

Gender-disaggregated data expansions - Developing a roadmap for capacity building

As part of the US-funded project 'Gender-disaggregated data expansion', this note presents the output of Workstream 5 on capacity building.

This roadmap identifies key challenges and a number of areas where efforts at a national level should be devoted to support data collection bodies and other relevant stakeholders in the progress towards more and better gender-informative data in the policy areas of digitalisation, telework and parental leave. It then presents a menu of options to support data collection bodies' capacities.

All project outputs are available at www.oecd.org/gender/gender-data-expansion.htm

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Developing a roadmap for capacity building

Closing the gaps in gender data requires having the right institutional setting and administrative capacities in place to collect and elaborate such data. The workstreams on digitalisation, telework and parental leave have allowed to identify a number of areas where further work is needed in terms of data collection and indicators' development by Data Collection Bodies (DCBs), such as National Statistical Offices (NSOs), social protection and other relevant public and, potentially, private bodies. In parallel, the expansion of data collection systems needs to be accompanied by adequate training and capacity building for such organisations.

This roadmap identifies key challenges and a number of areas where efforts at a national level should be devoted to support DCBs and other relevant stakeholders in the progress towards more and better gender-informative data in the policy areas of digitalisation (Section 1), telework (Section 2) and parental leave (Section 3). It then presents, in Section 4, a menu of options to support DCBs' capacities.

1. Advancing the collection of gender-sensitive data on digitalisation

Key challenges in the collection of gender-sensitive data on digitalisation

In 2019, the OECD prepared a Roadmap on 'Measuring the Digital Transformation' (OECD, 2019^[1]). The Roadmap reflects a recognition that national statistical systems need to adapt and expand to adequately reflect the digitalisation of economies and societies. It also highlights the need for new, complementary data infrastructures capable of monitoring digital activities and data flows on a timely basis wherever they happen. Since its launch, the Roadmap has served as a reference for prioritising digital measurement activities across the OECD. It is also a tool that can improve co-ordination with a view to avoiding fragmented efforts and initiatives to further develop the evidence base for well-suited policies in the digital age. The Roadmap includes nine actions to advance the capacity of countries to monitor digital transformation and its impacts. It presents concrete actions for DCBs and other relevant stakeholders to advance the collection of relevant and timely indicators around these key objectives, for which data-collection challenges exist (for an overview of these challenges, see OECD (2022^[3])):

- Make the digital economy visible in economic statistics
- Understand the economic impacts of digital transformation
- Encourage measurement of the digital transformation's impacts on social goals and people's well-being
- Design new and interdisciplinary approaches to data collection
- Monitor technologies underpinning the digital transformation, notably the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain
- Improve the measurement of data and data flows

- Define and measure skills needs for the digital transformation
- Measure trust in online environments
- Establish an impact assessment framework for digital governments.

In the recent in-depth evaluation of the CDEP, one of the five recommendations that were made to strengthen the Committee's relevance, the effectiveness and quality of its products, and its functioning involves further concentrating efforts on gender issues (OECD, 2021^[2]).

While it was envisaged that a full revision of the Roadmap would take place five years after its creation, it is timely to add a 10th action on gender in response to the increased calls for more gender statistics from across the OECD. This responds to the need to further advance gender mainstreaming, on top of the important strides that the OECD Committee on Digital Economy Policy (CDEP) has made in this respect (for example, a [gender theme page](#) has been present on the OECD Going Digital Toolkit since its launch in March 2019, and a new gender indicator was added in 2021 on the [disparity in Internet use between men and women](#)).

There are additional challenges require further attention, including: the lack of a gender perspective in cross-country surveys on digital issues, political sensitivities around multiple definitions of "sex", as well as reluctance on the part of NSOs to use non-traditional data collection approaches that can more easily allow for data disaggregated by gender.

Improving gender-sensitive data collection on digitalisation

As stressed in the "Update on CDEP gender activities and a proposal to add a gender "action" to the OECD Going Digital Measurement Roadmap" (OECD, 2022^[2]), expanding the collection and accessibility of gender statistics relevant to digital transformation is essential to understanding the existence and extent of digital divides across all dimensions of the OECD Going Digital Integrated Policy Framework (OECD, 2020^[4]) and developing well-suited policies in response. Advancing the collection of gender-sensitive data on digitalisation will contribute to gender mainstreaming and to the relevant sustainable development goals.

In order to develop new indicators and enhance existing gender statistics, it will be necessary to use both traditional and non-traditional data collection techniques, keeping in mind that data quality must be maintained and biases need to be addressed - including those that might emerge with non-traditional data collection approaches. It will also be important to achieve consensus among Members on priority areas and methodologies.

Specifically, stakeholders will need to strengthen their capacities, practices and cooperation to ensure that gender-sensitive data are collected in the different fields related to the digital transformation. In this respect, it is fundamental that NSOs, Ministries responsible for digital transformation policies, regulators, the research community, the Internet technical community and international organisations work together to achieve several goals (OECD, 2022^[2]):

- Align Members' priorities for gender statistics using common measurement methodologies and approaches.
- Encourage the collection of gender statistics in official surveys as well as other data collection approaches, and make that data easily accessible to support evidence-based policymaking.
- Develop a systematic understanding of gender biases in existing and future datasets, including those created using non-traditional data collection approaches.
- Engage with the private sector to make use of privately held data using confidentiality agreements and other trust-building mechanisms to allow for the development of new gender statistics and breakdowns.

Providing data to support research on digitalisation and gender to fill existing gaps

The data collection work by DCBs and the availability of gender-sensitive data are key to the academic and policy communities to advance the research on digitalisation and gender and to define policies to bridge gender gaps in the digital transformation. Research questions that could direct future research could focus on the following non-exhaustive list of items:

- Skills and education: gender divide in digital literacy and skills; skills demand and offer in the digital era; gender differences in digital access for children and adults. This would support policy research and actions related to tackling gender gaps in digital education; ensuring an equal access to digital tools and ICT studies for boys and girls; as well as issues related to tackling skills- and labour-shortages, and untapping girls' and women's potential to work on ICT-related fields;
- Jobs in the digital transformation: gender divide in access to digital forms of work, including platform work, and related working conditions; access, use and impact of digital technologies at a company/organisation level and their effects on gender divides in different types of industries, sectors and occupations; gendered impact of the fast-tracked COVID-19 digital transformation for businesses and employees. This would support policy research and actions related to ensuring a gender-inclusive world of work, leaving no one behind also in digital occupations; or again ensuring a more equal access and representation of both men and women in digitally-intensive sectors and occupations;
- Entrepreneurship in the digital era: gender gaps in the entrepreneurial digital sector; gender gaps in activities related to AI and IoT. This would support policy research and actions enhancing gender equality in digital companies and entrepreneurship opportunities, including in new entrepreneurial models such as fintech;
- Economy, people and society: impact of digital technologies on mental health through a gender lens; economic and social impacts of a range of rapidly developing technologies, analysing potential gender differences; impact of the digital transformation on people's lives; potential role of digital technologies and new business models to help address societal goals (i.e. health, ageing and climate change), taking into account the gender perspective; Human Rights implications of the gender digital divide for women and girls; socio-cultural norms around women in digital settings. Policy research and actions could focus on the digital and socio-economic inclusion of specific groups of the population.
- Trust and governance: gender divides in trust in institutions and in the relationship between governments and (key groups of) citizens and businesses; gender divides in the access and use of digitalised services; effects of digitalisation and automation on gender equality. Policy research could integrate the analysis on existing regulatory frameworks and how different administrations ensure gender equality and inclusion in the shift towards digital services.

In addition, it is of foremost importance to systematically collect evidence on the effectiveness of policies in the digital field with a specific focus on their effects on gender equality, in order to best inform governments on the actions needed to support a gender-equal digital transition.

2. Advancing the collection of gender-sensitive data on teleworking

Key challenges in the collection of gender-sensitive data on teleworking

The paper "Teleworking through the gender looking glass: facts and gaps" has shown that the multiplicity of neighbouring concepts currently used in various sources complicates comparisons, limits the possibility of longitudinal analyses, and leads to a problematic lack of conceptual clarity. Data on teleworking and on work from home capture different phenomena, with different gendered patterns.

Data gaps are concentrated in two main areas: comparable longitudinal gender-sensitive data on the *use of teleworking* and its evolution, and datasets that will allow researching the *effect* of teleworking on gender inequalities (data on the observed use of teleworking is different from information on the possibility to access teleworking, which largely depends on the regulatory framework in place in a given country. See OECD (2021^[5]) for information on access and a classification of countries based on the existence of a right to telework and the relative enforceability of that right). Existing gender-sensitive data on the use of teleworking notably suffers from issues of comparability (since the definition of teleworking varies between data sources) and from a lack of longitudinal perspective. Datasets also suffer from a lack of connection between gender-sensitive data on teleworking use and relevant labour market outcomes such as gender-sensitive indicators of pay, career progression, job quality, and work-life balance. Please refer to the related paper for a more detailed analysis of these issues.

Therefore, a straightforward way to improve future data collection efforts would be to focus as much as possible on a single concept, with one consistent definition across sources, and well-defined levels of disaggregation of each indicator. Similarly, data collection should ensure disaggregation as well as that teleworking indicators are linked with key labour market outcomes.

Improving gender-sensitive data collection on teleworking

Towards a common concept of teleworking

A first step, which would then guide data collection, is the adoption of a common definition of teleworking which best describes the reality unfolding in the aftermath of the COVID crisis. The ILO definition (i.e. teleworking as “*carrying out work in a physical location that is different from the default place of work using information and communications technology (ICT) [and/or] telephones*”), by relying on the notions of “default place of work” and “physical location where the work is carried out” has the merit to be conceptually precise. The definition used in Working Conditions Surveys (WCS) (i.e. teleworking as “*regularly using ICTs and working in at least one other location than the employer’s premises several times a month*”) in addition contains information about frequency (it focuses on *regular*, rather than occasional teleworking) and mobility (it specifies that teleworking can be done from various places, not limited to home).

Building on these two definitions, a definition of teleworking fit for impactful data collection would retain the conceptual clarity of the ILO definition and add information about frequency contained in the WCS definition. It would also add information about intensity (i.e. the number of days spent teleworking a week) to allow deriving information about hybrid work. In order to make sure that workers bringing overtime work back home but otherwise working in the office are not counted as teleworkers, the definition should also include precisions regarding the timing of teleworking (i.e. it should be clear that teleworking is work away from the default place of work taking place *during* normal hours, not exclusively outside of them). Another important aspect of telework is that, except for outstanding reasons, it should be done on a voluntary basis.

Of lesser importance but still potentially useful, information on whether teleworking is conducted in a high mobility or low mobility fashion (i.e. whether workers mainly work from the same place - potentially their home - when they are not in the office, or whether they telework from a lot of different places) could also be included. In firm-level surveys, efforts should go beyond a signalling whether teleworking exist in that firm or not. In this respect, it would be important to measure the proportion of workers concerned and to identify the characteristics of those teleworking, including the proportion of women and men teleworking.

To achieve conceptual clarity, one possibility would be to use the ILO definition as a main question to identify teleworkers, and to complement it with questions about frequency, intensity, timing, coverage (in firm-level surveys) and potentially mobility. Adopting such a definition consistently across OECD Member States in regular individual and/or firm-level surveys would go a long way in understanding the gendered reality of teleworking since the pandemic-induced boom and in the future.

In practical terms, this implies the elaboration of a main question using the ILO definition and several follow-up questions to be used in WCSs and other relevant surveys. This is intended to provide a detailed overview of the concept, while allowing for disaggregation by various diversity markers (such as age and sex, among others).

Allowing to investigate the relation between teleworking and labour market outcomes

Beyond adopting a consistent definition, future data collection efforts should seek to maximise their usefulness in allowing linking gender-sensitive data on teleworking use with key gender-sensitive labour market outcomes such as pay, career progression, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Ultimately the aim of collecting data on the gender use of teleworking is to understand whether the development of teleworking aggravates, improves, or does not affect pre-existing gender gaps, which calls for indicators of these gaps to be regularly produced. In that regard, the literature review has shown that the biggest gaps in knowledge concern career progression and objective measure of job quality and work-life balance, so it will be of particular importance to collect data on these issues.

Existing research also highlights the role of important mediating factors, such as parental status, workers' autonomy, managerial attitudes, prevailing gender norms as well as interaction with other policies, such as flexible hours. Data collection should ideally be designed to allow for the possibility of these mediating factors and interaction effects to be teased out in the future.

Ensuring longitudinal comparability

The analysis of data collection on teleworking has shown major issues of comparability over-time due to the collection of the related information in different points in time. The important increase of related data-collection since the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic has reflected the need to fill this gap – yet, it has mainly collected data on an *ad hoc* basis, therefore not ensuring a systematic solution to the longitudinal issue. An important effort by DCBs will be to ensure a sufficient frequency of data collection – for instance on an annual basis.

Providing data to support research on teleworking and gender to fill existing gaps

Progress in data collection in the above issues would set the bases for the academic and policy communities to advance research on the issue of how teleworking affects gender disparities in labour market outcomes, which is fraught with selection issues. In that regard, a primary objective of future research efforts should be to focus on research designs allowing to address these issues as much as possible, aiming for causality. This is true for outcomes such as job satisfaction and work-life balance, pay, and career progression. Future research would benefit from using conceptually precise data, and focusing on well-defined teleworking data rather than vaguer “work from home” data.

In terms of control variables and interaction effects to consider, future research endeavours should as much as possible aim to include variables capturing the presence of and interaction with other policies (e.g. flexible hours, child and elder care, parental leave, etc.); proxies measuring the prevailing degree of gender neutrality or gender segregation in a given cultural context; and, for firm-level analyses, proxies capturing management culture, notably in terms of trust and strength of hierarchical structures. Where possible (i.e. where household panel data are available), within-household dynamics should also be considered.

Several research questions on which to focus emerge from the above analysis of available data and literature. The availability of better gender-sensitive data, and the collection of additional qualitative and quantitative evidence where needed, would allow to create further knowledge on several issues.

Before looking at effects on various labour market outcomes, it might be useful for researchers to focus on understanding the determinants of gender differences in the *use of* teleworking. One issue to investigate notably is the origin of the larger gap between ability to telework and incidence of teleworking for women. Future research could aim to measure how much of that gap owes to the higher concentration of women in particular occupations versus other factors, such as hierarchical position or gender discrimination in access to teleworking.

When it comes to analysing the effect of teleworking on gender disparities in labour market outcomes, two research questions appear as particularly relevant in the post-pandemic context. First, gender-differentiated effects on career progression should be researched in priority, since they have been under-researched so far. The growth in the incidence of regular teleworking following the pandemic, and the potential transformation in management practices that accompanied it, might offer a fertile ground to tease out the “pure” effect of teleworking on career progression, in contexts where teleworking use is mainstreamed among workers, irrespective of their gender and parental status, and where output-based (rather than face-time based) performance evaluation systems are generalised. Second, the productivity effect of teleworking by gender and parental status should also be investigated more closely, to help pinning down the cause of the observed gender gaps in teleworking wage premia.

Finally, it is fundamental to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy interventions as means of addressing the potentially negative side-effects of teleworking on gender disparities. One area to focus on would be the effect of the increasing take-up of teleworking among men and non-parents teleworking (and of gender-mainstreaming policies encouraging them to take up teleworking) on the gender care and housework gaps, and on wage premia and career progression. Other policies to look at include pay transparency policies and other measures aimed at strengthening female bargaining power, and their effect on the gender gap in teleworking wage boosts. Finally, analyses of policies mentioned as capable of mitigating the (perceived or real) detrimental effect of teleworking on women’s career progression (including dedicated managerial training and human resources policies) would also be a welcome focus of future research.

3. Advancing the collection of gender-sensitive data on parental leave

Paid family leave and childcare policies are key to ensure a more equitable distribution of work and family obligations while contributing to closing the gender employment gap. The [OECD Family Database](#) provides a good overview of maternity-, paternity-, parental- and home care leave entitlements across OECD countries (hereafter family leave when referred to the aggregate of these entitlements). However, data on the use of family leave benefits are much more limited, and even if they are available, they are often not measured in a systematic manner across countries. At the same time, the currently available indicators on family leave entitlements and family leave uptake are exclusively providing information on opposite-sex partners and do not account for the slowly improving inclusion of same-sex partners in family leave legislation and use (they will, at least in part, include this with the delivery of this project).

Key challenges in the collection of gender-sensitive data on parental leave

Providing internationally comparable data on family leave use is complicated. Relatively few countries issue statistics on the number of individuals taking maternity leave or claiming maternity leave benefits. More (but not all) countries publish statistics on the number of people using paternity leave, paid parental leave or receiving parental leave benefits. However, in some countries the numbers of people on parental leave are not disaggregated by sex; in others, leave use is monitored through specific government-run surveys with own samples and definitions. This lack of a systematic measurement of leave uptake across countries makes cross-national comparison difficult.

In addition, some countries only publish the number of leave recipients, but do not provide any information on how long parents have been on leave. This risks presenting a biased picture, particularly as many fathers take leave for far shorter durations than mothers.

Moreover, even where data are available, differences between countries in the structure and design of family leave programmes can hamper comparability (see more in the Family Database indicator [Key characteristics of parental leave systems](#)). In some countries paid maternity leave (e.g. Australia) and, on occasion, paid paternity leave (e.g. Iceland) do not exist as separate entitlements but rather are integrated into an overall parental leave system. In other countries (e.g. Austria) parental leave is theoretically unpaid, with benefits instead available through 'child-raising allowances' that are paid to parents who meet eligibility conditions whether or not they are technically on leave. In addition, some countries also allow to split up parental leave uptake over multiple periods up to certain ages (e.g. in Germany), which may risk double counting of leave takers and complicate the choice of the correct population for comparison across countries.

Improving gender-sensitive data collection on parental leave

Systematic measurement of parental leave uptake from Labour Force Surveys

At first glance, Labour Force Surveys may be a great source for basic statistics on family leave uptake. They do not only measure the activity status of members in a representative population in a reference week, they also typically record the reason for any possible absence from work (including maternity/paternity/parental leave). As such, Labour Force Surveys – for example the [European Union's Labour Force Survey](#) (EULFS) or the [United States Current Population Survey](#) (USCPS) - appear to be a useful avenue for the measurement of the uptake of parental- and other family leaves. However, substantial differences in the coding of the activity status of respondents currently compromise their usefulness in measuring family leave uptake. Most importantly, the specific conditions to code a parental leave recipient as either employed or inactive often differ widely between countries. This is critical as parental leave uptake is only reported for those who are coded as employed in the Labour Force Surveys (see e.g. Mikucka and Valentova (2013^[5])). A positive model of recording leave takers is the Dutch Labour Force Survey, which previously coded maternity and parental leave takers as belonging to the employed labour force while inquiring about any reason for potential absence in the reference week in a separate module (OECD, 2022^[7]).

Many other OECD countries follow ILO guidelines, which state that all those on full-time statutory (legal or contractual) maternity and/or parental leave should be counted as employed if they either expect to be on leave for a period of less than three months, or continue to receive at least 50 percent of their wage and salary while on leave (OECD, 2022^[7]). Some, however, use their own specific rules. In Sweden, for example, all parents on parental leave are counted as employed regardless of the length of the leave, as long as they have a (regular) job to return to. In the United States, leave takers are considered employed as long as the absence from the job is temporary, regardless of whether or not the person is being paid during the absence. In Estonia, by contrast, all parents on parental leave are considered inactive. Even for those countries that follow ILO guidelines, the thresholds depending on anticipated length of absence and income replacement rates complicate the measurement across countries. For example, most leave-takers in Hungary are counted as inactive as leave is usually taken for more than three months – and because, in most cases, parental leave benefits replace less than 50 percent of earnings.

While the differences in the coding of the activity status in Labour Force Surveys have been a clear obstacle for the measurement of parental leave uptake, the [Regulation 2019/1700](#) of the European Parliament and the European Council may make Labour Force Surveys a valuable source in the near future. This regulation aims for a better harmonisation of the main activity status in the EULFS, and would thus align the coding of the activity status for the majority of OECD countries with paid parental leave

systems. Across all countries in the EULFS, parental leave takers will be considered as employed if their leave is expected to last three months or less or if they are receiving job-related income or benefits. As such, any uptake of paid maternity/paternity/parental leave in a given reference week should, in principle, be measurable in a systematic manner without relying on various national sources with varying definitions or involving member countries through questionnaires. The first publicly available data under this harmonisation is expected to be delivered in October 2022, after which the Secretariat can evaluate its usefulness for future data collection.

For comparison with additional countries outside of Europe, the coding of the activity status and parental leave uptake would have to be aligned in other Labour Force Surveys or manually adjusted based on the available data. The USCPS, for example, records any respondent on maternity or paternity leave as employed, irrespective of whether they receive an income replacement or not (see Zagorsky (2017^[6]) and OECD (2022^[7])). Based on USCPS survey items that record payment received during the leave of absence in the given reference week, the population of leave takers could be adjusted to include only those receiving payment and therefore closely align with the definitions in the EULFS.

Including information on parental leave entitlements and uptake for same-sex partners

Most of family policy across the OECD, including maternity and parental leave policies, has been formulated based on concepts of nuclear families with two opposite-sex partners. Same-sex partners who become parents – for example through adoption, surrogacy or IVF treatment – have traditionally not been explicitly included in parental leave entitlements. Whether they are covered by similar leave entitlement than opposite-sex parents, often depends on whether they are generally on a similar legal standing. This includes whether they have access to marriage or registered partnerships, whether they can both be considered legal parents, and whether leave entitlements are defined to be gender neutral. With the increasing number of OECD countries that formally recognise same-sex marriages or partnerships, the inclusion of same-sex partners in family leave legislation is slowly improving. The systematic indicators on family leave entitlements have so far exclusively provided information on opposite-sex partners. For the future, it is thus important to include entitlements to and use of family leaves for same-sex partners in the indicators (see e.g. previous work of Wong et al. (2019^[7])). For this reason the OECD Family Database has been enriched with a new indicator on parental leave entitlements for same-sex and adoptive parents.

Any future survey data on parental leave use could also be improved by including questions on sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the respective questionnaires. Promising practices include, for example, the [Sexual Orientation Data Harmonised Standard](#) of the Government Statistical Service (UK GSS) in the United Kingdom, which is currently under development, or the [Household Pulse Survey](#) (HPS) of the United States Census Bureau. It is important to clearly determine which aspect of sexual orientation is most appropriate to measure in the respective survey as individuals could respond differently to questions on sexual identity, attraction and behaviour. The UK GSS, for example, found that measurement of sexual identity was related most closely to individual experiences of disadvantage and/or discrimination, which thus may make it the most useful concept to measure for parental leave use (see GSS (2019^[8])). Particularly for same-sex parents in the context of parental leave use, surveys could inquire about the gender identity of the respondent (and potentially their partner). The US HPS, for example, measures gender identity of both partners with a combination of two questions on gender assigned at birth and current gender identity (Anderson et al., 2021^[10])).

Providing data to support research on parental leave and gender to fill existing gaps

Improving the collection of internationally comparable and gender-sensitive data on family leave uptake could advance future research on its link with gender differences in social and labour market outcomes. In particular, improving data on the uptake of family leave by fathers – which has often been deemed as one

of the most effective mechanisms for reducing gender gaps in paid and unpaid work within households – could shed more light on how it links to labour market outcomes of their female partners, such as their labour force participation, working hours and wages, including the relative income of women within dual-earner families. This is especially important in the absence of regularly updated data on time-use, which is another crucial source for information on how fathers and mothers divide their family responsibilities in the household. If data on parental leave use is also collected for same-sex couples, it would allow to better study whether same-sex couples have a more a balanced division of household and care responsibilities after parenthood than those in opposite-sex nuclear families. The subsequent effects of parenthood, including well-studied motherhood penalties and the effects on household income in opposite-sex couples, could be analysed for same-sex parents as well.

In light of increasing earmarked entitlements for fathers, improved gender-sensitive data collection could also shed light on the effects of such reforms. Improved data could therefore allow to better analyse whether longer entitlements for fathers increase their take-up and whether this affects the leave use of mothers at all. There are worries that fathers will be less likely to make use of such earmarked entitlements, especially as they usually earn higher wages and therefore face larger opportunity costs of leave uptake. Using take-up data based on Labour Force Surveys can additionally allow to study these patterns across different socio-economic background characteristics of the families as well as their household constellation. For example, whether family leave use differs across income distribution or depending on the partners' labour market status could easily be studied with such data.

In general, better data on parental leave use by fathers and mothers can contribute to a broader research agenda on its linkages with health, individual and family well-being, fertility, job satisfaction, productivity and the effects on co-workers and their employing firms.

4. Supporting data collection bodies' capacities: a menu of options

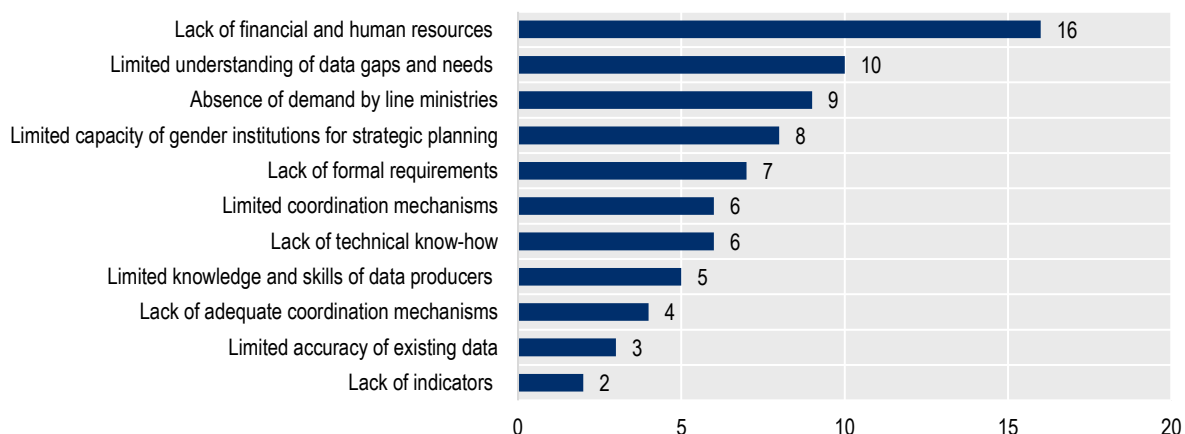
Strengthening DCBs' capacity is key to advance the production of timely, relevant, and robust gender-sensitive statistics in the above-mentioned areas. This relates to various dimensions – from aspects related to human capacities to the improvement of coordination and processes. Key starting points for the definition of the work are PARIS21's [Capacity development for better gender statistics](#) (PARIS21, 2019_[12]) and the [OECD Toolkit on Good Statistical Practice](#). This includes a [Self-assessment questionnaire on the implementation of the OECD Council Recommendation on Good Statistical Practice](#), a tool that allows DCBs to assess the state of the art on various dimensions: the legal and institutional frameworks for official statistics; the independence of NSOs; the adequacy of human, financial and technical resources available for the production and dissemination of official statistics; privacy of data providers; right to access administrative sources to produce official statistics; impartiality, objectivity and transparency of official statistics; commitment to sound methodologies and professional standards in the production of official statistics; quality of statistical products and processes; data access and dissemination; responsibilities for coordination of statistical activities within the national statistical system; commitment to international co-operation; and the use of innovative methods as well as new and alternative data sources as inputs for official statistics.

A recent consultation to OECD countries shows that challenges remain in relation to the identification, availability and use of gender-sensitive data and evidence, despite the overall agreement on the importance of collecting gender-sensitive and intersectional data. Limited availability of gender-sensitive data remains one of the most significant barriers to effective gender mainstreaming and closing gender gaps in some areas (OECD, 2022_[10]). Gaps seem to worsen in the availability of data that capture multiple sociodemographic variables compounding for instance age, income level or education, thus reflecting the intersectional nature of individual situations.

When consulted about the main barriers related to the production and collection of gender-sensitive statistics, central gender institutions report lack of financial and human resources, as well as limited understanding of data gaps and needs, as the main obstacles (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. BARRIERS REPORTED BY CENTRAL GENDER INSTITUTIONS IN STATISTICS DISAGGREGATED BY GENDER

Number of respondent countries



Note: Total respondents: 33 OECD Members.

Source: 2021 OECD Survey on Gender Mainstreaming and Governance (2021 GMG Survey); OECD (forthcoming_[11]).

To support OECD countries in facing these key challenges, the OECD suggests a menu of actions, reported below, to be used flexibly and adapted to the specificity of each policy field in question. This would start with the identification of key gaps in the availability of gender-sensitive data as well as an assessment of the current capacity within the national DCBs. The information collected through such scoping actions would allow to identify the best approaches to strengthen DCBs' capacities, and to define a capacity-building action plan that is fit-for-purpose.

The implementation of the actions listed below could be the object of a follow-up phase of the current project.

Supporting DCBs in assessing the main gender-data gaps in the fields in question

A first step to prepare the design of capacity building actions is the identification of the existing sources of information and data providers in the policy fields of digitalisation, telework and parental leave at a national level, as well as and the main data and methodological gaps, including in terms of disaggregation requirements. Key instruments for the identification of such gaps would be desk research as well as stakeholders' consultations, for instance through a questionnaire and/or expert interviews with the DCBs, to be filled in also in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders, such as data producers.

Questions that could be put to selected DCBs, for each policy field (digitalisation, teleworking and parental leave), could include:

- In your country, is there a systematic collection of gender-sensitive data in the field in question?
 - If so, could you please provide some examples of gender-sensitive indicators?
 - How often are these data updated?
 - What are the sources of data for gender-sensitive and intersectional policy making?

- How much do you rely on a) statistical data, b) administrative records and c) new and alternative data (such as information available from private vendors, social media, citizen science efforts, and web scraping activities) for the compilation of the indicators in question?
- Can you comment upon: coverage; interoperability and comparability; complexity; and granularity of data?
- What are the main barriers (for instance related to data gaps, methods and conceptual issues) that you experience in the collection of gender-sensitive data?
- Could you identify any good practices in the collection of gender-sensitive data?

To implement the above, in a future phase of the project the OECD could develop a questionnaire to be distributed to OECD Members, making sure that it is pre-filled based on desk research and the evidence collected in the different workstreams of this project, in order to make this exercise as efficient and less time-consuming as possible for each participating country.

Supporting DCBs in assessing their readiness for the development of gender-sensitive indicators

This consists of assessing the capacities and identifying the main training needs in the different organisations involved in data collection. Questions that could be put to DCBs could be:

- How do you perceive the adequacy of your DCBs' technical skills and knowledge for producing gender statistics in the field in question?
- What are the main strengths in your DCBs' functions relating to gender statistics in the field(s) in question? Do you have specific examples that could be showcased?
- What are the main challenges in your DCBs' work in collecting gender statistics in the field(s) in question? Do you have specific examples?
- Does your DCB work with other agencies to collect gender-sensitive data?
- What type of capacity building support would your DCB need most to improve its capacity to collect gender-sensitive data?

To implement the above, in a future phase of the project the OECD would collect such information through an online questionnaire to be sent to the DCBs and other relevant stakeholders and eventually complemented with follow-up consultations in the forms of interviews, focus groups or specific follow-up exchanges via email on specific issues highlighted in questionnaire responses.

Supporting DCBs in developing new indicators and ensuring the collection of relevant and timely data: a menu of options

Once the main capacity building needs in the different policy areas have been identified, a variety of actions could be implemented (also in combined forms) to support DCBs' capacities. A non-exhaustive list of key actions is included below.

Direct technical assistance

What? The provision of specific technical and thematic support to individual or multiple countries for the definition of new indicators and the identification and exploitation of existing and potential data sources to feed such indicators.

How? The OECD would be available to accompany countries in the adoption of gender-sensitive indicators, drawing from the material developed in the different workstreams of this project and proposing a series of tailored actions, adapted to their specific situation and needs.

Exchange of experiences

What? Facilitating peer-to-peer learning and supporting communities of practice to advance gender-sensitive data collection.

How? The OECD could be a platform to support the exchange of information and peer-to-peer learning and exchange of practices. The 2022 OECD symposium on “Strengthening government capacities for gender-sensitive data and evidence” (OECD, forthcoming^[11]) was an example of multi-stakeholder platform that was set up to explore ways to strengthen government capacities for a systematic gender-sensitive data collection and use in the support of evidence-based and inclusive decision-making across sectors. It also attempted to explore the potential of new technologies to use alternative data sources and types in the development of evidence-based, inclusive policy-making.

Exchange of experiences can happen in different formats – from small-scale expert meetings, to larger events with international and national DCBs on the three policy areas, to thematic seminars, peer-to-peer learning between selected countries, creation of new networks as well as study visits.

Content support

What? Support to countries through the generation of independent knowledge and provision of specific and tailored support through the preparation of methodological and information material on gender-sensitive data in those areas.

How? The OECD could provide support through, for instance, a series of monthly short policy briefs; technical material to be produced on demand, responding to specific questions presented by countries; and/or the presentation of selected practices and examples.

Governance support

What? Provision of support to strengthen the governance associated to the collection of gender-sensitive statistics in the policy fields in question.

How? The OECD could provide support by focusing on approaches to strengthen the role and required capacities of different institutional actors (e.g., line ministries, central gender institutions, national statistics offices, parliaments, courts and other data producers); identify and support the implementation of processes to enhance coordination between different actors (e.g. line ministries, gender institutions, national statistics and holders of administrative data such as service providers) in the policy areas in question; as well as cooperate with the DCBs to identify and face the key challenges in ensuring interoperability and privacy of datasets between different administrative bodies and institutions.

Staff training

What? Preparation of training material and delivery of courses to staff to ensure a deep understanding of the data issues in question.

How? The OECD could deliver staff training via the development of training material, e-learning courses and toolkits, provision of training sessions in different formats according to the needs, and/or the preparation of toolkits.

Pilot actions

What? Support in the implementation of new actions and approaches.

How? Such actions could range from the implementation of a new indicator in the relevant policy fields, to the adoption of innovative processes for data collection, or again to testing new cooperation methods between actors. An example would be the provision of support to policy makers in order to tap into the potential of different types of data (for instance, administrative data) in the policy fields in question and facilitate their enhanced use.

Reflecting on key policy, research and evaluation questions for present and future times

What? Support in understanding the direction of research and policy in the fields in question.

How? The OECD would moderate discussions and facilitate reflections around key research questions on digitalisation, teleworking and parental leave, whose data needs should be taken into account when defining new indicators and collecting data. The involvement of different national and international stakeholders, especially academics, policymakers and civil society, would be fundamental to support a forward-thinking approach to data collection. This would also allow to identify additional quantitative and qualitative information that would be needed to answer those questions, and potential methods to collect and analyse them in combination/addition to gender-sensitive data collected in a systematic manner.

Defining a capacity-building action plan that is fit-for-purpose

The results of the above actions and the selection of the key tools from the menu of options listed above will allow to define a specific capacity-building action plan adapted to the specific needs of the country/ies. Such plan should contain a proposal of fit for purpose, targeted measures to strengthen DCBs' capacities. The extent and implementation of the plan would depend on the priorities of countries as well as on available financial resources. Cooperation between countries could be a good approach to support an efficient capacity building process, as they could cooperate on different dimensions such as the strategic choices, policy needs, planning and resource requirements.

Taking into account that DCBs and other stakeholders may have multiple capacity building needs, the actions suggested would be planned according to urgency and priorities. In this respect, short-, medium- and longer- term actions should be envisaged, in order to ensure the effectiveness and feasibility of the process (UNECE, 2017^[12]).

An evaluation of the implementation of the capacity-building roadmap and the different activities would be also envisaged to allow for corrections and improvements, and to assess the effectiveness of the actions implemented.

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