



# Gender equality in Canada

Mainstreaming, Governance and Budgeting

HIGHLIGHTS

2018

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There is growing awareness among the global community that gender equality is a cornerstone of inclusive growth. Canada scores well on several metrics of gender equality. However, to drive greater gender equality results, the Government of Canada commissioned the OECD to undertake a Review which assesses the policy and institutional framework from a whole of government perspective.

OECD Reviews such as this provide a detailed assessment of the structures, practices and approaches that a government has in place to deliver gender equality outcomes. The Review benchmarks current arrangements against good practices and policy developments across other OECD countries. The assessment is anchored in the standards set out in the *2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*. Each Review offers a set of interconnected and mutually supporting recommendations aiming to strengthen governance structures and deliver improved outcomes for gender equality.

This Review was undertaken by the OECD's Directorate for Public Governance, with input from international peers from the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration in Spain and from the OECD's Public Governance Committee. The review findings are presented in summary form in this brochure.

## KEY MILESTONES IN RELATION TO GENDER EQUALITY IN CANADA

### 1970s

Position of Minister responsible for the Status of Women was created

### 1980s

CEDAW ratified and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guaranteeing equal rights adopted

### 1990s

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted and commitment made to conducting GBA on all legislation, policies and programmes

### 2000s

Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) established at Parliament

### 2015

Federal Government appointed first-ever gender parity Cabinet.

### 2016

Federal Government commits to gender-based analysis of budgetary measures in all future budgets.

## OVERVIEW

Canada has a longstanding commitment to gender equality. Over the past three years, the federal government strengthened the gender governance framework through developing institutions, policies, tools and accountability structures to promote gender equality and mainstreaming. The Review was commissioned with a view to building on Canada's ambitious gender equality agenda, and to further boost and sustain the effectiveness of on-going gender equality initiatives at the federal level.

### REVIEW PILLARS

The OECD Review assesses five pillars of governance for gender equality. These pillars are tailored to Canada's specific needs and priorities, and build on the provisions of the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation:

1. The role of a government-wide gender equality strategy
2. Canada's institutional approach to gender equality
3. Policy tools to deliver gender equality results
4. Openness, transparency and accountability in relation to gender equality
5. Advancing gender budgeting in Canada

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Building on the recently introduced Gender Results Framework, it would be beneficial to develop an **overarching strategy for gender equality** to help to orient, coordinate and drive gender equality initiatives forward – in the budget process but also beyond – as part of Canada's results and delivery agenda.
2. In the context of formalising **Status of Women Canada (SWC)** as an official department, consideration could be given to scaling up its mandate to expand the focus from solely women and include broader issues related to gender equality, aligning with the scope of GBA+. This, together with appropriate resourcing, would help enable SWC to become the policy hub and "go-to institution" on issues of gender equality.
3. To **maximise the impact of GBA+** on gender equality outcomes, there is room to continue to strengthen its application, scope, quality and rigour, as recognised by the Budget 2018 commitment to improve the evidence-base for GBA+. The quality of GBA+ could be further improved through greater transparency with regard to GBA+ undertaken across government.
4. To **strengthen accountability** for the government's actions on gender equality the Parliament of Canada and the Office of the Auditor General should build on their successful interventions in the area of GBA+ through greater incorporation of a gender perspective in their own areas of work. Parliamentary committees should also establish a fixed "home" for scrutiny of gender equality-related content in the budget.
5. Building on the steady progress in relation to **gender budgeting** efforts, the government should continue to develop the gender equality-related content presented in the budget and ensure a wide range of gender budgeting tools are implemented across the budget cycle. This would be supported by the introduction of a rolling programme of gender budget baseline analysis and through stronger incorporation of a gender perspective in *ex post* gender budgeting tools such as evaluation and spending review.



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@OECDgov

[www.oecd.org/gov](http://www.oecd.org/gov)

Contact: [Tatyana.Teplova@oecd.org](mailto:Tatyana.Teplova@oecd.org), [Pinar.Guven@oecd.org](mailto:Pinar.Guven@oecd.org) or [Scherie.Nicol@oecd.org](mailto:Scherie.Nicol@oecd.org)