

Abstract

A Study on the Measures to Improve the Effective Implementation of Gender Impact Assessment in Central Government of Korea

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Since the Gender Impact Assessment was introduced and institutionalized in 2000s in South Korea, more and more government institutions have participated in it, and the number of projects reviewed by the gender impact assessment has grown rapidly. It is also evaluated that the gender impact assessment has contributed to improving the gender awareness of public officials and reflecting gender perspectives into the government policy-making.

However, it has been also criticized that the gender impact assessment tends to be carried out perfunctorily and its

effectiveness is limited. To make the gender impact assessment better work for the gender equality, a public official needs to write a good gender analysis report on one's project or policy as a starting point, and an expert who reviews it also needs to draw upon valid and viable suggestions for improving the policy. Therefore, it is critical to improve the quality of reports that these stakeholders(public officials and experts) produce in order to improve the outcome of the gender impact assessment.

Under this background, this study analyzes the reports produced in the process of gender impact assessment at the central government level for the past two years (2018–2019). In-depth and focus group interviews were also conducted with various stakeholders including public officials and experts who take important parts in the process. Based on the findings, the study aims to draw upon measures for more effective implementation of the gender impact assessment at the central government level.

Main findings of this study are as follows. First, public officials seem to find it difficult to fully fill out the content given in the format of the gender impact assessment. Especially, they tend to find it more difficult to figure out gender differences surrounding the policy area. Also, it is found that their gender analysis on the policy environment tends to be less deep compared to experts'. Second, the cooperation between the stakeholders needs to be more strengthened to improve the implementation of the gender impact assessment. Experts are asked to provide their opinions twice during the process of the gender impact assessment: In the beginning stage, they make suggestions for selecting a project for the gender impact assessment, and they are also invited to draw upon policy suggestion for the gender equality in the later stage. However, in the end, it seems very difficult for the experts' opinions to reach the public officials

who are to actually reflect them into a policy or a project. The role of Ministry of Gender Equality is critical in this point as it bridges the communication between the experts and the public officials in the other ministries. Third, it is found that there exist gaps in the gender awareness and expertise between various stakeholders. While gender experts tend to be highly gender-aware but less knowledgeable about a detailed policy mechanism, public officials tend to be very knowledgeable about the policy itself but less gender-sensitive. This gap makes it difficult for the public officials to find the experts' opinions feasible and compelling. Fourth, it is also pointed out that an incentive is needed to motivate public officials to more actively participate in the gender impact assessment. Providing an extra budget for executing the suggestions from the gender impact analysis can be considered as one incentive.

Based on these findings, this study suggests the following to improve the implementation of the gender impact assessment. First, a close triangle cooperation mechanism should be in place among experts, the Ministry of Gender Equality and other ministries. For this mechanism to work, the number of the target projects also needs to be affordably adjusted. Second, the required contents of the gender impact assessment need to be more specified by policy areas and reflect the characteristics of specific policy contexts so as to facilitate the public officials' writing. Also, support mechanisms for the public officials need to be more strengthened. For example, incentives need to be given to the public officials who conduct the gender impact assessment while more efforts are required to raise the gender awareness of the public officials in general. Additionally, the gender impact assessment webpage also needs to improve. It needs to provide public officials with better and easier access to the information and documents related to the gender impact assessment

of previous years for their reference.

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