

The Open Gov Guide

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Open
Government
Partnership



Gender and Inclusion



North Macedonia has expanded protections for vulnerable groups, such as by improving access to justice, including for domestic violence survivors. Pictured: Vesna Shapkoski, Executive Director of L.E.T Station, a civil society organization focused on access to justice.

Open Gender Data

The fight for gender equality often centers around the importance of being seen, of shining a light on the often-hidden challenges that can be exacerbated by a person’s sex, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Examples of these challenges are barriers in accessing loans or public procurement tenders for women-owned businesses, the ability of girls or boys to consistently attend school, and LGBTQIA+ discrimination in health care or employment. Collecting and publishing disaggregated [gender data](#) that captures these disparities is critical to addressing inequality and injustice across and within different communities.

According to [Equal Measures 2030](#), without open gender data, “it is impossible to identify where needs are greatest or measure the impact of policies and programs.” However, considerable gaps in gender data collection, publication, and use [persist](#) in many countries due to data inaccessibility, interoperability, or the use of non-open formats.

Open Gov Challenge

Gender and Inclusion

With OGP’s [2023-2028 Strategy](#), OGP members are set to work toward a number of aspirational thematic reforms through the [Open Gov Challenge](#). This section of the *Open Gov Guide* addresses Gender and Inclusion.

Challenge prompt: Adopt open government reforms to promote the full participation of women politically, socially and economically.

Actions and reforms could include:

- Gender-targeted reforms such as mechanisms to tackle gender-based violence, both online and offline;
- Mainstreaming gender across other challenge areas (eg anti-corruption, fiscal openness, climate and environment); and
- Making the design and delivery of reforms participatory and inclusive of impacted communities.

Note: Gender data may disaggregate information by men, women, or other gender and sexual identity characteristics and experiences. In this chapter, references to “women” include those who identify as women, whether cisgender, transgender, or intersex women. Sex-disaggregated data often refers to binary “sex assigned at birth” characteristics of male and female, while gender data may take into account additional lived experiences and identities. Depending on the circumstances, there may be times in which it is beneficial to collect both sex and gender-disaggregated data.

Key Terms

- **Gender data:** Gender data (or “gender statistics”) refers to statistics or information that is separated or sortable by characteristics of sex, gender, or sexual orientation. According to [Data2x](#), a civil society organization (CSO) working to improve the production and use of gender data, “gender data provides meaningful insight into differences in well-being across women and men, and girls and boys, as well as actionable information for policy to address disparities.”
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Gender mainstreaming [refers to](#) the process of integrating a gender perspective into governance systems and processes.
- **Open gender data:** To be considered “[open data](#),” gender data must be [published](#) with the technical and legal characteristics to be “freely used, reused, and redistributed by anyone, anytime, anywhere.” It must also be [machine-readable](#), [bulk-downloadable](#), and [openly licensed](#) to permit free redistribution and reuse. The gender data in this chapter refers to government-held data unless otherwise stated.

The Evidence

Open gender data can support better decision-making and fairer access to services.

- [Investing](#) in open gender data creates a virtuous cycle to [improve](#) government data collection practices more broadly, such as through the use of “censuses, surveys, and administrative systems that produce health, education, employment, and welfare statistics.” Ensuring that data collection captures disaggregated, regularly updated information on multiple characteristics, including gender, helps shed light on vulnerabilities of other groups. For example, filling data gaps on women’s health outcomes would [address](#) persistent delays in the diagnosis of cancer and diabetes, which would, in turn, save at least one trillion dollars a year in the global economy.
- [Opening up](#) gender data is an important step to change policies and practices that could negatively impact different gendered groups and implement better-targeted initiatives to address their needs. For example, in [Kenya](#), data gathered by a CSO on women’s land ownership made it “faster, easier and cheaper for a woman to have her name added to a land deed.”

- Centralizing gender data can help ensure that policies and programs address the needs of those who most need that assistance. This can be done through a fully centralized process, across agencies, or through a [data collaborative](#).
- By improving knowledge and data sharing processes across government, open gender data can streamline how a government reports progress toward the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), the Commission on Ending Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and any other relevant international agreements or standards.

Reform Guidance

Recommended Reforms

The recommendations below represent reforms that national and local governments, representatives of civil society organizations, and others can consider for their action plans and the [Open Gov Challenge](#). The reforms are categorized according to OGP's principal values: transparency, civic participation, and public accountability. Reforms should be adapted to fit the domestic context, and involve and coordinate with other levels and branches of government.

Reforms across policy areas are also tagged by the estimated degree of difficulty in implementation. Though progress is often not linear, the recommendations have been categorized using these labels to give the reader a sense of how different reforms can work together to raise the ambition of open government approaches.

- **Foundational:** This tag is used for reforms that are the essential building blocks of a policy area. "Foundational" does not mean low ambition or low impact. These recommendations often establish basic legal and institutional structures.
- **Intermediate:** This tag is used for reforms that are more complex and often involve more coordination and outreach, such as with the public, between branches, agencies, and levels of government, or between countries.
- **Advanced:** This tag is used for reforms that close important loopholes to make existing work more effective and impactful. They are often about linking multiple databases or ensuring that oversight authorities can receive complaints from members of the public.

FOUNDATIONS

Include the collection and publication of high-value gender data in RTI frameworks: Include the collection and publication of high-value gender data in right to information (RTI) protections, including rules on archive management and proactive disclosure requirements. For example, in countries with lists of proactive data to be published, ensure that high-value gender data is on that list. For details on RTI best practices, see the “[Right to Information](#)” chapter of the *Open Gov Guide*.

- Transparency
- Executive
- Legislature
- Foundational

Ensure the legal framework for data protection and ethical use applies to gender data: Ensure that any [framework laws](#) on data protection and the ethical use of [automated decision-making](#), including the establishment or enhancement of a Data Protection Authority, explicitly refer to the protection of gender data. Though the use of “[big data](#)” [tools](#) can help accelerate efforts to close gaps in collecting gender data, it is critical to ensure that the government creates [appropriate safeguards](#) to protect individual rights and ensure an appropriate plan for use, storage, and disposal. For detailed guidance on digital governance reforms, please see the “[Automated Decision-Making, Algorithms, and Artificial Intelligence](#)” chapter of the *Open Gov Guide*.

- Transparency
- Public Accountability
- Legislature
- Foundational

Allocate dedicated funding to collect and publish government-held gender data: [Prioritize](#) the allocation of sufficient dedicated funding for gender data within the budgets of national statistical offices (NSOs) and in the budgets of implementing agencies. Budget commitments increase the likelihood that gender data collection, analysis, and dissemination efforts will be funded. Publishing such budget allocations can also help promote accountability. For details, see the “[Open Budgets](#)” chapter of the *Open Gov Guide*.

- Transparency
- Legislature
- Foundational

The NSO or open data body can conduct training sessions with public officials to ensure they have the knowledge necessary to carry out data-related tasks.

Consider creating an incentive program to encourage public officials to further develop their fluency with open data best practices in general, and open gender data in particular.

- **Prioritize the inclusion of gender data in agency and ministerial work plans:** [Prioritize](#) the inclusion of gender data in agency or ministerial work plans. One key agency that should prioritize the integration of gender data is NSOs, especially in planning national-level statistical data collection, analysis, and reporting activities each year. Other examples include gender-specific ministries, which can increase their use of gender data in planning and implementing policies and programs.



- [Chile](#) mandates that each ministry develops an annual commitment to fulfill gender-related data goals that are evaluated by the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality in close coordination with the Office of the President. The tracking of gender data by Chile's financial sector regulatory body illustrates how such commitments translate into real-world change. When the regulatory body began requiring banks to collect sex-disaggregated data on savings account holders, it led to the discovery of inequalities in the banking sector. For example, the regulator found that women have lower deposit rates and lower numbers of commercial loans. The government uses these annual findings to adjust policies on topics such as financial inclusion, housing, and credit.

- **Mandate the coordination of high-value gender data collection and publication through a new or existing body:** Mandate the [coordination](#) of high-value gender data collection and publication through a new or existing body (such as the NSO). The implementing body would coordinate or aggregate the data practices of agencies and ministries that produce key gender data sources, such as population censuses, household surveys, and administrative data. Specific tasks for the implementing agency include managing cross-sector data collection and prioritizing high-value datasets for proactive disclosure.



- [Strengthening collaboration](#) between the NSO and ministries with a high-priority gender data portfolio, in particular, is crucial to improving government-wide coordination, such as by aligning data collection, analysis, and dissemination efforts.
- According to Open Data Watch's 2023 Gender Data Compass [report](#), about 95 percent of statistics-related laws refer to the "importance of coordination between the NSO and other agencies that produce statistical data." Though most laws do not specifically reference gender, this legal foundation can help catalyze greater coordination in the collection, publication, and use of gender data.

TRANSPARENCY

□ **Develop and coordinate standardized, disaggregated gender data to be used with other key data:** [Ensure](#) that government gender data collection is standardized and disaggregated according to multiple characteristics, such as age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, migration status, and location. The collection and publication of disaggregated gender data on the impact of government policies and programs on beneficiaries is necessary to target the unique needs of the populations they serve. Below are examples of how to expand data collection in priority areas for gender data, as well as suggestions for new data collection methods. For a full list of high-priority gender data to collect and publish, see the “High-Priority Gender Data Checklist” in the box below.

□ **Labor data:** [Implement](#) time-use and labor force surveys to regularly collect gender data on employment, unpaid care work, and time allocation, all of which are underrepresented in gender datasets. This could also include labor data on government employees—Honduras [committed](#) to a similar initiative in its 2023–2025 OGP action plan. According to the 2023 Gender Data Compass report, these surveys [provide](#) “indispensable insights into the dynamics of labor and the distribution of responsibilities within households and communities, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics and inequalities.”

□ For example, in [Uruguay](#), time-use surveys quantified women’s unpaid care work, which helped support advocacy efforts to create an integrated national care system, including “expanded services for preschool children, the elderly and people with disabilities.”

□ **Health data:** Expand the scope of health data collected by the government, including on maternal mortality rates and other vital statistics. For example, UN Women [recommends](#) the consistent collection of information such as the cause of death or sex of victims and perpetrators, which could be used to inform progress toward the SDGs and other metrics. Efforts to expand the scope of administrative data collection and publication [require improving](#) civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), health administration, and education administration systems through long-term financial and technical investments.

Transparency

Executive

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Foundational

- Household surveys:** The NSO and other bodies focused on promoting best practices (such as a national science body or social science institution) can promote best practices to ensure statistical research is gender-sensitive. For example, [expanding](#) the scope of household surveys, which often serve as the primary source of gender data. Adding a [specialized survey](#) on [gender-based violence](#) as part of the regular household survey process would better capture the experience of women and girls to guide policy and programming. Another example is to include the collection of [intra-household](#) data, which aims to capture information about every member of the household. According to the 2023 Gender Data Compass report, such an [approach](#) “not only recognizes the unique roles and experiences of each individual but also ensures that gender data are as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.”
- Emerging technology:** [Consider](#) using emerging technology to collect and publish gender data, such as digitizing records, to increase the breadth and depth of data available, as well as the frequency of updates.
- Public participation:** Working with research institutions and networks can also [support](#) the integration of community priorities and perspectives into gender data collection and publication.
- Publish disaggregated, government-held gender data regularly and in an open format:** [Publish](#) disaggregated, government-held gender data at the individual level to improve the ability of government and non-government actors to analyze datasets for gender-specific insights through the coordination of the implementing body. Such data could be published on a centralized dashboard managed by the implementing body, where relevant government bodies can also upload their gender data and metadata in free, machine-readable formats and standardize vocabulary to make such information easier to analyze. The implementing body should also [publish](#) gender data regularly to make it easier to identify trends and progress over time. Finally, all gender data should be published with appropriate personal data protections.
- One way to effectively broaden data accessibility is to create a government-wide “open with a purpose” policy, which emphasizes intentional data-sharing practices to align with specific goals and outcomes, such as promoting gender equity and addressing gender-based violence. Structuring the policy as “open with a purpose” can lay the foundation for an [open by default](#) standard to maximize access to data unless explicitly restricted. Such a [policy](#) could also require that all data be made publicly available with a limited number of exemptions, such as security or privacy protections.

Transparency

Executive

Foundational

OPEN GENDER DATA

Improving census and CRVS systems can ensure the regular collection and publication of gender data. Census and CRVS systems can be used to provide reliable information on the demographics of people living within a country. According to the 2023 Gender Data Compass report, starting with these two systems could have an [outsized impact](#) on the production of gender data.

Make gender data interoperable: Use standardized coding across datasets related to gender to ensure that data in different databases can be used together, which increases accountability. Ensuring the successful centralization of gender data requires that data collected across government agencies and at the subnational level share a standardized coding system. This may include consistent ways of coding demographics across datasets or reducing duplication of data where there is no additional data. This allows data users to make connections across datasets to track trends and identify disparities. The [Republic of Korea](#) provides a good example of what a centralized, interoperable gender database looks like in practice.

Making sure the codes for different gender identity categories are consistent is an example of how to ensure interoperability across datasets. For example, in the United States, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology established common coding for [gender identity](#) related to health data, [as well as](#) for race, ethnicity, and sex assigned at birth.

Transparency

Executive

Legislature

Intermediate

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Consult with data users: Consult those using the data (especially researchers, journalists, and [data collaboratives](#)) in an advisory capacity to ensure data is useful and usable. Specifically, the agency responsible for gender data collection can assess the demand for specific types of gender data, data users' needs, and the performance of existing data platforms. The agency can also take a participatory approach to decision-making on what gender data to publish, such as through a multi-stakeholder committee.

Civic Participation

Executive

Legislature

Inclusion

Foundational

Conduct training and awareness raising for non-government actors: [Provide](#) tailored training for different non-government actors working on areas relevant to implementing agencies. This can include CSOs, journalists, the private sector, academics, and members of the general public. This is necessary to create a baseline understanding of what open gender data is, why it matters, [where to find it](#), and how it can be used to monitor progress on gender-related commitments.

Civic Participation

Executive

Inclusion

Intermediate

OPEN GENDER DATA

- Conduct public consultations on high-value data prioritization:** Conduct consultations where relevant members of the public can inform decision-making, such as in the identification of gender-related priorities for data collection or the design of pilots to collect new types of data. Ensure that such consultations include targeted outreach to the specific communities whose data will be collected and assessed. Examples of this include [deliberative models of participation](#) at national and local levels. The implementing agency can lead such consultations.

Civic Participation

Executive

Legislature

Inclusion

Intermediate

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

- Create or strengthen oversight mechanisms:** Create or strengthen independent audit and legislative oversight mechanisms to use open gender data in assessing whether government funds are spent effectively and equitably on policies related to gender inequality and similar issues. An RTI Commission, ombudsperson, or similar body could also play an oversight role in enforcing an RTI law, statistical laws, and regulations related to data disclosure to ensure that data conforms to the law and is accurate and free of political influence.
 - This includes publishing audit reports in an easy-to-find location (such as a central portal) and a structured format. Consider conducting a campaign to amplify the reach of the reports with users of such data (such as CSOs and journalists) and the general public.

Transparency

Public Accountability

Legislature

Foundational

High-Priority Gender Data Checklist

Implementing bodies charged with improving the quantity and quality of gender data can begin by prioritizing the collection and publication of high-value data. As mentioned above, gender data should include a broad definition of “women” that encompasses cisgender, transgender, and intersex women.

Below is a checklist of some of the most important types of high-priority gender data, with a full list available in the [Indicators Annex](#) of the 2023 Gender Data Compass [report](#).

- **Crime and justice data**, such as information on the sex of victims and perpetrators, [gender-based violence](#) indicators on physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, and prison population demographics
- **Economic data**, such as access to financial resources and land ownership
- **Education data**, such as school enrollment and literacy rates
- **Health data**, such as maternal and child mortality rates, food insecurity, and adult malnutrition
- **Labor data**, such as employment, unpaid care work, and time allocation
- **Living conditions data**, such as access to sanitation, electricity, and water

Examples of Reforms from OGP and Beyond

The following examples are commitments previously made within or beyond OGP that demonstrate elements of the recommendations made above. OGP members began making open gender data commitments in 2017 and have increasingly co-created commitments in this policy area since then. About 30 percent of OGP national members have at least one open gender data-related commitment.

- **Argentina Data Published to Address GBV:** [Successfully published](#) data on the budgets and resources allocated to preventing violence against women as part of a national plan.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina Data Portal for Official Statistics:** [Created](#) a data [portal](#) on official statistics, with some datasets disaggregated by sex in areas such as employment, education, and health.
- **Buenos Aires, Argentina Gender Data on Budgets and LGBTQIA+ Individuals:** Made various commitments on open gender data, such as [publishing](#) open budget data on all city programs and resources related to gender policies, with a specific focus on comprehensive sexual education. Also [committed](#) to begin collecting and publishing data on the city's LGBTQIA+ communities.
- **Canada Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Center:** [Created](#) a gender-based violence knowledge center to serve as a hub to coordinate federal initiatives under Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence, support data collection and research, and disseminate and mobilize GBV-related knowledge and evidence.
- **Catalonia, Spain Open Gender Data on Socioeconomic Inequality:** [Committed](#) to generating and publishing open, disaggregated gender data related to socioeconomic status and the feminization of poverty.
- **Czech Republic Centralized System for Education Data:** [Committed](#) to creating a new, centralized system for education-related data, which will include open data disaggregated by sex and other characteristics.
- **Honduras Open Data for Gender Parity in the Public Sector:** [Committed](#) to increasing access to sex-disaggregated data in an open format about the gender breakdown of jobs in the public sector, especially in leadership positions.
- **Quintana Roo, Mexico Budget Transparency Platform:** [Co-created](#) a budget transparency [platform](#) that provides information on the budget cycle in open data format, with cross-cutting annexes on gender and anti-corruption. [Committed](#) to making the platform more user-friendly.
- **Republic of Korea Open Gender Data Portals:** [Began](#) proactively disclosing high-demand open data as part of a larger effort to increase the accessibility of government-held data. Government think tanks have also contributed to this effort, such as the [Gender Statistics Information System](#) created by the Korean Women's Development Institute, which centralizes gender data from all government agencies.

OPEN GENDER DATA

- **Rosario, Argentina Opening Data with a Gender Perspective:** [Committed](#) to implementing a cross-cutting approach to collect, use, and publish gender data that can be used to create better-targeted policies based on its [Data and Gender Approach Guide](#) published in 2023.
- **Uruguay Gender-Based Violence Open Data:** Established and published standardized data on GBV across two action plans in [2018](#) and [2022](#), echoing the work of CSOs like [Feminicidio Uruguay](#) to capture data on gender-related violence.

BEYOND OGP ACTION PLANS

- **Canada Inclusive Data Collection in the Census:** [Became](#) the [first country](#) to provide census data about transgender and non-binary individuals as part of its [2021 census](#), which allowed individuals to self-identify their gender.
- **Liberia Gender Data Mainstreamed in Statistical Law:** [Passed](#) one of the first [statistical laws](#) to mainstream gender-sensitive analysis and data disaggregation in the practices of its NSO. For example, the legal framework specifically “directs the NSO board to oversee development of gender-specific indicators.”
- **Senegal Annual, Gender-Sensitive Health Surveys:** [Conducts](#) annual health surveys, unlike other countries that tend to collect health data every two or three years. These annual surveys allow the country to regularly update gender-sensitive health data, which allows for more targeted policy responses to gender disparities in health outcomes.
- **United Kingdom Inclusive Data Collection:** [Collects](#) data on gender identity as well as sex assigned at birth through the Office for National Statistics, which covers England, Scotland, and Wales. The collection and publication of this data led to the creation of a “gender data roadmap,” which identifies eight key drivers of gender inequality.

The Role of Local Governments

Discussions of open data in general, and open gender data in particular, tend to focus on the need for national-level gender ministries and statistical offices to improve their practices and take on more responsibility as central coordinators to improve data collection, publication, and use.

However, local governments have an important role to play in ensuring that national-level data practices fully capture trends taking place in smaller frames of measurement—within and between households, at the municipal level, and at the state or provincial level. This is why disaggregation by location and at the intra-household level is just as critical as disaggregation by sex and gender, as described in the “Recommended Reforms” section above. Challenges faced by specific groups—such as those living in temporary housing within cities—are often overlooked in traditional data collection practices. Local governments can therefore help address these gender data gaps.

Active OGP Partners

The following organizations have recently worked on this issue in the context of OGP at the national or international level. They may have additional insights on the topic. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. If you are interested in national-level initiatives, please contact research@opengovpartnership.org.

- [Data2x](#)
- [Data for Development Network](#)
- [Equal Measures 2030](#)
- [Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data](#)
- [Iniciativa Latinoamericana por los Datos Abiertos \(Latin American Open Data Initiative, or ILDA in Spanish\)](#)
- [Open Data Charter](#)
- [Open Data Watch](#)
- [Open Heroines](#)
- [Pollicy](#)
- [UN Women](#)

Benchmarking Data

The [OGP 2023-2028 Strategy](#) sets out the [Open Gov Challenge](#) and aims to provide clear benchmarks for performance through reliable data.

While benchmarks for individual countries and *Open Gov Guide* recommendations are not yet integrated, for this chapter, interested individuals may rely on the following data sets:

- The [Gender Data Compass](#) maintained by **Open Data Watch** includes [rankings](#) and [country profiles](#) to evaluate gender data systems worldwide. The GDC specifically “documents the current availability and openness of 53 important gender indicators in over 180 countries...and the environment in which the gender data system operates.”
- **UN Women** runs the Women Count [data portal](#), which centralizes several data dashboards related to gender, such as a COVID-19 and gender monitor and a dashboard on the SDG indicators.
- The **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs** (UN DESA) hosts the [Gender Data Hub](#), which includes an analysis of gender data coverage based on the minimum set of gender indicators put forth by the UN Statistical Commission.
- The State of Gender Data [portal](#) run by **Data2x** is updated annually to capture global progress toward filling gender data gaps.

Guidance and Standards

While the list below is not exhaustive, it aims to provide a range of recommendations, standards, and analysis to guide reform in this policy area.

- The [Gender Data Compass](#) maintained by **Open Data Watch** includes [rankings](#) and [country profiles](#) to evaluate gender data systems worldwide. Open Data Watch also produces reports on the findings of the GDC, with the latest published in [2023](#).
- **Equal Measures 2030** produced a [2022 update](#) to a report on its [SDG Gender Index](#), which includes an analysis of global progress on collecting, publishing, and using gender data.
- **UN DESA** hosts the [Gender Data Hub](#), which provides data on global progress toward meeting the minimum set of gender indicators created by the UN Statistical Commission. The Gender Data Hub also includes detailed [guidance](#) on specific themes related to gender data, such as economic empowerment, education, and the benefits of time-use data collection methods.
- The **UN Statistical Commission** mandated the creation of the [Global Gender Statistics Programme](#) through the UN Statistics Division, which is coordinated by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. The Global Gender Statistics Programme provides methodological [guidelines](#) on how to use gender statistics, including for specific topics such as how to produce statistics to [capture violence against women](#), as well as a [minimum set](#) of gender indicators and targets.

OPEN GENDER DATA

- **Data2x** published [recommendations](#) on the solutions needed to address gender data gaps in 2022, along with a “[Solutions Inventory](#)” that collects examples of methodological innovations to close these data gaps. Data2x also runs the [Gender Data Network](#) and participates in the [Women’s Financial Inclusion Data Partnership](#) (WFID) to advance work in this policy area. The WFID also includes a set of [principles](#) to guide the work of the partnership and others.
- The **Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data** [focuses](#) on gender data financing and reporting and includes detailed case studies and guidance in a single place.
- Led by researchers at the **Data + Feminism Lab** at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, **ILDA**, and **Feminicidio Uruguay**, the Data against Femicide project [centralizes](#) work to standardize femicide data and to develop tools to support the collection of such data from media sources as well as government bodies.