Gender Equality at Work

# Measuring and monitoring gender wage gaps in public administrations

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# Summary and recommendations

Governments are well placed to lead by example in reporting gender pay gaps, setting the standard for fairness, equality and transparency regarding pay. Below are key recommendations for pay gap reporting for public administrations.

- Governments should publicly report summary statistics on men's and women's earnings, disaggregated by key personal and job characteristics, where possible.
- Gender pay gaps should be presented at the mean, at the median, and at various points along the distribution of earnings to better identify where gaps are greatest, supporting more targeted policy interventions.
- Estimation of the gender pay gap requires a series of decisions regarding measurement and sample construction. No single set of choices is categorically better than another: all measures and all samples can help to elucidate different factors behind the pay gap. No matter which choices are made, clarity and transparency around the methodological choices and assumptions used to obtain the results is essential.
- Centralised human resources data generally provide the most accurate and comprehensive basis for analysis and should be used whenever possible. Where such data are not yet available, well-designed survey data can serve as a useful interim alternative.
- Responsibility for measuring and monitoring the gender pay gap can fall to various actors. Regardless of where responsibility lies, measurement must be carried out professionally and in accordance with sound statistical practices.
- Particular attention needs to be paid to data protection and confidentiality. Gender pay gap analysis must be conducted in a way that safeguards individual privacy and complies with applicable data protection legislation.
- Understanding why gender pay gaps persist is as important as measuring their size. Governments should use decompositions or multivariate analysis to understand the causes of gender pay gaps, thereby enabling corrective policy action.

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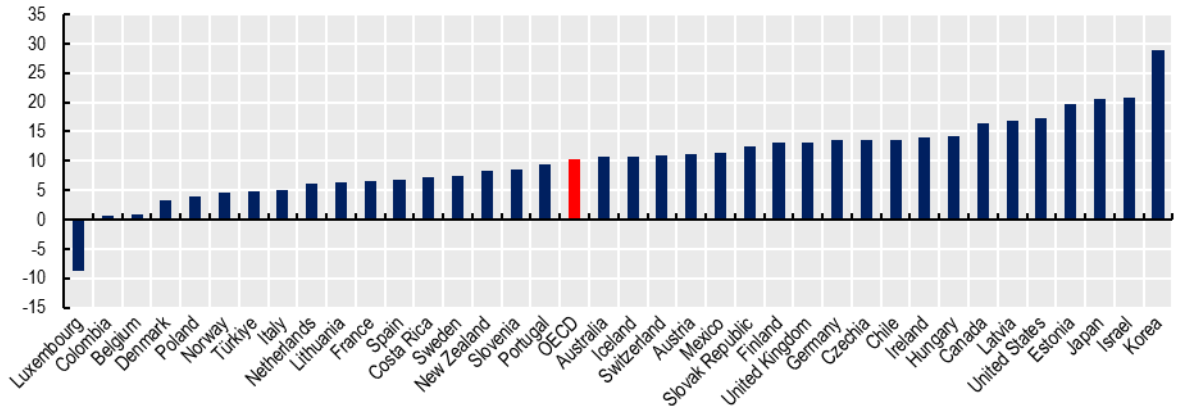
# Introduction

Gender pay gaps (also interchangeably known as gender wage gaps) are a critical manifestation of gender inequalities in the labour market, reflecting a range of differential outcomes and factors facing men and women today: gender gaps in unpaid work, gender differences in occupations, women's underrepresentation in leadership, discrimination, and beyond. Gender pay gaps also help to predict gender inequalities tomorrow, including gender gaps in pensions and in old-age poverty.

OECD data illustrate the scale of gender pay gaps. In 2024, on average, a full-time working woman with median earnings earned 10.3% less than the full-time working man with median earnings (Figure 1). Korea, Israel and Japan posted the largest gender pay gaps, all above 20%. By comparison, there is a negative gender pay gap in Luxembourg, and gender pay gaps were 3% or less in Belgium, Colombia and Denmark.

### Figure 1. Gender gaps in remuneration exist in all OECD countries

Gender pay gap, full-time workers, median earnings, 2024 or latest




Note: The gender pay gap is defined here as the difference between the median wages of men and women relative to the median wages of men. Estimates are unadjusted and based on gross earnings of full-time employees by earnings' deciles (upper limits) as reported in the OECD Distribution of Earnings Database. The most common reporting periods are weekly and monthly earnings of full-time employees for 30 out of 38 countries. Data refer to hourly earnings for five countries and to annual earnings for two countries. The distinction between full-time and part-time is according to national definitions as reported in the metadata, available from the source. Data refer to 2022 for Belgium, Iceland and Luxembourg. Data refer to 2023 for Chile Hungary, Portugal and Türkiye. Data for all other countries refer to 2024. The negative gender pay gap in Luxembourg is a feature of a unique labour market with many cross-border workers form Belgium, France and Germany and where men are more likely than women to be in lower-paying industries and occupations than women (STATEC, 2024[1]). Using the Structure of Earnings Survey and looking within broad occupations, gender pay gaps are positive (i.e. women earn less than men) (Eurostat, 2025[2]).
Source: OECD Data Explorer, "Gender wage gap" (https://data-explorer.oecd.org/s/49f) as per 15 March 2026.

Gender pay gaps (and their patterns over the life course) reflect the interaction of many social, economic and institutional factors, including gender differences in career breaks and work intensity and segregation of men and women into different industries, occupations and firms. These gender differences often stem from gendered norms and stereotypes around paid and unpaid work, which can interact with social, economic and policy environments, such as unequal access to and use of family leave and inadequate

access to affordable, good-quality childcare and out-of-school care. Discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence further limit women's full and equal participation in the labour market (OECD, 2025[3]; OECD, 2025[4]).

Reliable data on the size and evolution of gender pay gaps can help governments design targeted policies and track and monitor progress. Recognising this, the OECD explicitly calls on member countries to "regularly monitor and report on gender gaps in pay and employment outcomes" in the 2013 *Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship* (OECD, 2013[5]).

As of 2024, many countries noted the presence of an indicator, target or goal relating to the gender pay gap in their gender equality strategies, frameworks and/or action plans (OECD, 2024[6]) and many countries encourage or mandate pay transparency among employers (OECD, 2023[7]). Recent legislative advances in the European Union (EU), such as the EU Pay Transparency Directive (2023/970/EU), make systematic monitoring of gender gaps in earnings a legal obligation across Member States (European Union, 2023[8]).

Across OECD countries, employment in general government reaches almost 20% (OECD, 2025[9]), making it well placed to lead by example and set the standard for fairness, equality and transparency.[1] Indeed, the 2015 *Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life* calls on governments to systematically collect and publish gender-disaggregated data on pay, promotions, and career progression in the public sector (OECD, 2016[10]).

Indeed, when governments commit to measuring, analysing and publicly reporting gender gaps in earnings within public administrations, they not only draw attention to the root causes of these disparities but also create momentum for corrective policy measures. Such transparency can strengthen accountability in the public sector while also inspiring similar action in the private sector (Box 1).

### Box 1. Translating Findings into Action

While measuring and monitoring gender pay gaps is a critical first step, it should not be treated as an end in itself. OECD (2021[11]), found that measuring and monitoring gender pay gaps works most effectively when findings are integrated into broader human-resources ecosystems, including workforce planning, promotion and performance management, and career development processes.

Recognising the importance of linking pay gap reporting to transformation change, the EU Pay Transparency Directive establishes pay reporting requirements and joint pay assessments when gender pay gaps are wider than 5%. This is similar to the concept of an equal pay audit, which not only assesses gaps, but also recommends targeted actions to address inequalities (OECD, 2023[7]; 2025[3]) A full discussion of options to strengthen links between data and policy is outside the scope of this technical report. OECD (2021[11]; OECD, 2026[12]) discusses many practical examples and best practices.

For EU countries, EU Directive 2023/970 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms is of particular significance (European Union, 2023[8]). The directive outlines how gender pay gaps must be calculated and reported by public and private employers throughout the European Union and must be implemented in national law by 7 June 2026.

# Theory: How do we measure gender pay gaps in public administration?

Calculating the gender pay gap is – at face value – a relatively simple exercise. The gender pay gap ($GPG$) is traditionally defined as follows:

$$GPG = \left(\frac{ME - WE}{ME}\right) \cdot 100$$

where $ME$ is a measure of men's earnings and $WE$ is a measure of women's earnings.

In simple English, the gender pay gap measures the difference between the earnings of men and women, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. The relevant wage indicator (mean, median or otherwise, see below) within (a group) of wage workers is calculated by adding up the wages of all individuals in the group (e.g. separately for men and women) and dividing by the number of wage workers in that group. Using the median to obtain ME and WE and comparing them using the expression above provides an estimate of the "unadjusted median gender wage gap" – or "median gender wage gap".

Since gender pay gaps refer to aggregates and not individual cases, gender pay gaps remain somewhat distinct from the concept of equal pay – i.e. paying men and women equally for equal work.

When salary scales assign a single fixed value per grade, the likelihood of gender pay discrimination is minimal because pay decisions are standardised and transparent. However, if salary structures include ranges and allow discretionary decisions – such as setting pay based on subjective assessments of professional experience or individual negotiations – the risk of gender-based disparities increases. Importantly, a gender pay gap can persist even without direct discrimination at individual positions, as other factors, presented in this report, often drive aggregate differences in earnings. Reporting on gender pay gaps can support the implementation of equal pay legislation.

## How are earnings measured? Who's earnings count?

Although a relatively straightforward definition and mathematical equation, the actual estimation of the gender pay gap requires a series of decisions regarding the exact measurement of earnings and the construction of the sample. As much as it would simplify matters, there is no single set of choices that is categorically better than another set of choices, and there is no "right" answer (Box 2). Indeed, different definitions and samples can elucidate the causes of the pay gap and, thereby, ensure more targeted corrective policy actions (Moyser, 2019[13]). Recognising that all measures of the gender pay gap and all potential samples are meaningful, researchers and national statistical organisations (NSOs) often present multiple different gender pay gaps.

### Box 2. Constrained choices: Data availability can dictate measurement

The availability of data may play a central role in decision making. Not all data sources have all variables or all possible configurations of different variables. Some data sources, for example, may only provide information on annual earnings, while other data sources may only provide information on hourly earnings. Still other sources may have information that can be leveraged to compute results for multiple time spans (Box 4). Data availability challenges can arise around many different variables (e.g. employment status, sources of income), but in some cases, different data sources can be combined or linked to data on pay to fill gaps or support further decompositions.

But regardless of whether decisions around measurement and methodology are driven by data availability or not, transparency is key for building trust through reproducibility and comprehensibility. Reporting should clearly document who, what, where, when and why.

If data limitations do exist, efforts should be made to improve data so that gender pay gaps can be fully analysed to better understand root causes of existing inequalities and better target policy interventions.

No matter which choices are made, clarity and transparency are key, as they ensure that policymakers, researchers, and the public understand what is being reported, and the methodological choices and assumptions used to obtain the results. Clarity and transparency also facilitate comparisons over time and across countries, prevent misinterpretation or misuse of results, strengthen confidence in the findings, and enable evidence-based policy interventions targeted at the underlying causes of pay disparities.

The rest of this section highlights common measurement decisions when calculating gender pay gaps in (central) government administrations (also widely known as the "public administration," "public service" or "civil service"). These decision points are summarised in Table 1.

### Table 1. Summary of decisions for measuring gender pay gaps in public administrations

| Topic | Subtopic | Main Questions to Consider |
|---|---|---|
| Earnings | Compensation | What is included in earnings (e.g. base salary, bonuses, allowances)? |
| | Time span | Are earnings measured on an hourly, weekly, monthly or annual basis? |
| | Reference period | What is the reference period (e.g. calendar year, fiscal year, December, annual average)? |
| | Summary statistics | How will men's and women's earnings be summarised (e.g. mean, median, bottom quartile, top decile)? |
| Sample | Contract status | What types of contracts are included (e.g. permanent, temporary, casual, fixed-term, interns, students, etc.)? |
| | Working time | Are both full- and part-time workers included? |

Source: OECD.

## *Earnings*

### *Compensation*

There are many components to "earnings" – ranging from base salary to bonuses, tips and more – and choosing what (or what not) to include can significantly affect the size of the gender pay gap (Box 3).

### Box 3. What about non-wage benefit take-up?

Earnings (e.g. basic pay, overtime pay, bonuses, tips, etc.) are only one component of total compensation. Non-wage benefits – such as employer-provided pensions, health insurance, paid leave, bonuses, training opportunities, and flexible working arrangements – can represent a substantial share of remuneration and working conditions. Ignoring them may underestimate gender differences in overall compensation and job quality.

Most evidence suggests that men and women differ not only in their access to non-wage benefits, but also in their take-up of those benefits. Women are, for instance, often overrepresented in temporary jobs that may offer limited access to employer-sponsored pension schemes. Women also tend to work fewer hours, which may impact eligibility for certain non-wage benefits. But even when access is equal on paper, take-up rates of non-wage benefits, including flexible working arrangements, can differ in practice due to differences in awareness, family responsibilities and workplace culture.

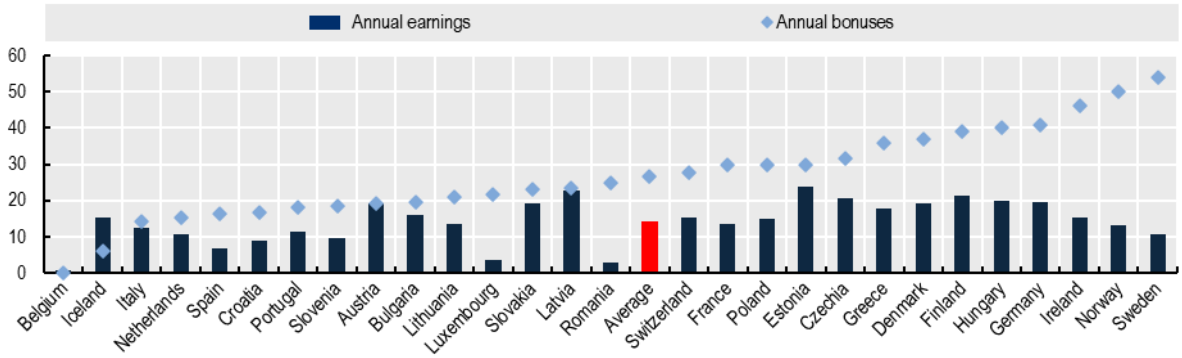
Since take-up of non-wage benefits can negatively influence career outcomes, expanding the analysis of gender pay gaps in public administration to consider gender gaps in both access to and use of non-wage benefits could provide a more comprehensive understanding of gender inequalities and contribute to further evidence-based policy action.

Consider gender pay gaps in bonuses, which are, on average, 12 percentage points (p.p.) larger than gender pay gaps in annual earnings – 14% versus 26% (Figure 2). This increase in the gender pay gap may reflect two mechanisms:

- men may be more likely to hold positions that include performance-related bonuses, such as those in middle or senior management, and
- conditional on position, men may be more likely to receive performance-related bonuses.

## Figure 2. Gender pay gaps in bonuses are often larger than those in earnings

Gender gap in mean annual earnings and bonuses in the private sector, full-time workers, 2022




Note: Estimates include all age groups and all occupations and all industries (except public administration, defence, compulsory social security). Estimates are an unweighted average of 30 EU and OECD countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
Source: Eurostat (2025[14]), *Structure of earnings survey: annual earnings*.

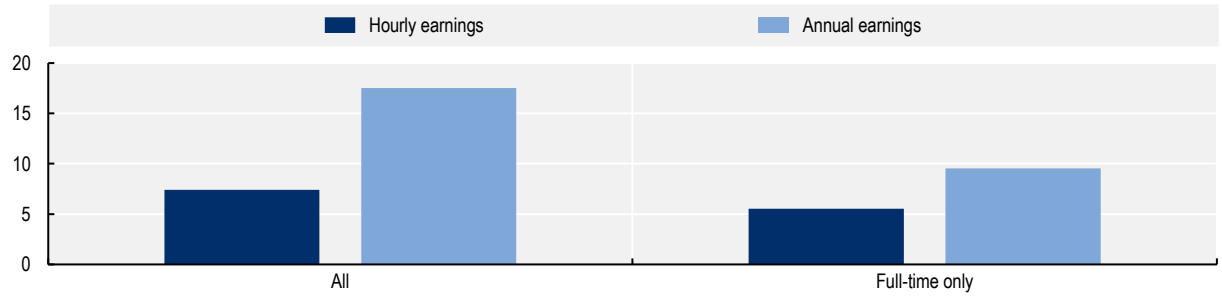
Given that gender pay gaps can vary considerably across components of earnings, if the data allows, presenting gender pay gaps according to different components of earnings can support better targeting of policy action.

### *Time span and reference period*

Earnings can be calculated on an hourly, weekly, monthly or annual basis, and the choice of time span has important implications for the size of the gender pay gap. By definition, gender pay gaps based on hourly earnings will not capture differences in hours worked. Since women work less than men – in large part due to differences in unpaid care and household responsibilities – accounting for hours worked by looking at weekly, monthly or annual concepts changes the size of the gender pay gap (Figure 3). Indeed, on average among EU and OECD countries, the gender pay gap at the mean increases from 10% when using hourly earnings to 14% when using annual earnings (Box 4).

## Figure 3. Gender gaps in pay are smaller among full-time workers

Gender gap in median hourly and annual earnings in the private sector, all workers and full-time workers, average of 30 EU and OECD countries, 2022




Note: Estimates include all age groups and all occupations and all industries (except public administration, defence, compulsory social security). Estimates are an unweighted average of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
Source: Eurostat (2025[2]), *Structure of earnings survey: hourly earnings* and (2025[14]), *Structure of earnings survey: annual earnings*.

Estimating and presenting multiple time spans for earnings can help governments better identify effective interventions. Consider, for example, pay equity legislation. This typically requires that employees receive equal pay for work of equal or comparable value. To assess compliance with this legislation, gender pay gaps in hourly wages are more relevant and more accurate, as they strip away confounding gender differences in hours worked. On the other hand, the annual gender pay gap most accurately captures the actual economic experiences of women and men, reflecting the various ways gender norms and stereotypes (especially around unpaid work) contribute to women earning less.

### Box 4. Moving between annual earnings and hourly earnings and back again

What if a specific data source only has information on annual earnings or hourly earnings and not both? If only one is provided, it is often possible to extract information on the other measure using complementary information contained in the same data source.

Suppose the data includes information on annual earnings (AE), hours worked per week (H), and weeks worked per year (W). Obtaining hourly earnings (HE) is as simple as the equation below:

$$HE = \frac{AE}{H * W}$$

Suppose the data includes information on hourly earnings, but not annual earnings. The above equation then rearranges to:

$$AE = HE * (H * W)$$

Sometimes data will refer to hours worked per year (instead of per week), in which case $(H * W)$ is already pre-calculated.

Regardless of which time span is chosen, a reference period must be selected. Options tend to depend on the time span. If using annual earnings, for example, reference periods are typically either calendar year or fiscal year. If using weekly earnings, reference periods could be a specific week of the year (e.g. week 26) or an annual average. A similar logic applies to hourly earnings and monthly earnings.

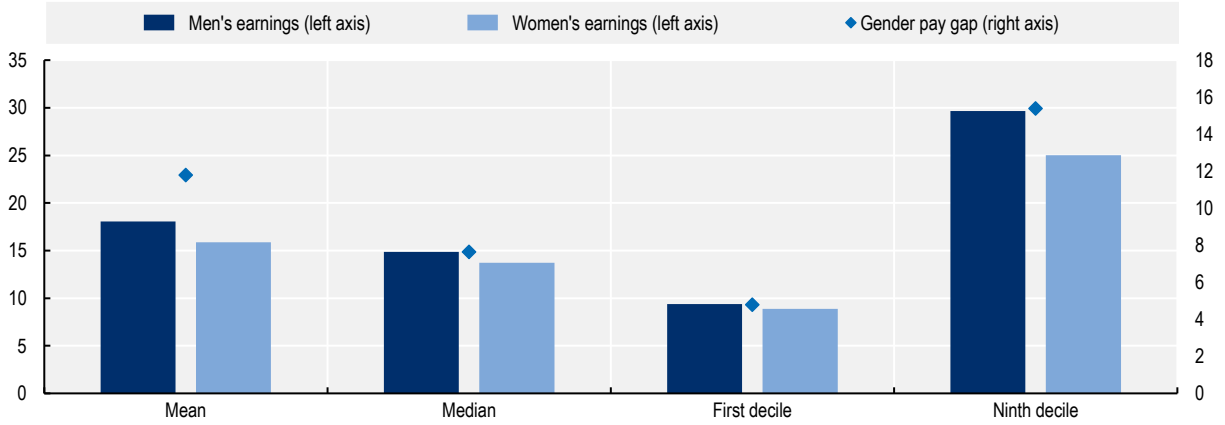
#### *Summary statistics*

Gender pay gap data is typically presented at the mean, the median, or at a specific percentile along the income distribution (see (European Union, 2023[8]) Article 9.1). Since each of these measures provides a different perspective regarding the relative distribution of men's and women's earnings, it is often helpful to present more than one. Indeed, as the exact midpoint, medians are less sensitive to extreme values, while means capture overall differences in average earnings and are influenced by very high and very low incomes. Both are uniquely valuable since the median can offering a picture of what a "typical" worker earns, while the mean more accurately reflects vertical segregation – i.e. more men at the top of the distribution, more women at the bottom of the distribution – a key driver of the gender pay gap. Examining gender pay gaps at different points of the income distribution (e.g. bottom decile, top decile) can provide an even more granular understanding of gender disparities, identifying where gaps are most pronounced and where interventions may be most needed.

Consider economy-wide estimates of the hourly gender pay gap in the EU. The gender gap in mean hourly earnings is about 12%, reflecting average wages of EUR 18.06 for men and EUR 15.88 for women (Figure 4). Using the median, the gender pay gap falls to 8%, reflecting median wages of EUR 14.85 for men and EUR 13.70 for women. Looking at the first decile of the earnings distribution, the gender pay gap is 5%. This compares to 15% at the top.

### Figure 4. Mean gender gaps are typically larger than median gender gaps

Gender gap in hourly earnings in the private sector, median, mean, first decile and ninth decile, average of 30 EU and OECD countries, 2022




Note: Estimates include all age groups, full- and part-time workers, and all occupations and all industries (except public administration, defence, compulsory social security). Estimates are an unweighted average of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
Source: Eurostat (2025[2]), *Structure of earnings survey: hourly earnings*.

## *Sample*

### *Contract status*

Any employer – including governments – can have multiple different types of employees: permanent, temporary, casual, fixed-term, interns, students, independent contractors, etc. Across these various types of employment contracts, pay (and pay structures) can vary significantly, and men and women may not be equally represented. For example, women may be more likely to hold part-time, fixed term or casual positions, while men may be more concentrated in permanent roles. Including (or excluding) certain types of contracts in estimates of gender pay gaps can thus significantly affect results. As with all other decisions, where possible, presenting statistics for different groups can help better target policies and interventions where they are most needed.

### *Working time*

The gender pay gap can be calculated for full-time workers, for part-time workers or for all workers combined. As with other decisions, each option is valid, but each also comes with advantages and disadvantages.

At face value, the decision on whether to report for full-time workers or all workers is similar to the decision between hourly and annual earnings. Focusing only on full-time workers allows for a more direct comparison of the earnings of men and women for the work that they are performing. By contrast, including part-time workers ensures that gender differences in the propensity to work full-time – in part due to gender norms and stereotypes around paid and unpaid work – are factored into the gender pay gap.

Since part-time work tends to pay less than full-time work (Eurostat, 2025[2]; Eurostat, 2025[14]; Garnero, 2016[15]), this decision impacts gender pay gaps estimated using both hourly earnings and annual earnings. In EU and OECD countries, for example, median hourly gender pay gaps for full-time workers are 5.5%,

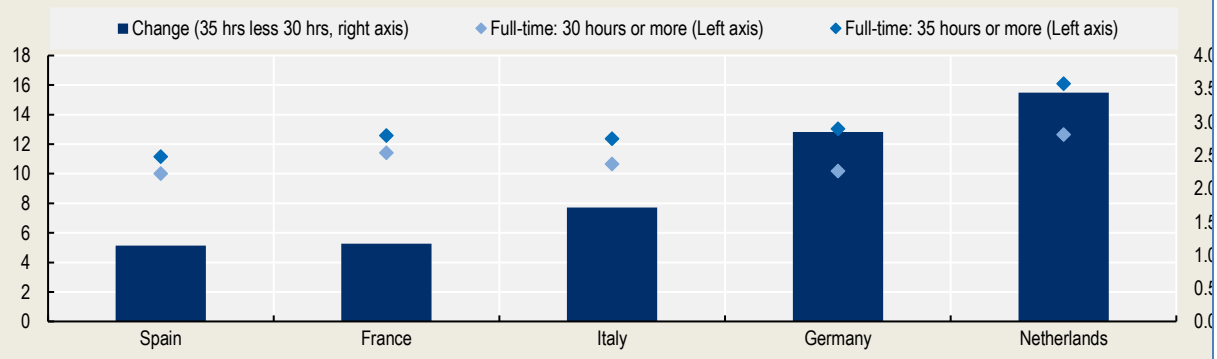
on average, while gaps are 7.4% for all workers, a difference of 1.9 p.p. (Figure 4 above, and Box 5 for a discussion of the impact that threshold definitions may have on the measured gender pay gap). Reflecting that annual earnings capture both differences in hourly pay and differences in work intensity (e.g. hours worked, weeks worked), the impact of excluding (or including) part-time workers is much larger when presented for annual earnings. In these same EU and OECD countries, median annual gender pay gaps rise 8 p.p. when moving from full-time workers only (9.5%) to all workers (17.5%).

### Box 5. Defining full- and part-time work

There is no single standardised definition for part-time work across all EU and OECD countries. In harmonised OECD data, part-time work refers to those who usually work fewer than 30 hours per week in their main job. But national definitions can vary considerably. In some cases, workers classify themselves as part-time or full-time based on their own perception of their employment situation. In other cases, workers are classified as part-time or full-time based on a cut-off applied to *usual* or *actual* working hours, typically 30 or 35 hours. Choosing different cut-offs can significantly change estimated gender pay gaps. Ex ante, the direction of impact is unclear, depending crucially on the gender distribution of workers in the 30-35-hour range and the relative pay of men and women in this range of hours worked. Using median monthly earnings in five European countries, Figure 5 shows that gender pay gaps are higher under a 35-hour benchmark.

#### Figure 5. Gender pay gaps are higher when measured under a 35-hour benchmark

Gender pay gap, median monthly earnings in the private sector, full-time employees using a definition of 30 hours versus 35 hours, 2018




Note: Estimates include enterprises with 10 or more employees in NACE Rev. 2 Sector B-S excluding O.
Source: OECD Secretariat calculations using the European Structure of Earnings Survey.

## What data sources can be used?

Reliable measurement and monitoring of gender pay gaps depends on the availability of (quality) data. For public administrations, centralised human resources data generally provide the most accurate and comprehensive basis for analysis. Where such data are not yet available, well-designed survey data can serve as a useful interim alternative until more systematic data collection is established.

### *Centralised human resources data*

Gender pay gaps for most public administrations, can be calculated using centralised human resources data. These systems typically contain verified, up-to-date information on pay and other employee characteristics, including:

- **Basic demographics**, such as age and job tenure.
- **Job information**, such as job title, grade, or occupational category.
- **Organisational situation**, such as department, division or unit.
- **Working-time information**, such as full-time versus part-time status, or actual and contracted working hours.
- **Contract type**, such as permanent, temporary, fixed term, or other categories.
- **Compensation details**, such as base salary, bonuses, allowances, benefits, and other forms of remuneration.

This level of detail, its quality (Box 6) and these variables allow for the use of different definitions and decompositions to better identify the underlying drivers of gender pay gaps, such as gendered differences in occupational distribution, contract type or pay-setting practices. These insights, in turn, can inform more targeted and effective policy interventions.

If further information on recruitment, promotion and performance were available, the analysis can be extended to make a comparison of the "employment lifecycle" of different workers – from entry and progression to reward – to see where and how gender disparities arise.

#### Box 6. Ensuring data quality and consistency in human resources data

Data quality and consistency are essential to accurately assessing gender pay gaps. This requires that underlying information be recorded, processed, and reported in a consistent and standardised manner. Standardisation is particularly important – and may be particularly challenging – in large or decentralised public administrations, where human resources systems may differ across agencies or departments.

Key dimensions of data quality include completeness, accuracy, timeliness and coherence. All relevant variables, such as pay, working hours, occupation, and employment status, should be available for all employees and defined in line with standard – and accurately applied – classifications. Consistent reference periods (e.g. pay for the same month, quarter, or year) are also critical to ensure comparability across units and over time. Missing or inconsistent entries should be identified and addressed systematically (e.g. through validation checks, automated data cleaning procedures).

Maintaining metadata on data sources, definitions, and processing methods greatly supports transparency and reproducibility. When full standardisation cannot be achieved, it is essential to document and report limitations clearly. This includes noting any differences in definitions, coverage, or sampling that may lead to breaks in time series or affect comparability between entities. Transparent communication of such issues enables users to interpret results correctly and supports continuous improvement in systems.

To ensure gender pay gap measurement is reliable and comparable over time, public administrations need to build the correct institutional capacity. Beyond the issues already mentioned – e.g. inter ministerial collaboration and co-operation, data standardisation, analytical capabilities, clear governance – public administrations will also need a robust and secure HR and IT infrastructure. This enables public administrations to effectively and efficiently collect, link, store and analyse HR- and pay

related data. Such robust and secure HR and IT infrastructure must meet contemporary cybersecurity standards, incorporate secure user authentication, and ensure privacy is preserved during storage and transfer. HR and pay systems should also be interoperable, allowing for automated and standardised data transfers across departments, ministries, and agencies (e.g. through the use of shared identifiers and common metadata frameworks).

A full discussion of the importance of HR and IT infrastructure is outside the scope of this technical report, but further information can be found in, for example (Espegren and Hugosson, 2025[16]; McCartney and Fu, 2022[17]; Raja et al., 2025[18]).

Furthermore, investing in staff training is a critical component to achieving high data quality. Personnel responsible for data entry, management and analysis should be regularly trained on standard definitions, coding practices, and validation procedures to ensure consistent application of guidelines.

### *Survey data*

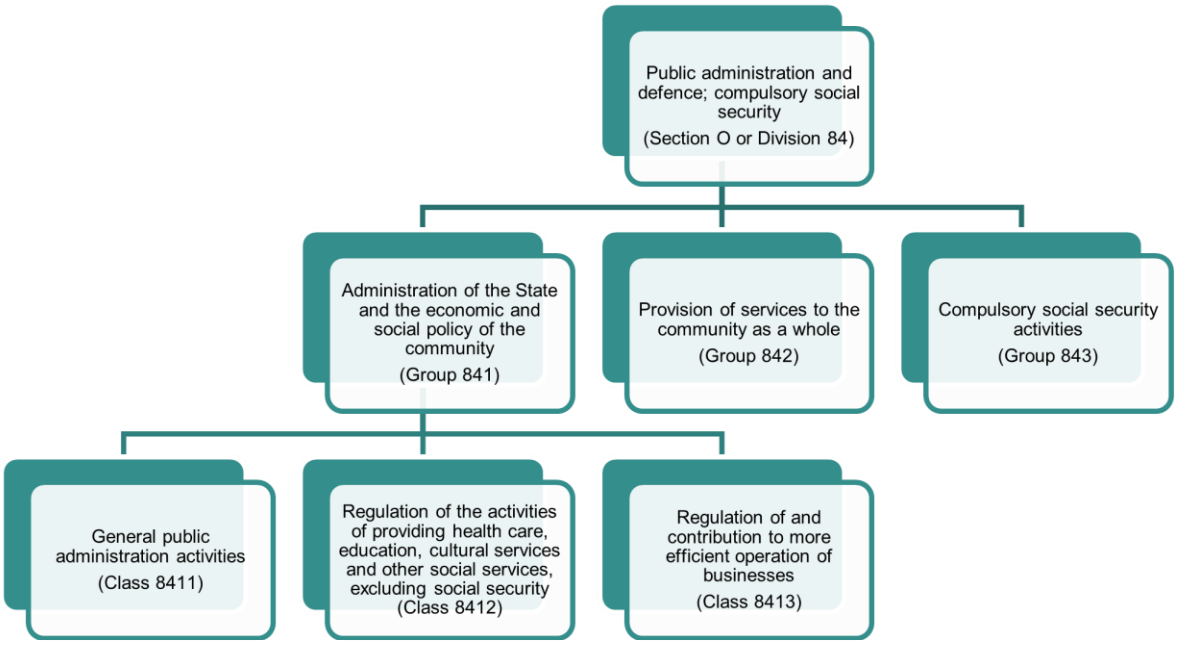
For countries or administrations where centralised human resources data are not available, survey data can serve as a valuable interim source for analysing gender pay gaps in public administrations. Labour force and household surveys often contain sufficient information to approximate pay differentials across public administrations, including:

- **Basic demographics**, such as age, gender and educational attainment.
- **Earnings**, such as monthly or hourly wages, and in some cases bonuses or other income components.
- **Working-time information**, such as usual and actual hours worked.
- **Employment status**, such as permanent or fixed-term contracts.
- **Occupation**, generally using the United Nation's International Standard Classification of Occupations – ISCO (ILO, 2012[19]) or a similar classification, such as the Standard Occupation Classification – SOC – System used in the United States (Office of Management and Budget, 2018[20]). Other classifications may exist and be used in other countries. Canada, for example, uses the National Occupational Classification – NOC (Statistics Canada, 2021[21]), Australia uses the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia – OSCA (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024[22]).
- **Industry**, generally using the United Nation's International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities – ISIC (United Nations, 2008[23]) or a similar classification, such as the "Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne" (NACE) used in the EU (Eurostat, 2008[24]). As with occupation, other classifications may exist and be used in other countries.

For the purposes of estimating gender pay gaps in public administrations, the inclusion of industry in these surveys is vital, since one of the main sectors included in most industrial classifications, such as the ISIC, is public administration.

According to ISIC, public administration and defence and compulsory social security (hereafter, section O) includes "activities of a governmental nature, normally carried out by the public administration," such as "the enactment and judicial interpretation of laws and their pursuant regulation, as well as the administration of programmes based on them, legislative activities, taxation, national defence, public order and safety, immigration services, foreign affairs and the administration of government programmes" (United Nations, 2008[23]). As with all industries in the ISIC, section O is composed of multiple sub-industries (Figure 6).

## Figure 6. Classification structure of public administration and defence and compulsory social security in ISIC




Source: United Nations (2008[23]), *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities*.

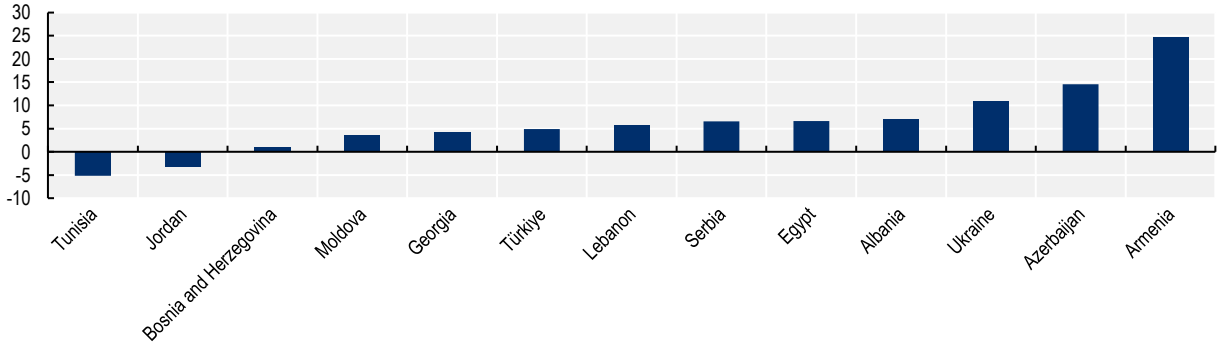
National statistical organisations (NSOs) and international organisations (IOs) often publish results on earnings by industry from labour force or household surveys in publicly available databases, although occasionally data relating to section O (i.e. public administration) is suppressed. NSOs typically also provide access to public use microdata files to qualified researchers and policy analysts, files through which estimates of gender pay gaps for the public administration can be calculated using standard statistical software, again, as long as data relating to section O is not suppressed.

Using publicly available data from the International Labor Organization (ILO), gender pay gaps in public administrations in selected non-OECD counties range from -5% in Tunisia to 25% in Armenia (Figure 7. ). Negative or small gender pay gaps in public administrations do not necessarily mean that women are favoured. To fully understand the size and direction of the gap, as well as its drivers, it is essential to undertake additional analyses and decompositions, which is when microdata from surveys (conditional on sample size, see point below) and administrative data can help (Box 7).

Negative gender pay gaps, for example, may reflect compositional effects. Consider the case of Luxembourg, where negative gender pay gaps (Figure 1) reflect that men are more likely to be in lower-paying occupations than women. Indeed, controlling for occupation reverses the gender pay gap back in favour of men (Eurostat, 2025[2]). This reversal of the gender pay gap upon controlling for occupation highlights the limitations of publicly available data tables and reinforces that such data should only be viewed as a temporary stop gap until microdata or (preferably) centralised human resources data can be obtained. In the interim, such publicly available data tables should be used carefully and cautiously.

## Figure 7. Gender pay gaps in public sectors also vary widely across non-OECD countries

Gender pay gap, average monthly earnings, selected non-OECD countries, public sector, 2024 or latest




Note: Data refer to section O "Public administration and defence, compulsory social security" in ISIC Rev. 4 or section L "Public administration and defence; compulsory social security" in ISIC Rev 3.1. Data for Lebanon and Tunisia refer to 2019. Data for Ukraine refer to 2021. Data for Albania and Azerbaijan refer to 2022. Data for Armenia, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan and Serbia refer to 2023. Kosovo* is not included as the most recently available data refer to 2000. Republic of North Macedonia is not included as the most recently available data refer to 2014.
Source: ILOSTAT Data "Average monthly earnings of employees by sex and economic activity" (data were taken from https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/).

But even when survey data can be accessed through public use microdata files and careful analyses and decompositions can be undertaken, there remain several drawbacks relative to centralised human resources data that limit accuracy and usefulness in estimating gender pay gaps in public administrations. These are outlined below.

- **Inclusion of non-government entities**: Since the legal or institutional status of employment is not the determining factor for an activity to belong to section O, some activities may be classified as belonging to section O even though they are carried out by non-government units.
- **Inclusion of all levels of government**: Survey data typically does not distinguish between different levels of government, with central, regional and local bodies all included under the same heading (Box 8). Combining all levels of government together in this way can obscure where gender pay gap are largest and prevent detailed analysis of root causes, thereby limiting government capacity for targeted (and effective) policy action where it is most needed. This obfuscation may be most problematic in contexts where pay setting practices are decentralised (e.g. central government cannot regulate local governments).
- **Small sample sizes and limited analytical capabilities**: Surveys typically draw on relatively small samples of a total population in each survey period. This can mean that there are too few observations to support robust analyses, especially when such analyses concern only specific subsets or sectors of the economy, such as public administration. Reflecting that such small samples may raise confidentiality concerns, to protect survey respondents, public use microdata files often suppress, recode or aggregate certain variables, thereby reducing the risk of re-identification. While these measures are essential for maintaining privacy, confidentiality and public trust, they can further constrain the scope and precision of analysis, limiting the value of surveys in the context of analysing gender pay gaps in public administration. On top of these limitations, survey data often do not contain all variables that are crucial for a detailed understanding of gender pay gaps in public administration, such as job grade or level. Such variables – which can help ensure targeted and effective policy responses – are usually captured only in administrative sources like centralised human resources data.

### Box 7. Comparing administrative and survey data: Canada's public administration

Given that centralised human resources data and survey data are distinctly different sources of data, they can produce different estimates of gender pay gaps for a given country and year. Consider the case of Canada. Using centralised human resources data, the average hourly gender pay gap between men and women in fiscal year 2019-2020 is estimated at 8.2%, including all men and women in the federal public service regardless of group or level (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2023[25]). Using the Labour Force Survey, the average hourly gender pay gap for men and women aged 15 years and over in the public administration in 2019 is estimated at 10.0% (Statistics Canada, 2025[26]).

### Box 8. Public administration or public sector?

Since survey data often include variables for both the public sector and the public administration, it is important to distinguish between these two concepts.

- **Public sector:** All organisations under public ownership or control, covering central and local government bodies but also publicly owned enterprises, education institutions, and health services.
- **Public administration:** This includes centres of government, line ministries, government agencies, regulatory bodies and other institutions of central government performing the core functions of public administration: policymaking and policy implementation, including delivery of administrative services.

Since workforce composition, occupational structures and pay-setting mechanisms can differ substantially across these two sectors, gender pay gaps can also differ substantially.

In Belgium, for example, correcting for working time, the average gross annual gender pay gap in the public sector was 4.2%, while the same concept measured for the public administration was 7.2% (Institut pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes, 2024[27]).

## Who should do the measuring?

Within public administrations, responsibility for measuring and monitoring the gender pay gap can fall to various actors, depending on institutional structures and data availability. The chosen institutional arrangement should reflect where the relevant data reside and who has the mandate and technical capacity for analysis.

Regardless of where the responsibility lies, measurement must be carried out professionally and in accordance with sound statistical practices (see next section). Transparency is equally critical: methodologies, definitions, and results should be clearly communicated to employees, policymakers, and the public. This not only builds trust and accountability but also ensures that efforts to close the gender pay gap are evidence-based and sustainable over time.

### *Central agencies*

In many countries and contexts, central agencies – such as ministries of finance, public service commissions, or treasuries – are best positioned to measure and monitor gender pay gaps in the public service. They often have access to comprehensive payroll and personnel data and hold the mandate for workforce planning and reporting. Centralised measurement also facilitates consistency in definitions, coverage, and analytical methods across the administration. Locating responsibility with central agencies may also allow for better alignment with related policy initiatives, such as pay equity reviews or workforce diversity strategies.

### *Individual departments or agencies*

In systems where human resources management is highly decentralised, individual departments or agencies may conduct their own analyses. In these cases, co-ordination and coherence are essential. Common guidelines, standardised tools, and regular training can help ensure that data are collected and analysed consistently.

A co-ordinating unit or central oversight mechanism can support comparability, facilitate knowledge sharing and aggregate results at the whole-of-government level. Without such coherence, decentralised measurement risks producing fragmented or non-comparable findings that limit policy usefulness.

### *National statistical organisations*

When analyses rely on survey or administrative data collected by national statistical organisations (NSOs), these bodies may be best placed to take the lead in measurement and interpretation as they will be most familiar with the data and its structure. NSO's expertise in statistical methodology, data quality assurance and trend analysis can help ensure robustness and credibility.

### *Other organisations*

(Arms-length) equality bodies, audit institutions and external evaluators can act as complements or substitutes in the measurement and analysis of gender pay gaps.

As complements, they can review methodologies, verify data integrity and assess whether analyses adhere to established standards. This can help strengthen accountability and comparability, especially in highly decentralised contexts.

As substitutes, they can undertake analysis and publish results on behalf of public administrations. In cases where arms-length equality bodies, audit institutions and external evaluators are carrying out the analysis themselves, timely and secure access to relevant administrative data is essential. Clear protocols for data protection and confidentiality are equally critical.

Regardless of the exact role played by such bodies, independent oversight can enhance public confidence in results.

# How do we protect people?

Particular attention needs to be paid to data protection and confidentiality. Gender pay gap analysis must be conducted in a way that safeguards individual privacy and complies with applicable data protection legislation. Protection of personal data is essential for legal compliance and for maintaining the trust of employees and the public.

Analysts must always ensure that no information is published or shared when sample sizes are too small, which could inadvertently lead to the identification of individuals. Disclosure control procedures should be systematically applied (Box 9).

Clear governance procedures should also be in place to manage data access and handling. Only authorised personnel should process identifiable data, and all analyses should be conducted in secure environments that protect data confidentiality. Publishing results in anonymised and aggregated form not only upholds privacy standards but also ensures that gender pay gap monitoring contributes to transparency and accountability without compromising individual rights.

### Box 9. Data protection tools: Data suppression, aggregation or anonymisation

Protecting confidentiality is a core principle of data analysis. Several methods exist to minimise or mitigate risks when analysing gender pay gaps. These methods can vary depending on the data source.

- **Public tables:** Data extracted from public tables are already anonymised and de-identified.
- **Public use microdata files:** Data are already anonymised or de-identified, but the risk of (re)identification remains. Guidance documents accompanying public-use microdata files – such as codebooks and terms and conditions – typically specify reporting requirements (e.g. minimum cell sizes) to safeguard confidentiality and ensure the validity of analyses. These requirements must always be followed and respected.
- **Centralised human resources data:** Data include many high-risk variables that can (re-)identify individuals. Protecting confidentiality means removing or masking personal identifiers (e.g. names, employee IDs, or specific unit codes) before analysis. This can often be done by simply taking an extract of a database that retains only the variables necessary for gender pay analysis (e.g. gender, department, division, grade, pay). But even when such actions are taken, individuals may still be (re-)identified unless certain actions are followed:
  - Suppression: Suppression involves withholding results for groups with too few observations to protect confidentiality.
  - *Example:* If only a small number of employees occupy a particular grade within a small unit, the average pay for that group should not be published. Results can be omitted or replaced with a note indicating that data are not disclosed for confidentiality reasons.
  - Aggregation: Aggregation combines small groups into larger categories so that no individual can be identified. Aggregation can also be applied to different variables to protect individuals, while still allowing for meaningful analysis (e.g. across occupational categories,

across units located within the same division, across divisions located within the same branch, etc.).

- *Example:* If presenting results by grade and level within each division produces very small cell sizes, results can be aggregated by grade only.

Each action plays a different role in protecting confidentiality, but establishing clear thresholds (e.g. suppressing results for groups with fewer than ten employees) and documenting the methods applied helps ensure both statistical integrity and compliance with data protection obligations.

# Practice: Do gender pay gaps exist in public administrations?

Despite the fact that governments often have (more) structured pay scales than the private sector gender pay gaps still arise in public administrations due to several factors, including occupational segregation, gender differences in promotion (i.e. vertical segregation), motherhood penalties and discrimination (see next section).

This section presents a summary of results from published reports and publicly available data tables on gender pay gaps in public administrations across EU and OECD countries that are not covered elsewhere in the report (e.g. Belgium, Finland and Spain in Box 13, Canada in Box 7, and Estonia Box 10). This should not be viewed as comprehensive. EU and OECD countries not included in this report may publish such information.

- **Australia:** Using average annual base salaries for both full- and part-time employees, with part-time salaries annualised to full-time equivalent earnings, gender pay gaps in the public service were around 5.2% in 2022, down from 7.8% in 2018. Deeper analysis suggests that this reduction is driven by a rising share of senior managers who are women (Australian Public Service Commission, 2023[28]). The continued persistence of the gender pay gap reflects an uneven distribution of women and men across the classification structure.
- **Austria:** In the federal service (*Bundesdienst*) the median gross gender pay gap adjusted for the extent of employment was 8.1% in 2022, down from 13.3% in 2012 (Bundesministerium für Kunst, Kultur, öffentlicher Dienst und Sport, 2023[29]). Estimates include all employees who were employed for at least one day in 2022, with the income of part-time employees extrapolated to full-time employment, and that of employees employed for less than a year is extrapolated to annual employment. The gender pay gap is larger in the military (25.1%) than in general administration (17.3%) than in executive service (16.6%) than among judges (10.7%) and teachers (10.5%). Among administrative interns and legal trainees, the gender pay gap is essentially zero (-0.2% and 0.3%, respectively).
- **Denmark:** Among state employees, the monthly average gender pay gap was 4.2% in 2024 (Danmarks Statistik, 2025[30]), where pay includes basic pay, qualification and individual allowances, pension, holiday payments and special holiday allowance, employee benefits, re-incentives and irregular payments, such as one-off allowances and bonuses.
- **Germany:** In 2024, the average hourly gender pay gap in the public service (including public administration and education) was 7%, down 2 p.p. from 2014 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2025[31]).
- **Japan:** Each **Government** institution at the national and local level in Japan is required to disclose its average gross annual gender pay gap. In fiscal year 2023, among national institutions it ranged from a low of 9.1% to 37.9% (Japanese Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2024[32]).
- **Luxembourg:** In 2022, in the public administration, men earned, on average, EUR 45.8 per hour and women earned EUR 46.8 per hour, a gender gap in favour of women of 1 euro per hour

(Statistics Luxembourg, 2024[33]). In 2010, the gender gap was in favour of men at EUR 2.30 per hour.

- **Netherlands:** In 2024, for the first time ever, average gross hourly wages for men and women were almost equal in public administration. Men earn, on average, 1 eurocent more per hour than women (Statistics Netherlands, 2025[34]). In 2022, in the government sector, the unadjusted average hourly wage gap was 5.1%, down from 9.6% in 2014. Adjusting for employee, employer and job characteristics, gaps fell from 6.4% in 2014 to 1.8% in 2022 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023[35]).
- **Spain:** In 2019, in the General State Administration (*Administración General del Estado*), the gender pay gap was 5.2%, with average gross hourly wages of EUR 18.33 for men public employees and EUR 17.39 for women public employees (Ministerio de la Presidencia, Justicia y Relaciones Con Las Cortes, 2021[36]). Analysis reveals that there are significant differences across groups, levels and departments.
- **Switzerland:** In the public administration (including federal government, cantons and municipalities), the average gross monthly gender pay gap narrowed from 18.1% in 2018 to 13.8% in 2022 (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2024[37]). Differences in the social, economic and demographic characteristics of men and women explain about half of this gap.
- **United Kingdom:** In 2024, the average annual gender pay gap for public administration – including national, regional and municipal governments – was 5.8%. Among full-time workers, the gender pay gap was 4.2%, while it was 9.3% among part-time workers (Office for National Statistics, 2024[38]). Disaggregated by sub-industries (Figure 6), gender pay gaps were smallest in regulation of and contribution to more efficient operation of businesses (-2.0%) and largest in defence activities (16.6%). In 2017, the United Kingdom mandated that organisations with 250 or more employees report gender pay gaps annually, including government departments. Examining results for earnings in 2024 for HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Valuation Office Agency (VOA), the mean gender pay gap was 5.7%, down 0.4 p.p. from 2023, while gender pay gaps in bonuses were notably larger, at 18.4% (HM Revenue & Customs, 2024[39]). In the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the mean gender pay gap was 4.9% in 2024, down from 6.8% in 2023, while bonus gender pay gaps were 6.4%, up from 5.6% in 2023 (Competition and Markets Authority, 2025[40]).

Aligning with the EU Pay Transparency Directive (Directive 2023/970), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is updating EU-wide guidelines on gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems – resources should become available in Spring 2026 (EIGE, 2026, forthcoming[41]). This evidence-based step-by-step guidance supports employers to ensure equal pay for same work or work of equal value between men and women.

### Box 10. Calculating the gender pay gap in the Estonian public service

**Legal Framework and Context.** In February 2026 Estonian legislation did not impose a direct obligation to calculate the gender pay gap within the public service. However, the **Public Service Act** requires public authorities to protect officials from discrimination, follow the principle of equal treatment, and actively promote equality. Each year, the Minister of Finance presents a **report to Parliament** on public service development trends, including civil service remuneration. The analysis has included gender pay gap calculations for several years. Previously, the data was published in the extensive *Public Service Yearbook*. As from 2025, data are made available through an interactive Power BI dashboard on the Ministry of Finance website (currently only in Estonian).

**Target Group and Data Sources,** The Estonian civil service consists of state and local government institutions. At present, the gender pay gap is calculated only for state authorities, as their data is centrally accessible via the state personnel and payroll database. Two indicators are calculated:

1. **Overall Gender Pay Gap**

This indicator measures the raw difference between average salaries of men and women without adjusting for occupation, field, or responsibilities. The comparison is based on the difference in gross hourly wages. The overall gender pay gap was 1.7% in 2024.

- **Methodology:** The calculation uses the difference in gross hourly wages for October. October is specifically chosen to ensure the results are comparable with the national gender pay gap indicators calculated by Statistics Estonia.
- **Formula:** Gross hourly wage = (basic wage + bonuses) / (monthly working hours * workload + overtime)

  Wage gap = (men's gross hourly wage – women's gross hourly wage) * 100% / men's gross hourly wage
- **Data Privacy:** To protect individual privacy, the pay gap is displayed only for institutions with at least three men and three women.

2. **Pay Gap by Service Group and Responsibility Level**

This indicator offers a more detailed comparison by accounting for the nature and complexity of work.

- **Service Groups:** State agencies must classify service positions into pre-defined service groups (e.g. policy development, communication management, data analysis). Each group is further subdivided into levels based on complexity and responsibility.
- **Methodology:** Same as for the overall gender pay gap, the difference in gross hourly wages for October is calculated at the level of each service group.
- **Accessibility:** Unlike the overall gender pay gap dashboard, this detailed view is for **internal use only**. It is accessible to HR managers and enables filtering by institution type or specific organisations (e.g. ministries).
- **Data Privacy:** Similar to the general gap, data is only shown if there are at least three men and three women at the specific service group level being analysed.

Source: Ministry of Finance Estonia.

# Analysis: What explains gender pay gaps in public administrations?

Understanding why gender pay gaps persist within public administrations is as important as measuring their size. A headline figure showing that women earn less than men can draw attention to the issue, but without deeper analysis, it reveals little about underlying causes or potential policy responses.

## How to look beyond headline gaps?

There are two standard approaches to move beyond headline gaps: decompositions and multivariate regressions. Neither approach is categorically better than another. Choosing a method should reflect considerations interpretability and analytical capacity.

- **Decompositions:** This is a simple analytical approach that involves preparing, presenting and comparing results for various social, demographic, economic and job characteristics. Results are transparent and easy to communicate to the public. For administrations without strong analytical capacity, such descriptive decompositions can provide meaningful insight and support targeted policy interventions.
  - *Example:* Suppose the overall gender pay gap is 12%, but when decomposed by job category (e.g. policy analysts, clerical staff, managers), the gap disappears within each level. This means gender pay gaps stem entirely from women being concentrated in lower grades and suggests an issue with unequal representation across job categories not with unequal pay within job categories. Areas of focus for reducing the gender pay gap would include promotion and recruitment practices.
- **Multivariate regression:** This is a common analytical method that controls for several variables simultaneously (e.g. grade, tenure, full-time status, age). In simple terms, this means comparing men and women who are otherwise similar to estimate how much of the pay difference remains once these factors are taken into consideration. After such regressions, results are often divided into two parts: an “explained” component, which reflects differences in the control characteristics, and an “unexplained” component. Interpreting this unexplained component can be challenging. Occasionally, the unexplained component can be interpreted as discrimination, but this can be misleading. On the one hand, in cases where there are not sufficient controls in the regression for personal or job characteristics, interpreting the unexplained component as discrimination is inaccurate. On the other hand, in cases where there too many controls in the regression that themselves reflect bias (e.g. seniority in systems where promotion opportunities are unequal), the explained portion may hide structural inequalities. This means that, while multivariate regressions are statistically powerful, the complexity of the models and the nuances in interpretation can make communication to non-technical audiences challenging.
  - *Example:* Regression analysis shows that the overall gender pay gap of 15% shrinks to 4% after accounting for grade, tenure, and working-time status. This means that 11 p.p. of the gap are “explained” by men and women occupying different types of positions or having different

working patterns. The remaining 4 p.p. are “unexplained,” potentially pointing to differences in career trajectories or discrimination.

Several countries have undertaken efforts to analyse gender pay gaps in their public administrations either using decompositions, multivariate regressions, or both, including France (see Box 11), New Zealand (see Box 12), Austria (Bundesministerium für Kunst, Kultur, öffentlicher Dienst und Sport, 2023[29]), the Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023[35]), Spain (Ministerio de la Presidencia, Justicia y Relaciones Con Las Cortes, 2021[36]) and Switzerland (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2024[37]).

## What key factors explain gender pay gaps?

In both the private and the public sector, stubborn gender pay gaps are a product of several social, economic and institutional factors. Drawing on OECD (2025[4]; 2025[3]), relevant factors in the public sector are summarised below.

- **Career breaks:** Career interruptions, such as those taken for childbirth, influence earnings not only by reducing the number of weeks worked in a year but also by slowing career progression. Social norms and gender stereotypes surrounding paid and unpaid caregiving, combined with the structure of family leave policies and limited access to early childhood education and care and out-of-school care, often result in women taking career breaks more frequently than men.
- **Work intensity:** Part-time employment generally offers lower hourly wages than full-time positions and further reduces annual income because of fewer hours and weeks worked. Similar to career interruptions, women are more likely than men to engage in part-time work, often as a way to manage both work and family responsibilities.
- **Horizontal segregation:** Gender differences in the distribution of men and women across job categories (e.g. policy analysis, clerical staff) and across departments (e.g. finance, labour) contribute to the gender pay gap since women are more likely to work in low-paid jobs or sectors than men.
- **Vertical segregation:** Women are often underrepresented in the most senior and the highest-paying positions.
- **Task segregation**: Women and men are often assigned to different files or workstreams, with women more likely to be assigned to low promotability policy areas, topics or tasks.
- **Harassment and gender-based violence:** Many women face gender-based violence, with perpetrators occasionally controlling their employment situation. Women may also encounter technology-facilitated gender-based violence in the workplace, where perpetrators use digital tools to monitor or interfere with their work remotely. Experiencing violence or harassment from a colleague or a supervisor can discourage women from remaining in employment or seeking promotions.
- **Discrimination:** Discrimination against women in hiring and compensation continues to exist, as evidenced by audit studies and legal cases.

Examining all of these factors when assessing gender pay gaps in public administrations can ensure that policy responses are effective and appropriately targeted to root causes. Gender pay gaps that stem from gender differences in vertical segregation, for instance, require adjustments to policies that focus on recruitment, retention and promotion processes. By contrast, gender pay gaps that stem from differences in work intensity may require adjustments to policies around overtime, long working hours and flexible working arrangements, for example. In many cases, all of these factors contribute to gender pay gaps in an interrelated fashion, requiring co-ordinated and cohesive policy action on many fronts.

### Box 11. Case study 1: Understanding gender pay gaps in the French civil service

In 2024, on average, gross full-time equivalent earnings for women civil servants were 10.6% less than men civil servants in France. This gap is 4.7 p.p. less than a decade ago. This decline is partly due to an increase in women's working hours and to an increase in the share of women in the highest-paying jobs. Looking exclusively at equivalent jobs, seniority, and working hours, the gender pay gap was 2.2% in 2024, similar to ten years ago.

Regardless of category, women's pay is, on average, lower than men's, even after adjusting for working hours. Gaps range from 6.3% for category C employees to 9.3% for category B employees to 11.5% for category A employees (excluding teachers). Half of these differences can be explained by segregation within the civil service: women are overrepresented in categories with remuneration below the overall average and underrepresented in categories with remuneration above this average. Demographic effects and "premium" effects also play a role.

- **Demographic effects:** Differences in the distribution of women and men across grades and levels within the same profession, interpreted as a "seniority" effect based on differences in internal promotion and career breaks.
- **Premium effects:** Differences in remuneration for the same position, grade and level. These differences have various causes: they may be related to working hours (e.g. overtime), to the place of work (e.g. geographic mobility), or to specific job characteristics (e.g. hardship allowance relating to working on call or on Sunday).

Note: Gross earnings are calculated by adding bonuses and allowances, including those related to overtime pay. Employees are classified into three hierarchical categories (A, B and C) according to educational level and duties. Each category is further subdivided into grades and steps. A salary scale determines earnings for each step, as well as the duration and conditions for advancement.
Source: Direction générale de l'administration et de la fonction publique (2025[42]), *Les écarts de rémunération brute entre les femmes et les hommes fonctionnaires dans les ministères en 2024*.

### Box 12. Case study 2: Decomposing gender pay gaps in New Zealand

The average gender pay gap in New Zealand's public service using annual base salaries was 5.9% in 2025, down from 18.6% in 2000. This aggregate gender pay gap masks significant variation across job categories, age and departments.

- **Job category:** Among policy analysts, gender pay gaps fell from 9.8% to 5.4% between 2000 and 2025, while for managers, gaps fell from 13.7% to 6.4%.
- **Age:** Gender pay gaps tend to increase with age, growing from around zero for those under 35 years of age to 11.7% for those aged 60-64 years.
- **Departments:** Gender pay gaps vary significantly across departments and agencies, ranging from 22.6% in the Ministry of Defence to -5.9% at the Ministry for Children. Differences across departments reflect variations in workforce composition, including whether the department operates in a traditionally men- or women-dominated sector, with traditionally men-dominated occupations often paid more highly than traditionally women-dominated occupations.

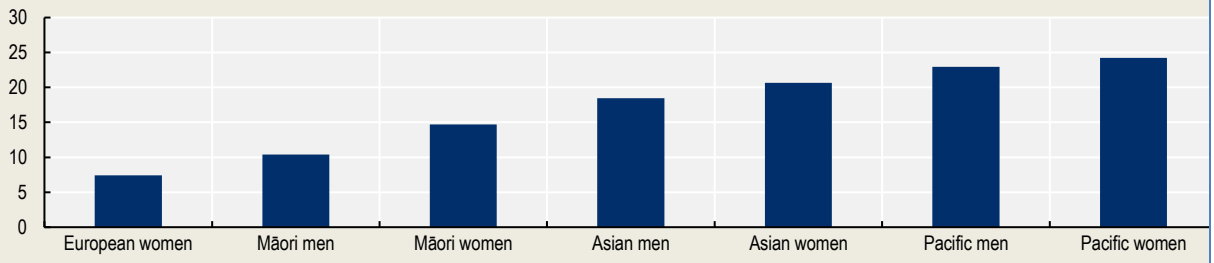
**Going beyond gender: Considering intersectionality in gender pay gaps in public administrations**

Intersecting identities – such as gender, race, and socio-economic status – can generate distinctive forms of disadvantage and contribute to complex, overlapping systems of inequality that call for tailored policy solutions (OECD, 2025[3]). Indeed, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recognises the potential for intersectional experiences of discrimination and notes that legal and policy frameworks must reflect this diversity and tackle the underlying drivers of gender inequality in a comprehensive and integrated manner (UNHR, 1979[43]).

Only a handful of OECD countries regularly collect data that intersect gender with race and ethnicity. Even where such data are collected, limited resources often result in irregular availability, analysis and publication. In some countries, such analyses are not possible due to legal impediments. Governments should review and assess the need to protect individuals against the need to gather critical information for addressing disparities (OECD, 2025[3]). Data on New Zealand's public service demonstrate the power of intersecting identity factors: relative to European men, gender pay gaps are smallest for women of European descent (7.4%) and largest for Māori and Pacific women (24.2%) (Figure 8).

### Figure 8. Public service pay gaps are larger for Māori and Pacific women than for women of European descent in New Zealand

Gender and ethnic pay gap (%), average annual salary relative to European men, 2025




Note: Gender and ethnic pay gaps are defined as the difference between the average annual earnings of European men and a gender-ethnic group relative to the average annual earnings of European men.
Source: Public Service Commission of New Zealand (2025[44]), *Public Service gender pay gap, pay by gender and ethnicity and ethnic pay gaps.*

# Checklist: Priority considerations for measuring and monitoring gender pay gaps in public administrations

Since the process of assessing gender pay gaps requires careful consideration of methodological, contextual and institutional factors, the priority considerations below (framed as key questions) can help guide public administrations in ensuring data collection is robust, analysis is meaningful, and findings translate into actionable policies that promote gender equality in the public sector.

## Data and methodology

1. **What data is available?**
   - If human resources data:
     - Is the data centralised (e.g. one database for the entire public service) or decentralised (e.g. each ministry or department controls their own data)?
     - If decentralised, is there a unit tasked with co-ordination?
     - Are there data quality assurance procedures (e.g. standard protocols for missing data)?
     - Do staff responsible for data entry receive training on data quality and completeness?
   - If survey data:
     - Which survey?
     - How frequently are data updated?
     - What is the sample size?
     - Is data on public administration available in public data tables or public use microdata files?
       - If data on public administration are suppressed, can custom tabulations for public administration be requested from the data controller or owner?
2. **What variables are available in the data?**
   - If multiple data sources are available, answer these questions for each data source.

### Table 2. Hypothetical example of data availability across data sources

| | Human Resources Data | Labour Force Survey Data |
|---|---|---|
| Basic demographics | Yes: Age, job tenure | Yes: Age, gender, job tenure, education, marital status |
| Job information | Yes: Job title, grade, level, occupational category | Yes: Industry, occupational category |
| Organisational situation | Yes: Department, branch, division, unit | |
| Working time | Yes: Contractual working hours | Yes: Usual hours worked, actual hours worked |
| Contract status | Yes | Yes |

| | Human Resources Data | Labour Force Survey Data |
|---|---|---|
| Compensation | Yes: Annual base salary, annual bonuses | Yes: Gross hourly wages |
| Reference period | December | Monthly |
| Other relevant variables | Yes: Non-wage benefits (i.e. paid leave, pension) | |

Source: OECD Secretariat.

3. **Are any key variables necessary to measurement or high-quality analysis missing from the available data?**
   - If important key variables are missing, is it possible to link pay information to other data sources via personal identifiers to fill in data gaps?
     - If it is possible to link via personal identifiers, what protocols are in place to ensure only authorised personnel are accessing and using such data (e.g. restricted systems or data centres)?
   - If data limitations cannot be overcome through linkages, what steps will be taken to improve data availability over time?
4. **What measurement choices are possible with the available data? What is the structure of the available data?**
   - What is the reference period (e.g. December, fiscal year)?
   - How can earnings be measured (e.g. hourly, weekly, monthly, annual)? Is it possible to present multiple time spans using complementary information available in the dataset (e.g. hourly wages combined with hours and week worked or vice versa)?
   - How are earnings defined?
   - Is it possible to present information for full-time and part-time employees separately? If so, how is full-time defined?
   - Which employee groups are included (e.g. temporary, part-time, permanent, contract, interns, apprentices)?
   - What part(s) of the public administration does this analysis cover (e.g. central government, local government, public agencies)?
   - How is job information standardised (e.g. ISIC, job codes, job titles, grades)?

### Box 13. Analysing pay gaps

Governments use different ways in which to analyse gender pay gaps, accounting for different variables to get a handle on horizontal and vertical segregation, job classifications, and pay systems within public administrations.

For example, the Ministry of Finance in Finland calculates an equal pay index.

- Average equal-pay index (A) [(average pay of women / average pay of men) * 100] = 90.8 – difference of 9.2 p.p.
- On basis of the government pay classification system, earnings are categorised in eight different “job demand levels” for which an equal pay index is calculated (B) = 93.7
- Average pay gap index within the same job demand level and within the same agency (C) = 99.0

This then can be used to calculate indicators of vertical segregation – due to men and women working in different "job demand levels") in and horizontal segregation – due to men and women in different pay levels for similar jobs in different agencies.

- Vertical segregation; (B – A): 93.7 – 90.8 = 2.9
- Horizontal segregation (C – B): 99.0 – 93.7 – 5.3
- Unexplained difference: 92 – 2.9 – 5.3 = 1.0

The Belgian Federal authorities calculate average gender pay gaps for statutory and contractual staff based on a sample of about 30 000 staffers with information on range of variables such as age, contractual status, working hours, salary scale and grade. Results indicate that the gender pay gap is related to the overrepresentation of women in the lowest grade, amongst part-time workers and among contractual staff. Publication of the results is scheduled for 2026.

The Spanish authorities have developed a pay register for public employers that was developed by Ministries of Labour and Equality and the Social partners. (Vicepresidencia Segunda del Gobierno. Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social, 2025[45]). The pay register is compiled by each public employer using internal microdata on which the tool can generate mean and median pay gaps per job classification level as disaggregated by pay components. In case of pay audits, the tool can generate "equal value" groupings as operationalised through objective job evaluation criteria, including skills, responsibility and working conditions. As part of the transparency framework, worker's representatives have access to aggregate results.

There are many different tools on calculating gender pay gaps available, but the Eual Pay Internation Coalition (EPIC) (2026[46]) has awarded the Logib pay system – developed by the Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality – the "EPIC Good Practice" label. Logib uses a job evaluation method which takes requirements and demands of job functions into account to design a clear and structured pay system in order to reduce the risk of pay discrimination. Logib has two modules, one for companies with 50 employees or more, and one for smaller enterprises. The Logib pay system is available free of charge and relevant information, including examples guidelines and supporting documentation is available in four languages (Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, 2024[47]).

Sources: Federal Public Service Policy and Support, Belgium; Ministry of Finance, Finland; and Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Instituto de Investigaciones Feministas, Spain.

***Ownership versus analysis***

5. **Who controls the data (e.g. central agency, individual departments and agencies, NSO)?**
6. **Who has the mandate and technical capacity for analysis?**
    - If centralised human resources data, is there a current staff member, unit or team with the technical capacity for analysis?
    - If de-centralised human resources data:
        - Is there sufficient technical capacity in all reporting departments and agencies?
        - Who decides on common guidelines and standardised tools for reporting across departments and agencies (e.g. central unit or external body)?
        - What protocols are in place to ensure consistent and coherent reporting across entities
        - (e.g. regular training)?
        - What oversight mechanisms exist to assess implementation, coherence and co-ordination across departments and agencies (e.g. central unit or external body)?

- If the answers to Question 5 and Question 6 differ, what procedures are in place to ensure that data is transferred between the data controller and the data users securely and confidentially?

***Management***

7. **Is there a dedicated budget for monitoring gender pay gaps?**
8. **Is reporting on gender pay gaps legally required? If not, what systems are in place to ensure regular and continuous reporting of gender pay gaps?**
9. **What role might an external oversight body play in implementation (e.g. audit, review, assessment, training, co-ordination, publishing)?**

***Data protection***

10. **What protocols and disclosure control procedures are in place to protect confidentiality of employee data (e.g. anonymisation, suppression, aggregation, minimum cell size reporting requirements)?**
11. **Are analysts trained or briefed on such protocols?**
12. **What procedures are in place to ensure only authorised personnel have access to and can analyse identifiable data (e.g. restricted systems or data centres)?**

***Publication***

13. **How and where will results be made public (e.g. annual report, open data portal, etc.)?**
14. **What protocols (e.g. metadata, technical report, endnotes) are in place to ensure clarity and transparency around published gender pay gaps (e.g. definitions used, sampling choices)?**
15. **How will results be used to inform pay practices and policy change (e.g. working group, pay committee)?**
16. **How can results be tied to existing workforce planning or reporting? What alignment opportunities might exist with workforce diversity strategies?**

# Operational Guidance: a step-by-step approach in identifying and, where necessary, developing indicators on gender pay gaps

1. Go through the Checklist.
2. If **administrative data is available** (for the whole civil service or the department), then append the earnings data by gender for all available staff and calculate the gender pay gap ($GPG$) as:

$$GPG = \left(\frac{ME - WE}{ME}\right) \cdot 100$$

   where $ME$ is a measure of men's earnings and $WE$ is a measure of women's earnings.

   - Depending on the nature of available data and the sample size, payroll data can be fed into a statistical software package (e.g. R, Stata, SAS, SPSS) and used to calculate different GPG indicators at different points in the earnings distribution (e.g. at the mean, at the median, or at earnings deciles or quintiles) for:
     - different variables,
     - time spans and reference periods (hourly, monthly, annual earnings),
     - different types of earnings (e.g. bonuses),
     - type of employees covered (full-time civil servants, and/or temporary staff staff),
     - age-group,
     - or any other pertinent information that the data source may hold (e.g. educational attainment, length of tenure).

   See Checklist items 2 and 3, as well as Table 2 in the Checklist for an overview of relevant considerations.

3. Whatever the calculations covering whichever variable, it is critical to be **transparent** about **samples and calculation variables (see above)**. Sample sizes must also be sufficiently large. For example, a tabulation should be based on at least ten [10] observations. (Ritchie, 2021[48]) If not, the calculations are not robust enough for use or publication and could create data protection and privacy concerns.
4. In practical terms, country contexts will determine issues around **data control** (item 5), **technical capacity** (item 6), **management of indicator development** (items 7, 8, and 9), and **publication** of results (items 13, 14, 15 and 16).
5. Regardless of the data source, considerations on privacy are paramount and must be adhered to. See **Data Protection** Checklist items, 10, 11 and 12.

6. If only **survey-based data** are available (e.g. from labour force surveys or household surveys or another microdata set), then GPGs can be calculated as above. Departments or agencies responsible for reporting GPGs in the civil service should work with national statistical organisations (NSOs) to identify the most appropriate surveys for the purpose of calculating GPGs in the public sector (or public administration). NSOs can also support in the analysis of data and publication of results.

   Compared to administrative data, survey-based data present several drawbacks. For this reason, survey-based data should only be used as a temporary measure of GPGs until administrative datasets can be organised, developed, identified and/or analysed. See section titled “Survey data” for more details on the limitation of survey data.

7. If **no data source** is available, then new data must be developed.
   - Developing administrative datasets and/or data sources should be the priority. Depending on governmental structure and organisation, such administrative data may be controlled centrally by a single department (e.g. treasury) or by individual government agencies or departments. Since government employees are being paid, such administrative data are available and should be leveraged. Information on employee characteristics (see Table 2 in Checklist for example variables) often features in the same administrative dataset as pay and earnings or can be linked or merged using employee IDs. This can be done is various statistical packages, which can also be used to calculate the desired indicators. As above, sample sizes are critical.

8. To **develop an administrative dataset**, governments will need to consider who controls the data.
   - If a single central agency (e.g. treasury) controls data on employees, this entity can either maintain responsibility for the calculations and reporting or give responsibility for calculation and reporting to another department or agency, bearing in mind the secure transfer of information (see Checklist item 6).
   - If individual departments or agencies control their own data on employees, a single central agency may consider developing a cross-government reporting system. Many cross-government reporting systems exist in all OECD countries. Such reporting systems can be used as guide should such a system need to be developed. Important considerations include the development of technical guidance and reporting guidelines, the identification of responsible person(s) in each department, the creation of a (technical) working group, and the co-ordination of a reporting schedule, etc.
   - Under such decentralised reporting systems, individual departments or agencies can report their own GPGs or securely transfer employee data to the co-ordinating body.

9. Avoid developing survey-based data.

   Developing survey-based data should be avoided. Developing high-quality survey-based data is expensive, and administrative records are already available. Governmental resources (e.g. time and funding) should therefore be used to develop, organise, compile and/or co-ordinate an administrative dataset. In addition, to ensure the representativeness of survey-based data, governments would need to compare such data to administrative records, which ultimately defeats the purpose of developing a survey.

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## Notes

[1] General government includes all levels of government (i.e. central, state, local and social security funds), core ministries, agencies, departments and non-profit institutions controlled by public authorities.

# Measuring and monitoring gender wage gaps in public administrations

Gender pay gaps are a critical manifestation of gender inequalities in the labour market, reflecting a range of differential outcomes and factors facing men and women today: gender gaps in unpaid work, gender differences in occupations, women's underrepresentation in leadership, discrimination, and beyond. Gender pay gaps also help to predict gender inequalities tomorrow, including gender gaps in pensions and in old-age poverty. As of 2024, many countries noted the presence of an indicator, target or goal relating to the gender pay gap in their gender equality strategies, frameworks and/or action plans and many countries encourage or mandate pay transparency among employers. Recent legislative advances in the European Union (EU), such as the EU Pay Transparency Directive (2023/970/EU), make systematic monitoring of gender gaps in earnings a legal obligation across Member States. Across OECD countries, employment in general government reaches almost 20%, making the government as an employer well placed to lead by example and set the standard for fairness, equality and transparency. This technical paper provides key recommendations for pay gap reporting for public administrations.