

**Gender Architecture in Scotland: A Discussion  
Paper by Communities Analysis Division  
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Ltd**

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# 1. Introduction

The First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG) was established in 2018 to advise the First Minister on what is needed to tackle gender inequality in Scotland. During 2020, the NACWG explored the topic of 'Creating an Intersectional Gender Architecture – the status of women in Scotland, structures and intersectionality'. They published their 2020 report and recommendations in January 2021, alongside reports from previous years.

In developing their thinking around gender architecture during 2020, the NACWG supplemented their own thinking and circle discussions with an analytical paper from the Scottish Government outlining the current gender architecture and commissioned external research. The commissioned research was undertaken by an independent research consultancy, Rocket Science UK Ltd. The commissioned research included three key elements; a literature review, primary research interviews with Scottish informants and secondary analysis of international case study examples chosen based on an initial scan of the literature.

This discussion paper brings together evidence from the literature alongside the findings of the commissioned research to further supplement the evidence base around gender architecture. Given its origins in work by the NACWG, much of this paper articulates the space for change and improvement in gender architecture, rather than examining and challenging the existing practices, processes and structures of Scottish institutions. It should therefore be seen as a contribution to the broader evidence base, but by itself it does not attempt to provide a fully rounded picture of the effectiveness of gender architecture in Scotland.

The paper is divided into 6 sections:

- [Section 1](#) provides an introduction.
- [Section 2](#) summarises what is meant by an intersectional gender architecture.
- [Section 3](#) describes the current gender architecture in Scotland and provides

insights into its effectiveness.

- [Section 4](#) summarises international models of gender architecture with [Annex A](#) providing detailed case studies.
- [Section 5](#) looks at international accountability frameworks and implications of these for Scottish institutions with Annex B providing detail.
- [Section 6](#) provides a brief conclusion and notes the value and many limitations of the work.

## 2. Defining an Intersectional Gender Architecture

The words ‘intersectional’ and ‘gender architecture’ are not words in every day usage. This section draws on a range of literature to explain how the terms are used when considered in Scottish gender discourse and applied to the organisation of Scottish institutions and society.

### 2.1 Gender architecture

The definition of gender architecture used by the NACWG is:

**“the governance structures put in place to tackle gender inequality and discrimination”<sup>1</sup>**

Governance structures<sup>2</sup> are found in all institutions and organisations in Scottish society – they determine the structures, decision making processes and authorising environments through which policies and services are determined. This governance pattern within an organisation may or may not include a positive gender architecture that seeks to articulate the impact on women and promote equality. Where there is a positive gender architecture, the governance structures will set the objectives for gender equality and establish an accountability mechanism to ensure that the types of policies, processes and actions that are implemented achieve the stated objectives.

At a national level the gender architecture is a combination of individual governance structures for a range of organisations. In its broadest sense, each governance structure will set the strategic planning, risk and performance management for their

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<sup>1</sup> First Minister’s National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, “Gender Architecture”, May 2020, [Advisory-Council-on-Women-and-Girls-Gender-Architecture.pdf \(onescotland.org\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> “Governance: what is it and why is it important?”, *Governance Today*, (2020), [Governance: what is it and why is it important? \(governancetoday.com\)](#)

own organisations. Depending on the objectives set, the governance structures can individually have positive, negative or neutral impacts on gender equality. But even if there are individual good examples<sup>3</sup>, the key for the effectiveness and accountability of the architecture is how they work and function together to make systemic changes.

Given this definition, the governance structures that can be considered to create the gender architecture need to be reasonably permanent features of a country's governance, rather than short-term initiatives. While all governance structures are subject to change in the long term (laws, public bodies and ministerial portfolios can all change and evolve over time), governance structures in a gender architecture should be designed and implemented with the intention that they will be in place for a significant and non-limited period of time.

It should be noted that there is no single, universally agreed definition of 'gender architecture', nor is the term widely used or understood in the Scottish equality policy context. In its broadest sense, 'gender architecture' could refer to any structures impacting on social policy which then impact on women. For example, it could include policies that have developed from the architecture, such as the [Equally Safe](#) framework in Scotland.<sup>4</sup> But, as Walby and colleagues note, "stretching the concept of equality architecture to include all government policy would render the concept less meaningful and less useful in practice".<sup>5</sup> Following Walby et al., the term chosen by the NACWG restricts the notion of architecture to those governmental bodies that

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<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government accepted the 2018 recommendation by the NACWG to create a gender beacon collaborative including Scottish Government, a local authority, a public body and a third sector agency to take a holistic and systemic approach to gender equality. This work is ongoing. [Scottish Government's Response to the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Equally Safe: national strategy - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> Sylvia Walby, Jo Armstrong and Sofia Strid, "Intersectionality and the Quality of the Gender Equality Architecture", December 2012, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, Volume 19, Issue 4, Winter 2012, Pages 446–481, [Intersectionality and the Quality of the Gender Equality Architecture | Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)

have an explicit remit to address equality issues, and in this case issues specifically relating to gender.

This paper concentrates on the national gender architecture in Scotland. A range of policy-making structures (systems and processes) will also exist at a local level through local authorities, health boards and community planning partnerships. The extent to which there is a gender architecture at a local level will be just as important to the ultimate aim of progressing gender equality throughout Scotland, as it is at a national level. This matter is not covered in this paper but is identified as a clear gap that would benefit from future work.

## 2.2 Intersectionality

Intersectionality is defined in the Oxford dictionary as the

**“interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage”.**<sup>6</sup>

The term intersectionality was first defined in a 1989 academic paper by Kimberlé Crenshaw to express the double discrimination faced by Black women in America.<sup>7</sup> She described how they face the simultaneous discrimination of sexism and racism (and therefore gendered racism, or racist sexism). Subsequent feminist analysis emerged through criticisms of White feminism for its failure to meaningfully engage with race, class and other social divisions among women.

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<sup>6</sup> [intersectionality, n. : Oxford English Dictionary \(oed.com\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> K. Crenshaw, 1989. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, Issue 1: 139-167. Available at: [Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics \(uchicago.edu\)](#) [accessed 23 June 2020].

This need for a more strategic intersectional approach has been made even clearer by the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, and on minority ethnic women, young women, disabled women and lone parents in particular, as well as by the recent growing awareness of intersecting racial injustice in Scotland and beyond, partly as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement.<sup>8</sup>

In their 2019 report and recommendations, the NACWG define intersectionality as:

**“a framework for understanding how multiple categories of identity ... interact in ways that create complex systems of oppression and power”.**<sup>9</sup>

## **2.3 An intersectional gender architecture**

Based on the definitions set out above, an intersectional gender architecture could be defined as:

**“Governance structures put in place to tackle gender inequality and discrimination in a way that takes account of how gender interacts with multiple other categories of identity to create complex systems of oppression and power”.**

However, this definition highlights an underlying tension between a desire to see people as a combination of multiple identities and power systems, and the desire for a strong single lens to lead a pragmatic governance structure that will be able to progress outcomes and pursue accountability. In essence, it becomes hard to measure outcomes and hold governance bodies accountable for outcomes without grouping people in some way.

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<sup>8</sup> Scottish Government, Housing and Social Justice Directorate, Coronavirus (COVID-19): impact on equality (research), 17 September 2020, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): impact on equality \(research\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Coronavirus-(COVID-19):-impact-on-equality-(research)-gov.scot)

<sup>9</sup> First Minister’s National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, “2019 Report and Recommendations”, [NACWG-2019-Report-and-Recommendations.pdf \(onescotland.org\)](https://www.onescotland.org/NACWG-2019-Report-and-Recommendations.pdf)

The Equality Act (2010) streamlined legislation in the UK, bringing different aspects of identity into one Act. Provisions incorporate overarching protection of women's rights, and legislate against discrimination on the grounds of sex and eight other 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. This has tended to lead to organisations adopting approaches where impact assessments, training and guidance refer to all protected groups within a broad equality framework.

Progressing an equality mainstreamed architecture, as is currently the approach in Scotland, could be seen to have a better chance of encapsulating multiple identities than a single focus gender architecture. However, in practice, there is a dilemma; in focussing on a mainstreamed architecture it becomes too complex and broad to actually make progress for either individual protected characteristics or those at the intersection. Alternatively, centring the initial architecture on single characteristics, no matter how intersectional the subsequent analysis is, will likely attract criticism of why one characteristic is seen as more important than others.

In the above definition, the 'way in' to the issue is through gender; others will argue that the 'way in' should be race or disability or socio-economic disadvantage. As discussed in the remainder of this paper, this tension is felt domestically and internationally and is, in practice, difficult to resolve.

Some academic literature attempts to further examine these issues; Hancock 2007, offered a threefold typology of the relations between multiple inequalities: **unitary** (one inequality treated as dominant), **multiple** (many equalities treated as stable additive categories) and **intersectional** (where categories are fluid and mutually constitutive).<sup>10</sup> Walby et al., 2012 stated that increasingly the latter 'mutually constitutive' notion is becoming the commonly accepted approach, but that this is

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<sup>10</sup> Hancock Ange-Marie. When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm, *Perspectives on Politics*, 2007, vol. 5 1 (pg. 63-79)

not necessarily helpful for policy analysis because a focus on the individual can work against a focus on wider structural inequalities. Instead they identify six intersectional policy analysis models based on evidence reviews of practice, as summarised in Table 1 below.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 1.** Walby et al.’s typology of intersectional policy analysis models.

Model	Description
Single	All inequalities are categorised and examined according to their single over-arching inequality (such as gender).
Assymetric	One inequality is treated as dominant with others treated as secondary.
Parallel	Multiple inequalities are treated as separate and distinct, and are addressed by different policies, laws and agencies.
Additive	Disadvantage is clearly identified as cumulative for groups that suffer multiple inequalities.
Mutual constitution	Groups at intersections are seen as uniquely constructed categories.
Mutual shaping	While effects of one inequality on other inequalities may be discerned, the separate systems of inequality remain.

Walby et al. argue that none of the models should be dismissed because they may hold relevance in different contexts, but propose that the most useful model for policy analysis is ‘mutual shaping’. In the case of ‘mutual shaping’ there would be a system to tackle discrimination by a single protected characteristic (such as by gender or by race or by disability), but there is an effort to identify the unique effect of one inequality on other strands, such as the intersecting impact of being a minority ethnic woman over and above the impact of either race or sex on their own. Further, continuing with the example of a minority ethnic woman, there is an importance then placed on ensuring that policy and practice recognises and

<sup>11</sup> [Intersectionality and the Quality of the Gender Equality Architecture | Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)

responds to the different reality for a woman with an intersectional identity. This 'mutual shaping' approach can be seen as the model that is most likely to result from a highly competent equality mainstreamed approach.

However, while seeming a reasonable approach for some policy analysis, it is not clear how well this would work in practice for multiple identities, nor how satisfactory the results would be because "intersectionality is not simply about more grounds of discrimination but points to a completely different kind of discrimination that is deeper, more obscure and more complex".<sup>12</sup> This issue is difficult to resolve and is returned to throughout this paper.

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<sup>12</sup> Lyiola Solanke based on blog post [Tackling multiple discrimination: Delivering equality in the 21st century | Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(lse.ac.uk\)](#)

### 3. Assessing the Accountability and Effectiveness of Scotland’s Gender Architecture

The key elements of Scotland and the UK’s national gender architecture were set out in a Scottish Government report published in 2020 and for ease are summarised in Table 2 below.<sup>13</sup> As the description of elements of the gender architecture shows, Scotland has a wide range of equality structures but no elements that are solely and specifically targeted at gender inequality.

**Table 2.** Comparison of the key elements of the gender architecture in Scotland and UK.

Element of Gender Architecture	Scotland	UK
Distinct ministries for gender	Partial, dedicated Minister with cross portfolio responsibility but for equality rather than gender.	Partial, there is a nominated Minister for women and equalities but this is combined with other duties (not fixed).
Independent oversight of gender	Partial. Oversight exists but as part of mainstreamed oversight by Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC).	Partial. Oversight exists but as part of mainstreamed oversight by Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). EHRC is funded by UK Government.
Dedicated parliamentary Committees for gender	Partial, mainstreamed oversight with Equality Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee.	Yes, the Women and Equalities Commons Select committee
Gender focal point networks in government civil service	Yes, gender equality team based within broader Equality, Human Rights and Inclusion Directorate.	Yes, based within the broader Government Equalities Office.
Gender focal point networks in Parliament	No, there are various cross-party groups working on issues related to women, but there doesn’t appear to be a single network dedicated to women.	Yes, the All-Party ‘Women in Parliament’ Group focuses on removing barriers to women entering parliament and progressing to senior positions.

<sup>13</sup> [Advisory-Council-on-Women-and-Girls-Gender-Architecture.pdf \(onescotland.org\)](https://www.onescotland.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Advisory-Council-on-Women-and-Girls-Gender-Architecture.pdf)

Element of Gender Architecture	Scotland	UK
Institutionalised gender budgeting	Partial, through practice of mainstreamed equality and human rights budgeting but with no statutory backing other than Public Sector Equality Duty.	No.
Anti-discrimination legislation	Yes, as part of Equality Act 2010, Scottish Specific Duties and <a href="#">new commitments</a> <sup>14</sup> to introduce Human Rights treaties into domestic law.	Yes, Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty and Human Rights Act 1998.

This section provides some insights into the effectiveness of Scotland’s gender architecture based on interviews carried out through the Rocket Science commission<sup>15</sup>, supplemented by secondary analysis of literature and considerations from the international models discussed in [Section 4](#). Rocket Science carried out a small sample of interviews with representatives of stakeholder groups interested in articulating the need for change. Knowledge and understanding is currently relatively limited so these should only be seen as insights rather than robust conclusions.

Across the national gender architecture and from the above limited evidence sources, a number of considerations were identified:

- the lack of gender-focussed resourced structures;
- the disparate approach to intersectionality and lack of diverse voices heard;
- the lack of intersectional data;

<sup>14</sup> [New Human Rights Bill - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

<sup>15</sup> This provides a view from the 12 women from third sector organisations, public sector or academic organisations who were interviewed to give their ‘expert’ opinion. In many cases these views related to gender inequality more broadly rather than linked to the effectiveness of elements of the architecture. Literature was used to supplement interviews but there was limited evidence available by which to evaluate governance structures rather than the policies or legislation that emerge from them. Hence, this is a partial view and should be seen as insights rather than a robust evidence base.

- the lack of gendered rather than equality budgeting;
- the perceived lack of measurable progress on outcomes.

These are discussed in more detail in the remainder of this section.

### **3.1 The lack of gender-focussed resourced structures**

A first gap for Scottish gender architecture was the apparent lack of **gender-focussed structures** within the architecture, especially when compared to the international case studies.

As noted in Section 2.3, the drive for an equality mainstreamed approach in Scotland derives from the **Equality Act 2010**, which is the statutory cornerstone of the UK and Scotland’s gender architecture. The **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)** was introduced by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It “obliges proactive due regard for equality issues across the daily work of all public authorities”.<sup>16</sup> ‘Due regard’ to the duties must be demonstrated, and public authorities are required to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different protected groups;
- foster good relations between different protected groups.

The Scottish Parliament cannot modify the PSED. However, Section 153 of the Equality Act 2010 enables Ministers in England, Wales and Scotland to impose ‘specific duties’ to strengthen and enhance the general duties placed on public bodies. In Scotland, this has taken the form of a separate act of parliament, The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

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<sup>16</sup> This ‘general duty’ applies to over 40,000 public authorities across Great Britain, and to all their decisions ‘including policy formation, budget setting, procurement, service delivery and employment’. Private and third sector organisations that are performing public functions are also subject to the duty.

The Scotland Specific Duties are designed to create an additional layer of accountability, and to improve the “implementation of the public sector equality duty by requiring enhanced data collection and evaluation, as well as greater transparency and accountability”.<sup>17</sup> They require Scottish public bodies to:

“mainstream equality into all of their functions; do equality impact assessment; gather, analyse and use employee data disaggregated by protected characteristic; develop equality outcomes, and report on progress to deliver these; publish their gender pay gap; and publish an equal pay statement, including occupational segregation information, by gender, race and disability”.<sup>18</sup>

There is a considerable range of literature around the effectiveness of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. A recent report, published by Scottish Government and based on engagement across the public sector, has completed a first phase review of the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland.<sup>19</sup> The second phase of work will look in more detail at future improvements to the PSED and the Scottish Specific Duties. This work is likely to be important in the development of effective gender architecture in Scotland but the arguments included in that report are not repeated here.

The duty to mainstream equality is unique to Scotland and aims to make equality a routine objective across all public sector activity. As a result there are a range of equality-focussed structures (as set out in Table 2), but even in these structures, as the below insight from an interviewee illustrates, the effectiveness of the architecture for gender equality is often perceived to rely on the competence of individuals and

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<sup>17</sup> Dr Graham Long et al, “The SDGs and Scotland: a discussion paper and initial analysis”, 2019. [SDG-Discussion-paper-February-2019.pdf \(globalgoals.scot\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> Close The Gap, “Response to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee’s Race equality, employment and skills inquiry”, June 2020. [Close-the-Gap-response-to-Equalities-and-Human-Rights-Committee---Race-equality-employment-and-Skills-June-2020.pdf \(closethegap.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021: Mainstreaming Report \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

diversity of people in power rather than resourced structures and effective governance.

**“[The PSED is] really great until you get to the part that says but what if I don’t wanna? There’s no sanction for that. There needs to be an incentive for people to follow it. It needs to be more than gestures, there needs to be force behind it.”**

### **3.2 The disparate approach to intersectionality and perceived lack of diverse voices heard**

The second concern raised about the Scottish gender architecture related to **who** is represented on and feeding into this architecture. Literature and interviewees both highlighted a lack of understanding and engagement with intersectionality, and a lack of consensus on its meaning by actors in the equality architecture. As a result there was a view that the architecture worked mainly in the interests of relatively privileged women rather than those who were marginalised.<sup>20</sup> As two interviewees commented:

**“if you only ever talk to the people that you know, you will only ever know what you already know. That is something that needs to be taken to heart in how governance structures are built by the Scottish Government... they need to expand the number of people that they are talking to and listening to if they want to learn new things and have new ideas. It’s about building structures that are intersectional, it’s about breaking down the siloes of the individual characteristics and sharing.”**

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<sup>20</sup> Christoffersen, *Researching Intersectionality*; Olena Hankivsky and Ashlee Christoffersen, 2011. “Gender mainstreaming in the United Kingdom: Current issues and future challenges” *British Politics* 6, 1: 30-51.; Hankivsky, de Merich and Christoffersen, *Equalities Devolved*; Olena Hankivsky, 2005. “Gender Vs. Diversity Mainstreaming: A Preliminary Examination Of The Role And Transformative Potential Of Feminist Theory”. *Canadian Journal Of Political Science* 38 (4): 977-1001. doi:10.1017/s0008423905040783.

**“it’s almost that we are expected to agree with the policy. [The EqIA] is not [done] early enough that they engage people to genuinely shape the course that a policy takes. It can feel disempowering to be invited along to check a box. We need to be able to shape things so that it works for Muslim women, women of colour, disabled women, autistic women... just in general in terms of strategy to genuinely consult with women is what is needed. Co-designing conversations with women and learning and sharing information, ways of thinking. You can’t ethically shape something without doing it at the beginning... It feels like questions are being asked but they know the answers that they want. People know when they are being shut down and ignored”.**

### **3.3 The lack of intersectional data**

A third area of criticism relates to, and compounds, the perceived lack of intersectional voices with the lack of **intersectional gendered data** to monitor outcomes and service improvements. This has become increasingly high profile over the last 12 months with the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting significant data gaps as public bodies tried to evidence and tackle apparent inequality in health, social and economic outcomes.<sup>21</sup> Although gender data is often available from large surveys, intersectional data is less common due to low sample sizes. As one interviewee noted, with regards to the disaggregation of data:

**“The small sample numbers are a problem. If you run a large survey and the result is that 98% of people are happy then you won’t notice the 2% and why it doesn’t work for them – their experiences disappear.”**

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<sup>21</sup> [Public sector - understanding equality data collection: executive summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/understanding-equality-data-collection-executive-summary/pages/10.aspx)

There have been calls from many groups for significant improvements in data collection, analysis, reporting and use including from a recommendation from the [NACWG in 2019](#) for “adequate resourcing to enable the collection and analysis of robust intersectional data” and the recommendations of the [Expert Reference Group on Covid-19 and Ethnicity](#). The latter recommended that health data should be improved and that “the National Performance Framework must include analysis and narrative on disparities for minority ethnic people within all progress reporting”.<sup>22 23</sup>

### **3.4 The lack of gendered rather than equality budgeting**

A fourth issue raised was the **lack of institutionalised gender budgeting** in Scotland. The Equality Budget Statement, now renamed [the Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement](#) (EFSBS)<sup>24</sup>, was relatively progressive within the UK when it began in Scotland in 2009, and its annual publication since then can be seen as highlighting the continued commitment of the Scottish Government to considering the impact of the Scottish Budget through an equality lens. However, there have been criticisms, which are acknowledged in the budget documents, that it could do more to show how revenue is raised and how the budget is spent on improving outcomes for equality groups including women. There also does not seem to be a strong mandate for committees to consider gender in their evaluation and assessments of how effectively money is spent within their portfolio.<sup>25</sup> The Equality

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<sup>22</sup> [National Advisory Council on Women and Girls \(NACWG\) 2019 - report and recommendations: SG response - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity: recommendations to Scottish Government - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Scottish Budget 2021-2022: Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget statement - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Scottish budget process - animation - Visit & Learn : Scottish Parliament](#)

Budget Advisory Group produced a set of recommendations in July 2021 aiming to improve equality and human rights budgeting in Scotland.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.5 The perceived lack of measurable progress on outcomes

A final consideration is that, according to a [report](#) by the main scrutiny body EHRC in 2018, there was limited evidence that the current equality architecture was making marked differences in outcomes for any of the protected characteristics, including for women and girls.<sup>27</sup> Engender noted in their [RoadMap](#), for example, that “there have been only limited, marginal, and project-based attempts to tackle components of girls and women’s inequality in education”, with the PSED having made “no discernible difference to education and skills practice or outcomes”.<sup>28</sup> This was further reinforced in 2018, when a [report](#) by the First Minister’s Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership noted that with regard to the PSED:

**“Many public bodies appear to have approached the duties in more of an administrative or procedural manner instead of being focused on improving outcomes. This may be due to a number of factors including whether there were appropriate reporting requirements, guidance and incentives to operationalise the duty.”<sup>29</sup>**

### 3.6 Section summary

This section of the paper has identified that many key elements of gender architecture are in place in Scotland. This includes the streamlined Equality

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<sup>26</sup> [Equality Budget Advisory Group: recommendations for equality and human rights budgeting - 2021-2026 parliamentary session - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>27</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, (2018), Effectiveness of the PSED Specific Duties in Scotland: [Effectiveness of the PSED Specific Duties in Scotland | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Engender | Gender Matters](#)

<sup>29</sup> [First-Ministers-Advisory-Group-on-Human-Rights-Leadership-Final-report-for-publication.pdf](#)

legislation and Public Sector Equality Duty, and the presence and commitment to structural elements (government department with equality policy remit, ministerial offices, parliamentary committees, independent oversight bodies) that progress, scrutinise and seek compliance of policy and legislation. However, the effectiveness of this structure was considered to be curtailed by a range of issues around resources, data, compliance, capability, intersectionality and the thorny issue of resolving and showing accountable progress in gender aims and outcomes within a broader equality framework.

## 4. Lessons from International Models of Gender Architecture

This section considers international examples of elements of gender architecture and accountability frameworks to see if there are lessons which could benefit Scotland.

### 4.1 Lessons from international models of aspects of gender architecture

Following a scan of the literature, Rocket Science selected four countries with aspects of gender architectures that may have messages or lessons for Scotland. A summary is provided below and [Annex A](#) provides further details of the case studies. An assessment of the architecture is included in each case study.

- In **Canada**, their Gender Based Analysis (GBA) has been mainstreamed throughout government and is supported by investment in training and infrastructure. The GBA is conceived as a strategy and a tool, as it represents both the policy analysis tool used to increase gender equality through federal government policies and programmes, and the strategy used to raise awareness of the importance of gender as an organising principle. In 2011, the expansion to Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) signified the government's commitment to ensuring a more intersectional approach to inequality. Detail in the case study identifies that this approach has been well resourced and mainstreamed. However, some critics consider the 'addition' of other minorities to the original women-focused agenda to be incompatible with the concept of intersectionality, which does not centre any one group.
- **Sweden** consistently ranks highly in gender equality indicators, with the Swedish Government declaring itself to be a feminist government in 2014. Strong mainstreaming and budgeting processes are highlighted, supported by extensive data. However, the case study presents an example of a country

where a focus on improving women’s equality has not necessarily translated to other groups, emphasising the need for dedicated measures to ensure intersectional policymaking and practice.

- In **South Africa**, the governing ANC (African National Congress) party's use of parliamentary quotas has led to levels of female representation currently among the highest in the world. However, the case study shows that where gender parity commitments are linked to individual parties, there is a risk of progress backsliding with changes in administration. Observers have also noted a narrowing of ideological interests represented by the women elected.
- **South Korea** is one of ten OECD countries to have made its gender budgeting practices legally binding, which has made it a more established process that cannot be interrupted by short-term political changes. The case study explains how compulsory training for government officials on how to complete a gender budget statement reduces the risk that gender budgeting will not be considered across all areas of government.

This section of the report looks across the case studies to identify key lessons that might be helpful for assessing and developing Scotland’s gender architecture.

**Table 3.** Overview of factors that could be of relevance to the Scottish gender architecture mapped to the international case studies.

Factor	International Case Study
Timescales for change	All
Importance of gender budgeting	Canada, Sweden, South Korea
Intersectional approach	South Africa, Canada, Sweden
Need for Data frameworks	Sweden
Importance of feminist activist networks	Sweden, South Africa

Across the international case studies there are a number of factors which could be of relevance to the Scottish gender architecture. These are discussed below.

## 4.2 Timescales for change

It is clear from each case study that the origins for change are highly diverse but that once initial steps were made, it has required significant time and commitment for processes to embed and to take effect. In Sweden and Canada the gender architecture has grown incrementally over time since the late 1970s, but key progress steps were still being made in recent years with the mandating of Canada's GBA+ system in 2009 and its expansion to include men and gender-diverse people in 2011, and the establishment of a Swedish Gender Equality Agency in 2018. In South Korea, however, the process was slightly shorter, moving quickly to a statutory gendering budgeting position, perhaps due to having international practice to build on.

## 4.3 Importance of gender budgeting approaches

The case studies of Canada, Sweden and South Korea clearly show the role that gender budgeting can have in challenging policy and budget decisions and driving forward accountability. Both Canada and South Korea have put gender budgeting on a legislative footing to ensure compliance and have supported it by funding and committing to extensive training across all departments. The case studies suggest that this change has been a significant step for them. Although mandating gender budgeting is seen to be helpful, other case studies show that it is not always necessary. Three OECD countries conduct gender budgeting without a legal requirement in place; in Finland it is “underpinned by administrative practice” and in Japan and Sweden it is “underpinned by high level political commitment/convention”.<sup>30</sup> The Swedish case study in particular shows an embedded gender budgeting process that is driven by organisational commitment to gender mainstreaming rather than legislation.

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<sup>30</sup> [Gender-Budgeting-in-OECD-countries.pdf](#)

## **4.4 Complexity of implementing an intersectional approach**

Achieving an intersectional approach has proven complex and challenging for all international examples with no country successfully establishing a fully intersectional framework. All examples, apart from South Africa, start from a gender lens with intersectional considerations being developed as a stage two to the process. Canada has moved from a gender budget tool to a gender plus tool to integrate men and people with diverse gender identities, and Sweden is increasingly developing data to help understand intersectional issues including race. However, in the case studies, both are criticised for a lack of intersectional voices and experience being central to the approaches. The one case study that differs is South Africa which began from an intersectional perspective. However, even here, as the case study shows, there is criticism that the diversity of women's' voices are narrowing.

## **4.5 Priority need for data framework**

All case studies showed that data is of central importance in being able to undertake evidence-based policy and improvement. All international examples are building data to support their policy development with the most advanced being Sweden and Canada, although as noted above there remains significant criticism about the amount of intersectionality in this data.

## **4.6 Importance of feminist activist networks**

One of the apparent findings from across the case studies is the importance of groups of feminist activists in leading to fundamental changes in the gender architecture. In South Africa, the Women's' National Coalition was instrumental in ensuring that women participated in the making of the constitution and the formulation of the Women's Charter. In South Korea, the Korean Women's Association United began to analyse gender-related budget issues and provided an Alternative Budget before submitting a petition for the implementation of gender budgeting by the National Assembly. It has been reported that Sweden's success in relation to gender mainstreaming has been a result of governmental changes

alongside the work of networks of feminist activists. For example, one comparative report of gender policy in Scotland and Sweden explains that:

**“the impact of EU law varies between member states depending, among other things, on the form of conventional gender relations in existence and the strength of organised feminism. Thus though both Sweden and Scotland are bound by EU gender directives, these are locally interpreted and applied... according to the norms that govern social relations as well as the levels of gender consciousness of politicians, policy-makers etc.”** <sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Forbes J, Ohrn E and Weiner G (2011), Slippage and/or symbolism: gender, policy and educational governance in Scotland and Sweden, *Gender and Education*, Volume 23, Issue 6

# 5. Lessons from International Accountability Tools and Approaches

## 5.1 Introduction to accountability tools and approaches

One of the primary measures of the effectiveness of a gender architecture is that it drives improved gender equality. Such accountability can be established through a range of routes, can be based on different methodological approaches and can happen at a variety of levels. Defining the type of accountability required through governance structures is therefore crucial to developing an effective approach. This section examines some of the theory behind approaches to accountability before looking at some international accountability models for gender equality.

From analysis of accountability frameworks there appear to be a number of different approaches. One approach is an outcome-based accountability mechanism that sets strategic objectives/outcomes and performance measures for the whole gender architecture which can be actively monitored. A second approach is more process driven based on developing, communicating and seeking compliance around tools and approaches that help bodies to assess and implement gender equality according to laws and organisational requirements. Each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. While the outcomes method keeps a clear line of sight to progress, the ability to make that progress may be hampered if processes are not in place to ensure action on the ground moves towards outcomes. Similarly the process approach may lead to a lot of internal activity but might lose sight of the overall priorities and goals.

Accountability can also happen at different levels in the governance structures: it can happen at the organisational level or at the architecture level or at both. In Scotland, each public sector body is required to produce a Mainstreaming Report which sets clear outcomes to be reached over the next four years. These reports are of variable quality and are usually not specific to gender. They can, however provide some level

of organisational accountability. But, even if individual elements of the architecture have effective accountability mechanisms in place, this might not lead to improved gender equality unless all elements at a national, or a local, level function well together.

## **5.2 Implications of International Accountability Frameworks in Scotland**

Internationally, there are a number of frameworks which could be adopted to measure gender equality and progress in Scotland, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Beijing Declaration; the Sustainable Development Goals; and OECD's Gender Equality in Public Life. There is considerable overlap between the frameworks but as described in Annex B each has a slightly different nuance.

Being subject to international frameworks can provide a route to articulate government commitment to working towards gender equality. In terms of existing international frameworks this requirement rests with the UK Government rather than Scottish Government, leaving a potential gap for accountability for devolved action.

As noted above, a key decision in choosing or developing a framework for gender accountability in Scotland is to be clear on its final purpose, whether it is to measure the effectiveness of the gender architecture processes and structures or whether it is to measure the improvement in gender equality. It is anticipated that improving process and structures will ultimately improve outcomes but that cannot always be taken for granted.

From the case studies, both Sweden and Canada have quite advanced monitoring approaches but for different purposes. The Swedish Government has its own accountability framework which uses data to monitor progress against stated gender equality goals. Statistics Sweden is commissioned to publish data relating to 88 indicators of gender equality which are aligned with the government's four sub-goals for gender equality. As of 2016, two new sub-goals were added and new indicators have been developed to track these. In Canada, there is also a structured

accountability process in place, but in their case this refers to the process more than the outcomes. The Gender Based Assessment tool (now GBA+) is monitored by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PAC) and reports against its Departmental Action Plan on Gender Based Analysis which is renewed every four years.<sup>32</sup>

Scotland does have an existing outcomes based accountability framework through its [National Performance Framework \(NPF\)](#).<sup>33</sup> This framework sets out the purpose, values and outcomes that should be the aim of Scottish society and is supported by published performance indicator sets. It is possible to look across the outcomes at inequality by protected characteristic, where data allows, in order to assess progress and two reports have looked at inequality issues, but neither focus specifically on gender ([Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people](#) and [Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19](#)).<sup>34 35</sup>

Alongside a framework for accountability the literature suggests that there are two additional elements necessary to measure the effectiveness of gender architecture. The first of these is data. Collecting intersectional gender data allows for a greater understanding of the effectiveness of policies put in place to work towards gender equality. Encouraging this to take place across government, at both a UK and Scottish level, is necessary to form a full picture of how much progress is taking place. Data has been improved with Scotland's recently published [Gender Equality Index](#), which provides a range of data across seven domains (work, money, time, knowledge, power, health, justice) and helping to establish a basis to measure progress.<sup>36</sup> However, this Index in itself can't create accountability unless it is part of a broader framework and monitoring/review approach. It is also relatively limited in its portrayal of intersectional issues due to gaps in underlying data.

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<sup>32</sup> [Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis \(2016-2020\) - Women and Gender Equality Canada](#)

<sup>33</sup> [National Performance Framework | National Performance Framework](#)

<sup>34</sup> [Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 | National Performance Framework](#)

<sup>36</sup> [Scotland's Gender Equality Index 2020 \(data.gov.scot\)](#)

In summary, like the gender architecture itself, there are a number of elements of an accountability framework in place in Scotland including the NPF, the Gender Equality Index and the oversight and scrutiny bodies for mainstreaming processes, but these do not appear to be joined up enough to provide a secure monitoring and review process. There are a number of existing international frameworks that could be developed or adapted to monitor progress but it is worth noting that first, each of the international frameworks comes from a specific historical place and focuses on different aspects; rights, outcomes, goals, processes; and second, that there are no examples of working frameworks that assess or measure the effectiveness of intersectionality<sup>37</sup> specifically. Given this, no existing framework is likely to be optimal for the Scottish situation without significant work to identify the nature of accountability required (process or outcome or both) and to tailor and establish goals, data, and policy and practice monitoring mechanisms.

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<sup>37</sup> Although it is worth noting the [Intersectionality Based Policy Analysis Framework](#).

## 6. Conclusions

This paper provides a discussion of the gender architecture in Scotland. It is based on literature review and international case study examples, along with primary research interviews from a small sample of experts. It is therefore quite limited in its viewpoints and would benefit from a more rounded analysis of gender architecture from a wider range of intersectional organisations, as well as from a full range of actors within established organisations and institutions. Nevertheless it provides some useful insights that can contribute to the evidence base around key questions such as:

- Is the equality architecture of Scotland related to a lack of positive change for women and girls?
- Does Scotland's gender architecture have an absence of diverse voices with meaningful influence and participation, and if so how can this be tackled?

In general, there appears to be considerable potential within the current Scottish architecture to drive forward gender equality. This includes the streamlined equality legislation and Public Sector Equality Duty and the presence and commitment to key structural elements (government office responsible for equality and gender policy, ministerial offices, parliamentary committees, independent oversight bodies) to progress, scrutinise and seek compliance of policy and legislation. However, the literature and interviews showed that, at present, many of the current elements appear to fall short of this potential.

Unfortunately the issues raised in the report are neither simple nor quick to fix and in some cases the range of criticisms raised in the literature and within interviews represent conflicting viewpoints. For example the architecture is criticised:

- For being ineffective in driving gender equality because of its mainstreamed nature as equality rather than gender architecture.

- For encouraging a siloed approach to equality concentrating on gender as a single lens - particularly through factors such as the recommended EqIA templates.
- For failing to understand and invest in an intersectional approach in terms of capability of policy-makers, engaging voices of experience and improving data.
- For the ultimate lack of accountability, scrutiny and compliance.

The NACWG published their [exploration](#) of intersectional gender architecture in 2020 and set out a range of recommendations that they believe will reform the gender architecture in Scotland.<sup>38</sup> The Scottish Government response to the NACWG's recommendations was published in December 2021.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> [Intersectional Gender Architecture | National Advisory Council on Women and Girls \(onescotland.org\)](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Scottish Government Response to the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

# Annex A – International Case Studies of Gender Architecture

This Annex is developed from the commissioned research carried out by Rocket Science. It describes a set of case studies representing a range of international practice from four continents, demonstrating specific aspects of gender architecture that have been considered successful and may have potential relevance for Scotland.

**Table 4.** Overview of key features of the countries represented in the international case studies.

Country	Population	GDP per capita	Continent	Aspect of gender architecture considered in the case study
Scotland	5.4m	£29,816	Europe	-
Canada	37.8m	£39,197	North America	Intersectionality using Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)
Sweden	10.3m	£42,194	Europe	Gender mainstreaming
South Africa	58.8m	£10,623	Africa	Increasing representation of women in Parliament using gender quotas
South Korea	51.3m	£34,557	Asia	Institutionalising gender budgeting
Scotland	5.4m	£29,816	Europe	Intersectionality using Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)

## **1.1. Canada: Mainstreaming intersectionality through Gender Based Analysis**

Canada is a high-income country with the tenth largest economy in the world. While the majority of Canada's population self-identify as having European ethnic origins, it is one of the most multicultural nations in the world and is becoming even more diverse: statistics Canada projects that visible minority ethnicities among the working-age population will make up around 1 in 3 people in 2036 (compared to 22.3% in 2016). It is notable that both migration and gender equality are presented within Canadian political discourse as positive contributors for economic development and prosperity.

Canada has three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal. At the federal level, gender equality is prioritised within the present government's agenda and this has been reflected in the developments discussed in the case study below.

Canada is seen as one of the pioneers in institutionalising state feminism.<sup>40</sup> In the country, gender mainstreaming has predominantly been implemented through gender-based analysis (GBA), where the adoption of a gender lens in policy analysis represents an attempt to account for and overcome gender bias in policy and programme making. As early as 1972, the Treasury Board appointed a senior policy advisor charged with identifying employment policies and programmes that had the potential to disadvantage women and other groups, and in 1976, the Policy on the Integration of Concerns about the Status of Women became the first gender analysis strategy worldwide, calling for a gendered analysis of all federal Canadian legal and programme initiatives and acknowledging the necessity of effective and early identification of the different impacts of policies and programmes on women and men.

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<sup>40</sup> Sauer, A. (2018), Equality Governance via Policy Analysis: The Implementation of Gender Impact Assessment in the European Union and Gender-based Analysis in Canada, Political Science: Bielefeld, Germany.

### **1.1.1. Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) / Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)**

GBA in its current form was first defined in Canada's 1995 Federal Plan and was presented to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The political scientist Arn T. Sauer has described GBA in Canada as both 'a strategy and a tool', as it represents both the policy analysis tool used to increase gender equality through federal government policies and programmes, and the strategy used to raise awareness of the importance of gender as an organising principle.<sup>41</sup> The first toolkit was disseminated in 1996 and was divided into three sections:

- Section one introduced the key concepts of gender and GBA and gave the rationale for applying GBA.
- Section two provided the policy making process of when and how to integrate GBA.
- Section three outlined eight concrete GBA implementation steps, designed to fit the policy cycle.<sup>42</sup>

The questions included in the toolkit were as follows:

- Does this policy/program/trend improve the well-being of women/men?
- What resources does a person need to benefit from this policy/program/trend? Do women and men have equal access to the resources needed to benefit?
- What is the level and type/quality of women's and men's participation in the policy/program/trend? Has this changed over time?

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<sup>41</sup> Sauer, A. (2018), Equality Governance via Policy Analysis: The Implementation of Gender Impact Assessment in the European Union and Gender-based Analysis in Canada, Political Science: Bielefeld, Germany, p. 170

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.171

- Who controls the decision-making processes related to this policy/program/trend?
- Who controls/owns the resources related to this policy/program/trend?
- Does this policy/program/trend have any unexpected negative impacts on women and/or men?
- Does this policy/program/trend benefit men more than women (or vice versa)? If so, why?

In addition to the GBA guide for policy making, significant infrastructural support was developed around the tool to support its uptake and implementation, including the Gender-based Analysis Directorate, the Inter-Departmental Committee on GBA and a public sector GBA resource centre. While GBA was non-mandatory when initially introduced, it has incrementally become more central through the decades and became mandatory in 2018. There have also been developments to ensure accountability and ways to measure its effectiveness, starting with the 2009 evaluation by the Office of the Auditor General, which led to the Departmental Action Plan stipulating that all federal departments and agencies must engage in GBA.

In 2011, GBA was renamed Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) in an effort to expand the tool from a focus on women to include men and gender-diverse people. The new approach is a result partly of critiques of the GBA approach as inadequately inclusive, although some have described GBA+ as the federal government's response to Canada's growing diversity. It is described on the official website as follows:<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Status of Women Canada (last modified 25 September 2020), [Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\) - Women and Gender Equality Canada](#). Accessed 21 October 2020.

**“GBA+ is an analytical process that provides a rigorous method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as a means to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA+ is not just about differences between biological (sexes) and socio-cultural (genders). We all have multiple characteristics that intersect and contribute to who we are. GBA+ considers many other identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability, and how the interaction between these factors influences the way we might experience government policies and initiatives.”**

**“Using GBA+ involves taking a gender- and diversity-sensitive approach to our work. Considering all intersecting identity factors as part of GBA+, not only sex and gender, is a Government of Canada commitment”**

The Canadian government has also published advice online for evaluators on how to integrate GBA+ into evaluations, providing an overview of the main points to consider, practical examples and methodological approaches.<sup>44</sup>:

In December 2018, the Status of Women Canada agency was promoted to department status following the passing of the Budget Implementation Act 2018 (No 2), which included legislation in favour of evolving the agency into a department and increasing its power, duties, and functions to those concerning not just women, but all gender identities. Now known as the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), its role is to continue “the work of advancing more equitable economic, political and social outcomes for Canadian women” and with “an expanded mandate for gender equality that includes sexual orientation, gender identity and

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<sup>44</sup> [Integrating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into Evaluation: A Primer \(2019\) - Canada.ca](#)

expression”. The department partners with other areas of government, both federal and provincial, as well as civil and private organizations.

Since the passing of the legislation, all Canadian federal budgets are required to undergo a gender and diversity analysis. This is supported by a commitment of over \$350m in new funding by 2022-23, to enable WAGE to lead the process of integrating GBA+ into government policies and investments and to carry out research and data and collection that will support the new Gender Equality Framework.

### **1.1.2. Key lessons from Canada**

While Canada’s GBA tool is recognised to be a well-designed tool, in its early days, the fact that GBA was non-mandatory resulted in slow implementation and rate of change. Sauer also notes that GBA differs from its European Commission counterpart, the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) as in Canada, “[p]olicy analysis is located within the departments and is generally conducted in-house [...] In contrast to the standardised integrated European IA [Impact Assessment] approach”.<sup>45</sup> This meant that decisions around how and when to consult the GBA tool were essentially left to individual policy analysts leading to significant variance in the quality and frequency of its use. This lesson seems to have been learned, as reflected in the Canadian government’s commitment of over \$350m (CAD) in new funding between 2018 and 2022-23 to enable WAGE to lead the process of institutionalising the integration of GBA+ into government policies and investments.

Like Scotland (although on a more rapid scale), Canada is becoming increasingly diverse and there is increased demand within the population for more intersectionally-informed approaches to policy making and public service provision, as well as reckoning with the countries’ historical involvement in slavery and the

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<sup>45</sup> Sauer, A. (2013). Gender Impact Assessment. LIAISE Toolbox: [Impact assessments | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://europeancommission.europa.eu)

oppression of indigenous peoples. As mentioned above, critiques of GBA have also highlighted the fact that the approach focuses on gender as the main axis of oppression.

According to Walby et al's typology of approaches to intersectionality practice (see Appendix A), this represented an **asymmetric** approach to intersectionality whereby gender is seen as the main or dominant inequality. GBA+ therefore aims to move Canada's policy analysis approach towards a more **mutual** approach to intersectionality, i.e. recognising that groups at intersections experience inequalities in uniquely constituted ways.

In spite of this, some policy scholars have argued that GBA+ may represent a misunderstanding of the core premises of intersectionality, due to it being historically an 'additive' approach where sex and gender are prioritised and other inequalities and identities are considered 'in addition'. The inherent tensions between an approach privileging gender, and intersectionality, led to some confusion and resistance as GBA+ was implemented, along with concerns by observers that intersectionality was being introduced nominally only. Although Havinsky and Mussell (2019)<sup>46</sup> note that given the difficulties of translating theory into practice, GBA+ represents a strategy of 'incremental radicalism' and is valuable in that it builds on the existing structures of gender mainstreaming, they go on to conclude that “[p]ut succinctly, it is not intersectionality without a challenge to the centrality of gender in such an analysis”.

## 1.2. Case study: Gender mainstreaming in Sweden

Sweden is well known for its high rates of gender equality, as well as high quality of life and high average income. The public sector of Sweden is divided into the State and self-ruled local authorities (made up of independent regional County Councils and local Municipalities), with the latter making up the larger element of the public

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<sup>46</sup> [Gender-Based Analysis Plus in Canada: Problems and Possibilities of Integrating Intersectionality | Canadian Public Policy \(utpjournals.press\)](https://www.utpjournals.press/issue/11/11_11)

sector. Members of the Swedish Parliament, named the Riksdag, are elected on the basis of proportional representation. The country also has a history of citizens being heavily involved in political movements and of these leading to political change, including the women's movement.

Sweden consistently ranks highly in gender equality indicators and has a reputation for being progressive regarding gender-related issues; the Swedish government declared itself to be a feminist government in 2014. On the EU's Gender Equality Index in 2019, Sweden ranked first out of all the countries in the European Union, with 83.6 points out of 100, compared to an average of 67.4 points for the European Union as a whole (Scotland is not included in the index, but the UK as a whole scored 72.2 points). Sweden has been ranked first in the EU since 2005. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020, Sweden ranks as the fourth most gender-equal country in the world, though this follows three other Nordic countries: first Iceland, second Norway, and third Finland (the UK is ranked 21<sup>st</sup>).

Though gender mainstreaming is said to have been in practice in Sweden since the 1970s, it was officially introduced in Sweden in 1994, meaning **“decisions in all policy areas and at all levels are to be permeated by a gender equality perspective”**. All ministers in Government Offices are responsible for gender mainstreaming their area of work and the Minister for Gender Equality is responsible for coordinating these efforts and supporting the ministers to improve these efforts. Sweden is typically considered to be a best practice example of successful gender mainstreaming. Though there is some criticism that suggests “that a conflation of gender mainstreaming (viewed as a strategy) with gender equality (as a policy objective) has been a vital part of the construction of Sweden as the best case of

gender mainstreaming”<sup>47</sup> meaning that Sweden’s success in relation to gender equality does not necessarily correlate to success in relation to gender mainstreaming. Some reviews of Sweden’s gender budgeting explore the country’s favourable social and political conditions for the success of gender mainstreaming and explain that it is not as simple as replicating Sweden’s policies elsewhere in order to be successful if these preconditions are not in place. In particular, “a wide diffusion of egalitarian values, historic dominance of leftist parties, and over 50% female representation in the Riksdag”<sup>48</sup> have been cited as important preconditions.

Gender mainstreaming in Sweden initially consisted of training in how to develop a gender equality perspective in all work and implementing this perspective in key steering documents including budget reviews. As part of the gender mainstreaming strategy, gender budgeting was introduced in Sweden in 2002 with a project named An Equal Share. In 2004, when the Government developed their plan for gender mainstreaming for all policy areas, gender budgeting became an important part of work across the board. It is important to note that gender budgeting in Sweden is not mandated by law (unlike in South Korea, as discussed below) but rather has a foundation in high-level political commitment.

In 2011, to improve the quality and results of gender mainstreaming, the Swedish government designed a new strategy for implementing gender mainstreaming at central, regional, and local levels. From 2011 to 2018, this programme, called Gender Mainstreaming in Government Agencies, was managed by the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research and is now managed by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency. According to the Swedish government, the programme consists of five key parts:

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<sup>47</sup> Andersson R (2017), The Myth of Sweden’s success: A deconstructive reading of the discourses in gender mainstreaming texts, *European Journal of Women’s Studies* Volume 5, Issue 24

<sup>48</sup> Sainsbury D and Bergqvist C (2009), The Promise and Pitfalls of Gender Mainstreaming: The Swedish Case, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Volume 11, Issue 2

- strategy for gender mainstreaming in the Government Offices;
- a development programme for government agencies;
- support for gender mainstreaming at regional level;
- quality assurance of the development of gender mainstreaming in municipalities and county councils, and
- initiatives to gather and share experience and knowledge about practical implementation of gender mainstreaming.

The programme includes sixty government agencies from across the cultural, judiciary, labour and health and care sectors. Annually, each agency produces a report for their Ministry and presents their findings to the Minister for Gender Equality. Success stories of gender mainstreaming in Sweden include the Migration Agency updating their protocol of payment of compensation to asylum seekers so that money could go to female family members rather than just males; the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth increasing the amount of funding given to businesses run by women by 200%; and the Swedish Research Council increasing the number of research grants it allocated to women until this reached an equal number for men and women.

Knowledge and information relating to gender mainstreaming in Sweden is shared on the dedicated website [includegender.org](http://includegender.org). This website is described as “a Swedish national resource for gender equality” and was developed by a cooperative of organisations and bodies including the European Social Fund, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, the County Administrative Board, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems.

Sweden monitors the progress of its gender mainstreaming through the production and analysis of data disaggregated by gender. Statistics Sweden publishes gender-disaggregated data in a number of areas including “population, health and social care, education and research, time use, parental insurance, unpaid work, income-

generating employment, entrepreneurship, wages/salaries, income, influence and power, and crime (including violence against women).<sup>49</sup> Statistics Sweden publishes updated gender-disaggregated data twice a year. According to the OECD, Sweden is one of two member countries (with Norway being the other) where gender-disaggregated data is collected and available “across all or most key areas of the public service”.<sup>50</sup> However, the lack of staff time allocated to in-depth analysis of this data has been cited as a challenge for Sweden. This demonstrates that it is not only the collection of data disaggregated by gender that is important for effective gender mainstreaming, but making sure that there are adequate resources to analyse this data and that there are procedures in place in which this analysis can be used as evidence for change.

### **1.2.1. Key lessons from Sweden**

Sweden’s high scores in international rankings and success stories such as the updated protocol of the Migration Agency and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth demonstrate that gender mainstreaming in Sweden has been successful and therefore that it may be a useful example for Scotland. This evaluation will look at three key elements in relation to Sweden’s gender mainstreaming and make comparisons to Scotland where possible:

- The importance of feminist activism
- Focus on gender over intersectionality
- Variance in gender policies within gender mainstreaming

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<sup>49</sup> European Institute of Gender Equality, Sweden web page (date unknown): [Gender Mainstreaming Approach - Sweden | European Institute for Gender Equality \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu/eu-external-communication/en/press-corner/press-releases/2017/06/20170620-sweden-gender-mainstreaming)

<sup>50</sup> OECD, Sweden Policy Brief: Strengthening the application of gender mainstreaming to the budget process (2017): [sweden-strengthening-gender-mainstreaming.pdf \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/12/4/49784212.pdf)

**The importance of feminist activism:** It has been reported that Sweden’s success in relation to gender budgeting has been a result of governmental changes alongside the work of networks of feminist activists. Gender mainstreaming was adopted by the EU as its main strategy in relation to gender policy in 2007, suggesting that gender mainstreaming may be applied in a similar way across EU countries. However, one comparative report of gender policy in Scotland and Sweden explains that:

**“the impact of EU law varies between member states depending, among other things, on the form of conventional gender relations in existence and the strength of organised feminism. Thus though both Sweden and Scotland are bound by EU gender directives, these are locally interpreted and applied... according to the norms that govern social relations as well as the levels of gender consciousness of politicians, policy-makers etc.”** <sup>51</sup>

Given this importance of feminist networks, it is important to support them and include them where possible in the process of gender mainstreaming. This is possible, whilst taking into account that the third sector is not part of gender architecture because feminist organisations can be included alongside the gender architecture and influence it even if they are not explicitly part of it.

**Focus on gender over intersectionality:** It has been highlighted that despite progress in relation to gender equality in Sweden, gender mainstreaming has not done this in an intersectional way either in theory or in practice. The theory underlying Sweden’s gender mainstreaming has been criticised as not being intersectional because of the way that it considers gender to be a “single social category of Swedish policy”<sup>52</sup> and does not fully accommodate for the fact that

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<sup>51</sup> Forbes J, Ohrn E and Weiner G (2011), Slippage and/or symbolism: gender, policy and educational governance in Scotland and Sweden, *Gender and Education*, Volume 23, Issue 6

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

different social categories intersect, such as ethnicity and class. It is also pointed out that in practice, while gender equality is advancing in some respects, “aspects of racism, discrimination and exclusion continue”.<sup>53</sup> This is not to deny the fact that sexism also continues to some extent (of course it still occurs in many ways), but more to highlight the fact that there are more advanced structures in place that are reducing the prevalence of sexism or reducing gender inequality, whereas the same cannot be said for other forms of discrimination such as racism. Migrant women are identified as one group that are particularly disadvantaged in Sweden due to the intersecting discrimination they face on the grounds of their gender, nationality and ethnicity resulting in inequality between this group and other groups of women (e.g. white Swedish women). This can particularly be seen in the labour market. This is the case to some degree in Scotland due to the focus on gender mainstreaming, rather than looking at equalities more broadly.

**Variance in gender policies within gender mainstreaming:** Gender mainstreaming is a broad term that applies to all elements of government and policy, however in practice gender mainstreaming will not always be carried out at all levels and can be applied in a variety of ways. As such there is a risk that though two countries may both be enacting gender mainstreaming and complying with the EU’s commitment to gender mainstreaming, the implementation may be very different. One comparative piece that looks at Sweden and Scotland explains that this

*“allows less committed member countries, such as Scotland, off the political hook by providing a menu of gender policies from which they can pick and choose”<sup>54</sup>.*

This raises concern that gender mainstreaming strategies in Scotland are only picking up on certain elements, in comparison to Sweden’s strategy which is considered to encompass a greater proportion of government work.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

### **1.3. Case Study: Using parliamentary quotas to redress gender imbalance in South Africa**

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa (RSA), is a developing/newly industrialised country at the southernmost tip of Africa, with the second largest economy on the continent. With over 59 million people, it is the world's 24th-most-populous nation. About 80% of South Africans are of Black African ancestry, encompassing a variety of ethnicities, cultures and languages. The country's pluralistic makeup is reflected in the constitution's recognition of eleven official languages, the fourth-highest number in the world. The remaining population consists of Africa's largest communities of European, Asian, and multi-racial ancestry, and the country is sometimes called the 'Rainbow Nation' to describe its diversity.

One of the key mechanisms used to ensure justice for all in the 'new South Africa' is the 1996 constitution, which has been widely recognised as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, especially its Bill of Rights. Section 9 of the Bill (below), disallows discrimination on a range of identities, and made South Africa the first jurisdiction in the world to provide constitutional protection to LGBT people (under "sexual orientation").

**Section 9: everyone is equal before the law and has right to equal protection and the benefit of the law. Prohibited grounds of discrimination include race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth [emphasis added].**

In stark contrast to the National Party's fixation on taxonomizing people during Apartheid, the 'new' South Africa is acknowledged as having an advanced understanding of intersectionality. Legal scholar and author of the 2019 book *Intersectional Discrimination* Shreya Atrey has noted that:

**“[i]ntersectional discrimination has evaded sophisticated discrimination regimes like the US, the UK and Canada... In contrast, the South African Constitution under Section 9(3) recognises that discrimination could be based on ‘one or more grounds’ and the Constitutional Court has received such multi-ground claims favourably”.**<sup>55</sup>

A Platform For Action, established at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, was a key catalyst in an international shift in focus from understanding lack of women’s political representation through individual choices towards addressing structural inequalities undermining and hindering participation. The platform brought attention to the importance of gender-equal representation and called for affirmative government action to tackle existing inequalities. There are now over 100 countries in the world using gender quotas in some form to promote women’s political representation, an approach sometimes referred to as the ‘fast-track’ model in contrast to the ‘Nordic model’ or ‘incremental model’ of gradual improvement.<sup>56</sup>

The case of South Africa is a successful example of how quotas can significantly increase the numerical representation of women in the legislature. South Africa currently has the tenth-highest representation of women in Parliament in the world.<sup>57</sup> Along with five other countries in the top ten, South Africa has legislated quotas to ensure the election of female parliamentarians.

South Africa uses a voluntary party quota (VPQ) system, instituted by the ANC during the country’s first democratic general elections in 1994 as a response to ongoing pressure from the Women’s National Coalition (WNC), a unified women’s

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<sup>55</sup> Shreya Atrey, ‘Comparison in intersectional discrimination’, *Legal Studies* 38 (2018), p. 381.

<sup>56</sup> Drude Dahlerup & Lenita Freidenvall, ‘Quotas as a ‘fast track’ to equal representation for women, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7:1 (2015), p. 26-48, DOI: 10.1080/1461674042000324673

<sup>57</sup> (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019).

movement dedicated to pushing the gender mainstreaming agenda into the new democratic parliament.<sup>58</sup> South Africa is therefore often considered as one of the rare success stories where women organised as women have had a pivotal role in the negotiations of a new political system. Today, the country is close to gender parity in its parliamentary and ministerial positions, with 46.62% of MPs being women and 35.29% aged under 45.<sup>59</sup>

As well as symbolic representation, which increases the visibility and status of women in public and provides role models for young women and girls, increased representation has been found to be a strategic way of increasing gender mainstreaming, as the 'gendered perspective' is introduced through diversifying the decision-makers. For example, in South Africa, scholars have attributed the advocacy and adoption of some new laws, in particular in the areas of gender-based violence, family law and land rights, to women's increased presence.<sup>60</sup>

### **1.3.1. Key lessons from South Africa**

Scotland has a strong track record of using political party quotas as a key mechanism in improving gender equality in the political sphere. The Scottish National Party, Scottish Labour Party, the Scottish Green Party and Scottish Socialist Party have all used quotas and other placement strategies. However, although there is evidence of support for quotas in Scotland, including the cross-party Women 5050 campaign, Scotland does not currently have the power to legislate mandatory candidate quotas as UK policy applies in this regard.

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<sup>58</sup> Geisler, 2004:136; Goetz & Hassim, 2003; Meintjes, 2005

<sup>59</sup> [South Africa | Inter-Parliamentary Union \(ipu.org\)](https://www.ipu.org/regions/south-africa)

<sup>60</sup> G.Waylen, 'Women's Mobilization and Gender Outcomes in Transitions to Democracy: The Case of South Africa'. 2007

While the country was leading in terms of political representation in the early 2000s (when it was ranked fourth globally), there has been a drop in performance of late – in part due to progress elsewhere in the world. [In Scotland](#), women currently hold 36% of seats in the Scottish Parliament, 42% of Ministerial positions, 29% of seats in local council chambers and 36% of heads of public bodies<sup>61</sup>.

South Africa offers an interesting case of both the potential strength and some of the risks inherent in the political party quota system, as quotas were introduced by the progressive African National Congress (ANC) in 1994 as part of their aim to redress the injustices and oppression of the Apartheid era and create ‘a better life for all’. However, as the ANC remains the only political party in the country to have committed to using quotas, there is likely to be a fall in women’s representation should another party that is less committed to gender-balancing measures gain power in future.

Intersectionality was developed in a country where Black women were an oppressed minority; in South Africa the context differs and is more complex in that Black people are the majority (80% of the population) but the distribution of wealth, capital and land ownership remains highly weighted against them. Thus while 95% of all ANC women MPs are Black which in fact represents a slight over-representation compared to the population (in which around 80% are of Black African ancestry), this is not necessarily seen as contradictory to the country’s progressive agenda. In contrast, the conservative Democratic Alliance (DA), which does not mandate political quotas, continues to be over-representative of the white minority and also has the lowest proportion of young MPs).<sup>62</sup> There are currently no quotas for other marginalised groups such as LGBT+ people, disabled people or people from rural/remote areas.

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<sup>61</sup> Engender Sex and Power in Scotland, 2020

<sup>62</sup> South African Parliamentary Monitoring Group, ‘Youth in Parliament 2018’: [Youth In Parliament 2018 | PMG](#) (Last accessed: 23 October 2020).

Diversity of perspective is also an important intersectional concern relating to parliamentary quotas. South Africa has a closed-list proportional representation (PR) system where the electorate vote for political parties instead of individual politicians. The ANC therefore chooses its leaders and representatives itself, and has been critiqued for nominating an ideologically narrow (i.e. representative of the ANC's own interests) set of female politicians under quotas whilst seemingly maintaining a commitment to diversification through gender mainstreaming.<sup>63</sup> As such, while the representation matches the gender distribution in the population, some critics are concerned that the ideological, class and regional composition of women has become increasingly homogenous. One scholar notes that “the ANC gender quota has failed to account to an intersectional diversity of the representatives, which places the quota under a new level of criticism”<sup>64</sup>

A further caveat around quotas is that scholars and activists have linked quotas to stigmatization and backlash effects. These policies may thus produce a trade-off effect in which short-term gains in women's numeric representation result in longer-term exclusion from positions of authority; and progress towards gender-equal representation in states and regions where quotas are not legally binding often appears to reach a level of saturation at around 35% (interestingly, almost exactly the current representation in Scotland); as of 2016, only fourteen countries worldwide had passed the critical minority benchmark of 40% representation for women. One researcher therefore asks “do they formalize a glass ceiling? In other words, are the effects of gender quotas sustainable?”<sup>65</sup>. Parliamentary or legislative

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<sup>63</sup> D. Walsh, 'Party Centralization and Debate Conditions in South Africa'. In: S. Franceschet, M. Krook and J. Piscopo

<sup>64</sup> R. Tiainen, 'Gender quotas in South Africa: Addressing women's descriptive political representation through an intersectional analysis', Lund University (Last accessed: 11 November 2020)

<sup>65</sup> Amanda B. Edgell, 'Vying for a Man Seat: Gender Quotas and Sustainable Representation in Africa': [Vying for a Man Seat: Gender Quotas and Sustainable Representation in Africa | African Studies Review | Cambridge Core](#) Published online by Cambridge University Press, 2018.

quotas therefore need to work alongside other gender mechanisms to generate lasting positive change.

#### **1.4. Institutionalising gender budgeting in South Korea**

The South Korean government is a centralised democratic republic which is made up of three key branches: executive; judicial; and legislative. South Korea has a population of 51.3 million with a population density that is over ten times the global average. Seoul, the capital city, is home to about half of these people. South Korea is deemed to be one of the most ethnically homogenous populations as 96% of the population is ethnically Korean. This is important in relation to how intersectionality is understood in relation to South Korea's gender architecture; "given that the overwhelming tendency to place a focus on intersectionality between gender and race stems from the western political context, there is a shortcoming in the direct application of literature of intersectionality and political representation to the South Korean political context"<sup>66</sup>. This is not to suggest that the theory of intersectionality is not relevant to South Korea, or that racism is not present in South Korea, but rather that the mainstream literature on intersectionality needs to be interpreted so it is relevant to all types of intersectional discrimination that take place in the South Korean context e.g. discrimination based on gender and class.

Governance structures relating to gender equality have been in place in South Korea since the inception of the Korean Constitution in 1948 which specified that "no one shall be subjected to discrimination based on sex".<sup>67</sup> Since then, South Korea has committed to international frameworks relating to gender equality including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (ratified

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<sup>66</sup> Lee J, Hwang A and Kwon S (2017), Intersectional Dynamics of Gender Quotas in South Korea, Presented at the 5th ECPG Conference University of Lausanne, Switzerland

<sup>67</sup> Kim Sun Uk (2007) [Gender Equality Legislation in Korea, Asian Journal of Women's Studies](#), 13:3, 109-131.

in 1984) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (adopted in 1995). Also in 1984, the Korean Women's Development Institution was founded, "a governmental funded institution for research and education on women's issues".<sup>68</sup> The South Korean government has continued to develop its gender architecture with one of their key tools being gender budgeting, alongside "developing women's capacities, increasing women's political representation and improving the welfare and civil rights of women".<sup>69</sup>

Gender budgeting consists of reviewing or assessing budgets from a gender perspective in order to promote gender equality. After many years of advocacy in South Korea from women's groups, in 2006 gender budgeting was made a formal part of the National Public Finance Act, making it legally compulsory for a gender budget statement and gender performance report to be submitted annually, starting from 2010. The Gender Budget Research Centre was opened by the Korean Women's Development Institute in 2007. The Gender Budget Research Centre conducted a three-year research project to establish institutional infrastructure in order to increase the effectiveness of gender budgeting. As a result of this research, before preparing a gender budget statement, government officials in Korea are required to attend specific training on this.<sup>70</sup>

South Korea is one of ten OECD countries to have made its gender budgeting practices legally binding, which is said to make it a more established process that cannot be easily interrupted by short-term political changes. Since 2013, gender budgeting began to take place in South Korea at a local level (as well as the national level) with local governments developing gender budget statements. However, there

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<sup>68</sup> Kim E (2006), [Korean Women's Activities for Legislation to Guarantee Gender Equality in Employment](#), Journal of Korean Law, Vol 5, No 2.

<sup>69</sup> Seaforth W (2008), [Gender Mainstreaming in Local Authorities – Best Practices, United Nations Human Settlements Programme \(UN Habitat\)](#).

<sup>70</sup> [Gender Budgeting in OECD countries](#).

has been some criticism that these local level gender budget statements are not as credible as those formulated by central government due to the guidelines provided being unclear.

### **1.4.1. Key lessons from South Korea**

One of the key reasons that South Korea's gender budgeting has been a success is due to securing the policy in law to ensure that gender budget statements and gender performance reports are submitted. This legal requirement means that it is not dependent on personal will or a particular political party. As it is compulsory, there has been an increase in awareness of gender budgeting and gender equality more widely amongst government officials. Three of the OECD countries conduct gender budgeting without and legal requirement in place; in Finland it is "underpinned by administrative practice" and in Japan and Sweden it is "underpinned by high level political commitment/convention".<sup>71</sup> This is also the case in Scotland as gender budgeting does take place but is not legally mandated. This shows that it is possible to have strong gender budgeting that is not secured in law, however if political will changed it would then be at higher risk of not being continued.

According to the OECD "the practice of gender budgeting typically involves co-ordination between a number of government departments" however this is not the case in South Korea, where the Minister of Strategy and Finance has the main responsibility for implementing gender budgeting (note that this is also the case in Canada). This demonstrates a recognition of the importance of gender budgeting at the centre of South Korea's budget process.

Another positive of South Korea's gender budgeting is that they provide thorough guidelines and training on how it should be done; government officials are required

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<sup>71</sup> [Gender Budgeting in OECD countries.](#)

to complete training on how to prepare a gender budgeting statement. This is important because “training and capacity development... can be a crucial factor in order to increase openness towards gender-responsive policies throughout the public sector”.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> [Gender Budgeting in OECD countries.](#)

# Annex B – International Measurement Frameworks

This Annex describes some key measurement frameworks used internationally to account for progress in gender equality.

The first international framework is the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW) formed in 1979. This is an international treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly. It defines discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end it. Countries that have agreed to the convention are required to submit [national reports](#) to the committee at least every four years to demonstrate what they have done to achieve the aims set out by the convention.<sup>73 74</sup> CEDAW articles fall into three main categories; the nature and scope of the government's obligations; the specific forms of discrimination and the measures which should be undertaken to eliminate discrimination in each of the areas; and procedural and administrative matters. As this is a reserved competency, the report is submitted by the UK Government. Other organisations can produce shadow reports that present alternative views of progress such as that from the Women's Resource Centre<sup>75</sup> and the report in Scotland from the Scottish CEDAW Shadow Report Forum.<sup>76</sup> CEDAW majors on considerations of rights and discrimination.

The second framework is the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, adopted unanimously by 189 countries in 1985 as an agenda for women's empowerment. It is considered a key global policy document on gender equality.<sup>77</sup> It

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<sup>73</sup> [UK government response to CEDAW 2017](#)

<sup>74</sup> [OHCHR | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)

<sup>75</sup> [CEDAW Joint Shadow Report.](#)

<sup>76</sup> [Scottish Women's Convention | CEDAW \(scottishwomensconvention.org\)](#)

<sup>77</sup> [World Conferences on Women | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

sets strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training of women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl-child

The agenda states that “implementation is primarily the responsibility of Governments” though it also relies on public, private and non-governmental institutions at all levels from community to international.<sup>78</sup> Countries are required to report progress against the 12 areas of concern. The UN Economic Commission for Europe holds a forum for member states to monitor the implementation of the agenda through reviewing progress and outlining challenges.<sup>79</sup> The Beijing platform

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<sup>78</sup> [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome | UN Women](#)

<sup>79</sup> [Monitoring and Review | UNECE](#)

provides very detailed objectives and actions which could form the basis of an outcomes based monitoring framework if it was tailored to the Scottish context.

The third framework is the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, of which the fifth goal is gender equality.<sup>80</sup> This goal outlines that “gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world”. Each SDG has sub-targets and indicators.

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) launched the Sustainable Development Report which contains the SDG Index and Dashboards, using a combination of official and unofficial data and indicators to understand each country's progress. Each country is encouraged to pick the number and range of Complementary National Indicators that best suit its needs and capacity to collect and analyse data, with significant variation expected between countries. For a comprehensive accountability framework for the SDGs and for international comparators this index is very useful, especially as the SDGs are represented within Scotland National Performance Framework, however for goal five, gender equality, the indices are quite limited when compared with the Beijing convention reducing its effectiveness for gender accountability.

The final framework is that related to the **OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life (2015)** which provides a government-wide strategy with “clear, timely and actionable guidelines for effectively implementing gender equality and gender mainstreaming initiatives”.<sup>81</sup> The goals of the recommendation are to:

- Mainstream gender equality in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant public policies and budgets.

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<sup>80</sup> [Goal 5 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>81</sup> [2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life | en | OECD](#)

- Strengthen accountability and oversight mechanisms for gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives across and within government bodies.
- Achieve gender balanced representation in decision making positions in public life by encouraging greater participation of women in government at all levels, as well as in parliaments, judiciaries and other public institutions.
- Take adequate measures to improve the gender equality in public employment.
- Strengthen international co-operation through continuously sharing knowledge, lessons learned and good practices on gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives in public institutions.

The Recommendation report is accompanied by the 2015 **Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality**<sup>82</sup>, which is aimed at strengthening governance and accountability by empowering countries to analyse their specific country and work contexts, and identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps. The toolkit gives practical steps and questions to ask and is supplemented by helpful good practice examples and lessons learnt ‘pitfalls’. It heavily focuses on the processes and the structures by which decisions are made.

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<sup>82</sup> [OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality | UNICEF Global Development Commons](#)