implement, given the limited resources available.

As noted in Chapter 4, having gender units in some ministries has been particularly helpful for developing capacity in the government. These units have been building knowledge that is then shared across the ministry. It has been suggested that setting up gender units as standard practice in each government ministry, as is done in Mexico, could prove helpful, improving government capacity for using the budget tracer. This would give line ministries points of contact for help or advice on use of the tool.

While line ministries should adopt the institutional structure that best fits their needs and activities, gender units in each ministry would help draw together the appropriate representatives from each government entity, providing a forum for discussion of key challenges and for sharing best practices.

Availability of gender-disaggregated data for budgeting purposes

As noted in the previous Section, gender-disaggregated data is key if governments are to understand needs for gender equality and for developing gender sensitive and evidence-based policies. In Colombia, it is particularly important for integrating a gender lens into planning and performance monitoring and budgeting.

In the area of budgeting, Colombia could look to Canada for inspiration. Canada has focused on improving the availability of gender-disaggregated data as part of its gender budgeting efforts (see Box 5.6).

Box 5.6. Canada's efforts to improve gender-disaggregated data

When Canada implemented gender budgeting, it introduced a requirement that all budget proposals be accompanied by a gender impact assessment (GBA+). The government recognised that good-quality GBA+ would require more in-depth gender-disaggregated data than was available at the time. To improve the situation, the government made a proposal to invest CAD 6.7 million over five years so Statistics Canada could create a new Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics, to act as GBA+ data hub. CAD 5 million per year was also allocated to Status of Women Canada to undertake research and data collection in support of the government's Gender Results Framework.

Source: (OECD, 2018[7]), Gender Equality in Canada: Mainstreaming, Governance and Budgeting, 10.1787/9789264301108-en.

IT tools

Efforts to introduce gender budget tagging will test whether a country's internal budget management systems and IT tools are fit for purpose. In Colombia, the DNP and MHCP developed technological tools to identify budget allocations to support women's equity, using a special budget marker in their information systems.

The DNP registers investment projects through the Single Public Investment and Finance System (SUIFP), with entities identifying whether a project is relevant to women's equity. For operating expenditure, the MHCP developed the Trace App, through which entities can report whether or not expenditure relates to women's equity. CPEM consolidates the information from both DNP and the MHCP, using Excel.

Although the existing tools function well, there is scope for greater sophistication. Further developments could help to require that entities include relevant information. Any efforts to improve the sophistication of the IT tools should also consider the scope for integrating different IT systems in use across government, including local and national IT systems.

Engagement with civil society

An open government approach can ensure that the policies and programmes advocated for in the budget proposal respond to citizens' needs for gender equality and that gender budgeting does not lose contact with its feminist-inspired origins and critical perspectives.

Colombia's government has engaged with civil society over the budget tracer for women's equity. A civil society DataQuest event was held in March 2019, offering a forum to debate equality for women in relation to public spending in Colombia. However, there is still scope for greater engagement with civil society. To support this, the government hopes to publish materials on the budget tracer specifically for civil society, avoiding technical language.

The report to Congress on the budget tracer is a useful tool for engagement with civil society, as are the plans to upload information from the tracer to the open government portal.

Modern budgetary framework

Evidence from across the OECD shows that gender budget tagging should be supported by a modern budgetary governance framework that includes programme budgeting and strong links between planning and budgeting. In Colombia, programme budgeting has not yet been set up. Furthermore, there is a weak link between planning and budgeting and no culture of results-based management. Reforms to introduce programme budgeting and strengthen the link between planning and budgeting will help provide a more solid foundation for the application of the budget tracer and other gender budgeting tools.

5.3.5. Assessment

Gender budgeting has only recently been introduced in Colombia, which benefits from a number of core strengths already in place. These include the strong strategic framework guiding gender budgeting efforts, including legal foundations and clear institutional arrangements. In addition, a formal set of gender equality goals is set out in the National Policy on Gender Equality, which provide objectives for gender budgeting.

The budget tracer for women's equity is the core gender budgeting tool. It has a clear methodology in place, with good alignment between the categories in the tracer and the gender equality goals in the National Policy on Gender Equality. The rollout of the tracer has been steady so far, aided by training and capacity development provided by lead institutions. However, it has not yet been consistently implemented across different sectors and levels of government, and further institutional capacity at both the national and local levels will be required. Functionality for the tracer has been integrated into relevant IT systems in the DNP and the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MCHP), but further refinements could be made.

Information from the tracer is highlighted in a report to Congress, and this is an important accountability mechanism. It should also be noted that it is planned to present this information on the transparency portal.

Colombia is integrating a gender perspective into planning and performance setting, with plans to expand the gender budgeting toolkit and include a gender dimension in evaluations. This will be supported by greater availability of gender-disaggregated data and development of performance indicators on gender equality.

The tools adopted so far have helped to highlight the importance the government attributes to matters of women's equity, but there are limitations. The tracer is focused at present on promoting allocations for activities that support women's equity, but does not identify projects that negatively impact women's equity. In addition, information from the tracer has improved transparency on the amount of money allocated to women's equity, but is not yet influencing decisions on resource allocation, which has limited its impact of the tracer in its current form.

This Chapter nevertheless offers a path for action for gender budgeting and aims to provide a vision for it to become effective in mobilising government resources for progress on gender equality.

5.4. Gender-sensitive public procurement

5.4.1. Introduction

Public procurement refers to the many ways in which governments plan, source and manage the acquisition of goods, services and works, using a range of contractual arrangements and purchasing tools. It is a significant policy instrument, accounting for 29% of government expenditures and approximately 12% of gross domestic product (GDP) in the OECD area (OECD, 2019[22]). In Colombia, public procurement represents 11.5% of GDP.

The 2015 OECD *Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement* proposes concrete steps to encourage member states to evaluate the use of their public procurement policies and processes to pursue strategic objectives, including gender equality (OECD, 2015[23]). Governments are increasingly leveraging public procurement to pursue complementary policy objectives. In this context, gender-responsive procurement policies and practices have the potential to promote gender equality and encourage suppliers to support women's empowerment, contributing to a whole-of-government response to tackle persisting gender gaps and vulnerabilities.[1]

Box 5.7. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement: Balance

The *Recommendation on Public Procurement* "recommends that Adherents recognise that any use of the public procurement system to pursue secondary policy objectives should be balanced against the primary procurement objective.

To this end, Adherents should:

i) **Evaluate the use of public procurement as one method of pursuing secondary policy objectives in accordance with clear national priorities**, balancing the potential benefits against the need to achieve value for money. Both the capacity of the procurement workforce to support secondary policy objectives and the burden associated with monitoring progress in promoting such objectives should be considered;

ii) **Develop an appropriate strategy for the integration of secondary policy objectives in public procurement systems**. For secondary policy objectives that will be supported by public procurement, appropriate planning, baseline analysis, risk assessment and target outcomes should be established as the basis for the development of action plans or guidelines for implementation;

iii) **Employ appropriate impact assessment methodology to measure the effectiveness of procurement in achieving secondary policy objectives**. The results of any use of the public procurement system to support secondary policy objectives should be measured according to appropriate milestones to provide policy makers with necessary information regarding the benefits and costs of such use. Effectiveness should be measured both at the level of individual procurements, and against policy objective target outcomes. Additionally, the aggregate effect of pursuing secondary policy objectives on the public procurement system should be periodically assessed, to address potential objective overload".

Source: (OECD, 2015[24]), OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement, https://www.oecd.org/gov/public-procurement/recommendation/.

Gender-inclusive public procurement involves the introduction of gender requirements and considerations into related policies and practices, in order to use it as an instrument to promote gender equality (OECD, 2021[25]).

Gender-sensitive public procurement could help Colombia meet its commitments to foster inclusion and sustainability under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Growing concern is reflected in the increasing attention paid to gender inequality by different international organisations. During its 2014 Brisbane Summit, the G20 committed to reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025 (the 25 x 25 goal). Diverse policy actions, including public procurement policies, are being leveraged in G20 countries to move this commitment forward (OECD, 2021[25]).

The trends described above are moving countries to redefine the concept of value for money in public procurement, as a way to promote policy coherence. Such new concepts of value for money require specific tools and mechanisms and may involve the introduction of gender considerations and requirements into public procurement policies and processes, leveraging public procurement to improve gender equality (Burgi, 2017[26]).

This Section reviews the different tools and mechanisms Colombia is using to promote gender equality through public procurement, as well as the challenges that policy makers and procurement practitioners face in promoting gender equality through public procurement.

5.4.2. Institutional framework and policy coherence for gender-sensitive public procurement

Colombia has already established some basic measures to promote gender-sensitive public procurement, but stronger leadership would help to achieve deeper and sustained progress

As discussed in Chapter 4, a sound institutional design is necessary for the promotion of the government's gender equality agenda. A strong institutional set-up facilitates the strategic use of all government tools for gender equality purposes, and this Section focuses on its importance for fostering gender-sensitive public procurement.

Political commitment and leadership are always key elements in advancing innovative or disruptive policy measures. The OECD report *Making Reform Happen: Lessons from OECD Countries* notes that the different reforms assessed in the analysis all point to the need for strong leadership. If the government is not united around a reform proposal, it sends out mixed messages, and opponents are able, usually successfully, to exploit its divisions and resist reform (OECD, 2010[27]).

Strong leadership is all the more necessary because incorporating complementary policy objectives into public procurement adds to the complexity of the processes, which in turn encourages officials to resist reform. In many Latin American contexts, price considerations prevail over wider concepts of value-for-money.

The Colombian government's central purchasing body, *Colombia Compra Eficiente* (CCE), has already enacted measures to incorporate gender considerations into public procurement. These are primarily intended to encourage the participation of women in the purchasing system and in suppliers' staff. It is important, though, that these efforts be situated in the whole-of-government context. For example, gender-sensitive public procurement could be used as a tool in policy documents such as the update of CONPES 161 of 2013, which outlines national public policy on gender equality. CCE could be invited to join and actively participate in the committees and working groups that promote gender equality and mainstreaming in the whole-of-government, such as the CONPES 161 follow-up commission (*Comisión Intersectoral de Seguimiento al CONPES 161*). Moreover, gender-inclusive procurement could be used as part of the policy package the government is using to recover from the economic and social effects of COVID-19, recognising that the pandemic has hit women particularly hard (see Box 5.8 for an example from Spain).

Box 5.8. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into recovery initiatives

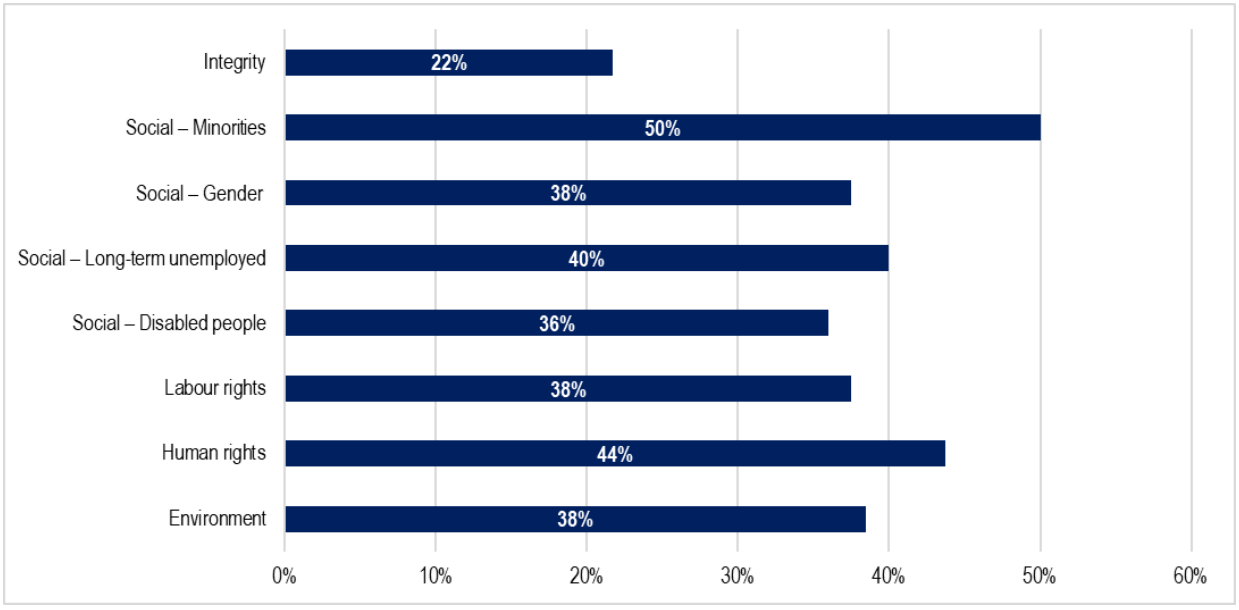
In 2021, Spain's Institute of Women elaborated two guides aiming to facilitate the necessary mainstreaming of the gender perspective into all activities funded by the Spanish Plan for Recovery, Transformation and Resilience (RTRP), one addressed to public administrations at the national, regional and local level, and another one addressed to private entities and partnerships. Their aim is to facilitate the necessary integration of the gender perspective into all actions that can be funded within the framework of the RTRP, including through public procurement.

Source: (Instituto de las Mujeres, 2021[28]), How to integrate the gender perspective into all activities funded by the Spanish Plan for Recovery, Transformation and Resilience, Guía para aplicar la pespectiva de género a las actuaciones financiadas por el Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia (igualdadenlaempresa.es), https://www.igualdadenlaempresa.es/actualidad/en-destacado/docs/GuidesGenderInRTRP_EN.pdf.

The actions outlined in the previous paragraph would serve several purposes. First, they would raise the profile of public procurement as an arena for advancing gender equality, reinforcing the notion that contracting authorities should embrace gender-sensitive public procurement, leading to policy coherence. Second, they could empower CCE to lead and co-ordinate efforts to facilitate the adoption of gender inclusive procurement. This would motivate CCE to build on previous efforts and develop its expertise on gender policies. Different deputy directorates (*subdirecciones*) in CCE now have responsibilities for promoting gender equality. Third, by clearly indicating political commitment, such measures could potentially direct resources towards gender-sensitive procurement. This is important since, for example, the Department of Boyacá reports the lack of resources as one of the main challenges for gender inclusive procurement. More concretely, these measures would enshrine gender-inclusive procurement in Colombian policy, beyond the term of any particular administration in the jurisdictions of departmental or city governments.

OECD research has identified a common challenge to incorporating gender provisions in public procurement as the lack of a clear understanding about how it can be achieved. This lack of awareness of how to implement gender-related issues accounts for 38% of the responses captured in the OECD Survey on leveraging responsible business conduct (RBC) through public procurement (see Figure 5.7) (OECD, 2021[25]).

Figure 5.7. Limited understanding of how to implement strategic objectives in public procurement



Note: Based on data from 28 countries. Data from Austria, Chile, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States are not available.
Source: (OECD, 2021[25]), Promoting gender equality through public procurement: Challenges and good practices, 10.1787/5d8f6f76-en.

The need to raise awareness and understanding was also recognised by Colombian institutions in the fact-finding questionnaire for this review. Lack of interest and understanding by the different institutions was cited as one of the main obstacles for gender equality programmes and initiatives. Lack of a strategic framework to incentivise the commitment from the whole of government was another major limitation cited. Here again, an updated CONPES would be useful to tackle these obstacles and promote awareness of the strategic role public procurement can play in advancing the gender agenda.

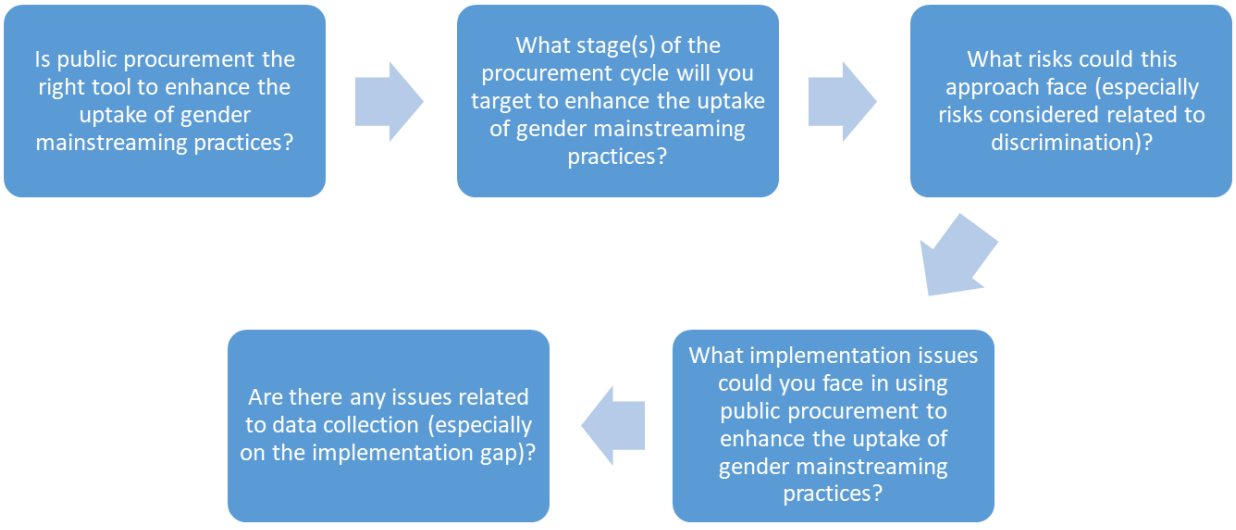
5.4.3. Regulatory and strategic framework for gender-inclusive public procurement

The regulatory and strategic framework for gender-inclusive public procurement should go beyond encouraging the participation of women on suppliers' staff

The first question the regulatory or the strategic framework should address is whether public procurement is the right tool to improve gender balance. While public procurement is increasingly leveraged to achieve complementary policy objectives, governments should first assess to what extent it is the correct, and only, tool to promote gender considerations. Such assessment should bear in mind different elements. First, it should consider conflicting objectives and priorities. For example, a government may want to leverage public procurement to promote small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and gender objectives at the same time. Authorities will thus need to define which is the priority and how these two objectives will co-exist. Colombia is, to some extent, pursuing these two objectives in public procurement. Second, contracting authorities should analyse how far the capacity of the procurement workforce can support incorporation of gender-based considerations. Governments should also bear in mind the burdens created by the requirement that contracting authorities and suppliers incorporate gender objectives. Market engagement, for example, can be useful to determine if the supplier market can accommodate gender considerations (as will be discussed further below).

Figure 5.8 shows some of the main questions to ask in considering whether public procurement is the right approach for accommodating gender objectives.

Figure 5.8. Questions to ask in considering public procurement as a tool to promote gender considerations



Source: (OECD, 2021[25]). Promoting gender equality through public procurement: Challenges and good practices; 10.1787/5d8f6f76-en.

As mentioned above, CONPES 161 of 2013 does not explicitly anticipate the implementation of gender-sensitive public procurement. The same applies to the National Development Plan 2018-22 (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022 "Pacto por Colombia, Pacto por la Equidad"*). As explained in Chapter 3, this National Development Plan (PND) includes the programme "Pact for Women's Equality" (*Pacto de equidad para las mujeres*) aiming to i) design strategies for the equitable participation of women in the labour market to enhance their economic situation in environments free of violence; and ii) promote public innovation to improve gender equality in the labour market. In this sense, the government's objectives are not only to increase employment opportunities for women, but also to implement strategies to improve working conditions and contribute to gender equality in all kinds of businesses.

The PND in its Section on effective public spending includes a goal to simplify and optimise public procurement, which in turn includes a strategy to develop a socially and environmentally sustainable procurement system. One of the strategies aims to include social and environmental considerations in framework agreements, but includes no direct reference to gender-sensitive criteria.

Currently, the instruments issued by CCE basically focus on increasing the participation of women in the labour market. CCE first issued Concept C-567 on 10 September 2020, establishing that public entities can set contractual obligations to materialise horizontal policies and that nothing prohibits contracting authorities from introducing requirements guaranteeing that contractors have a minimum percentage of women as part of the staff executing the contract.

It later issued a statement (*Circular 004-2020* on 27 October 2020) inviting public entities to include social considerations to set a minimum percentage of women's participation in contract execution. It aims to

promote affirmative actions, by designating women as a group for special protection under the Constitution (*sujeto de especial protección constitucional*).

The concept and the statement described above were the first steps in advancing gender-sensitive procurement. In December 2020, the Legislative Branch issued Law 2069 to promote entrepreneurship in Colombia. Article 32 establishes that in line with sector analyses, public entities will include different requisites and grant additional points in procurement processes as affirmative actions to incentivise women-owned businesses (*empresas de mujeres*) and entrepreneurship. Likewise, Article 35 sets tie-breaking criteria, the second of which consists of favouring businesses from female heads of families, female victims of violence within the family, or companies where such women are majority holders. However, these gender-based benefits and advantages would only be enforced following the issuing of a regulating decree.

The regulating decree was published on 24 December 2021 (*Decreto 1860 de 2021*). It provides a concrete definition of women-owned businesses to facilitate the implementation of affirmative actions. Likewise, it establishes that women-owned businesses can receive up to 0.25 points, as established in the conditions and tender documents. It also establishes how to implement and validate the tie-breaking criteria relative to women heads of family or victims of violence within the family. CCE is currently reviewing international practices and assessing how implementation will work in practice.

In line with previous rules, CCE issued model template documents for the sectors of transport infrastructure and water and sewage. Annex 5 – Contract attachment (*Anexo 5 – Minuta del Contrato*) establishes contractual obligations for contractors, to ensure a minimum amount of female participation in the execution of the contract, promoting access to and equitable gender participation in the labour market. The suggested percentage is 5%, but it can rise to as much as 30% according to sector analyses and features.

Brief references to gender considerations in public procurement are included in the Guide for socially responsible public procurement (*Guía de Compras Públicas Socialmente Responsables*), issued by CCE. This establishes that social sustainability objectives include criteria to promote equality for vulnerable groups, such as women. It encourages a new definition of value for money that includes more than simply price considerations and is consistent with national policies and priorities. Concretely speaking, the Guide mandates public entities to incorporate evaluation criteria and measures to protect and encourage the participation of women in public procurement and opens up the possibility of adopting a differential approach to offer equal opportunities to men and women. Finally, it calls on public entities to establish a dialogue with suppliers to ensure they assume clear and concrete commitments, as well as to monitor compliance.[2]

Some experiences of this kind are seen at the subnational level, but progress varies by jurisdiction. The City of Bogotá, for example, issued a decree to establish affirmative actions to promote the participation of women in public procurement markets. Unlike the CCE rules, this decree adopted a gradual approach, as a way to encourage potential suppliers and contractors to hire women. It is not clear whether this approach originates in data from market analyses and engagement strategies indicating the capacity of suppliers to accommodate the percentage of women required to execute contracts. Such evidence would be helpful to assess whether the progressive requirements have been adapted to the current conditions of the suppliers' staff. The decree mandates local contracting authorities to include in the terms of reference and tender documents the duty to hire and maintain a minimum percentage of women to execute the contract. The requirement varies by sector, as illustrated in Table 5.2.

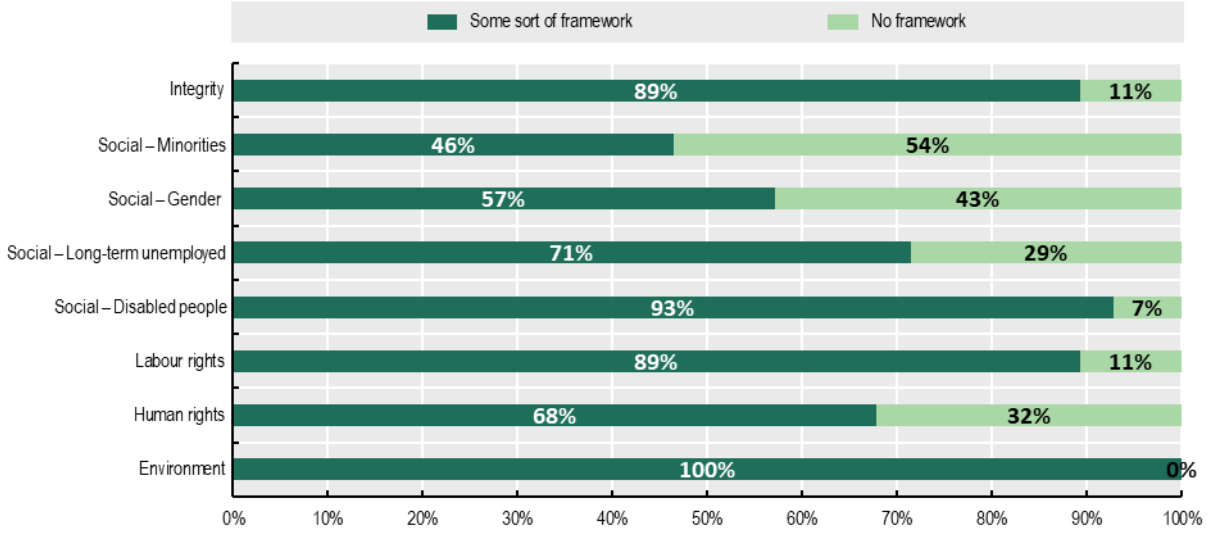
Table 5.2. Minimum percentage of women to execute a public contract in the City of Bogotá, by sector

Sector	As of 1 June 2021	As of 1 June 2022	As of 1 June 2023
Construction	6%	10%	15%
Transport and storage	10%	15%	20%
Public services	22%	27%	30%
Information and telecommunications	43%	47%	50%
Others	40%	45%	50%

Source: (City of Bogota, 2021[29]), Decreto por medio del cual se establecen medidas afirmativas para promover la participación de las mujeres en la contratación del Distrito Capital, https://www.sdmujer.gov.co/sites/default/files/2021-02/normas/Proyecto%2520Decreto%2520contratacio%25CC%2581n%2520mujeres%2520%2528publicacio%25CC%2581n%2520pa%25CC%2581gina%2520web%2529.pdf

The instruments described above constitute the current framework in Colombia for advancing gender-inclusive procurement. Of the countries that replied to the OECD Survey on leveraging RBC through public procurement that have a framework for strategic objectives in public procurement, 57% include gender-related considerations (see Figure 5.9).

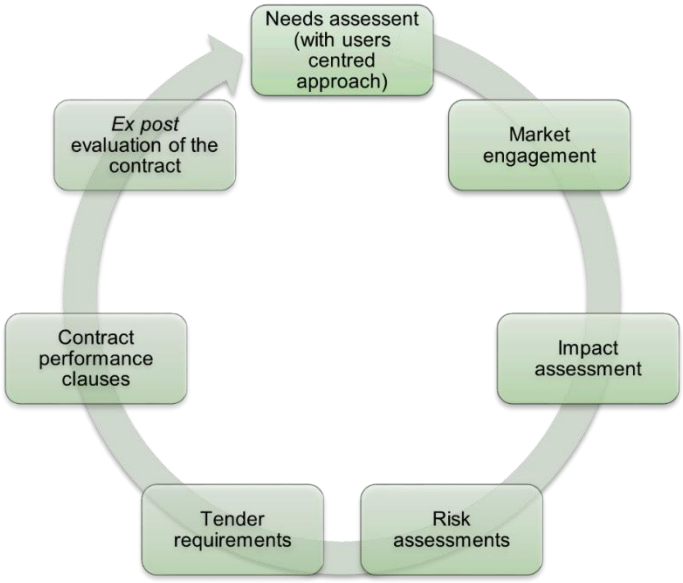
Figure 5.9. Share of countries with a framework supporting strategic objectives in public procurement



Note: Based on data from 28 countries, either regulatory or strategic framework. Data from Austria, Chile, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States are not available.
Source: (OECD, 2021[25]), Promoting gender equality through public procurement: Challenges and good practices, 10.1787/5d8f6f76-en.

A framework is always a good start, and Colombia should build on previous achievements to require more female participation in the staff of suppliers and contractors. This could help fulfil the objective set in the PND to improve working conditions for women. For example, the current framework could be reviewed to amplify the various mechanisms and tools incorporating gender considerations in public procurement. Figure 5.10 illustrates the tools available applicable throughout the public procurement cycle.

Figure 5.10. Mechanisms and tools to integrate gender considerations into public procurement



Source: (OECD, 2021[25]), Promoting gender equality through public procurement: Challenges and good practices, 10.1787/5d8f6f76-en.

In line with the previous figure, CCE could launch initiatives to expand requirements for women's participation to include equality in salaries for men and women, as well as to extend the conditions to the supply chain beyond tier 1. Similarly, it could incorporate a gender perspective into needs analyses. This would mean assessing how procurement operations can impact gender equality and how differences in roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men and women in certain situations (see Box 5.9 for the experience of Belgium).

At the same time, it would be beneficial to engage the market in gender-inclusive procurement. Market dialogue for gender inclusive procurement can be useful to i) identify potential bidders and solutions with positive impacts on gender equality; ii) build capacity in the market to meet gender-equality requirements and special gender-based needs; iii) inform the design of the procurement strategy, tender documents and contract, so that gender equality criteria are relevant, achievable and non-discriminatory; and iv) provide feedback to suppliers after the procurement process.

As noted in previous Sections, efforts should also be made to apply a gender lens to impact assessment of procurement operations. This may include assessing how potential procurement under consideration can incorporate gender provisions, as well as the projected impacts on women and men once the procurement opportunity has been carried out. The Swedish checklist for contracting authorities on gender impacts offers a practical illustration of this practice (see Box 5.10).

Moreover, CCE could take initiatives to account for gender-specific risks. This would help identify adverse social impacts, including risks to gender equality, linked to different purchasing categories in relevant value chains. It could also help identify events or conditions that may prevent the planned procurement from meeting gender-related objectives and anticipating mitigation measures.

Finally, it could consider adopting *ex post* evaluation of gender objectives in contracts. This practice provides insight into what worked and what did not, but to be effective, it requires collection of performance data to build a baseline for future contracts.

Box 5.9. Incorporating a gender perspective into needs analyses in Belgium

In 2018, to support its constitutional obligations on gender equality, Belgium's Institute for the Equality of Women and Men published a manual and checklist on gender-sensitive public procurement. This specifies how to conduct a gender-based needs assessment. The document is intended for federal staff managing public procurement contracts, as well as gender-mainstreaming officials.

The central focus of the manual is to explain how public institutions can ensure that differences between men and women are taken into account and equality is promoted in the planning and implementation of public procurement contracts. It highlights the importance of integrating gender dimensions into government contracts and provides guidance on how contractors fulfilling procurement calls can respond to potential gender differences in the process.

By ensuring that the requested end result matches the situation of men and women, it will reach a larger target group and better meet the needs of both. The first part of the checklist is focused on the content of contracts and measures that allow contracts to take the situation of both women and men into account.

Part I: Integrating a gender perspective in the framework of public procurement contracts

1. Use of language: language has to be as inclusive as possible in the announcement of the contract and the specifications.
2. Definition of the contract: when defining the aims of the contract, officials must verify whether it relates to an area where differences in situation exist for women and men.
3. Preliminary market study: the market study verifies whether differences prevail in the situation of women and men in the contract area.
4. Description of the contract: the contract subject/description must indicate that potential differences between women and men must be taken into account.
5. Award criteria:
    - "Integration of the gender perspective": is included as part of the award criterion "quality".
    - "Knowledge of the gender perspective among the team": is the experience relative to the gender perspective in the area of the contract. It is included under the award criterion "knowledge and expertise of the officials(s) preparing the contract".
6. Contract performance conditions: contracts require that potential differences between women and men be taken into account regarding communication, statistics, samples and recommendations.

Source: (OECD, 2021[25]; Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, 2018[30]; Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, 2018[31])

Box 5.10. Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR): Checklist for local contracting authorities on gender impact

In the framework of its Programme for Sustainable Gender Equality, SALAR published a guide on "Procurement for Gender Equality". This tool was primarily intended for use by politicians who wish to increase their knowledge of gender equality issues and to improve the quality of services. It provides concrete examples of how requirements on public procurement can be carried out, and aims to encourage local authorities to start using it as an instrument to promote gender equality. The guide also includes a checklist of questions to assess the potential impact on gender equality of the planned procurement.

- Is a gender equality perspective relevant for the public service in question? Is it possible to integrate a gender equality perspective in this particular service?
- Does the public service concern women and men, girls and boys?
- Can this particular service have consequences that make it essential to do a gender analysis?
- Are the presented statistics related to the public service gender disaggregated?
- What impact will the procurement have on women and men, girls and boys?
- Is there a connection between this public service and the gender equality objectives that the municipality or county has set up?
- Are there any criteria for evaluation and is there a plan for follow-up?

Source: (OECD, 2021[25]), Promoting gender equality through public procurement: Challenges and good practices, 10.1787/5d8f6f76-en.

5.4.4. Supporting tools and measures

Stakeholder engagement should facilitate implementation of the tools and mechanisms to incorporate gender considerations in public procurement

The initiatives to implement tools to adopt gender-inclusive procurement should be coherent with the overall policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and bear in mind the efforts, concerns, and potential overlaps of a variety of stakeholders. Consultation and co-ordination with stakeholders can also facilitate acceptance of the measures to be implemented and mobilise resources to fulfil plans.

Key stakeholders include public procurement and gender-mainstreaming policy makers, as well as the contracting authorities. These authorities will have to manage implementation directly and will thus be more knowledgeable about the challenges they face in terms of, for example, capacity and resources. As noted above, market engagement strategies are key for engaging businesses and understanding their capacity, to ensure that gender-equality requirements do not become barriers to participation. A gradual approach, like the one used by the City of Bogotá, allows the supplier community to grasp the policy objective relative to gender equality and accommodate its working staff accordingly. Citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly those specialised in gender issues, may also provide input with research and data previously collected. Finally, control and audit authorities may contribute by collecting data and analysing the performance and progress towards implementing gender-sensitive procurement, for example through performance audits. CCE has no power to monitor or control implementation of the policy, and oversight bodies could thus contribute by leveraging their mandates. Figure 5.11 provides an illustration of the wide array of stakeholders to engage to increase success.

Figure 5.11. Stakeholder engagement for the development of gender policies in public procurement



Source: (OECD, 2021[25]), Promoting gender equality through public procurement: Challenges and good practices, 10.1787/5d8f6f76-en.

Implementing the tools and mechanisms to incorporate gender considerations into public procurement should be facilitated by such support as capacity building, manuals, etc.

Because gender-inclusive public procurement is an emerging practice in Colombia, the implementation process will need to be supported systematically. First, CCE, as the central purchasing body, could take the lead in developing awareness-raising and capacity-building workshops and seminars. These events would be useful to convey a strong message about the objectives behind the policy, the potential benefits, the challenges, and how the policy fits in the whole-of-government gender equality strategy, as depicted in the PND and CONPES 161. A shared understanding is critical for ensuring organisational buy-in, mobilising resources and aligning expectations.

Second, CCE could analyse the extent to which capacity in the procurement workforce is adequate to implementing gender-sensitive procurement. Sample surveys, focus groups and the organisation of a task force involving several contracting units may be useful for this purpose. Then, CCE could design seminars and other training activities, including online modules, to close the capacity gap and analyse both national and international experiences. It is particularly important that the officials in charge of support tools (i.e. *Solución en línea* and the *JOTA* chat) be adequately trained and ready to provide support to procurement agents looking for answers.

Third, CCE could leverage its experience drafting guidelines and practical manuals to develop a guide focused on gender-inclusive procurement. CCE has already developed a guide for socially responsible procurement, as noted earlier, but its content on gender-sensitive procurement is limited on how to implement the policy and the different tools available. During the virtual fact-finding mission, CCE officials noted that such manuals would be updated once the decree project regulating Law 2069 was approved, as occurred in December 2021. As new tools are incorporated, CCE could facilitate their implementation with “how to” guides and updates to the existing guidelines. Australia’s *Workplace Gender Equality – Procurement Principles and User Guide* and Spain’s *Guide for the Inclusion of Gender Equality Clauses in Contracts, Subsidies and Public Agreements* provide good examples (see Box 5.11).

Last but not least, it is worth noting that support activities and materials should be developed not only for public entities and agencies, but also for the supplier community, to understand gender-sensitive procurement and what is expected from them.

Box 5.11. Examples of guidelines on gender-sensitive public procurement in OECD countries

Australia

The Workplace Gender Equality Procurement Principles describe the Australian government's procurement policy within the framework of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (WGE Act). They were developed as part of the government's commitment to fairer and more consistent measures, ensuring that it deals only with organisations that comply with the WGE Act. Where the Principles apply, non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees in Australia must supply a letter of compliance with their tender submission or prior to contracting with the Australian government. "Letters of compliance" are issued by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

The Principles are part of the government's financial management framework, which creates an overarching requirement to manage an agency's affairs efficiently, effectively, economically and ethically, and in accordance with the policies of the government.

The Principles were developed to assist:

- potential suppliers/bidders and relevant employers – to understand the government's expectations and requirements for making submissions and/or being awarded public contracts;
- officials – to perform their procurement-related duties in accordance with government policies;
- government agencies – to ensure the effective and consistent application of this procurement policy.

The accompanying User Guide describes the roles and responsibilities of organisations required to apply the Principles. It also sets out the model clauses for use by government agencies (while meeting the WGEA is mandatory, use of the model clauses is optional). The guide includes further practical information, such as a simplified flowchart of the procurement process for potential suppliers and tenderers under the Principles, a simplified flowchart outlining the key steps to be taken by agencies and officials, and a section on Frequently Asked Questions for suppliers and procuring agencies.

Spain

Published in 2022, the Guide for the Inclusion of Gender Equality Clauses in Contracts, Subsidies and Public Agreements provides an overview of the legal framework in Spain, through interactive maps on existing legislation on public procurement linked to equality between women and men in the different regions and municipalities, as well as good practices developed at local level. It also analyses the different phases of the contracting procedure and includes guidance on how to incorporate the gender perspective in each of them.

Source: (OECD, 2021[25]), Promoting gender equality through public procurement: Challenges and good practices, 10.1787/5d8f6f76-en; information provided by the government of Spain in 2023.

CCE should anticipate data needs, to be able to evaluate and communicate progress on implementation

In the fact-finding stage of this review, Colombian authorities recognised that the collection of data, monitoring and evaluation of the gender-sensitive procurement policy is a challenge. They attributed this to the following factors:

- limited technological capacity;
- insufficient financial and human resources to compile data;
- limited knowledge and understanding on the part of data producers about gender equality issues;
- lack of awareness of the need to compile gender-disaggregated data;
- co-ordination issues;
- lack of indicators to steer data collection disaggregated by gender.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are typically used by OECD countries to collect gender-disaggregated data. For example, e-procurement tools present advantages such as the capacity to collect real-time data and operate with other digital tools, such as tax or social security systems. CCE already collects some gender-disaggregated data, but further systematisation is required. For example, CCE has developed a dashboard for keeping track of specific data, such as participation gaps between men and women by department, and salary gaps. It has already set up an e-platform that has proved useful for collecting and systematising the data, the e-procurement system SECOP. The Chamber of Commerce also has a suppliers' registry (*Registro Único de Proveedores*, RUP), which may be useful for collecting information on the performance of gender-sensitive procurement requirements and policies.

However, CCE first needs to define which data would be useful to monitor and evaluate gender-inclusive procurement. CCE could start by defining key performance indicators (KPIs) and assess the possibility of collecting the necessary data to track such indicators. KPIs not only measure aggregated procurement performance, but also prove helpful in assessing specific procurement process performance and providing grounds for procurement officials to guide future procurement decisions. KPIs could refer to the gaps in gender remuneration in supplier companies, the percentage of supplier companies led by women (*empresas de mujeres*) and the percentage of women shareholders or in senior/executive positions in supplier companies. Such indicators would support the previous recommendation to adopt an approach more extensive than simply tracking women's participation in the labour force. Good KPIs should be relevant, clear, measurable, objective, achievable and limited (see Box 5.12).

Box 5.12. The features of good KPIs

KPIs should have certain fundamental qualities that benefit procurement organisations and suppliers alike. KPIs should be:

- relevant and linked to the key objectives of the organisation (avoiding critical outcomes or risks) rather than to the process;
- clear (i.e. spelled out as simply as possible to ensure a common understanding between buying organisations and suppliers);
- measurable and objective (i.e. expressed in pre-determined measures and formulas, and based on simple data that can be gathered in a cost-effective manner without subjectivity);
- achievable (i.e. realistic and within the control of contracting authorities and suppliers);
- limited (i.e. as few as required to achieve the objectives while minimising disadvantages, such as costs, efforts and risk of disputes).

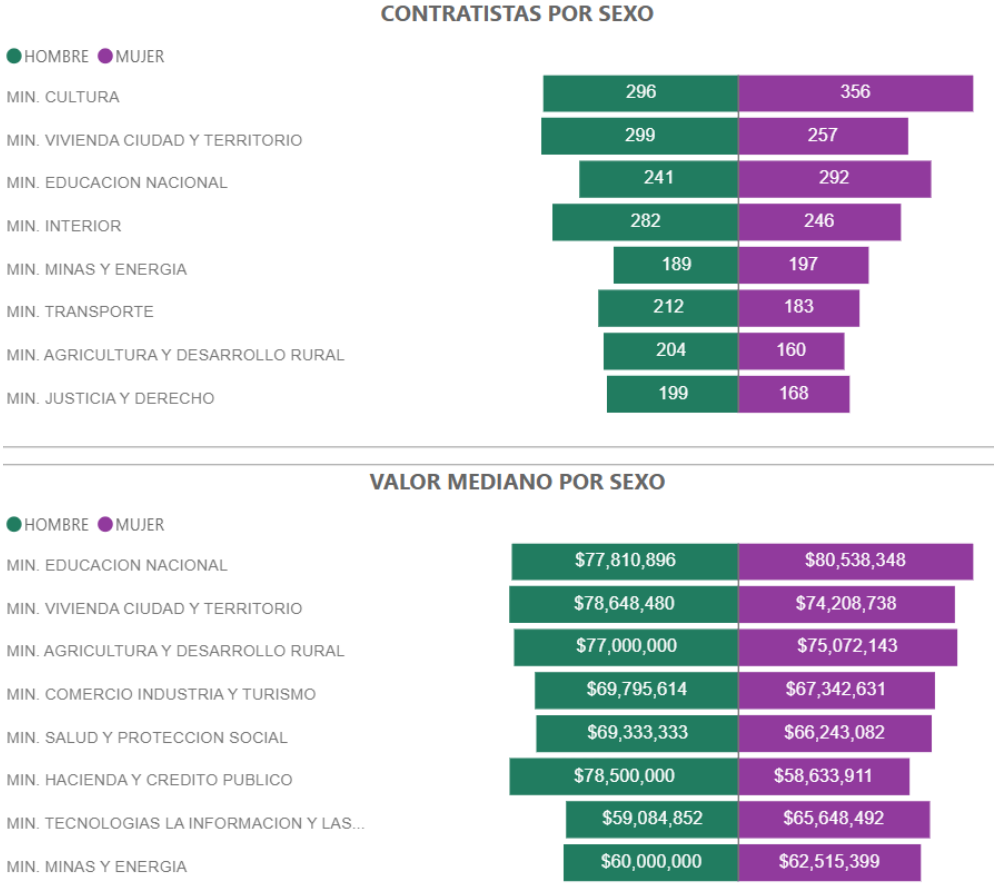
To the extent possible, procurement authorities should use information and documentation that is already available, rather than collecting additional data or documentation.

Source: (OECD, 2018[32]) Public Procurement in Nuevo León, Mexico: Promoting Efficiency through Centralisation and Professionalisation, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264288225-en.

Once KPIs and the data necessary to track them have been defined, CCE would need to assess where this information could be sourced and how to collect it. Questions might include whether SECOP or RUP would be better suited to such data collection and whether these platforms could be connected with others containing relevant databases. CCE is currently working, for example, to interconnect its systems with *Confecámaras'* databases, to extract information from the Consolidated Business and Social Registry (*Registro Único Empresarial y Social*, RUES).

Notably, CCE has already undertaken relevant data collection exercises and analyses that can be built on. In early 2021, it carried out an analysis using a dashboard synthesising the dynamics of public procurement by ministries between 2018 and 2021, with data on the total value of contracts and the share of participation between men and women. Figure 5.12, for example, shows the distribution of contractors by gender for different ministries, as well as the median value of contracts by gender.

Figure 5.12. Distribution of contractors and value of contracts by gender for different ministries



Source: (Colombia Compra Eficiente, 2021[33]). Prestación de Servicios por Ministerios, https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMGY4ZDY2OGItNTExZC00ZTQzLTljYTUtYjg1NTFjOGYzYjEzIiwidCI6IjdiMDkwNDFlLTI0NTEtNDlkMC04Y2IxLTc5ZDVlM2Q4YzFiZSIsImMiOjR9.

In August 2021, CCE published a report, "Differential Gender Analysis in Public Sector Contractors" (*Análisis Diferencial de Género en los Contratistas del Sector Público*). Its objective was to analyse the trends in the procurement of service providers by gender over the period 2018-2021. It aimed to determine whether improvements have been made in the share of participation and the salary gap between men and women. Data used for the analyses come from SECOP. The main conclusions are the following (Colombia Compra Eficiente, 2021[34]):

- The share of women's participation in the public procurement market has increased, but the rate per company of women's contracts is lower than that of men;
- The median salary for men is higher than that for women for all the years under analysis.
- In general, more contracts are awarded to women, but for suppliers in the highest income bracket (above COP 8 million), more contracts are awarded to men.
- Some sectors have traditionally had a higher share of women's participation (i.e. social inclusion, education, health, and social protection), while in others, women's participation has increased (i.e. defence). On the other hand, some sectors have a preponderance of men (i.e. sports and transport) and in others, men's participation has increased (i.e. foreign affairs).

These data can be extremely valuable in targeting public policies toward specific sectors (i.e. those with the lowest rates of women's participation) and evaluating their impacts. Conducting such analyses, CCE is on the right track for producing data that may encourage further gender-sensitive public procurement.

Box 5.13. Data collection to support gender-sensitive procurement in Australia and Chile

In **Australia**, large employers must report annually to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency on employee remuneration and other gender equality indicators. They must submit a public report about the outcomes of the employer's workplace programme. If they provide false or misleading information in the report, or fail to provide the required information, they may be declared non-compliant with the WGE Act (*Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012)*.

The report must be submitted yearly by employers. The public reports include the following items:

- description of the workplace profile;
- the employer's analysis of issues in the employer's workplace relating to equal opportunity for women;
- actions taken by the employer in the reporting period to address the priority issues identified in the analysis;
- the action the employer plans to take in the next reporting period to achieve equal opportunity for women in the workplace.

The reports provide clear information to contracting authorities on the compliance of their suppliers and potential suppliers with national legislation. Employers who report annually to the agency receive customised competitor analysis benchmark reports each year to highlight progress made and areas for improvement for workplace gender equality. Such reports enable employers to compare their gender performance with that of their competitors.

Measuring and monitoring barriers to public procurement in sectors where women-owned businesses operate is crucial to understanding their impact. E-procurement platforms can accumulate real-time data. For instance, in **Chile**, the Central Purchasing Body, *ChileCompra*, introduced an electronic registry to determine which companies were led or owned by women. This registry certifies "female enterprises" (sole proprietors) and includes this data in the civil registry.

The requirements for this registry are:

- for natural persons: having a female owner in the Civil Registry;
- for legal persons:
    - more than 50% of the shares of the company must be owned by one or more women.
    - the CEO must be a woman.

Registration is free and valid for a year. It is visible in the supplier's electronic file, and public purchasers can use it as an evaluation standard or criterion in the bidding documents.

Source: (OECD, 2021[25]; Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2020[35]; Chile Compra, 2016[36])

5.5. Gender-sensitive infrastructure

5.5.1. Introduction

A common misconception about infrastructure is that it is gender-neutral, but several arguments must be weighed against this idea. First, men and women have different infrastructure-related needs and concerns and hence may not benefit equally from infrastructure investments. Second, infrastructure planning, design and execution are sectors usually dominated by men (e.g. the construction sector). In Colombia, female participation in the labour force in 2019 in the construction sector was about 5%, compared to an average of 8.8% in a sample of 27 European countries (Lozano Maturana and Luque Medina, 2020[37]).[3]

OECD countries are increasingly incorporating a gender lens into the public investment process and the planning and execution of infrastructure. Governments are increasingly deploying tools to identify the gender-specific impacts of infrastructure decisions and to ensure shared benefits for men and women alike. Likewise, there is a trend to review infrastructure frameworks to ensure equal consideration for men's and women's needs.

Greater consideration of gender equality in infrastructure frameworks is also visible in international fora. For example, the G20 Quality Infrastructure Investment Principles (QII) call for infrastructure that is inclusive and enables the economic participation and social inclusion of all (Principle 5). Likewise, the OECD *Recommendation on the Governance of Infrastructure* calls on adherents to develop a long-term strategic vision that actively contributes to the achievement of sustainable and inclusive development, in line with long-term policy objectives, including national and international commitments on environmental protection, climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions, human rights, social inclusion, gender equality, regional disparities and urban-rural connectivity (OECD, 2020[38]).

This Section aims to review the tools and mechanisms Colombia uses to promote gender-sensitive infrastructure, as well as the challenges that both policy makers and infrastructure officials face in promoting a gender lens in developing infrastructure.

5.5.2. Institutional framework and policy coherence for gender-sensitive infrastructure

The Colombian government should aim to strengthen and articulate the institutional framework for gender mainstreaming in infrastructure

As discussed in previous Chapters, in 2013, CONPES 161 set a broader approach to extend gender mainstreaming into economic and political empowerment of women. Since then, one of the government's priorities has been strengthening the institutional framework for gender mainstreaming, for example by

creating specialised offices or units in key public entities at the national level. This strategy of establishing "champions" for a specific subject matter has been successful in other policy fields.

As shown in Chapter 4, the CPEM plays an advisory role to the government in the area of gender equality policy. The Gender Subdirectorate in the National Planning Department (*Departamento Nacional de Planeación*, DNP) helps develop gender equality policies and mainstreaming a gender approach in broader policy fields, particularly public investment policies.

Certain entities have already established dedicated teams to promote gender balance in the infrastructure workforce. For example, the National Infrastructure Agency (*Agencia Nacional de Infraestructura*, or ANI) established, through Resolution 1708/2019, a gender mainstreaming team (*Equipo de Trabajo para la Equidad de Género*) made up of representatives from each of its six vice-presidencies and one from its presidency. This team's work focuses on strengthening the participation of women in decision-making roles in the agency and adopting corporate guidelines to ensure gender equality in the infrastructure workforce. ANI has successfully achieved gender parity in executive roles and in the Board of Directors. While these achievements are important, it should be recognised that they do not automatically translate into adopting a gender lens for infrastructure. Political commitment and specific tools are also needed to support implementation.

Likewise, inter-institutional teams are working on gender mainstreaming in infrastructure. The Ministry of Transport, for example, is leading a cross-sector team (*Comité Sectorial para la Coordinación e Implementación de la Política Pública Nacional de Equidad de Género en el Sector Transporte*) with the participation of national and subnational entities, including ANI. The team includes one representative from each of the transport sector entities. It was established in 2019 through Resolution 2830 and meets every few months.

While all these initiatives (i.e. "champions", institutional teams, inter-institutional task forces) represent important steps, they appear to be fragmented and missing a clear mandate that provides guidelines on their roles, structures and interactions. A central body or function could also help achieve consistency and policy coherence, not only through the support of previous initiatives, but also by adopting the tools recommended in this report.

The Colombian government should monitor the impact of recent reforms to support more gender-responsive infrastructure investments

Recent reforms are creating momentum to increase the participation of women in the labour force involved in the execution of infrastructure. For example, Law 2069 of 2020 (the Entrepreneurship Law, which is fully reviewed in the previous Section on public procurement) established bid preference mechanisms to support the participation of women-owned businesses (*empresas de mujeres*) in public procurement markets. However, its implementation is still under way, since the decree regulating it has only recently been issued.

The Colombian government recognised the differentiated effects of COVID-19 on women, particularly as concerns access to jobs and economic opportunities. A decree issued in October 2020 by the president to all the ministries, administrative departments and entities of the national executive branch recognises an unemployment rate for women as 26.2%. Presidential Directive 11 (*Directiva Presidencial 11*) introduced a number of measures to mitigate the impacts of the crisis on women, in line with the country's economic recovery plan, *Compromiso por Colombia,* namely:

- a mandate to increase the participation of women in the construction workforce across all projects to be undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Cities and Territories;
- a mandate for the Ministry of Transport to promote women's participation in the infrastructure labour force in the context of 5G infrastructure projects and PPP infrastructure projects more broadly;

- a mandate to increase the participation of women in strategic projects undertaken by the Ministry of Energy in renewable energies, oil and gas;
- a mandate to Colombia's central purchasing body (*Colombia Compra Eficiente*, CCE) to adopt tools to increase the number of women-owned businesses providing goods and services through public procurement;
- the mandatory implementation of the gender budget tagging system, *Trazadores Presupuestales para la Equidad de la Mujer*, to monitor the implementation and results of these measures.

To achieve the last point, the government should anticipate the measures necessary to evaluate the impact of the Directive's mandates on gender equality and participation in the infrastructure labour force.

The measure related to women's participation in the context of 5G and PPP infrastructure projects is quite concrete, which should allow for clear assessment of its achievements. The new 5G infrastructure contracts include requirements for concessionaires to ensure that women make up a minimum of 10% of employees hired during the preconstruction and construction phases in operational jobs (i.e. co-ordinators, technical aides, machinery drivers, supervisors and workers). Likewise, at least 30% of the executive roles in the operation and maintenance phases must be performed by women. Notably, these requirements apply directly to the concessionaires and indirectly to subcontractors. Concessionaires must also conduct stakeholder engagement to identify skill gaps in women in communities where infrastructure projects will be developed and ensure adequate training to facilitate the onboarding of female labour, particularly in local communities. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a monetary penalty.

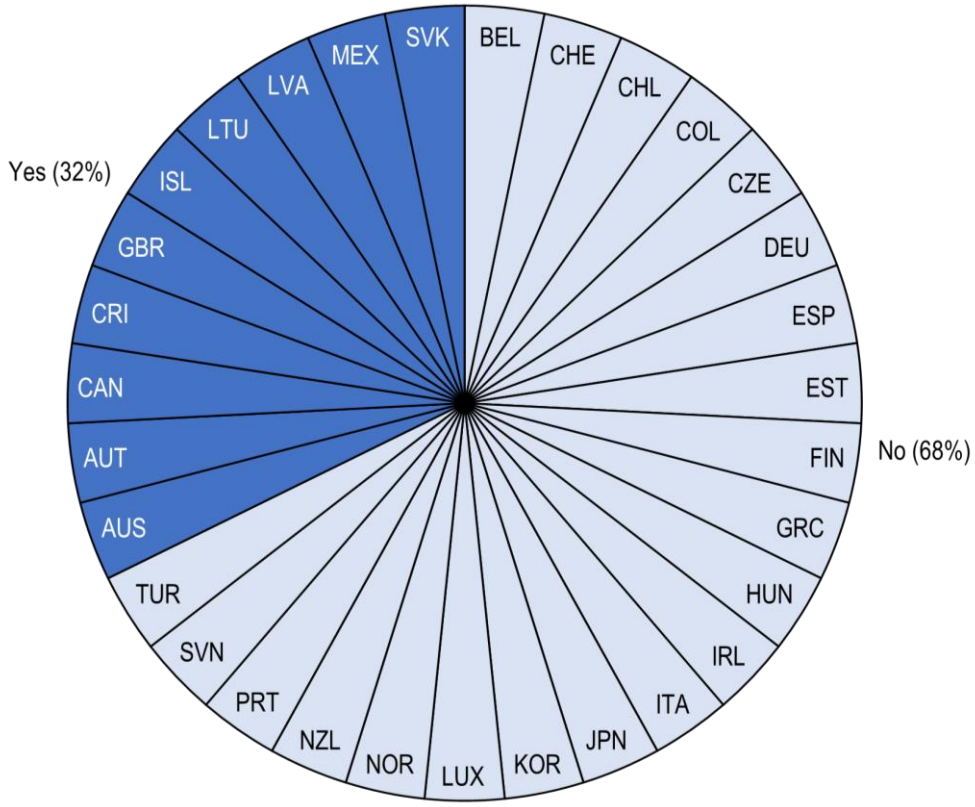
If it is successfully carried out, the 5G infrastructure will set a new benchmark for gender-sensitive infrastructure in Colombia. An ANI assessment found that only 13% of the labour force in 4G infrastructure projects were women. Just 6% of the women in this group performed highly skilled jobs, and the remaining 94% were employed to provide office maintenance and canteen services. In an interview conducted in March 2022, the CPEM reported that 5G requirements had already created 60 000 jobs for women.

Stronger political commitment would help mainstream gender considerations in public investment, achieving buy-in and addressing co-ordination challenges

As noted in the previous Section, political commitment and leadership are always key elements for introducing innovative or disruptive policy measures and have been identified by the OECD as critical for successful reforms.

As underlined in Chapter 3, incorporating a gender subsection in the National Development Plan (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo*, or NDP) was an essential step in signalling political commitment for the gender agenda in public investment. It highlighted the government's political will to mainstream gender considerations in public investment and other policy areas, as well as to align long-term infrastructure plans with gender mainstreaming policies, a challenge in 71% of OECD countries (see Figure 5.13). It also has the potential to increase DNP's leverage in requesting public entities across levels of government to adopt clearer and more ambitious gender mainstreaming targets.

Figure 5.13. Explicit alignment of long-term national infrastructure plans with inclusion and gender mainstreaming policies in OECD countries



Note: Data for Belgium is based on the survey responses from Flanders only. Australia's data on long-term strategic vision for infrastructure is based on the 2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan. The 2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan is a practical and actionable roadmap for infrastructure reform, developed by Infrastructure Australia, an independent advisory agency. The plan is not a politically sanctioned document.
Source: (OECD, 2020[39]), OECD Survey on the Governance of Infrastructure.

Despite the achievements to date, the OECD team learned during its fact-finding mission of a reluctance to address gender issues in infrastructure planning and delivery, particularly from line ministries, thanks to a lack of awareness of the relevance of the gender perspective in infrastructure investment. So far, DNP's Gender Subdirectorate has not participated in formulating any sectoral infrastructure plans. This is attributed to lack of political will from line ministries and inadequate co-ordination mechanisms.

The CPEM, DNP, ANI and line ministries related to infrastructure, and in particular, their heads, could be more vocal in promoting the benefits stemming from gender-sensitive infrastructure (Lozano Maturana and Luque Medina, 2020[37]) and (OECD, 2021[40]):

- transport infrastructure reduces the time allocated to domestic activities, which are mainly performed by women (following prevalent gender stereotypes), freeing time for economic activities and hence contributing to productivity;
- infrastructure improves mobility, which leads to greater access to well-remunerated jobs;
- the construction sector is one of the main engines for creating jobs. A gender lens can lead to equal job opportunities for men and women;

- building infrastructure that is safe and free of violence removes barriers to economic opportunities for women, who are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, including by reducing commuting times;
- achieving a critical mass of all genders in infrastructure planning and decision making can increase representation of diverse perspectives and concerns, and promote the women's empowerment agenda;
- gender-sensitive infrastructure makes it possible to tackle different dimensions of poverty, including time poverty, poverty gaps and the digital divide.

Stronger political commitment could increase the number of entities using the budget tagging system. About 50 out of 200 public entities at the national level now report their activities under the system, but ANI, for example, does not use it, because there is no legal requirement to do so. Likewise, only a limited number of entities at the subnational level have adopted the system. Greater adoption could lead to upgraded co-ordination between, for example, the CPEM and the DNP, to ensure consistency in introducing gender-sensitive infrastructure. So far, their co-ordination has been mostly *ad hoc* and related to specific initiatives.

As described in Box 5.14 and Box 5.15, specific sector initiatives demonstrate the kind of political leadership required and could be a source of inspiration.

- The Ministry of Mines and Energy, jointly with DNP, issued guidelines to mainstream gender considerations in the sector. The guidelines provide tools and best practices across the different stages of the infrastructure cycle.
- The Ministry of Transport, as head of sector, led the drafting of the National Public Policy on Gender Equality for the Transport Sector. It has also led the efforts to link women to the execution of infrastructure works for public transport systems.

Box 5.14. Gender guidelines for the Colombian mining and energy sector

The Ministry of Mines and Energy, jointly with the DNP, issued guidelines to mainstream gender considerations in the sector, by suggesting specific actions to key stakeholders and its affiliated entities and agencies, local authorities, companies and trade associations.

The guidelines stem from multiple regional workshops, in which members of women's organisations, civil society, academia and international organisations, using a participatory methodology, expressed their views on the problems related to gender equality in the sector.

The guidelines noted that mining and energy are important sectors in the Colombian economy, but they chiefly employ men. Direct jobs are male-dominated and female participation is below the national average (i.e. 24% in the hydrocarbons subsector, 29% in electricity and 8.8% in industrial mining).

The most common gaps in the sector are the following:

1. care work overload: due to their traditional role as caregivers, women's possibilities of taking decision-making positions are limited.
2. low participation of women in careers in sciences and technology: this gap is narrowing, but fewer women pursue studies in these fields than men.
3. lack of tenure and a gender gap in subsistence mining: vulnerability of women working in small-scale or old-fashioned mining, even in informality.
4. environmental impacts: women are the most affected, and tend to assume more of the risks and less of the benefits than men, especially in the use of water and land for subsistence agriculture.

The guidelines are organised by axis, to achieve improvements in gender-sensitive infrastructure:

- promoting the participation of women in leadership positions in the energy infrastructure sector;
- articulating and co-ordinating differentiated actions for the sector in an inter-institutional and inter-sectoral manner;
- preventing violence against women in the industry and community of influence.

The actions resulting from these guidelines will be monitored by the Ministry every six months, to follow the progress in implementation.

Source: (Ministerio de Minas y Energía, 2020[41]), Lineamientos de género para el sector minero energético, https://www.minenergia.gov.co/documents/10192/24180065/Lineamientos-de-pol%25C3%25ADtica-p%25C3%25BAblica-con-enfoque-de-g%25C3%25A9nero-del-sector-minero-energ%25C3%25A9tico.pdf.

Box 5.15. Good practices in the Colombian Ministry of Transport

The Ministry of Transport, as head of sector, led the establishment of the Sectoral Committee to co-ordinate implementation of national public policy on gender equity in the transport sector. The committee's aim is to align the needs and capacity of women in plans, programmes, projects and strategies in the sector. The Committee has met every three months since 2019, to propose such actions as:

- promoting engagement of women in decision-making positions and in the sector's value chain;
- designing the protocol for preventing, monitoring and sanctioning of violence against women in the sector;
- awareness-raising among stakeholders of women's different mobility needs;
- linking women to the execution of infrastructure works for public transport systems.

The Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Environment, in a joint effort, developed the Guide to incorporate a gender perspective in projects, programmes, plans and policies in the transport sector. This document builds on previous work on gender and climate change. A tool for public entities, the guide includes a checklist, examples, good practices and recommendations for integrating gender considerations into their plans or programmes, especially in projects to mitigate climate change in the transport sector. By reviewing all the steps of the cycle of projects, from background and design up to implementation and evaluation, it provides orientation for stakeholders on gender mainstreaming.

Source: (Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible, 2021[42]; Ministerio de Transporte, 2019[43])

5.5.3. Strategic framework for mainstreaming gender considerations in infrastructure

The Colombian government should develop a strategy to ensure that data collected through the gender tagging system, consultations, pilot projects and other means can be reused for planning, investment decision making, monitoring and evaluation

Lack of gender-disaggregated data is a major obstacle in OECD countries to adopting a gender lens in infrastructure decision making. As shown previously, Colombia is not alone in its pursuit of data to steer planning and decision making in infrastructure. In the context of COVID-19, more than half of OECD

countries reported that a lack of readily available gender-disaggregated data made it difficult to incorporate gender considerations in policy responses addressing the crisis. A lack of data-driven targets and weak oversight can also limit consideration of gender issues in infrastructure development (OECD, 2021[40]).

Key performance indicators (KPIs) should be established for all the stages of the infrastructure life cycle. Gender-related KPIs could be adopted at the project design phase to assist monitoring of the implementation and operation of infrastructure contracts. Integrating gender-inclusive indicators in gender-blind projects can still allow governments to make them more inclusive, by keeping track of contributions to gender equality goals and adopting corrective measures throughout performance, if needed.

Obtaining key data and evidence to inform decision making is critical for increasing awareness and achieving a "demonstration effect" showing the relevance of adopting a gender perspective in infrastructure investment. Good data would also help in building KPIs, monitoring and accountability. Gender equality goals have a greater chance of realisation if they are supported by robust monitoring and evaluation.

As noted above, the need for gender related data in Colombia was identified as a challenge in the OECD fact-finding survey and in interviews during the fact-finding mission. The Ministry of ICTs (MinTIC) reported that the main obstacles to the availability, access, quality and use of gender-disaggregated data and statistics include: the lack of awareness of the need to compile this data, limited co-ordination mechanisms to determine which data to collect, and lack of indicators to steer the collection of gender-disaggregated data. ANI is building a set of sustainable indicators to assess transport infrastructure projects. One of its components is designed to evaluate gender equality targets established in 5G contracts. Likewise, the Ministry of Energy and the DNP suggest indicators and guiding questions to diagnose gender gaps in the mining and energy sectors, which can be useful for producing data and incorporating gender considerations in energy infrastructure planning and appraisal (see Table 5.3). A whole-of-government initiative to produce and collect data on gender-sensitive infrastructure had not been undertaken, but recent implementation of the budget tagging system could prove useful.

Table 5.3. Suggested indicators and steering questions on energy transformation with social and environmental responsibility

Suggested indicators	Steering questions
• Gender gap in access to clean energy: • rate of energy poverty by type of household • rate of household energy efficiency • rate of female incidence of household energy poverty • time spent looking for energy by women	What are the features of the households with greater deficits in access to clean energy? Is the percentage of households led by women greater than that led by men?
Health issues stemming from indoor pollution in houses due to the use of solid fuels for cooking: • Rate of households cooking with energy sources with damaging effects on health	What is the rate of households by region affected by the use of solid fuels? Who are the individuals most affected (i.e. women or men)?
Features of clean energy consumption by gender	What are the differences in the consumption of clean energy between men and women? Are there differences in consumption trends that should be considered in planning and decision making?
Men's and women's participation in implementation of alternative energy (for example, the installation and maintenance of solar panels)	To what extent women participate and take decisions in the energy sector, particularly at the local level?

Source: (Ministerio de Minas y Energía, 2020[41]), Lineamientos de género para el sector minero energético, https://www.minenergia.gov.co/documents/10192/24180065/Lineamientos-de-pol%25C3%25ADtica-p%25C3%25BAblica-con-enfoque-de-g%25C3%25A9nero-del-sector-minero-energ%25C3%25A9tico.pdf.

The NDP 2018-22 brought a new sense of awareness to the need for gender-budgeting practices. In response to this mandate, as explained previously, the DNP and the Ministry of Finance have co-led the

gender budget tagging system in recent years. In fact, the adoption of the gender budget tagging system has raised awareness and made it possible to collect relevant data.

The purpose of the tagging system is to identify and track budget allocations of investments and expenses with a direct impact on gender equality. The aim of the tagging system is not to single out projects whose sole beneficiaries are women, but to identify projects that, even if targeted to a broader end-user group, have a direct impact on closing gender equality gaps.

The gender tagging system aims to cover the entire public investment cycle, starting from the diagnosis and planning to the budget allocation and to execution. So far, most of the work has focused on raising awareness, training the public workforce and working directly with public entities to identify ongoing projects that can be tagged under this system. Going forward, the goal is for entities to conduct this process on their own, before allocating resources to public investment and expenses.

The implementation guide for the budget tagging system prepared by the DNP includes practical tools for public practitioners to mainstream gender considerations throughout the investment life cycle, with a strong emphasis on the strategic planning stage. The guide puts particular emphasis on the following steps to mainstream gender considerations throughout the planning phase:

- Gender-sensitive needs assessment: use of key gender-disaggregated indicators and cross-sectoral data to get a better sense of invisible gender gaps in public investment. Guiding key questions and examples are provided to ensure a gender-sensitive needs assessment.
- Gender-focused objectives: definition of gender equality objectives that provide a clear idea of the baseline and targets to achieve. Guiding key questions and examples are provided for the adoption of gender-focused objectives.
- Gender indicators: definition of indicators that will make it possible to measure the impact of public investment on gender equality. The guide provides guiding key questions and examples of gender indicators.

Data collected through the tagging system not only provides information on the public resources devoted to closing gender gaps, but also allows for collection of qualitative data, including insights on the type of projects tagged and their implementation.

To collect information on gender-sensitive public investment, the DNP set up the Unified System for Public Investments and Finance (*Sistema Unificado de Inversiones y Finanzas Públicas*, SUIFP). This integrates the processes relative to each of the public investment stages and follows investment projects from design to delivery, facilitating alignment with government programmes and public policies. Additionally, the budget tagging system led to the design of a tool for collecting qualitative information on action to close gender gaps, promote gender equality, their links with public policies (i.e. NDP, gender equality and sectoral commitments) and funding sources (Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2021[44]).

The Colombian government could create a task force on gender-sensitive infrastructure to collect data from a set of pilot infrastructure projects on the impact of the five categories described in the gender tagging system, which are also aligned with the Public Policy for Gender Equality. The categories are: economic autonomy and access to assets, participation in leadership positions and decision making, health and sexual and reproductive rights, education and access to new technologies, and women free of violence. The second report to Congress on implementing the budget tagging system recognises the need to increase the production of gender-disaggregated data (Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2021[44]). Iceland's experience putting together a working group on gender-disaggregated data could be illustrative (see Box 5.16).

Box 5.16. Collecting gender-disaggregated infrastructure data in Iceland

In 2021, the Icelandic Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance released a report entitled "Mapping Gender Perspectives – Status Report 2021". One of its areas of focus was to address the availability of gender-disaggregated data to inform planning and policy making. Iceland has an ongoing project to create a working group on gender-disaggregated statistical data, with the aim of improving its availability, harmonisation and use across public bodies. Especially in the transport sector, the report's findings were that differentiated travel patterns for men and women are generally not taken into account in transport plans and models in the country, for instance:

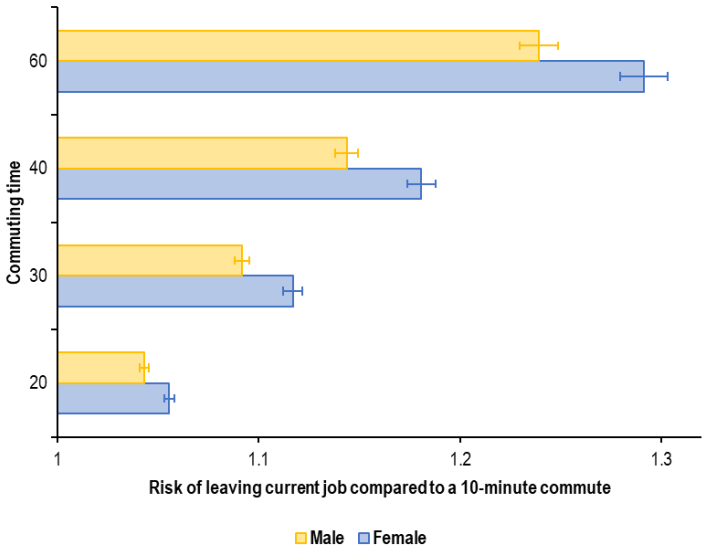
- Women are often more confined to the local environment by unpaid domestic and care tasks, which limits their scope for work. They tend to live closer to their workplace and use footpaths to and from work more often than men.
- Gender inequality is greater in rural and coastal areas. An important part of keeping the country inhabited is to increase opportunities for women in the countryside. Shortening travel time to and from urban centres is thus likely to expand the areas where women can look for work and increase their employment opportunities.

Source: (OECD, 2021[40]), Procurement strategy in major infrastructure projects: Piloting a new approach in Norway, 10.1787/38996343-en.

As for the category on participation in leadership positions and decision making, entities in charge of infrastructure projects could trace women's participation in managerial roles throughout the life cycle of a sample of infrastructure projects. The data collected could shed light on the extent to which women's participation has increased as a result of requirements such as those set in 5G contracts and the adoption of gender-related objectives as part of infrastructure projects. For instance, entities could measure how many projects explicitly consider objectives related to improving women's access to job opportunities.

Similarly, for the category on economic autonomy and access to assets, infrastructure entities could measure the correlation between the impact of infrastructure projects in shortening commuting times and women quitting their jobs, and then compare this correlation with one for men. The evidence suggests that longer commuting times increase the probability that both men and women may quit a job, but the effects seem to be greater for women. Women who have an hour-long commute are 29.1% more likely to leave their current jobs than if they had a 10-minute commute, compared with 23.9% for men (OECD, 2021[40]) (see Figure 5.14). Data collected from specific infrastructure projects could help determine the strength of this correlation in Colombia and provide elements to prioritise infrastructure that reduce commuting times as a way of facilitating women's access to jobs.

Figure 5.14. Commuting time as a factor in deciding to quit a job, by gender



Source: (Nafilyan, 2019[45]). Gender differences in commute time and pay: A study into the gender gap for pay and commuting time, using data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/genderdifferencesincommutetimeandpay/2019-09-04.

Likewise, more qualitative data collected through consultation, perception surveys or focus groups could provide useful feedback for gender-sensitive infrastructure planning and decision making. Chile, for example, relied on this more qualitative approach to assess gendered transport infrastructure needs (see Box 5.17).

Box 5.17. Collecting gender-disaggregated infrastructure data in Chile through qualitative means

To formulate Chile's Gender Equality in Transport Policy (2018-2022), the Ministry of Transport and Communications undertook a thorough assessment of gendered transport infrastructure needs and uses. It used data from an origin-destination survey conducted in 2012, and a qualitative analysis on women's perception of public transport conducted on 2017, which revealed that:

- 65.5% of public transportation trips for care purposes (e.g. health, grocery shopping, errands, leaving or picking someone up, visiting someone) were performed by women, while 62.8% of commuting trips were performed by men. Additionally, 57.6% of the trips that last less than 30 minutes are also performed by women.
- Women use public transportation more often during off-peak hours and, due to safety concerns, the number of trips performed by women decreases considerably from 7 pm onwards.

Long wait times deter the use of public transportation, especially given that unpaid work is normally time-consuming and women prefer to save time when performing trips for care purposes.

Source: (OECD, 2021[40]), Procurement strategy in major infrastructure projects: Piloting a new approach in Norway, 10.1787/38996343-en.

Collecting all these types of data would serve several purposes. First, it would be useful for infrastructure officials to learn about good practices in incorporating a gender lens. Second, it might indicate specific areas of the organisation or stages of infrastructure projects for which awareness and training are necessary. Third, the feedback loop may be useful for challenging widespread misconceptions. For example, a set of projects successful in achieving the target of participation of women in the construction stage will provide evidence that such a requirement is not only achievable but desirable, and even perhaps that the threshold should be raised. Such data would be useful for revising current objectives and indicators. Finally, the collection of data in itself will help develop expertise in gender equality issues. The exercise of collecting and analysing information could be part of a dedicated annex in reports to Congress on gender-sensitive infrastructure.

This strategy would require awareness raising and training so that it could be replicated elsewhere. Officials participating in the first pilot exercises could coach those in other institutions who might replicate the strategy. As noted above, more entities would also need to commit to the budget tagging system and other data collection techniques.

5.5.4. Supporting tools and measures

The Colombian government should provide tools to improve institutional skills and change organisational culture to ensure a gender approach in public investment

The second report to Congress on implementing the budget tagging system explicitly recommends that entities "develop, monitor, and evaluate coaching processes and gender-related training for planning and financial units, as well as officials in charge of design and delivery of investment projects". Consequently, to facilitate the drafting of such a report, the Ministry of Finance and the DNP produced a series of support material, including (Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2021[44]):

- a guide for the inclusion of gender approaches to the planning cycle and the use of the budget tagging system;
- a gender approach in the planning cycle and use of the budget tagging system;
- sector guides for gender-sensitive planning and budgeting (Trade, Industry and Tourism; Mines and Energy; and ICTs);
- participative budgets following a gender approach;
- methodology for the diagnosis of the implementation of gender budgeting in four entities of the national government;
- information analysis and knowledge sharing for the design of a methodology for gender budgeting.

In co-operation with the CPEM and the Ministry of Finance, the DPN organises workshops and provides training to public officials from multiple public bodies at the national level. The DNP reports that such training has helped increase understanding of the complexities across sectors and identified specific sector needs. Guidelines for incorporating a gender lens in public investment have been prepared in collaboration with the ministries of Energy; ICTs; Housing, Cities and Territories; Transport; and Environment.

As described in the Section on political commitment, a reluctance to address gender issues in infrastructure planning and delivery has been noted, particularly from line ministries. The innovative nature of this dimension of infrastructure governance, and a corresponding lack of awareness and need for upgraded capacity, may explain such resistance. Training and support materials should be part of the strategy to foster gender mainstreaming in infrastructure by creating awareness and capacities.

Box 5.18. Sector guidelines for gender budgeting and planning

The DNP issued the "Sectoral handbooks on gender budgeting and planning" to complement the general guide of the gender budget tagging system. The handbooks cover three different sectors: Trade, Industry and Tourism; Mines and Energy; and ICTs.

These handbooks provide indicators to identify gaps and barriers for women in each sector and include recommendations by strategic lines. They also seek to determine objectives of investment projects or other initiatives or activities related to the gender perspective.

Their purpose is to mainstream gender considerations at different levels of the public sector, particularly in specific ministries. The handbooks can be an important tool to help different sectors put into practice the general guidelines for gender budgeting.

Finally, institutional recommendations are made to emphasize that gender budgeting is a cross-cutting mandate.

Source: (DNP, Dirección de Desarrollo Social, Subdirección de Género, 2020[46]; DNP, Dirección de Desarrollo Social, Subdirección de Género, 2020[47]; DNP, Dirección de Desarrollo Social, Subdirección de Género, 2020[48])

More effort is needed to adopt formal methodologies to identify gender impacts and gain insights into infrastructure planning and appraisal

In Colombia, the methodology for the identification of investments and expenses with a gender impact has been developed so far through data mining (mostly using databases with information on public contracts). However, as explained above, the process of diagnosis and identification does not include formal methodologies for assessing gender impacts (e.g., gender impact analysis, techniques to complement cost-benefit analysis). The quality of the data thus presents a challenge for the tagging system and other methodologies for assessing gender impacts stemming from infrastructure. It would be useful, for example, to develop a repository assessing the gender impacts of a sample of infrastructure projects in different sectors (i.e. transport, communications, mining, energy) to help in the appraisal of future projects. However, this also requires a formal methodology for *ex post* assessment.[4]

The government has established the foundations for systematic collection of data through the gender budget tagging system, but moving forward, it will be necessary to identify how the data can be used to derive insights for planning and appraisal, and leverage more qualitative information. The results from the tagging system are summarised in a report that is presented to Congress regularly, but it is not clear how the DNP (and public entities in general) can reuse the data to derive insights and identify gender impacts at earlier stages of the decision making in public investment.

The government also faces the challenge of making progress on infrastructure projects better aligned with public policy priorities, such as gender equality. As in any other country, resources are limited and prioritisation is always a concern. One tool commonly used to prioritise public investments in OECD countries is cost-benefit analysis (CBA), but it is generally agreed that this should be complemented by other tools that incorporate qualitative criteria and the contributions of the projects to the achievement of policy goals, which can be hard to monetise. Failing to use such complementary tools can lead to overlooking gender considerations in project prioritisation and appraisal. Moreover, the timing in the application of such analyses is also important so that they can genuinely contribute to decision making and avoid a "tick-the-box" approach.

Gender-disaggregated impact is relevant at every stage of the infrastructure investment cycle, but it is particularly important to analyse it in the early stages, so that the findings and conclusions can inform the

appraisal, selection, design and planning of the project. Early intervention allows for measures to mitigate risks. If such considerations are not incorporated in the initial phases, they will be challenging to incorporate as the project is executed. Without early intervention, projects may require significant adjustments to their budget and calendar, and risk jeopardising delivery of the infrastructure on time, on budget and at the quality expected. Table 5.4 shows how gender impacts should be considered through the different stages of an infrastructure project.

Table 5.4. Gender impact considerations throughout the infrastructure investment cycle

Phase	Gender output	Gender outcome
1. Preparation/procurement	Gender impacts on concerned actors/companies/workforce	Gender impacts on concerned actors/companies/workforce Direct users Indirect users
First assessment	Planning: Gender impacts arising during execution of the project and after deploying the asset – life cycle impacts	
2. Execution	Gender impacts on concerned actors/companies/workforce	Concerned actors/companies/workforce Sub-contractors/supply chain Materials
3. Use and maintenance	Gender impacts on concerned actors/companies/workforce	Concerned actors/companies/workforce Sub-contractors/supply chain Direct users Indirect users
Second assessment	Evaluation: Did the assumptions from the first assessment materialise as planned?	

Source: Source: (OECD, 2021[40]), Procurement strategy in major infrastructure projects: Piloting a new approach in Norway, 10.1787/38996343-en.

Different tools could be adopted to facilitate gender-sensitive infrastructure at early stages of the investment cycle. For example, an emerging practice in OECD countries is to carry out *ex ante* evaluations to assess impacts on gender equality of proposed infrastructure projects, such as gender impact assessments (GIAs). As explained above, GIAs allow governments to learn about invisible biases or assumptions about the potential impact of projects on women and men, which can inadvertently influence the selection of a project over another without considering its negative impacts. The assessments are designed to highlight the potential impacts in terms of relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in a given context or project, fixed in the corresponding budget proposal (see Box 5.19 on Canada) (OECD, 2021[40]).

Box 5.19. Gender equality considerations in project appraisal in Canada

Canada's gender-based analysis framework (GBA+) aims to understand how infrastructure investments impact men, women, and gender non-binary people. The GBA+ framework is used to mainstream gender considerations throughout the early stages of the planning and decision-making processes. Key areas of analysis covered by the GBA+ framework to assess programmes and projects include:

- target population: identification of intersecting identity factors across the target population, analysis of how programme or project components address needs of diverse populations and consultation of targeted populations;
- indirect impacts of programme: identifying individuals outside the target population that might be affected by the project and their socioeconomic characteristics, consultation of key stakeholders, identification of the unintended impacts of the programme and formulation of strategies to mitigate such impacts;
- availability of data: adoption of data collection guidelines and processes that ensure gender-disaggregated data, including different factors and personal characteristics;
- project evaluation: establishment of baseline indicators to assess impacts on targeted populations, data collection to measure projects' outcomes, analysis of gaps and unintended barriers in access and use of the service.

Source: (OECD, 2021[40]), Procurement strategy in major infrastructure projects: Piloting a new approach in Norway, 10.1787/38996343-en.

The findings and risks identified in the GIA should inform an action plan to tackle them. The analyses and feasibility studies could spot specific concerns for women such as time poverty, access to economic opportunities and jobs, commuting times, safety, and gender-based violence. The City of Vienna, Austria, is mainstreaming gender considerations in feasibility studies for transport infrastructure (see Box 5.20).

An additional tool is requiring cost-benefit analysis to apply a gender lens during project appraisal and selection. This could consist on analysing social externalities of infrastructure projects with differentiated impacts on men and women. Here again, costs and benefits throughout the life cycle of the infrastructure should be considered, as well as cumulative impacts and synergies with different infrastructures and policies.

Box 5.20. Infrastructure design in the City of Vienna based on gender-differentiated needs

The City of Vienna in Austria conducted a survey in the late 1990s on the use of public transport by men and women, which ultimately led the city to consider women's specific transport preferences. Data is now collected to determine how different groups of people use public transport and spaces before a capital project gets under way. In the context of the Gender Mainstreaming Model Districts project, Geo-information Service-based analytic maps were developed for all Vienna's municipal districts, indicating the advantages and the shortcomings of the respective pedestrian networks. The "network qualities" marked on the maps show sufficiently wide (projecting) pavements, while "network deficiencies" note narrow pavements or dangerous spots for pedestrians. Important destinations in districts (e.g. public transport stops and social and healthcare facilities) provide information on expected pedestrian volumes and any special requirements. These maps are regularly updated.

Source: Source: (OECD, 2021[40]), Procurement strategy in major infrastructure projects: Piloting a new approach in Norway, 10.1787/38996343-en.

5.6. Road map with policy recommendations

5.6.1. Gender Impact Assessments

The government of Colombia could introduce gender impact assessments (GIAs) as a strategic tool to achieve its gender equality objectives. The following recommendations are proposed to outline a way forward to progress in this respect.

- Consider **adopting a staged approach to promote the systematic use of GIAs**:

Short term:

- **Engage in broad-based public consultations** with communities and gender experts to support accurate identification and understanding of potential issues to women of diverse backgrounds, taking into account intersectional identity factors.
- **Develop evidence-based sector specific needs assessment and analysis** in each line ministry to outline policy issues in relation to gender equality. The example of the Ministry of Energy can provide a good foundation. Engaging key governmental stakeholders (e.g., CPEM, OCM, DANE, DNP) and non-governmental stakeholders would be an important part of this process.
- **Identify major primary laws with potential high impact on gender equality** and analyse them against the objectives set up in the National Gender Equality Policy and in the Transversal Pact for Women of the National Development Plan 2018-2022.
- With the leadership of the DANE and of the CPEM and the support of the OCM, consider **undertaking an audit of data sources and publications** available to understand gender inequalities in the country, including through an intersectional perspective.

Medium term:

- **Develop a guiding framework** (including methodology, guidelines, and other relevant documents) **for GIA implementation** and ensure that government actors have the knowledge, capacities and resources to use GIA effectively.

Long term:

- **Introduce a binding legal requirement to systematically conduct GIAs** for all policies, programmes, regulations and budgets accompanied by a clear quality control criteria and ensuring that the analysis is undertaken early enough to inform policy development. The CPEM could provide support to line ministries responsible for undertaking GIAs, by offering guidance and gender expertise.
- Consider **strengthening the evidence base for gender-sensitive policy making** by enhancing the use of statistical data in designing, planning, implementing and delivering gender-related public policies and services. The capacities of institutional actors (line ministries, the CPEM, DANE, Congress, courts and other data producers) should also be reinforced.
- With respect to the monitoring of the situation of rural women, consider **taking action to improve the exchange of data between national entities and to promote the characterisation by gender** of some statistical exercises.
- As the conversion of administrative records in statistical records requires a high level of specialisation and storage capacity, consider **setting up systems to facilitate those operations** within the DANE.

- Consider **investing in cross-cutting training** to increase the number of professionals able to collect, manage, and store relevant disaggregated data and statistics across the government.
- Consider **improving data integration and exchange of information** across line ministries.
- Continue **promoting the collection and dissemination of data disaggregated by gender and other characteristics on a systematic basis**. Efforts should be made to ensure that all administrative records and statistical data that have individual people as a unit of analysis present disaggregation by gender.
- Consider **establishing a centralised system to store all data and administrative records on women** at both national and subnational level and make them accessible to line ministries, taking into account privacy matters.

5.6.2. Gender budgeting

A staged approach to further developing gender budgeting in Colombia recognises the limited resources that are available, and the importance of embedding practices over time as institutional capacity grows. Recommendations are presented for actions in the short and medium-long term.

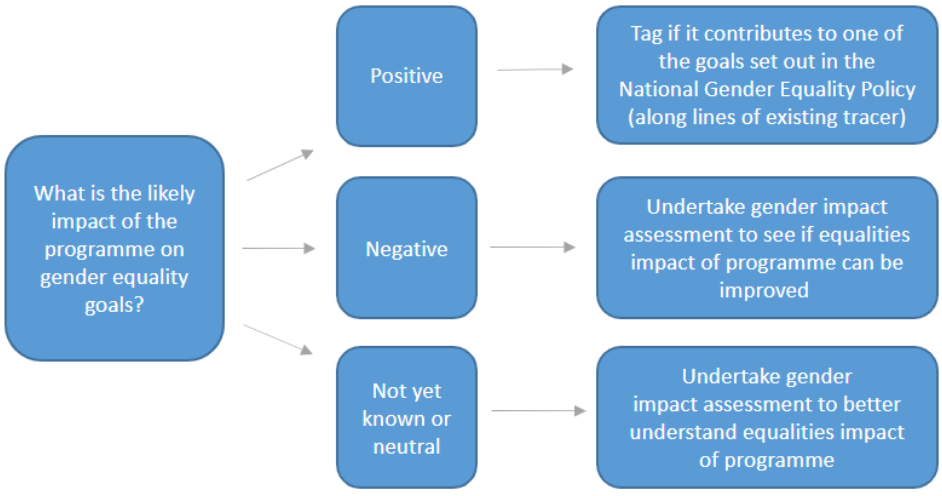
Short term

- **Continue to support broader use of the budget tracer for women's equity** by providing support and guidance tailored to specific sectors and levels of government. Further gender expertise could, for example, be provided by the CPEM on a regular basis.
- **Strengthen institutional capacity** at a greater pace by dedicating greater resources to the teams responsible for the tracer in the DNP and in the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MCHP). Institutional capacity could also be strengthened by systematically embedding gender "champions" in each government ministry, and entities at the regional and municipal level. In addition, a central platform to co-ordinate the work of these gender champions will provide a means for them to discuss challenges and share expertise.
- **Take forward measures to support improved selection of gender performance indicators** as part of the planning and performance measurement cycle. It could do this, for example, through integrating gender indicator options into the government's "product catalogue" instrument for formulating investment projects.
- **Take measures to strengthen the availability of gender-disaggregated data**. This will support existing gender budgeting practices, and lay the foundation for the expansion of the approach to gender budgeting in Colombia in the medium and longer-term.

Medium-long term

- Further **develop the methodology for the budget tracer** so that policies that have positive, negative, or neutral/unknown impacts on women's equity can be identified. The introduction of gender impact assessments, both for projects with a negative impact on gender equality and those whose impact on gender equality is unknown, will help give a better understanding of these impacts and help establish how they might be mitigated through policy redesign. A vision for this development is shown in Figure 5.15 below.

Figure 5.15. Vision for the budget tracer for women's equity in the medium to longer term



Source: Developed by the OECD (2022).

GIAs are the most common tool used by OECD countries implementing gender budgeting. The provision of impact assessments alongside budget proposals will also help the MCHP assess which budget allocations should be prioritised to achieve gender equality goals set out in the National Policy on Gender Equality most effectively.

- Consider the **introduction of programme budgeting**, as well as **strengthen the link between planning and budgeting**. Improvements to the budgeting framework in Colombia are central to the development of gender budgeting over time.
- Consider the **creation of an inter-agency group on gender budgeting**, including key stakeholders in the DNP, the MCHP and the CPEM, which could help bring together the implementation partners and ensure regular co-ordination as Colombia's approach to gender budgeting is reinforced. The series of actions set out above are intended to be mutually supporting. Implementation will undoubtedly need to take place over several years. Putting such a package of measures into effect will require clear leadership.

5.6.3. Public procurement

The measures taken so far have already produced results. For example, CCE reports 50% growth in the participation of women in Colombia's E-Marketplace (*Tienda Virtual del Estado Colombiano*, TVEC) from January 2020 to December 2021. Out of 45 framework agreements (*Acuerdos Marco de Precios*, AMP) and demand consolidation instruments (*Instrumentos de Agregación de Demanda*, IAD), there were 104 015 women linked to suppliers, of whom 36 933 (36%) were heads of households. A total of 2 932 women were members of the boards and 117 were legal representatives of companies. Furthermore, from 2018 onwards, women's participation in services contracts grew by 34.5%.[5]

These numbers indicate positive trends upon which CCE and contracting authorities can build. The following recommendations aim to support those efforts and facilitate the adoption of a wider approach towards gender-inclusive public procurement.

- **Strengthen leadership commitment** to incorporate a gender lens in public procurement. Colombia has already established some basic measures to promote gender-sensitive public procurement, but stronger leadership would help to achieve deeper and sustained progress.

- **Expand the scope of the regulatory and strategic framework for gender-inclusive public procurement** beyond simply encouraging the participation of women in the staff of suppliers.
- CCE could launch initiatives to:
  - widen the requirements for women's participation to also include equality in salaries paid to men and women, as well as to extend the conditions to the supply chain beyond tier 1;
  - incorporate a gender perspective into needs analyses;
  - engage the market for gender-inclusive procurement;
  - apply a gender lens to impact assessment of procurement operations;
  - take into account gender-specific risks.
- **Facilitate** the implementation of the tools and mechanisms to incorporate gender considerations in public procurement through **stakeholder engagement**.
- **Facilitate** implementation of the tools and mechanisms to incorporate gender considerations in public procurement through **support activities** (i.e. capacity building, manuals, etc.) that could be provided by the CPEM as appropriate.
- **Anticipate data needs** to allow CCE to be able to evaluate implementation progress.

5.6.4. Infrastructure

- **Monitor the impact of recent reforms** to support more gender-responsive infrastructure:
  - The Colombian government has implemented major reforms to promote the participation of women in infrastructure decision making. However, no clear system is in place to monitor the impact of these reforms, ensure progress towards initially set targets, and review the policy if needed.
  - Gender equality objectives have the greatest chance of being realised if they are supported by robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms.
  - Integrating gender-inclusive indicators into gender-blind projects can encourage governments to make them more inclusive, by keeping track of their contribution to gender equality goals and adopting corrective measures subsequently if needed.
- **Adopt formal methodologies to integrate gender considerations** during the infrastructure project planning and appraisal process:
  - Particularly in the early stages of the infrastructure life cycle, it is key to understand gender disaggregated impacts in order to incorporate these considerations into the overall investment programme, as well as into the design of each specific infrastructure project.
  - Colombia could consider using *ex ante* evaluations to assess the likely impact on gender equality of proposed infrastructure projects.
  - Gender impact assessments can allow governments to learn about invisible biases or assumptions about the possible impact of projects on women and men, which can inadvertently influence the selection of one project over another without awareness of its negative impacts.
- **Use data to increase awareness** and promote political consensus on the benefits of implementing a gender perspective in infrastructure investment:
  - Attaining political consensus from the legislative branch and key implementation agencies (e.g. ANI) on mainstreaming gender considerations in public investments is a key challenge.
  - Obtaining key data and evidence to inform decision making is key to increasing awareness of the relevance of a gender perspective in infrastructure investment.

  - Partnering with the private sector, academia and civil society could provide relevant data that are properly defined, measured, collected, analysed, synthesised and presented for decision makers and the public.
  - As broad expertise in collecting, connecting and interpreting quality data might not exist across all sectors and levels of government, capacity building will be a key enabler of data-driven approaches.
- **Develop a strategy to ensure that data collected through the gender tagging system, consultation, pilot projects and other means can be reused** for planning and investment decision making:
  - The gender budget tagging system aims to fill a void in quantitative data generation and collection. The gender budget tagging reports are publicly available and regularly presented to the Congress. However, there is no clear strategy on how this information can be reused to inform strategic planning and project prioritisation.
  - More qualitative data collected through consultation, perception surveys or focus groups could also provide useful feedback for gender-sensitive infrastructure planning and decision making.
- **Promote co-operation** between relevant line ministries/agencies with the DNP and the CPEM:
  - While co-operation between the CPEM, the DNP and national line ministries has increased, progress varies across sectors, agencies and levels of government. More efforts are needed to ensure that co-operation happens on more than just an *ad hoc* basis.

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Notes

[1] For example, women have been disproportionately affected by the economic and social consequences of COVID-19.

[2] Colombia Compra Eficiente (2018), *Guía de Compras Públicas Socialmente Responsables*, https://colombiacompra.gov.co/sites/cce_public/files/cce_documents/cce_guia_cp_socialmente_responsables.pdf (consulted on 31 January 2022).

[3] The 27 countries are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Slovenia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the Slovak Republic.

[4] Notably, the government is working on incorporating a gender perspective in policy evaluation, based on a guide developed with UN Women.

[5] Data provided by CCE.

6 Inclusive and gender-sensitive emergency preparedness framework in Colombia

Colombia has been frequently affected by natural and human-induced disasters, such as floods, landslides and other geological hazards, that have disproportionate effects on women and girls. The COVID-19 pandemic offered further evidence of additional vulnerabilities caused to women and girls. To face these challenges, the national government has started to set up several disaster risk management mechanisms. This Chapter assesses the current legislative and strategic framework related to disaster risk management and gender equality in Colombia, highlighting existing challenges, as well as enablers and opportunities to integrate a gender perspective in the disaster risk management cycle. After providing a rationale for supporting gender-sensitive and inclusive disaster risk management systems, the Chapter provides a series of recommendations to support the Colombian government in developing a disaster risk management system that integrates a gender lens, helping to achieve its gender equality objectives.

6.1. Introduction

Natural and human-induced hazards have become a key challenge faced by both developed and developing countries worldwide (IPCC, 2022[1]) . Moreover, the risk of disasters has been exacerbated in the context of climate change, population growth, rapid urbanisation processes and international civil unrest. The importance of developing strategies to reduce disaster impacts on individuals, systems and countries has therefore recently gained more attention than ever before (UNISDR, 2015[2]).

The impact of disasters does not strike communities equally. Of the victims of any disaster, women and girls are disproportionately affected, since they are subject to additional vulnerabilities (Bradshaw, 2013[3]) (Enarson, 2012[4]) (Neumayer and Plümper, 2007[5]) (Thurston, Stöckl and Ranganathan, 2021[6]). This has become evident during the COVID-19 outbreak in many countries. Women have been exposed to a higher risk of domestic violence during the crisis, while having to suffer the burden of additional unpaid care due to the closure of formal care services. Similarly, women's economic status has been negatively affected by the pandemic, since women are largely employed in the informal sector. Women-led businesses, operating on average with lower levels of capitalisation, have been at greater risk of closing for extended periods with reduced or no revenue caused by lockdown measures (OECD, 2021[7]).

In the meantime, the role of gender in disaster risk management has become evident in some countries (Box 6.1).

Box 6.1. Gender-sensitive approaches to disaster risk management in OECD countries

Australia

Australia has frequently been subject to many forms of natural hazards, and its government and civil society have acknowledged the gendered impact of disasters. Several measures have been introduced over the years to ensure gender equality and inclusiveness in disaster management. The National Gender and Emergency Management Guidelines were developed with state sponsorship to integrate gender considerations into national guidelines. Australia also announced an AUD 150 million domestic violence package to provide critical emergency response services. Earlier, the national progress report, based on implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2011-2013), included information on the participation of women's organisations, measures taken to address gender-based issues in recovery, plans and programmes developed with gender sensitivities, and gender perspectives on risk reduction and recovery.

Japan

After the Great East Earthquake incident in March 2011, the government of Japan took significant measures to incorporate gender perspectives into its disaster risk management strategies. At the time the earthquake hit, gender-sensitive policies and guidelines were limited in Japan. Having understood the issues faced by women and girls due to limited women's engagement in disaster risk management, different measures were subsequently introduced, such as the establishment of several women-led community organisations and the initiation of the Sendai Gender Equal Opportunity Foundation to train women to increase their participation in disaster prevention and recovery planning. In 2020, in addition to these local and community movements, the government issued the "Guidelines for Disaster Planning, Response, and Reconstruction from a Gender-equal Perspective". The Basic Disaster Management Plan was also revised to instruct local governments to promote collaboration between their disaster management and gender equality divisions, and to clarify the respective roles of the gender equality division and the gender equality centre during ordinary times and at each stage of disaster response.

Source: (Hazeleger, 2013[8]; OECD, 2021[7])

Countries with well-established gender equality and empowerment mechanisms have been shown during the COVID-19 pandemic to take into account the needs of women and men in decision making. The government of Iceland, for example, which had introduced gender budgeting in 2015, adopted budget measures with a gender perspective during the pandemic. Canada and Switzerland also used their existing gender-sensitive information-sharing systems to manage the impact of the pandemic effectively. The United States used consultations with external stakeholders to identify the needs of women and address their issues. A similar approach was adopted in the United Kingdom, by including the most senior minister responsible for gender equality and women's empowerment in some of the highest-level COVID-19 Cabinet Committees (OECD, 2021[7]).

The gender perspective and women's concerns in emergencies are still barely recognised officially by many countries, but significant acknowledgement of the importance of incorporating inclusivity and gender sensitivity in future emergency management systems emerged after the pandemic (Ryan and El Ayadi, 2020[9]).

Colombia is subject to a high risk of both natural and man-made hazards, including floods, landslides and geophysical hazards that have struck the country in the past few decades (Villamil, Santamaria and Diaz, 2016[10]). The eruption of the Colombian volcano Nevado del Ruiz in 1985 was one of the worst disasters in the country's history, killing more than 25 000 people (Díaz-Tamayo, 2021[11]) (Erman, 2021[12]). More recently, in 2017, a landslide in the Andean city of Mocoa cost 329 lives (OECD, 2019[13]). Estimates suggest that more than 86% of the Colombian population is at medium to high risk of seismic activity, more than 31% exposed to landslide hazards and more than 28% to floods (OECD/The World Bank, 2019[14]). Colombia has also suffered from human-induced disasters, mainly due to the prolonged armed conflict in the country (Eslava, 2020[15]). Indeed, it has one of the largest displaced populations globally (Domingo, 2015[16]). The armed conflict affected around nine million people in Colombia, with more than 80% of the total internally displaced persons composed of young girls and women (OECD, 2020[17]). More specifically, the data available shows that marginalised communities of children, Afro-Colombians and poor women were the groups with the highest share of the internally displaced.

In response, the Colombian government has initiated several disaster risk management mechanisms in its development plans. For example, Colombia has followed the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, being the first Latin American country to do so (Díaz-Tamayo, 2021[11]).

Given the rising risk of disasters in Colombia, women and girls have been disproportionately affected. They are vulnerable at every stage of the disaster cycle: before, during and after (Domingo, 2015[16]). Such vulnerabilities are due to unequal access to resources, unequal representation of women in disaster risk reduction decision making, and women's status in the sociocultural context (OECD, 2020[17]).

As shown in Chapter 2, the immediate impact of the COVID-19 outbreak was to widen gender gaps in employment, increasing gender-based violence and poverty among women. Some interventions reduced the economic impact on women to a certain extent. The Solidarity Income scheme, operated as a poverty reduction measure during the crisis, has managed to reduce poverty among women (Cuesta and Pico, 2020[18]). Meanwhile, scope remains to enhance Colombia's gender-sensitive disaster risk management system. As noted earlier, the pandemic shed light on the importance and necessity of inclusive and gender-sensitive emergency management systems in dealing with future hazards.

This Chapter reviews the possibility of developing an inclusive, gender-sensitive disaster risk management (DRM) framework for Colombia. It also provides policy makers and practitioners input to identify opportunities and strengths, and offers recommendations on integrating a gender lens in the disaster risk management cycle.

6.2. Rationale for an inclusive, gender-sensitive DRM system in Colombia

Inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM is one way to address the disproportionate impact of disasters on women (Enarson, 1998[19]) (Ariyabandu, 2005[20]) (Bradshaw and Fordham, 2015[21]) (Domingo, 2015[16]) (Kimber, 2017[22]) (Hemachandra, Amaratunga and Haigh, 2018[23]). It provides multiple benefits for women and girls and society at large (Hemachandra, Amaratunga and Haigh, 2018[23]) (OECD, 2021[7]). It allows men and women to introduce their experience in DRM decision making, helping to reduce the disproportionate impact on women in disasters. Several frameworks have been introduced at the global level to support women's involvement in disaster risk management and reduction efforts, as Box 6.2 shows.

Box 6.2. Global frameworks for gender equality and women's inclusion in disaster risk reduction

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Gender equality is a key enabler for inclusive growth and national well-being, as emphasised in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 5 was established to deliver gender equality and women's empowerment. The SDGs consider gender equality the necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world and for securing fundamental rights.

Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)

The framework was introduced as a guide for building nations' and communities' resilience to disasters from 2000 to 2015. Gender was identified as a cross-cutting principle in the framework. It declared the necessity of including a gender perspective in all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes.

Beijing Agenda for Global Action on Gender-Sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction

The agenda set nine goals to be achieved before 2015. Most were designed to enhance women's participation in disaster risk management through legislative and policy interventions and to support women's empowerment in disaster risk management.

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR)

In 2015, another global agenda was introduced for the period 2015-2030, replacing the Hyogo Framework for Action. It provided direction in four priority areas towards a disaster-resilient society. The framework specifically emphasises the need for women's empowerment and inclusive decision making for disaster risk reduction at all levels. Its fourth priority declares that women and other stakeholders, specifically vulnerable communities, be included in designing disaster preparedness strategies and enhancing capacity for disaster resilience.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly introduced the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In 2018, some general recommendations on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction were issued in the context of climate change. Articles 16-24 of Document 37 on General Recommendations emphasise that all the global frameworks and initiatives on women's empowerment in disaster risk reduction efforts in the context of climate change. The recommendations guide countries in promoting and protecting human rights for women at all stages of disasters: prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and adaptation.

Source: (United Nations, 2022[24]; United Nations, 2005[25]; CEDAW, 2018[26])

Enhancing women's access to public leadership also contributes to a more collaborative political environment. Inequality has been reduced in countries that have a greater share of women in legislatures. Increasing the number of women in politics and public decision-making roles has a positive social and economic impact, such as reduced corruption. The inclusion and engagement of women from diverse backgrounds in political roles is an essential element of a robust, diverse and representative public sector (OECD, 2017[27]). Moreover, countries with inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM systems have successfully managed the COVID-19 pandemic. In Canada, British Columbia's provincial government adopted an interim disaster recovery framework to promote gender-inclusive recovery agendas, drawing on the Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples, as well as Gender-Based Analysis Plus (OECD, 2021).

In the Colombian context, effective and gender-sensitive DRM has become important considering its disaster risk profile (Domingo, 2015[16]) (OECD, 2020[17]). As shown in Chapter 2, Colombian women make up 51% of the total population (World Bank, 2022[28]) and, despite the significant progress achieved over the years to secure women's rights and equality, they still face violence, discrimination and limited access to productive resources during disasters. Taking into account the increasing climate-induced hazards and growing population in Colombia, the vulnerability of women and girls is expected to increase. The gender sensitivity of the existing DRM to reduce women's vulnerability in disasters could be reinforced. The next Section assesses the existing legislative background for DRM in Colombia and analyses policies and laws to incorporate gender-sensitivity in DRM mechanisms.

6.3. Legislative background in Colombia

6.3.1. Legislative background on disaster risk management

In the past three decades, Colombia has developed a national disaster risk management structure to reinforce its resilience to disasters and interconnected risks (OECD, 2019[13]). In 1989, an initial disaster risk management system was established, introducing the National System for Prevention and Attention to Disasters (*Sistema Nacional para la Prevención y Atención de Desastres*, or SNPAD) through Law 46 of 1988. Later, in 2011, Law 4147 was adopted to establish the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), with the mandate to co-ordinate the national system and guide implementation of DRM.

The present Colombian disaster management system was established after the decentralisation process was introduced in 1989. It includes institutions at national, departmental and municipal levels based on the legal frameworks set out in 1989 and 1998. The Decree-Law 919 of 1989 and the National Plan Decree 93 of 1998 assign responsibilities to all these institutions and facilitate co-ordination at the three levels. In 2004, the SNPAD was established as Colombia's National Platform to support the implementation of and align with the framework of action adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in in Kobe, Japan, in 2005. The SNPAD and its functions are mainly defined by the National Plan for Disaster Prevention and Response, which provides planning strategies and policy vision.

Later, the institutional framework for DRM was redesigned by adopting Law 1523 in 2012, introduced as the National Law of Disaster Risk Management and the National System for Disaster Risk Management (SNGRD). Law 1523 mandates powers to local authorities to implement DRM functions. The Disaster Risk Management Law incorporates existing norms previously defined as prevention, attention and recovery of disasters, managing emergencies and reducing risks (Guzmán Mesa, 2016[29]). Law 1523 lists 15 risk management principles. The first principle of equality states that "all natural persons will receive the same help and the same treatment when receiving humanitarian aid, in situations of disaster and danger". The fifth principle aims to ensure the participation of ethnic communities, as well as of civic, communal, and voluntary associations in disaster risk management activities. It does not, however, have a special

provision for integrating a gender perspective into Colombia's DRM systems, although efforts have been made to encourage an inclusive DRM by promoting the participation of local communities in the process.

In 2014, Colombia introduced the National Policy for Disaster Risk Management. This was followed by the adoption of the National Plan for Disaster Risk Management (PNGRD) 2015-2025, which serves as the current national disaster risk reduction strategy (Peters, 2019[30]). Other policies associated with disaster management include: Decree 4147, which outlines the creation of the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management; the National Development Plan 2014-2018; the Departmental and Municipal Development Plans; the Act of volunteering; and the Colombian General Act of firefighters.

Additionally, some strategies and guidelines have also been established, such as: the Corporate Strategy for the Articulation of Policies and Actions on Climate Change in Colombia; the Guidelines to Optimise Urban Development Policy; the Regulation of Automotive Terrestrial Handling and Transportation of Dangerous Merchandise road. Colombian Emergency Response Platform (*Plataforma Colombiana de Respuesta a Emergencias*, or PCRE) attempts to solve problems related to emergencies in the country.

6.3.2. Legislative background on inclusive and gender-sensitive disaster risk management

Colombia's National Unit for DRM has no legal provisions or measures to support an inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM system at present. The unit is formally responsible, however, for implementing DRM according to sustainable development policies. Similarly, the most relevant legislation to Colombia's DRM system, Law 1523 of 2012, has no legal provisions to support a gender-sensitive DRM.

Nevertheless, the Colombian government has introduced some programmes to strengthen the role of women in disaster risk reduction. A programme called "Guardians of the hillside" (*Guardianas de la ladera*), launched in Manizales in the department of Caldas in 2003, is still running. Led by the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), it involves women, especially mothers, in risk mitigation activities in the hilly areas, to enhance their capacity by working as DRM agents and looking after hazard-prone areas. Such initiatives demonstrate some level of gender-sensitive DRM measures. Notwithstanding, as already recommended by the OECD, Colombia would benefit from reinforcing inclusive DRM policy making and policy implementation (OECD, 2019[13]), as detailed in the following Section.

6.4. Assessing enablers of inclusive, gender-sensitive DRM system in Colombia

6.4.1. Availability and implementation of global frameworks and agendas

As illustrated above, several global agendas and frameworks have been adopted in Colombia to guide an inclusive, gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction process. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) supports inclusive disaster risk mechanisms at all stages of disaster management and identifies women as key stakeholders who have been mostly neglected in disaster risk reduction decision making (UNISDR, 2015[2]) (United Nations, 2022[24]). Leading by example in Latin America, Colombia was one of the first countries in the region to comply with the SFDRR, and has ratified most of these frameworks and agendas (Díaz-Tamayo, 2021[11]). It has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to shape the DRM system with an inclusive and gender-sensitive approach and incorporated its provisions into national development plans and policies.

Although these frameworks are integrated into the national system, their implementation is limited, as demonstrated by the number of women victims of disasters even after their ratification. Enforcing related laws and policies should thus be encouraged. International co-operation could play a significant role by helping monitor the implementation of laws and policies on gender-sensitive disaster risk management. As

revealed in stakeholder discussions, a good practice can be identified on climate change initiatives undertaken in Colombia in the past few years. Most of those initiatives have been financially supported by international agencies, which create the conditions to monitor progress in implementing gender-sensitive climate change policies. Colombia could take advantage of this to reinforce the follow-up mechanisms for monitoring enforcement of gender-sensitive DRM frameworks.

6.4.2. Existing disaster management systems and institutional setting

The existing disaster preparedness system, as noted above, provides some important foundations for a gender-sensitive and inclusive DRM system in Colombia.

The current system is built upon several guiding principles developed in accordance with global agendas and frameworks on inclusive and gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction: rights approach, gender equality, and cultural diversity. Among the goals of the National Plan for Disaster Risk Management (PNGRD), more specifically, is to develop DRM processes with an inclusive approach. For example, training is offered to the entities of the National Disaster Risk Management System (SNGRD) to design, implement and evaluate risk management strategies with a differential approach, taking into account cultural and gender diversity. Colombia's National Unit for Disaster Risk Management also holds a community roundtable, with participation from civil society entities, to increase integration of inclusion and protection into DRM, and to follow up and evaluate it. All these initiatives favour an inclusive, gender-specific framework.

As for organisational culture, stakeholder discussions indicate that the DRM system is highly bureaucratic at both the national and the local level. Most DRM organisations in Colombia historically have been led by men, limiting women's active involvement. At the local level, women's organisations have reportedly been vocal about the inclusion of their perspectives in DRM decision making. Social norms and gender stereotypes, however, still prevent women and members of marginalised groups from participating in top-level consultations (OECD, 2020[17]), including in DRM. Local DRM organisations in Colombia often report the limited resources as a barrier to developing a gender-sensitive and inclusive DRM framework.

Building on existing DRM practices, Colombia could take further steps to integrate a gender perspective and move towards an inclusive DRM system.

6.4.3. Level of knowledge and interest of public officers engaged in DRM

Promoting an adequate level of knowledge among public officers engaged in DRM is vital for effective policy making (Hilton, 2015[31]). Research indicates that updated, integrated knowledge of disaster management is limited among most staff working in the field, especially in developing countries. For example, after the devastating earthquake in Nepal in 2015, its government adopted a new Disaster Management Act in 2017, one of whose main objectives was to increase women's participation in disaster-related decision making. The limited knowledge of community officers has proved a challenge, however, and gender sensitivity in post-disaster recovery has not yet been effectively introduced (Thapa and Pathranarakul, 2019[32]).

Stakeholder discussions reported a comparable situation in Colombia. Civil servants are interested in and committed to strengthening DRM in the country, but DRM officers' knowledge could be improved, especially on mainstreaming gender into DRM. Understanding sector-specific gender gaps and how they increase disaster risks among women and girls could be enhanced. The Ministry of Environment has acknowledged the importance of gender-sensitive climate change policy and expressed willingness to mainstream gender in its strategies. However, as Colombian stakeholders have noted, public officials would benefit from a better appreciation of how to make the existing DRM system more inclusive and gender-sensitive.

6.4.4. The capacity of Colombian women

Empowering women to participate in disaster risk governance is a key determinant of inclusive, gender-sensitive DRM systems. Women's capacity to contribute to DRM activities has been evident in many countries (Hemachandra, 2022[33]). In Colombia, some organisations have successfully used transitional justice mechanisms to support internally displaced populations, mainly women, in receiving assistance and reparations (Domingo, 2015[16]). These initiatives have encouraged women to talk about their experiences as victims, and their expectations. One non-governmental organisation managing a slope-stabilising infrastructure project has helped build capacity among local unemployed women in risk mitigation, communication, community engagement, leadership and occupational health and safety (Wesely, 2021[34]).

These examples demonstrate Colombian women's capacity to participate in all types of DRM-related activities, such as experience sharing and disaster risk mitigation. Colombian stakeholders have also confirmed that women are perceived as having a sound understanding of how to manage limited resources and prepare for pre- and post-disaster situations. Further measures could be introduced in Colombia, specifically at the grass-roots level, to build women's confidence in their capacity to contribute to DRM.

6.4.5. Data availability

Achieving gender equality in disaster risk management calls for timely, reliable gender-sensitive data and evidence. At present, the production and use of gender-disaggregated data on disasters is limited globally. If reliable data is scarce, programmes can unintentionally exacerbate gender inequalities and leave women behind, unable to provide assistance to disaster victims (Parkinson, Lancaster and Stewart, 2011[35]).

In Colombia, progress has been made on increasing the availability of gender-disaggregated disaster-related data. The number of victims is now accounted for based on their gender and ethnicity. The UNGRD recently published the "Colombian Risk Atlas: Revealing latent disasters" (*Atlas de Riesgo de Colombia: revelando los desastres latentes*) as part of its broader assessments, to improve understanding of the disaster risks at the national and subnational level. To evaluate the level of vulnerability of Colombia's territory, the atlas also explicitly considers the social dimension. The Ministry of Environment is also reportedly planning to incorporate gender-sensitive data in the National Gender and Climate Change Action Plan, to measure quantitatively and qualitatively the impact on women of disasters caused by climate change.

More could be done to boost data collection to promote a more gender-sensitive DRM system in Colombia. As noted in Chapter 5, its systems for gathering and sharing gender-disaggregated data across all sectors of the economy could be increased. As stakeholders have indicated, the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies department collects a significant amount of data on the state and evolution of natural resources and the environment but does not embed a gender lens in its statistics. The interoperability of the data systems could also be enhanced to increase data sharing between sectors.

6.4.6. Level of community awareness

Raising awareness of the importance of integrating gender perspectives in DRM is vital for building inclusive DRM systems (Hemachandra, 2022[33]) (Latu et al., 2018[36]). In Colombia, several DRM-related awareness campaigns have been conducted to highlight the role of women in DRM. The UNGRD recently launched a programme, "The Planet Speaks Out" (*El Planeta Pide la Palabra*) offering a virtual space to share and exchange knowledge on disaster risks. As of June 2021, 35 events had reportedly been held, with more than 10 000 direct participants, including national and international entities, as well as Colombian departments and municipalities. The programme adopts a differential approach, giving visibility to women's contributions to DRM. In 2019, the UNGRD held a temporary exhibition, "Science, Knowledge and Woman" (*Ciencia, Conocimiento y Mujer*) at the Museum of Knowledge in Disaster Risk Management, to highlight

the work of women on disaster risk management both in the country and abroad (National Unit for Disaster Risk Management, 2020[37]). Nevertheless, as revealed in stakeholder discussions, more could be done to increase awareness of women's role in managing disasters and the importance of gender-sensitive DRM, especially at the departmental and municipal level.

6.4.7. Involvement of role models

Role models play a significant part in contributing to equality and women's empowerment in leadership and decision making (Latu et al., 2018[36]). They can influence communities on a wide range of policy issues and promote more inclusive disaster risk reduction measures.

In Colombia, some powerful women have initiated grass-roots disaster management and climate-related activities. For example, with other 114 rural climate change adaptation promoters, a Colombian singer who is also a climate activist has launched a project for the ecological restoration of 900 hectares of wetland in the communities of Chinchorro, Cecilia y Mata de Caña. She co-ordinated the project of the Ministry of Environment and Territorial Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the funding from the Adaptation Fund. The initiative aimed to benefit more than 400 000 people in the region, who learned how to contribute to sustainable ecosystem management and effective disaster risk management practices (UNDP, 2020[38]). Having active role models working in areas related to DRM is an enabler for an inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM system, but their visibility has been limited at the national and international level, reducing their ability to raise awareness of women's capacity across fields.

6.4.8. Financial support

International agencies and donors can help countries achieve gender equality by providing funding, technical knowledge and capacity building, including with the aim of developing inclusive DRM systems. Some Pacific Island countries, which are highly vulnerable to climate-induced disasters, are supported by donors in including a gender perspective in their DRM practices (Charan, 2016[39]).

Several international agencies and donors have long operated in Colombia and promoted interventions targeting gender equality across many policy areas. Disaster risk management is one of them, receiving continuous support from international donor agencies (UNDP, 2020[38]). The United Nations Population Fund has supported the department of La Guajira to address gender inequalities and develop a risk index for the Colombian Risk Atlas. Such facilities are helpful for building an inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM system, but it is important to ensure funding for both national and local governments, in order to support gender mainstreaming efforts in their institutions. Similarly, considering that a gender-sensitive DRM system is still at a nascent stage in Colombia, the country would benefit from continued support in the years ahead.

6.4.9. Civil society organisations

Civil society organisations and NGOs play an important enabling role in supporting countries in managing disaster risks and strengthening the resilience of communities at highest risk.

In Colombia, as stakeholders interviewed confirmed during the fact-finding mission, some improvement has been noted in the involvement of civil society organisations. However, their level of engagement in the overall DRM in the country could be increased. No evidence was noted of explicit processes and strategies on how to engage them to promote women's participation in the DRM. Looking ahead, co-ordination between such organisations with local level DRM agencies could be increased to make the DRM more inclusive and gender-sensitive.

6.4.10. Other elements: national legislative framework for gender equality, leadership commitment, sociocultural factors

Robust legislative frameworks supporting gender equality and mainstreaming can also help build inclusive DRM systems. A strong political leadership's commitment to gender equality at the national level can play a significant role in making the topic a priority on the government's agenda and advancing gender-sensitive DRM practices and approaches.

As noted in the previous Chapters, Colombia has made strides in advancing gender equality, expressing the commitment of the Colombian state to the inclusion of a gender and intersectional approach in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies, plans and programmes. As explained in Chapters 3 and 4, in recent years, significant efforts have been made to raise awareness, build capacity and introduce gender perspectives in many sectoral strategies and programmes. The Ministry of Environment recently adopted a new Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and long-term climate strategy (E26), to achieve carbon neutrality with a gender perspective. Gender has also been mainstreamed in climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. This conducive environment should also facilitate the development of a gender-sensitive and inclusive DRM framework. Interest has been growing in Colombia among political parties and politicians in supporting disaster risk management efforts and establishing legitimate power in disaster response, especially after the 2017 Mocoa landslide (UNDP, 2020[38]).

Sociocultural factors are also key to achieving a positive change in society, including gender equality (Duflo, 2012[40]). As emerged in stakeholder discussions, gender inequalities in Colombia, which often stem from deep-rooted gender stereotypes and social norms, are embedded in political, economic and social structures. Gender stereotypes can discourage Colombian women from choosing certain fields of study, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), as well as from taking career engagements and working on their professional development (Franco-Orozco and Franco-Orozco, 2018[41]). This leaves them at the margins of DRM efforts, which often require leadership and scientific knowledge.

6.5. Road map with policy recommendations

Colombia's legacy of long-lasting armed conflict and natural calamities has made women and girls in the country more vulnerable to disasters. An inclusive, gender-sensitive DRM system would bring considerable benefits, by enhancing the understanding of women's differential needs, reducing their vulnerabilities in the future, and making use of their efforts to encourage a more productive DRM system as a whole.

Colombia can already count on several supportive enablers for integrating gender into disaster risk management. Its strong legislative support, ratification of international frameworks, women's capacity and rising women's movements are some of its key strengths for achieving an inclusive, gender-sensitive DRM. Building on these supportive elements, action could be considered to achieve these objectives.

- Consider **strengthening the mechanisms to monitor enforcement of legal provisions on gender-sensitive DRM.** Since Colombia has formally expressed its commitment to global agendas and frameworks for gender-sensitive DRM, additional measures could be introduced to follow up the implementation of laws on DRM, as well as of global frameworks on inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM, such as sanctions for non-compliance.
- Consider **making changes to the existing DRM legislation**, as appropriate, to incorporate gender-sensitivity and inclusiveness within Colombia's disaster management-related laws. Although several legislative and policy initiatives have been initiated to strengthen DRM and support gender equality, existing regulations and policies could be enhanced by adequate provisions to make the DRM system more inclusive and gender-sensitive.

- Continue **raising awareness about the importance of adopting an inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM** among line ministries and State agencies, non-governmental agencies, civil society and local communities. Awareness should also be raised to educate women, girls and other victims of disasters about their rights and responsibilities in building a more equitable society. This would also help create a positive perception of women's capacities. Furthermore, awareness campaigns could be launched to promote the consideration of women and girls as agents of change in disasters rather than as a vulnerable group only. Raising awareness could be achieved by conducting public campaigns to educate women and girls who have been victims of disasters and invite them to share their views and experiences on how to overcome future vulnerabilities for women and girls.
- As recommended in Chapter 5, consider **strengthening the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data for gender-sensitive policy making, also on DRM-related matters, and improve data integration and exchange of information across line ministries and government agencies.** Data collection and use could be enhanced at the subnational level to identify existing barriers and strengths to build an inclusive and gender-sensitive DRM system.
- Continue **mainstreaming gender considerations in the work of both national and subnational entities**, by recognising the importance of gender equality as a multi-dimensional and cross-cutting policy issue. Promoting awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming could prevent taking decisions in isolation and encourage synergies across sectors.
- Consider **strengthening women's empowerment through capacity-building activities**. Special training on disaster management could be offered to women and women-led organisations in local communities. Moreover, women should be invited to participate in all stages of the DRM cycle, since at present they are mostly involved in response and recovery measures only. As a long-term strategy, promoting STEM higher education among girls and women could also play an important role to empower them in decision making, and specifically in disaster risk management at later stages.
- Consider **exploring mechanisms to ensure stable financial support for DRM**, especially at the local level. Efforts should be made to ensure continuous funding flows, and resources should be channelled to departments and municipalities that report funding limitations, to help them strengthen their DRM systems and integrate a gender equality perspective.

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Annex A. Gender gaps at the regional level and relationship between gender equality and departmental GDP growth in Colombia

Introduction

As shown in Chapter 2, wide imbalances persist between women and men in Colombia, with significant regional variation. This Annex presents an analysis of existing gender gaps at the regional level in the country. After investigating departmental differences in gender gaps with respect to economic participation, educational achievement, health and survival, and political empowerment, the Annex proposes an econometric model to estimate the relationships between gender equality and economic growth in Colombia. This empirical study was developed by experts of the Colombian Observatory for Women in the framework of the six-year co-operative project between the government of Colombia and the OECD and included in the Report at the request of the Presidential Council for Women's Equality.

Gender gaps at the regional level

Colombia has wide territorial gaps in development, which are reflected in its departments' varying levels of competitive performance (CPC & U. Rosario, 2021[1]). Recent efforts have been made to measure gender gaps at the regional level, including creating the Colombian Women's Observatory, which answers to the Presidential Council for Women's Equality (CPEM), and the Departmental Gender Equality Index, managed by the Cydeem Foundation and Kynapsys Research and Consultancy (CPEM, 2021[2]) (Cydeem & Kynapsys, 2020[3])[1].

To offer a regional overview of the disparities between men and women, an index of gender gaps at the departmental level is presented below, drawing on the methodology of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (WEF, 2021[4]). A synthetic index is calculated for Colombia's 23 departments and the capital district of Bogotá.[2] This indicator has 16 variables divided into four pillars: 1) economic participation and opportunities, 2) educational achievement, 3) health and survival, and 4) political empowerment.

Table A A.1. Structure of the Gender Gap Index for Colombia, 2021

By department

Sub pillar	Variable (ratio between men and women)	Description	Source
Economic participation and opportunity	Labour force participation rate	Proportion of the economically active population over the working-age population (% 2020)	DANE
	Income equality	Monthly earned income (COP 2020)	DANE
	Hours worked	Average hours worked per week (hours 2020)	FILCO – Ministry of Labour
	Formality work rate	Proportion of employed who contribute to health and pension (% 2020)	FILCO – Ministry of Labour
	Professional and technical workers	Proportion of employed who are professionals and technicians (% 2020)	DANE
Educational attainment	Literacy rate	Proportion of the population that can read and write (%)	DANE
	Enrolment in primary education	Enrolment of students between 5 and 10 years of age in primary education (% 2020)	Ministry of Education
	Enrolment in secondary education	Enrolment of students between 11 and 16 years of age in secondary education (% 2020)	Ministry of Education
	Enrolment in tertiary education	Enrolment of students between 17 and 21 years of age in tertiary education (% 2020)	Ministry of Education
	Enrolment in STEM careers	Proportion of students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics careers (% 2020)	Ministry of Education
Health and survival	Sex ratio at birth	Proportion of male and female births (ratio 2020)	DANE
	Healthy life expectancy	Average years of life expected at birth (years 2020)	DANE
	Mortality to preventable causes rate	Number of deaths for cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases (per 100 000 habitants 2020)	DANE
Political empowerment	Governor	Proportion by gender of people who held the position of governor in the last four electoral periods (2007, 2011, 2015, 2019) (%)	National Civil Registry
	Mayors	Proportion by gender of people who held the positions of mayor in the municipalities of the department (% 2019)	National Civil Registry
	Gubernatorial candidates	Proportion by gender of people who were candidates for the post of governor (% 2019)	National Civil Registry

Source: Author's own calculations based on data from (DANE, n.d.[5]; FILCO, n.d.[6]; Ministerio de Educacion Nacional, n.d.[7]) (2002)

This index aims to present a general diagnosis of Colombia's departments for dimensions with persistent disparities between men and women that hinder the development of local economies.

At the methodological level, to obtain the scores associated with each indicator, the ratio between the observed value of the indicator for men and women is calculated, distributed between 0 and 1. [3] The values obtained are adjusted on a scale of 0 to 10, to facilitate the interpretation of the scores, where 10 indicates full gender parity and 0 represents the worst performance.[4]

The general score of the index corresponds to a simple average of the four pillars, which are in turn obtained from the simple average of its composing indicators.

The results for 2020 show that the department of Valle del Cauca ranked the highest, with a score of 8.02 out of 10, continuing its lead since 2019. Atlántico came in second, with a score of 7.75 out of 10. In third place was the capital district of Bogotá, with a score of 7.74 out of 10. At the other end of the scale, the La Guajira, Norte de Santander and Chocó fared the lowest (Table A A.1).

It is worth noting that Cauca has seen a jump of 4 p.p. since 2019, ranking ninth of the 24 departments evaluated. Boyacá and Cesar have also improved their rank substantially since 2019, increasing 3 p.p.

As for departments whose position fell in the gender gap indicators, Bolívar lost five positions in the general ranking, and Magdalena and Sucre fell four positions from 2019 (Table A A.2).

Table A A.2. Gender Gap Index score and ranking: Colombian departments, 2021

2020	GGI			ECO		EDU		SAL		POL	
Region	Score	Rank	Vs. 2019	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Valle del Cauca	8.02	1	0	8.37	14	9.02	7	9.02	17	5.67	1
Atlántico	7.75	2	0	8.40	12	9.23	2	9.32	8	4.04	2
Bogotá D.C.	7.74	3	0	9.07	1	8.94	12	9.59	2	3.33	3
Meta	7.31	4	0	8.29	16	9.03	6	9.12	14	2.81	4
Córdoba	7.10	5	0	7.76	22	9.35	1	8.99	19	2.31	5
Quindío	7.04	6	2	8.53	7	8.97	10	8.89	23	1.78	6
Santander	7.02	7	0	8.59	6	8.95	11	9.36	6	1.20	11
Huila	6.99	8	1	8.40	13	8.62	20	9.32	9	1.63	7
Cauca	6.92	9	4	8.64	5	8.90	14	9.36	5	0.78	16
Magdalena	6.92	10	-4	7.96	20	9.02	8	9.08	15	1.62	8
Risaralda	6.92	11	-1	8.41	11	9.20	3	8.95	21	1.11	12
Cundinamarca	6.88	12	2	8.89	2	8.85	17	9.04	16	0.74	17
Tolima	6.88	13	-1	8.50	8	8.57	21	8.94	22	1.51	9
Nariño	6.83	14	-3	8.23	17	9.10	5	9.60	1	0.41	18
Boyacá	6.78	15	3	8.50	9	8.86	16	9.42	4	0.33	21
Antioquia	6.77	16	0	8.76	3	8.81	18	9.16	11	0.35	20
Cesar	6.76	17	3	8.35	15	8.88	15	8.99	20	0.83	15
Caldas	6.74	18	1	8.75	4	9.10	4	9.00	18	0.13	24
Caquetá	6.74	19	2	8.45	10	8.73	19	8.67	24	1.11	12
Bolívar	6.69	20	-5	8.09	18	8.94	13	9.32	7	0.41	19
Sucre	6.67	21	-4	7.63	23	8.39	23	9.21	10	1.46	10
La Guajira	6.63	22	1	8.04	19	8.23	24	9.13	13	1.11	12
Norte de Santander	6.52	23	-1	7.80	21	8.97	9	9.15	12	0.18	23
Chocó	6.38	24	0	7.37	24	8.47	22	9.43	3	0.24	22

Source: Author's own calculations based on data from (DANE, n.d.[5]; FILCO, n.d.[6]; Ministerio de Educacion Nacional, n.d.[7]) (2022)

Pillar I: Economic participation and opportunities

This pillar is composed of five indicators measuring gender gaps in the labour market: labour force participation rate, gender wage gap, number of hours worked and share of informal employment.

The capital district of Bogotá ranks first under this pillar, with a score of 9.07 out of 10. In particular, the city reflects the best performance evaluated among the 24 regions for the indicators on labour force participation rate (global) and number of hours worked.

Cundinamarca ranks second, with outstanding performance in the indicators on the labour force participation rate and the proportion of employed persons with technical and professional training. The department of Antioquia ranks in third place, with the smallest gender gap in share of informal employment and faring well in the average number of hours worked.

Pillar II: Educational achievement

This pillar assesses gender disparities in enrolment rates across all levels of educational training (primary, secondary and tertiary). Additionally, it places special emphasis on gaps in professional careers with a lower participation of women (e.g., science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM).

Under this pillar, the department of Córdoba ranks the highest (9.35 score), thanks to its strong performance in enrolment in secondary education and participation in STEM careers. Atlántico takes the

second place, with the smallest gender gap at the national level in enrolment rates in higher education. Risaralda comes next, with good results in enrolment rates in primary, secondary and higher education.

Pillar III: Health and survival

This pillar considers three indicators: sex ratio at birth, life expectancy at birth and mortality rate from preventable causes usually associated with poor lifestyle habits and poor health management (cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, cancer and diabetes).

The department of Nariño ranks the highest, with a rating of 9.6 out of 10, and the best performance in terms of sex ratio at birth. In second place is the capital district of Bogotá, which demonstrates the smallest gap in mortality due to preventable causes. Chocó, a department showing outstanding results on mortality rates due to preventable causes ranks in the third position.

Pillar IV: Political empowerment

This pillar assesses the political participation of men and women in regional governments, specifically at the level of governorates and municipalities. Additionally, it includes an indicator on the proportion of candidates disaggregated by gender of gubernatorial candidates.

Overall, departmental scores for this indicator are relatively low. Valle del Cauca ranks first (with a score of 5.67), showing the highest gender parity in share of elected governors and the second highest parity in gubernatorial candidates. Atlántico comes next, with outstanding results in the number of gubernatorial candidates. The capital district of Bogotá ranks third, with the best performance in share of mayors.

Gender equality and GDP growth in Colombia's departments are positively correlated

A panel model is developed below to estimate the contribution of gender equality to the economic growth of Colombian departments. The following equation takes into account the capital district of Bogotá as well as other 23 departments, for the period between 2016 and 2020:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 g_TGP_{it} + \beta_2 g_STEM_{it} + \beta_3 g_ExpectLife_{it} + \beta_4 g_MortPrev_{it} + \beta_5 g_Mayors_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} + u_{it}$$

where Y_{it} includes various specifications:

- departmental GDP growth (LnPIB);
- departmental GDP growth per capita (LnPIBper);
- GDP growth excluding the mining-energy sector[5] (LnPIBnme);
- growth in non-mining-energy GDP per capita (LnPIBpernme).

The equation includes the following explanatory variables:

- (g_TGP_{it}): female-male labour force participation rate;
- (g_STEM_{it}): proportion of female to male students enrolled in STEM fields;
- $(g_ExpectLife_{it})$: male-female ratio of life expectancy at birth;
- $(g_MortPrev_{it})$: female-male ratio of mortality from preventable causes;
- (g_Mayors_{it}): share of women mayors.

Table A A.3 reports estimates of the four models as specified above. In general terms, the findings suggest that greater equality in the labour force participation between women and men is positively associated with the economic growth of the Colombian departments. For the four estimated models, women's participation in the labour market appears to have a statistically significant effect on departmental GDP growth. This

result is in line with those illustrated in various studies at the international level, which highlight the increasingly active role of women in the labour market and their contribution to promoting sustained economic growth. Reduced gender gaps are also associated with improvements in women's living conditions, determined by lower economic dependency ratios and greater income-generation opportunities (Bloom et al., 2009[8]) (Klasen, 2019[9]) (Elson, 2017[10]).

Table A A.3. Impact of gender equality on departmental economic growth

VARIABLES	(1) LnPIB	(2) LnPIBper	(3) LnPIBnme	(4) LnPIBpernme
(g_TGP_{it})	0.00957*** (0.00219)	0.00636** (0.00319)	0.00369*** (0.000985)	0.00811*** (0.00155)
(g_STEM_{it})	0.00379*** (0.000914)	0.00809*** (0.00139)	0.00233*** (0.000584)	0.000889 (0.000840)
$(g_ExpectLife_{it})$	0.0561** (0.0238)	0.114*** (0.0348)	0.0657*** (0.0132)	0.0196 (0.0203)
$(g_MortPrev_{it})$	0.00357*** (0.00138)	0.00800*** (0.00231)	0.00335*** (0.000762)	0.00362*** (0.00100)
(g_Mayors_{it})	0.000231* (0.000139)	0.000521* (0.000285)	0.000191*** (6.24e-05)	0.000219** (0.000107)
Constant	3.477 (2.215)	4.328 3(.193)	3.028** (1.264)	13.54*** (1.790)
Observations	120	120	120	120
Number of ID	24	24	24	24
R-squared	0,3158	0,5159	0,459	0,204

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.
Source: Author's own elaboration (2022).

In education, a more gender equal participation in STEM training programmes also appears to be positively associated with regional economic growth. In three of the four models, the estimated coefficient is statistically significant. Skills development is expected to lead to an increase in the human capital stock, which is fundamental to the dynamics of innovation, as well as to increase productivity and facilitate the proper functioning of the productive sectors that demand this type of skill (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, n.d.[11]).

As for health, although women usually have a longer life expectancy at birth than men and, in turn, a lower incidence of mortality from preventable causes, the model reveals that greater equality in these indicators also tends to be positively associated with economic growth. As for the variable measuring life expectancy at birth, the estimated coefficients are significant, at the 1% level in two of the four models, and at the 5% level in a third. Observing the variable for mortality due to preventable causes, the estimated effects are significant, at the 1% level in all the four models, highlighting a potential positive impact that health prevention policies can have on the economy. In general, better performance on these indicators is associated with better management of the health systems in the departments, greater access to and quality of the service provision, healthier lifestyle habits of the population and favourable environmental and health conditions. All these elements are indicators of social well-being and economic progress (Bloom, Kuhn and Prettner, 2020[12]).

Finally, increased political participation of women, particularly in leadership positions in local government, is positively associated with economic growth. In two of the four models, the estimated coefficients are statistically significant, at the 10% level, and significant in the other two, at 5% and 1%. Several studies indicate that the presence of women in elected positions increases the likelihood that women's interests are adequately represented and their perspectives taken into account, particularly in the design of public policies and allocation of resources. Additionally, women's participation in decision-making spaces reduces prejudice and negative stereotypes of their ability to occupy leadership positions, and directly affects the

aspirations of girls and adolescents who see the leaders and decision makers in their communities as examples to follow (ONU Mujeres, DANE and Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, 2020[13]) (Pachón, Peña and Wills, 2012[14]).

Overall, the empirical findings presented above provide evidence of some significant correlations between greater gender equality and GDP growth in Colombian departments. However, further studies could be conducted in the future to address and go beyond the limitations of this analysis. For example, the panel specification herein illustrated would benefit from the use of a greater number of observations and more extensive time-series data, since the process through which improvements in gender equality have an impact on economic outcomes is generally slow. This would also allow to develop more sophisticated econometric models using additional control and explanatory variables that could shed light on other potential effects on GDP growth. In addition, the model does not address issues of reverse causation that could arise from the use of the ratio of labour force participation rate as explanatory variable. In fact, while higher women's participation in the labour market can be a driver of economic growth, that may also rise as a result of better economic performances. Further studies could explore ways to tackle reverse causality, such as the use of lagged control variables. Moreover, the model does not yet provide any indications of how strong the variation in the explanatory variables is year-on-year, and whether this could be driven by departmental GDP growth as in the case of the ratio of female to male labour force participation. Finally, the regression analysis could be further improved by adding time or department fixed effects, to control for specific underlying differences that do not change over time and across departments. Additional control variables could also be included to take into account factors which are likely to affect cross-regional differences in economic growth.

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Notes

[1] This evaluates the gender gaps in 31 departments of Colombia and the city of Bogotá, based on five dimensions of analysis: physical autonomy, political autonomy, socioeconomic autonomy, quality of life and empowerment.

[2] Due to limitations in the information available, it was not possible to include the Archipelago of San Andrés and the departments of Amazonía and Orinoquía in the 2020 Departmental Gender Equality Index.

[3] To guarantee that the indicator scores are distributed between 0 and 1 in the calculated quotient, the data assigned to the numerator, in all cases, is the lowest value observed, regardless of the gender to which it corresponds. $\left\{0 < Indicator_i : \frac{hard\ data_{Inferior}}{hard\ data_{Superior}} < 1\right\}$

[4] The rescaling of the scores basically consisted of multiplying by 10 the values obtained in the quotients of each indicator.

[5] The mining and energy sector represents a significant share of the economies of Arauca, Casanare, Chocó, César, La Guajira, Meta, Putumayo and Santander. As an activity that generates high value, but with low labour intensity, its greater relative weight may underestimate the impact of gender variables on the economic growth of these regions. Hence, for certain simulations, this effect is isolated.

OECD Review of Gender Equality in Colombia

In recent decades, Colombia has pursued a strategy to encourage gender equality as an important enabler of inclusive growth and national well-being and to promote gender mainstreaming through institutions, policies and tools. This report assesses four main pillars of Colombia's governance for gender equality, analysing strengths and identifying areas for further improvement. It examines strategic planning for gender equality policy, a whole-of-government approach to promoting gender equality policy, using government tools to achieve gender equality objectives, and an inclusive and gender-sensitive emergency preparedness framework. The report also provides examples of different approaches in OECD Member and Partner countries to closing gender equality gaps. Based on this analysis, the report proposes solutions to help Colombia strengthen gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive policy making to promote sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

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