**RESEARCH BRIEF**

# Building an Enabling Environment for Gender Data Use

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender data must be available and used to design effective, inclusive public policies that address issues from income inequality to climate vulnerability. However, significant barriers prevent the transformation of valuable gender statistics into actionable insights that improve lives for women and marginalized groups. This brief is an attempt to diagnose critical factors for facilitating the movement from the collection and publication of data to its use and impact. In the process, we hope that by demystifying these upper stages of the Data Value Chain, they will receive more attention from decision makers and funders. We present a framework for understanding how to build an enabling environment that moves gender data from production to meaningful use and impact.

The enabling environment for gender data use is formed by two interconnected layers that bridge the production and use sides of the data value chain. **Layer 1** focuses on making gender data usable by ensuring they are fit for purpose and open for use. Once this condition is met, **Layer 2** enables data uptake through three factors (policies and practice, capacity, and financing) that create the conditions for sustained gender data uptake and impact.

Measuring the impact of gender data use remains one of the most important and underdeveloped areas in monitoring the gender data ecosystem. While tools exist to assess data availability and openness, far fewer instruments capture how gender data use translates into measurable improvements for women and marginalized groups. Current efforts include qualitative typologies of use cases, frameworks tracking data use by international organizations, and diagnostic tools for understanding political will and institutional conditions. However, systematic measurement of gender data impact across the full ecosystem remains limited, making it difficult to sustain political attention, secure financing, or build long-term demand for inclusive data systems.

Building an enabling environment for gender data use requires coordinated action across all layers and factors. When data are fit for purpose and open, when supportive policies and practices are in place, when stakeholders have necessary capacities, and when adequate financing flows sustain these efforts, gender data can move from production to impact and influence real-world decisions to achieve gender equality.

## WHY IS GENDER DATA USE ESSENTIAL?

The use of gender data is essential for designing effective, inclusive public policy. For example, policymakers can apply insights based on gender data to address issues of income, education, safety, health, time use, or climate vulnerability. These gender data-driven decisions can lead to more gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction strategies, as in Tonga; stronger protections for women from domestic violence, as in Vietnam; and better policies on parental leave, as in Finland, among many other development outcomes.

Beyond informing policy, gender data use serves as a signal of demand that reinforces gender data production. When stakeholders like governments, civil society, or international donors actively use data to inform decisions to improve gender equality, it justifies and incentivizes further investment in statistical systems. This cycle of demand and use strengthens data governance and increases financing, which in turn enhances data availability and quality. Yet, unlike sectors such as the economy or energy where demand is driven by powerful market and institutional interests, social statistics face a more fragile demand environment. The value of gender data is often less visible in budget negotiations or political discourse. Building this demand through better gender data use, therefore, is both a challenge and a strategic priority.

According to work by UN Women, PARIS21, Data2X, and others, current barriers to gender data use include limited data literacy among users, limited understanding of gender issues, weak incentives for cross-sectoral collaboration, lack of timely or disaggregated data, and underfunded national statistical systems (see Annex on previous work to identify barriers of gender data use). These barriers will require collective action from a wide range of stakeholders with a clear sense of how efforts will fit together. This brief seeks to take steps to address these barriers by laying out a framework for understanding gender data use and its enabling environment based on evidence from existing ways to measure this environment and case studies of successful gender data use.

## WHAT IS GENDER DATA USE?

Gender data use refers to the ways in which data that reflect gendered realities are accessed, interpreted, and applied to inform decisions, shape discourse, and drive systemic change. Gender data are more than sex-disaggregated data and cover a wide array of data that are gender-relevant, including from more

than just official data sources. This definition also includes citizen data (CD), administrative records, qualitative insights, and data collected outside national statistical systems that provide information relevant to gender equality. The goal is to capture the full spectrum of information sources that, when effectively used, can support inclusive development and inform gender-responsive policy.

**Figure 1:** The Data Value Chain
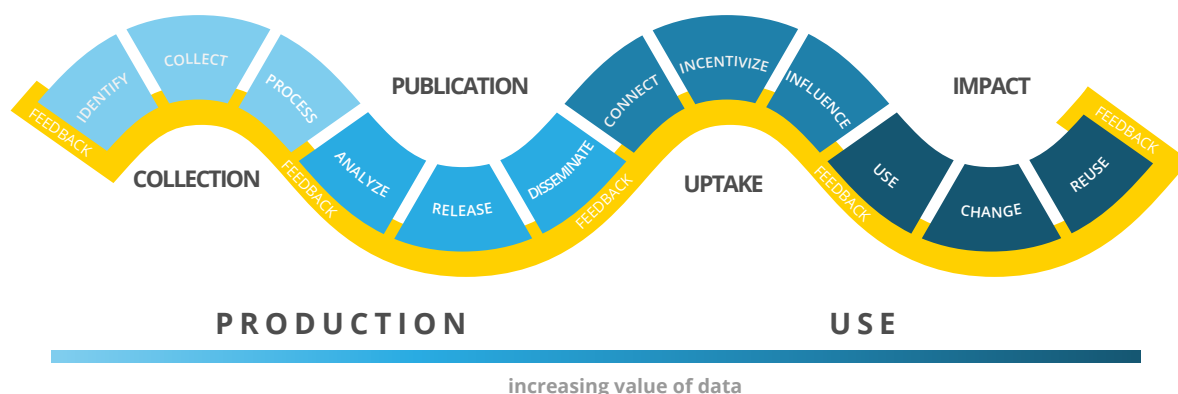


Efforts to promote gender data use span a wide spectrum from traditional dissemination activities (for example, launching reports, data portals) to more proactive engagements that foster demand and capacity for use (for example, embedding data champions in policymaking, convening multi-stakeholder dialogues). These activities aim to close the gap between data availability and its actual application, ensuring that data do not end up in "data graveyards" but are integrated into decisions that matter.

While the data value chain envisions an ideal flow from the collection of gender data to its use and impact (Figure 1), this is not an automatic process. Consider the final stages of the data value chain. Uptake is the process of connecting users with data and making data use easier. It includes efforts such as translating statistical findings into usable formats, aligning datasets with real-world policy questions, and building capacities of potential data users. It can involve writing a report that emphasizes certain points in the data. It can involve creating visualizations or developing an app that transforms the data into a more accessible format. While one "uses" data to write a report or develop an app that connects others to the data, we consider that to be "use for uptake." Uptake is a precondition for impact, and strengthening uptake mechanisms is key to realizing the potential of gender data.

In contrast, impact is the term reserved for outcomes where the use of gender data leads to measurable change, whether in resource allocation, legislation, program design, or the lived experiences of women and marginalized groups. Further, the use of gender data encourages re-use, which increases the value

of gender data. The systemic or habitual use of data to inform decisions builds feedback loops that connect to each relevant stage of the data value chain but which are most important here. The feedback generated from use for impact and the change that results will fuel a virtuous cycle as demand sustains and improves the supply, use, and reuse of gender data.

## WHO ENABLES GENDER DATA USE?

A wide range of stakeholders use and enable the use of gender data. This section focuses on stakeholders' roles to highlight the contribution that individuals, whose job descriptions may fall into more than one of these roles, can make to improving gender data use. This research brief covers four primary stakeholders that enable gender data use:

**Data Producers:** These may be members of the statistical system in government, including the national statistical offices (NSOs), planning ministries, and line ministries. A newer category of gender data producers includes civil society organizations and the private sector. These stakeholders make gender data usable by creating data that are fit for purpose. They can partner with user groups to build awareness and capacity. And they maintain feedback loops to inform better data production and build trust.

**Decision-makers:** These may be members of the government but include anyone in the private sector, civil society, or multilateral development organization who use data and create the feedback loops that improve gender data by showing where gender data are needed to inform decisions.

**Advocates:** These may be members of civil society, such as women's rights organizations. Members of academia are often advocates for the use of gender data to advance research and representation. The media may also be an advocate, using gender data to tell a compelling story. Advocates enable data uptake by making the case for strong use in policies and practice, capacity-building, and financing.

**Funders:** These may be members of government, for example the ministry of planning or finance. In addition, many multilateral development agencies, bilateral development partners, and private sector actors, such as telecommunications companies, can finance gender data use. They fund user feedback, better platforms, programs for better coordination and data-policy linkages, and adherence to open data principles.

## BUILDING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR GENDER DATA USE

The enabling environment for gender data use is composed of two layers that connect the production side to the use side of the data value chain to show how gender data use is catalyzed: Layer 1 represents the usability of gender data. To start, gender data must be fit for purpose and open for use. This layer covers the first half of the data value chain; resulting in data releases and dissemination that speak to the audience's needs and communicating it in formats and products that meet users where they are.

Once this part of the Production side of the Data Value Chain is completed, three factors, policies and practice, capacity, and financing, will create an enabling environment for gender data uptake in Layer 2, on the Use side of the Data Value Chain. Without gender data uptake, gender data impact is unreachable, which is why we focus on actions to improve uptake. The impact of gender data will be determined by each individual use case and stakeholders' efforts to use, change, and reuse gender data. The stakeholders identified above have agency over Production and Data Uptake that shapes the impact of gender data. Figure 2 below illustrates how these two layers interact with one another to enable gender data use through uptake.

**Figure 2:** The two layers of opportunities to support gender data use
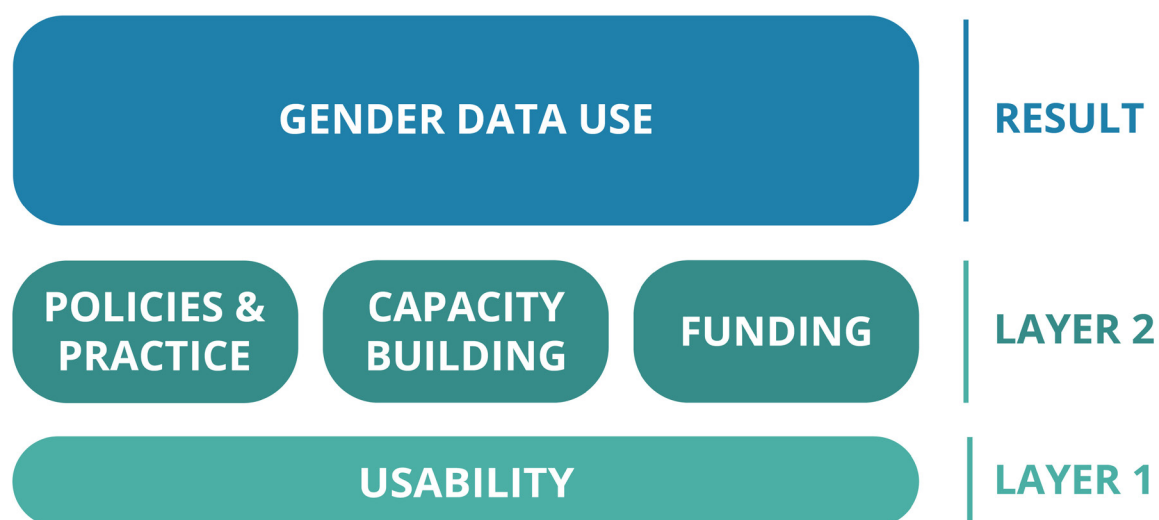


## USABILITY TO MAKE DATA FIT FOR PURPOSE AND OPEN

Ensuring that gender data are fit for purpose, accessible, and reusable can enhance their utility and impact. Data fit for purpose are those datasets that reflect the priorities of users and policy in terms of their availability and disaggregations. Active engagement and outreach around datasets ensure

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feedback loops can be used to ensure data remain fit for purpose. In addition to quality assurance of the data, this creates trust that is key to uptake and impact of gender data.

Examples from Vietnam and Finland show that connecting data producers and decision-makers is a way to ensure that data are fit for purpose and correspond to the needs of policymakers and advocacy groups. Actively connecting stakeholder groups to data and policy issues as well as making data openly available to encourage all users to connect to the data are preconditions to promoting data uptake.

To be usable, gender data must also be open for use. Publishing data online in the form of tables or graphs may not be sufficient to enable meaningful use. To support openness, data should be made available in formats that are machine-readable and non-proprietary, allowing for efficient extraction, analysis, and reuse across different platforms, including open-source tools. Comprehensive metadata are also essential to facilitate accurate interpretation, particularly as gender data become increasingly disaggregated. In addition, data should be offered in downloadable formats that accommodate a range of user needs and be accompanied by an open license that permits unrestricted use and reuse.

The Gender Data Compass (the Compass), developed by Open Data Watch, is a diagnostic tool designed to assess the availability and openness of gender data across national statistical systems together with the enabling environment of gender data. Most relevant to this analysis, the Compass evaluates the openness of gender-relevant indicators based on four key elements: the availability of open formats, metadata availability, download options, and open licensing.

Among these four elements, metadata availability scored the highest, with an average of 35 out of 100 across countries assessed. This suggests that, while efforts have been made to document gender data, providing users with descriptions, definitions, and methodologies, progress toward making data truly open remains uneven. Lower scores on machine-readability, downloadability, and licensing indicate persistent barriers to the effective reuse and application of gender data. Fully open gender data require simultaneous improvements across all openness dimensions to be truly accessible and impactful.

Although open formats and open data licensing are implemented relatively easily, even by countries with limited resources, the Compass's findings indicate that less attention is given to openness of gender data than non-gender data. Figure 3 below compares the average openness score for the 185 countries in the Compass with the openness scores from the 2022 Open Data Inventory (ODIN) for non-gender data categories. Even accounting for small methodological differences, the 18-point gap between the openness of gender and non-gender data confirms that gender data are less accessible and usable than other types of data. Though the causes of discrepancy vary across countries, one trend

that may account for the gap is that many countries only publish gender data in inconsistently published special reports that are often only available in PDF format. Until gender data are incorporated into mainstream data portals, the usability of gender data will continue to fall short and hamper use.

**Figure** 3: Average openness scores for gender data compared to non-gender data

Gender Data Compass Openness Score 2023 — 34.7 (out of 100)

Open Data Inventory Openness Score 2022 (non-gender data) — 53 (out of 100)

## POLICIES AND PRACTICE TO GOVERN DATA

Focusing on policies and practice, meaning both the letter and the spirit of laws and policies, is essential to strengthening the enabling environment for gender data use as part of Layer 2. While improvements in data production and dissemination are necessary, they are not sufficient on their own. Policies that explicitly promote the use of gender data, and the practices that put those policies into action, help ensure that data inform decision-making, budgeting, and accountability. Without institutional frameworks that mandate, encourage, or support gender data use, valuable information risks being overlooked or underutilized.

Evaluating how deeply embedded data use is in policy documents will depend on each context, however, there is evidence from global studies that reveal that there is a lot of room for improvement for data use. Recent analysis by PARIS21 measuring data use in national policy documents found that the global average score is just 54 out of 100, indicating that data are only moderately integrated into formal planning and strategy documents. This suggests a gap between commitments to evidence-informed policy and its practical application in policymaking. When the same measure is applied specifically to gender data, the average score drops even further to 48, revealing that gender-specific indicators and analysis are even less frequently referenced or embedded in policy frameworks.

Yet even where policies are gender-sensitive and stress the importance of gender data, gender data may not be used due to a lack of data use culture or lack of gender equality. PARIS21, in its work with the Dominican Republic, found this to be one of the main barriers to use of gender data. Social norms that value data use and that take into consideration the unwritten rules of how evidence is used in each context are necessary to increase uptake of gender data. As an example for how knowing this context can lead to results, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) put on a fair to show policymakers potential insights from their work, which

started a conversation about using government's data to inform policies. By raising awareness with parliamentarians, the GSS built a culture of data use that seeks to bring continual awareness to the potential of evidence-informed policies.

Another promising approach to bridge the divide between policy and practice is the Inclusive Data Charter (IDC). In 2021, Kenya launched an IDC action plan through the State Department for Social Protection, jointly developed with partners, including the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and Sightsavers, which commits to improving the collection, analysis, and use of disability and gender-disaggregated data. This policy commitment guides both institutional action and resource allocation toward inclusive data practices. By signing onto the IDC and implementing a concrete plan, Kenya exemplifies how formal policy commitments can translate into enhanced gender (and disability) data production and use in national planning processes.

The Gender Data Solutions Inventory by Data2X and Open Data Watch also features many examples of the potential for policies and their implementation to create a better enabling environment for using gender data. For example, the inventory includes the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Every Policy Is Connected (EPIC) tool, which made data more usable and also strengthened collaboration among key institutions such as the Philippine Statistics Authority and the Philippine Commission on Women, helping to embed data-informed monitoring directly into the country's landmark gender equality law implementation framework. The experience illustrates how tools like EPIC can operationalize legal and policy commitments by linking them to measurable indicators and data systems and in the process lead to better coordination to implement the spirit and letter of the law.

> **Box 1: Challenges to overcoming the gap between policy and practice**
>
> Building a culture of gender data use is a key component of bridging the gap between policy and practice but this is a challenging task. This box covers additional hurdles to instituting this culture and ways this has been addressed.
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> Gender data can disrupt entrenched policy narratives and budget allocations, which may provoke institutional pushback. High-level political direction is often necessary to overcome this challenge. In Bangladesh, for example, efforts to apply gender-responsive budgeting were helped with support from top decision-makers, socializing the rationale of gender-responsive budgeting among mid-level government officials and rolling out tools in an incremental manner.

Even when gender data are available and technically sound, institutional inertia, such as siloed mandates, lack of inter-agency coordination, or rigid planning cycles, can prevent their use. In the Philippines, although sex-disaggregated data are collected by the Philippine Statistics Authority and other agencies, weak coordination between planning bodies and data producers has limited the integration of gender data into some national programs, in part due to a lack of connecting between policy documents and available national indicators. The use of EPIC helped surface these disconnects and propose structured coordination pathways.

In some contexts, political leaders may see gender equality as a contested or politicized issue, further dampening the willingness to use data that highlight inequality or exclusion. The State of the World's Fathers mentions the role that Equimundo research has played in using data to illustrate the importance of equal care work between parents to shape future attitudes. Such research shows the ability of data to affect attitudes towards care work and remove the fears of losing status because of policy changes.

## CAPACITY TO WORK WITH DATA

Building capacity within national statistical agencies and among key users, such as civil society advocates and the private sector, is critical for creating an enabling environment that supports the effective use of gender data. NSOs must have the technical skills, resources, and institutional frameworks to produce, disaggregate, and disseminate gender-relevant data with quality and timeliness. Equally important is the capacity of data users to understand, interpret, and apply this information to advocacy, policy design, and business decisions. Data intermediaries, organizations or platforms that translate raw data into accessible insights, and efforts to improve data literacy among users play a key role in bridging the gap between data producers and end users, increasing demand for and meaningful use of gender data.

The Gender Data Compass highlights persistent capacity challenges for users to engage with gender data across ICT infrastructure, governance, and coordination mechanisms. It reveals generally low levels of capacity across countries, with many NSOs lacking adequate infrastructure, technical expertise, or coordination mechanisms for gender data production and dissemination. However, the Compass also identifies a positive correlation between the availability of online data services and greater gender data openness, suggesting that investments in digital platforms and user-friendly tools can enhance data accessibility and use. Complementing these findings, the UN Women/PARIS21 Gender Data Outlook 2024 underscores that capacity gaps among both producers and users limit

gender data uptake in many countries. Similarly, the World Bank's [Statistical Performance Indicators](#) assess national statistical systems not only on their ability to produce data but also to provide services that "connect data users to producers and facilitate dialogues between them," thereby fostering a data ecosystem conducive to evidence-based, gender-responsive policymaking.

Storytelling and visualization are key capacities needed to communicate compelling narratives about the lived experiences of women and girls, men and boys. And often these capacities are a function of the ICT capacities of an NSO or gender ministry: A PARIS21/ODW study ([Data Dissemination in the Digital Age](#)) found that a third of IDA-eligible countries do not have a data portal linked to their NSO's website and therefore lack a facility for publishing compelling visualizations and narratives. Yet this digital presence is only one part of communicating stories that will enable better gender data use. Other tools exist to improve the narrative development and visualization techniques tailored to gender data, including the [Practical guide to Data Storytelling in Voluntary National Reviews and SDG reporting](#), [e-learning courses on communicating gender statistics](#), and [Gender Statistics Training Curricula](#), as well as the engagement with data journalists facilitated by organizations like [EM2030](#).

Beyond the skills to communicate gender data effectively, the capacity to use gender data also includes the ability to recognize gender bias and other social constructs that shape data use. In [Vietnam](#), for example, violence against women (VAW) is a difficult subject to address given its traditional taboo nature. The General Statistics Office of Vietnam organized workshops for policymakers to promote data literacy and desensitize the issue. They also involved them throughout design, collection, and analysis of a 2010 VAW survey. This helped create ownership of the data and desensitized the issue. Policymakers used the survey to inform preventative strategies, design responsive services, and measure progress. By coordinating with decisionmakers and sensitizing them to the issue, government statisticians ensured that these decisionmakers would be able to engage with VAW data and thereby increase uptake.

**Box 2: AI Innovation in Government Statistics: Connecting Citizens with Official Data**

Innovation is crucial for encouraging greater use of government data, as traditional static websites and complex navigation systems often create barriers between citizens and the official statistics they need. Governments worldwide are increasingly employing artificial intelligence to transform how citizens access and interact with official statistical data, demonstrating

significant innovation in the capacity of government statistical services. Though not directly related to gender data, these examples could be adapted to break gender data out of their silo in special, separate reports. For example, Australia developed "Claire," a specialized chatbot for the 2021 Census that helped millions of households complete their forms through guided conversation. Canada created an in-house chatbot for the 2026 Census offering automated responses and live chat options when AI cannot address specific queries. The United States deployed AI chatbots on USA.gov to help citizens navigate government information, achieving a 78 percent task completion rate. The United Kingdom is experimenting with generative AI chatbots on GOV.UK to help users navigate their extensive government website. Maharashtra, India launched the "Aaple Sarkar Bot" providing information on over 1,400 public services. These initiatives represent a shift in how government statisticians conceptualize their role, moving from data custodians to facilitators of citizen engagement, using AI to make official statistics and government services more accessible.

By focusing on capacity building for better user engagement, through sensitization to issues, skills-building to analyze and process data, and building digital tools to increase engagement with data, data producers, funders, and advocates can enhance the overall enabling environment for gender data use. This includes investing in skills development, improving digital infrastructure, supporting data intermediaries, and expanding data literacy initiatives to empower civil society and private sector actors. Such efforts create demand for gender data and improve the ability of all stakeholders to apply data for policy formulation, monitoring, and advocacy, ultimately contributing to more equitable development outcomes.

## FINANCING TO SUPPORT DATA USE

Innovative and sustainable financing by external partners supporting domestic budget allocations is essential for nurturing an enabling environment for gender data use. Sustainable financing from external and domestic sources ensures that NSOs, data intermediaries, and civil society organizations have the resources necessary to collect, disaggregate, and disseminate high-quality gender data. Yet estimates show that gender data systems and efforts to fund gender data use are significantly underfunded: Data2X and ODW report that financing for gender data has stagnated, disproportionately relying on a few large donor-led projects and failing to build robust systems over time. The current financing flows are not enough to fill the $500 million gap needed annually through 2030 to support core gender data systems. Better use of gender data would generate more interest in financing gender data systems and in turn, better gender data use can be driven by better financing efforts.

What can this look like in practice? Japan invested in Cambodia's efforts to improve child protection systems by generating and using data on child violence and online safety in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such activities that involve external donors, international organizations (in this case UNICEF), private sector entities (ICT industry), and country governments are examples of how coordinated investments in gender data use can deliver meaningful improvements to people's lives. This project and many others can be found on the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data. This platform, through its Gender Data Channel, provides key insights into financing flows and gaps, underscoring the importance of coordinated investments and highlighting strategic opportunities for donor and domestic financing.

Strengthening data-policy linkages is one of the most sustainable ways to ensure gender data are fit for purpose and sustainably produced. UN Women invested in strengthening data-policy linkages in Tanzania, ensuring that national strategies related to gender policy and statistics explicitly included gender data action and financing plans. With this linkage in place, the government of Tanzania set up a Technical Working Group on Gender Statistics to ensure coordination across the NSS. Here financing provided the impetus for better production and use of data in national policy. In Colombia, financing from the Data4Now initiative connected the National Administrative Department of Statistics (known as DANE) to academic institutions to use their data. Financing in this example connected the NSO to user groups that would provide feedback on the data to ensure it is fit for purpose and to increase uptake of the data.

Further examples of use cases for financing gender data can be found in the Gender Data Solutions Inventory by Data2X, which catalogues 142 initiatives that require targeted financing and policy support to scale. These solutions illustrate not only technical innovation but also the potential pathways where strategic investment can enable sustainable gender data use.

By directing financing toward both supply-side activities, such as strengthening data infrastructure and NSO capacity, and demand-side efforts, like supporting data literacy training and data intermediary platforms, stakeholders can catalyze a virtuous cycle of gender data use.

## HOW DO WE MEASURE THE IMPACT OF GENDER DATA USE?

Measuring the impact of gender data use remains one of the most important and underdeveloped areas in monitoring the gender data ecosystem. While tools and frameworks exist to assess gender data availability and openness, far fewer instruments capture how the use of gender data translates into measurable improvements in outcomes.

A few recent efforts offer promising starting points. UN Women/PARIS21's Gender Data Outlook proposes a typology of gender data use cases to group experiences qualitatively and derive lessons from best gender data use practices.

The World Bank's [Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI)](#) include a dedicated pillar on Data Use. Though presently only able to track the use of data by international organizations, this framework offers a way to think about data use by additional users. Work is ongoing to determine the use of data by other user groups, such as [academics](#).

Several tools aim to link data uptake and impact to capacity building and institutional practice. For example, Data2X's [Political Will](#) initiative provides a qualitative diagnostic for understanding the conditions under which data use is likely to flourish, such as leadership commitment, legal mandates, and technical capacity. For improving data use at the working level, the [Capacity Development 4.0](#) framework, published by PARIS21, includes both technical and soft skills required for data use, such as communication, advocacy, and leadership, important factors when assessing the enabling environment for data to be used effectively. Finally, the Building Responsive Investments in D[ata for Gender Equality (BRIDGE) Tool](#) by Data2X and ODW highlights the importance of stakeholder coordination and user engagement in increasing the maturity level of gender data systems, which includes better use and impact.

Despite these advances and capacity building efforts, efforts to systematically measure the impact of gender data use remain limited. A robust agenda for future research and advocacy should include a measurement agenda to track gender data through each of the layers and factors presented in this brief. For example, measurement to refine the ways that policies use gender data themselves and measurement of gender data literacy across user groups. Novel pathways to source data in publications online should also be considered, as does testing how AI can be used to systematically find and inform policy decisions on gender equality. Without a stronger evidence base for the impact of gender data use, it will remain difficult to sustain political attention, secure financing, or build long-term demand for inclusive data systems.

## CONCLUSION

Improving the use of gender data requires more than producing better statistics, it demands sustained attention to the broader ecosystem that supports data uptake and impact. A broad range of stakeholders can respond to this call for action, from data producers to advocates. It will take commitment and action from this full array of stakeholders to promote gender data use by building an enabling environment. This brief has outlined four essential dimensions of that enabling environment: usability, policy and practice, capacity, and financing. Across each, challenges persist: gender data are often published in inaccessible formats; policies rarely encourage use and problems with implementation persist; capacities among both producers and users remain uneven; and financing for gender data systems is inconsistent and insufficient.

While there are challenges, this research has also revealed the following best practices that emerge across the components of the data use framework to improve the likelihood of gender data use for impact:

1. Link data to policy to ensure data are fit for purpose
2. Make gender data openly available to enable public use
3. Use policies as commitment devices to map out and monitor gender data
4. Connect user groups to data to encourage a culture of data use
5. Leverage political will and champions of gender data
6. Sensitize decisionmakers to gender and gender data issues
7. Build skills and leverage innovation to improve capacity to use gender data
8. Invest in initiatives that spark a virtuous cycle of gender data use

These best practices are already being implemented in many countries and contexts. There are examples of governments beginning to institutionalize gender data use. Civil society organizations are translating data into advocacy, while private firms are using disaggregated data in customer segmentation. These examples underscore that when data are usable, when institutions are equipped to engage with them, and when political and financial systems reinforce demand, gender data can influence real-world decisions to achieve gender equality.

**This brief was prepared by Open Data Watch and Data2X. Lorenz Noe served as the lead author. Join us in advocacy to mobilize support for gender data use that will impact the lives of women and girls.**

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## ANNEX: EXISTING WORK TO DEFINE GENDER DATA USE

Several initiatives have contributed to defining and strengthening gender data use. For instance, the UN Women/PARIS21 Gender Data Outlook, PARIS21 Gender Data Lab Initiative, and Open Data Watch Gender Data Compass have explored the institutional and technical barriers that prevent effective uptake and proposed actionable recommendations to overcome them. Their work highlights the challenges NSOs face in governing data ecosystems, meeting user needs, and using data internally to improve operations. The Engaging Parliamentarians initiative by PARIS21 and the Building Political Will for Gender Data framework developed by Data2X both underscore the importance of enabling environments for gender data uptake. These efforts provide lessons on how to link gender data to decision-making processes and build the political and institutional support needed to turn insights into impact.

These existing efforts were key for developing the framework presented here and each offer actionable ways to dive deeper on each of the components of the data use framework used by this paper. The work of these and many more partners is vital as much remains to be researched and tested about data use: what triggers it in certain contexts and how to operationalize a culture of data use.