

Evaluation Report

Council of Europe

Final Evaluation of the Project "Promoting an integrated approach to end violence against women and reinforcing gender equality in Georgia"

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Abbreviations

ATIP Fund	Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DV	Domestic Violence
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GEC	Gender Equality Council
HQ	Headquarters
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexual
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation of economic cooperation and development
PDO	Public Defenders Office
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
VAW(G)	Violence against women (and girls)

Executive Summary

Introduction and methodological approach

This report presents the findings of the external evaluation of the Council of Europe (CoE) project “Promoting an integrated approach to end violence against women and reinforcing gender equality in Georgia”. The evaluation was carried out by Mainlevel Consulting AG from 23.06.2022 to 31.12.2022. Data was collected via desk research, an online survey, and interviews. The evaluation findings and recommendations target primarily the members of the project team and the implementing organisation Council of Europe. To a lesser extent, project partners are also a target group of this evaluation. The evaluation had the following objectives:

- evaluate the results achieved in the project (effectiveness);
- evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of institutional settings, resources and working methods within the project (efficiency);
- evaluate the added value of partnerships and comparative advantage of the CoE vis-à-vis other international actors active in the field of gender equality in Georgia (added value);
- evaluate the degree to which the project’s objectives and results will continue to have an impact in the future (sustainability).

The criteria relevance and impact have not been the focus of this evaluation. However, additional findings gathered during data collection have been nevertheless included, as they present valuable information for the follow-on project.

The evaluated project

The project “Promoting an integrated approach to end violence against women and reinforcing gender equality in Georgia” was implemented from between January 2020 and December 2022. The project’s overarching goal was to strengthen gender equality and contributing to better prevention, prosecution and protection against all forms of violence against women in line with the Istanbul Convention. Specifically, the project assists Georgia via capacity building measures, knowledge creation and awareness-raising. Activities include: (1) policy analysis; (2) development of tools, materials and guidelines; (3) preparation and implementation of trainings, workshops, study visits with key stakeholders from politics and authorities, the judiciary, civil society and further key stakeholders; and (4) preparation and implementation of campaigns. The project was initiated in light of the review process of the Istanbul convention and seeks to assist the implementation of recommendations from the convention’s monitoring process. In Georgia, gender-based violence, domestic violence and violence against women still present significant challenges, despite many improvements in the legal framework, and have been aggravated during the COVID19 pandemic. While legal advances have been noted in recent years, implementation of laws and policies remains patchy. Capacities of the relevant authorities still need further development or reinforcement, and competing approaches further alignment.

Relevance

The project is in line with national, regional and international policies and priorities. It directly refers to Georgia’s efforts towards compliance with Istanbul Convention. It supports the implementation of the monitoring recommendations and the Council of Europe’s draft Action Plan for Georgia as well as the application of European legal standards. The project also implements several of the recommendations by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and can contribute to progress with the Sustainable Development Goal 5. Project partners confirm that the issues touched upon by the project are of high relevance for the involved stakeholders. The project conducted a needs assessment at the beginning and has tailored activities according to partner needs. Participants of capacity buildings confirm the relevance of training contents for their work. Interviewees praised the project’s openness to partners’ suggestions and its adaptability.

Added Value and Coherence

The project scored well in terms of external coherence and synergies with other interventions. No duplications of efforts were found, even though more than ten other donors support Georgia in the fight against VAW. Project staff analysed the existing institutional landscape and developed complementary measures. Other donors and partners highlighted the added value of CoE taking on a coordinative role and encouraging stakeholder cooperation in various ways. Another valued contribution by CoE project was the expertise provided both by the project team and external consultants, and the resources it made available. CoE also enjoys a very positive reputation among authorities as well as civil society partners. One key factor that is unique to CoE and that increased the projects effectiveness and leverage is the so-called "strategic triangle". Interventions are based on monitoring results and binding agreements, thus ensuring political alignment (see also Relevance) and a valid project rationale. Apart from external coherence and added value in relation to the other donors' interventions, CoE has also ensured complementarity with its own other projects in Georgia (internal coherence).

Effectiveness

Positive outputs and outcomes were reported across all three components of the project (political cooperation; capacity building; awareness-raising). The results in the various components have been perceived as mutually reinforcing by interviewees. The project has been highly proactive in coordinating the efforts of various stakeholders and in initiating cooperation. This applies to international as well as national stakeholders, and to state authorities as well as civil society actors. The evaluation confirmed positive outcomes in the area of intersectoral cooperation based on mutual understanding and contacts established during joint trainings. An intersectoral working group to review legislation on sexual violence was founded. Stakeholders, with whom cooperation was challenging, could be successfully involved. The project was able to spur discussion on sensitive issues, too, including the consent-based definition of rape and the practice of virginity inspections. The evaluation found comprehensive evidence on the success of the project's capacity building activities. A high level of ownership was acknowledged, and training contents were perceived as relevant. The trainings were viewed as effective and leading to a direct increase in knowledge and skills in relation to the Istanbul convention, VAW and European legal standards. Most respondents also expected to be able to apply their new skills. Many respondents were already able to apply their new skills and knowledge, both at work and to a lesser extent, outside of their work context. Respondents also noted several positive changes which they attribute to the trainings, in particular in the treatment of victims, a greater sensitivity for issues related to violence against women and sexual violence, and improvements in prosecution. Capacity buildings reached many training participants, also via online formats and dissemination of trainings in the law school and other training institutes as well as via trainings of trainers which will reach significant numbers of participants in the future. Finally, the project successfully increased awareness among both authorities and the wider public. Awareness-raising activities were appreciated as highly innovative and comprehensive. A few negative results were reported, such as resistance among training participants, scepticism towards the expertise of international experts, and challenging situations for trainers who had to manage controversies. In some cases, local and international perspectives clashed. Hindering factors for the project included administrative and logistical challenges as well as lack of will to change among some stakeholders; enabling factors included the high commitment of the other stakeholders as well as CoE's reputation, network, and project set-up.

Efficiency

The project is evaluated as very efficient, achieving numerous positive results with a limited budget. Project management is lean, but some frictions occurred due to high staff turnover and resulting handover processes and recruitment challenges. Partners had the impression that the project is understaffed considering the workload. The evaluation also found that certain processes at the Council of Europe were time-consuming. The project was perceived as highly adaptive in view of emerging needs and changing circumstances. Nevertheless, a few potentials for improvement were identified in terms of communication with stakeholders and external audiences. Efficiency was improved in terms of quantitative results due to the pandemic. Trainings were held online, resulting in reduced costs, unspent funds as well as higher participant numbers than initially targeted. However, in some cases, the quality of the exchange suffered due to the online format, and some target groups could not be reached. Despite the cost reduction and interruption of some activities due to the

pandemic, over 90% of the initial budget were spent. The evaluation found no evidence of misappropriation of funds or overspending.

Impact

The evaluation has been conducted too early to measure the final impact of the project. However, it is felt that the project activities have led to an increase in the number of prosecutions of sexual violence crimes and to changes in attitudes and stereotypes. One major process initiated by the project includes a legal amendment pertaining to the definition of rape.

Sustainability

the project ensured ownership and contextualisation in the development of training contents, tool and guidelines by involving local stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) and local trainers. Written outputs continue to be available, free of charge. The project has achieved a high level of sustainability by organising the capacity building as Training of Trainers, followed by cascade trainings where the original training contents can be scaled and reach a greater group of participants. The high numbers of participants of capacity buildings, together with a multi-dimensional approach, are a good pre-condition for lasting institutional change, despite certain staff turnovers in the partner institutions. One major achievement in terms of structural change are the anticipated legal changes through the amendment proposal brought before parliament. Risks to sustainability include the lack of high-ranking officials, in particular from certain stakeholders, involved in project activities. Some partner institutions also face a high staff turnover that might impact sustainability. Partner funds for training and other internal measures are limited, so continued funding via a follow-on project will be needed. A great majority of the interviewees has recommended the continuation of the project to ensure that results can be safeguarded and scaled up.

Conclusion

The evaluation found the project to be highly successful. With a comparably small budget and few human resources, the project has achieved significant results at outcome and partially even impact level in all three components. The project is in line with local and international policies and priorities and takes into account the needs of partners and target groups. Various project results were found to be sustainable in the long term. The project made use of scaling opportunities (ToTs) and initiated structural and procedural changes.

Recommendations

- Put a stronger focus on topics that have yet been underrepresented, in particular prevention and involvement of vulnerable groups
- Increase outreach within the current target group and identify change agents as levers
- Continue efforts for legal reform, especially in areas where progress has been initiated (e.g., regarding the consent-based definition of rape)
- Continue successful measures to ensure sustainability (especially capacity building)

1. Introduction

Mainlevel Consulting AG has been contracted by the Council of Europe (CoE) to conduct an evaluation of the project “Promoting an integrated approach to end violence against women and reinforcing gender equality in Georgia”.

This evaluation report provides an overview of the project’s results as well as learnings and recommendations to inform the follow-on project. Findings are structured along the CoE evaluation criteria, namely: Relevance; Added Value; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Impact and Sustainability.

2. Background on the project

The project “Promoting an integrated approach to end violence against women and reinforcing gender equality in Georgia” is implemented between January 2020 and 31 December 2022. The overall budget of the project is €800,000.00 and it is funded through a voluntary contribution. A cost extension for January to December 2023 was approved in October 2022. The budget was therefore increased by €310,000, culminating in a total cost of €1,110,000.

The project was based on two predecessor projects where its current activities were piloted or prepared, namely:

- Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Georgia (DGII project, ID 1940, 1 February 2018 – 31 December 2019)
- Women’s Access to Justice: delivering on the Istanbul Convention and other European gender equality standards (DGII project, ID 2073, 2019–2021)

The current project is geared to support the implementation of European standards on fighting violence against women (VAW) and promoting gender equality. Specifically, the project assists Georgia in the practical implementation of the Istanbul Convention via capacity building measures, knowledge creation and awareness-raising. Activities include:

- policy analysis
- development of tools, materials and guidelines
- preparation and implementation of trainings, workshops, study visits with key stakeholders from politics and authorities, the judiciary, civil society and further key stakeholders
- preparation and implementation of campaigns

The main partners and stakeholders of the project are the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality; Violence against Women and Domestic Violence; the Public Defender’s office; the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the Supreme Court, the Gender Equality Council of the Georgian Parliament; the Chief Prosecutor’s Office; the Ministry of Justice; the High School of Justice; the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs; the State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking (ATIP Fund), Public Broadcaster, and civil society stakeholders in Georgia.

The project is managed by a project team with four members based in Strasbourg and Tbilisi. It is overseen by a Steering Committee (SC) tasked with the strategic guidance and follow up of the implementation of the project. Key partners are participating in this SC to ensure ownership and sustainability. The SC reviews milestones and key findings of the project.

Gender Equality and Violence against Women in Georgia

(Sources: UN Women (2021); OECD (2019); GREVIO (2022))

Georgia has a comprehensive institutional framework to address issues of gender equality and violence against women (VAW) at different branches and levels of government, including:

- the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament (GEC)
- the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues
- The municipal gender equality councils
- the Public Defender's Office (PDO) including the Gender Equality Department

The country has passed several laws to advance gender equality and address the issue of GBV and VAW, and has been an early supporter of international commitments towards Gender Equality, e.g. by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) in 1994 and the Istanbul Convention in 2017. These international agreements have found their way into national policies. Two key documents include the National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims 2018-2020, which will be renewed for the period of 2022 to 2024, and the Law on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Women in Georgia are more vulnerable than men to poverty and social exclusion, and less protected by benefits and labour legislation as they are mostly employed in the informal sector. Access to education and comprehensive healthcare remains a challenge especially for rural women and ethnic minority groups as well as women with disabilities.

Gender-based violence, domestic violence and violence against women still presents a significant challenge, despite many improvements in the legal framework, and has been aggravated during the COVID19 pandemic. The risk of violence has increased extremely and is particularly high for women with disabilities and members of the LGBTI community as well as other women experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination. Their access to support and protection still needs to be improved, as is emphasized in the GREVIO Report. The report equally points out the need to ensure continued resources to combat violence against women and support victims. Throughout the country, there are not enough shelters or sexual violence referral centres.

Georgia has actively promoted women's participation in decision-making and has introduced quotas recently. "However, the data illustrate that the representation of women in the legislative as well as executive government, at both the local and central levels, in the judiciary system, in managerial positions and in higher ranks, remains low." (UN Women 2021) The same applies for the security sector. In some parts of the population, women are married at a very early age.

The GREVIO report points out needs for further institutional and legal action to improve the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and the situation of women: "The shortage in comprehensive medical and forensic care for victims of rape and violence as well as the shortage in dedicated domestic violence shelters is exacerbated by a lack of co-ordinated multi-agency co-operation and, consequently, by investigations and prosecution proceedings that lack in promptness, effectiveness and sensitivity. As a result, the report calls for immediate measures to ensure a more prompt and appropriate response by prosecution services in all cases of violence against women, in particular rape and sexual violence. It also suggests that on-the-job training for law-enforcement officials be strengthened and

further developed in order to overcome persistent attitudes, beliefs and practices that stand in the way of an effective police response to domestic violence. This would require, among many other things, a thorough understanding of the power differences between the victim and the perpetrator, the gendered nature of domestic violence and the impact and consequences of the violence on women victims who are often economically dependent on their abuser." (GREVIO 2022)

3. Evaluation Objectives

As defined in the terms of reference (ToRs), the evaluation had the following objectives:

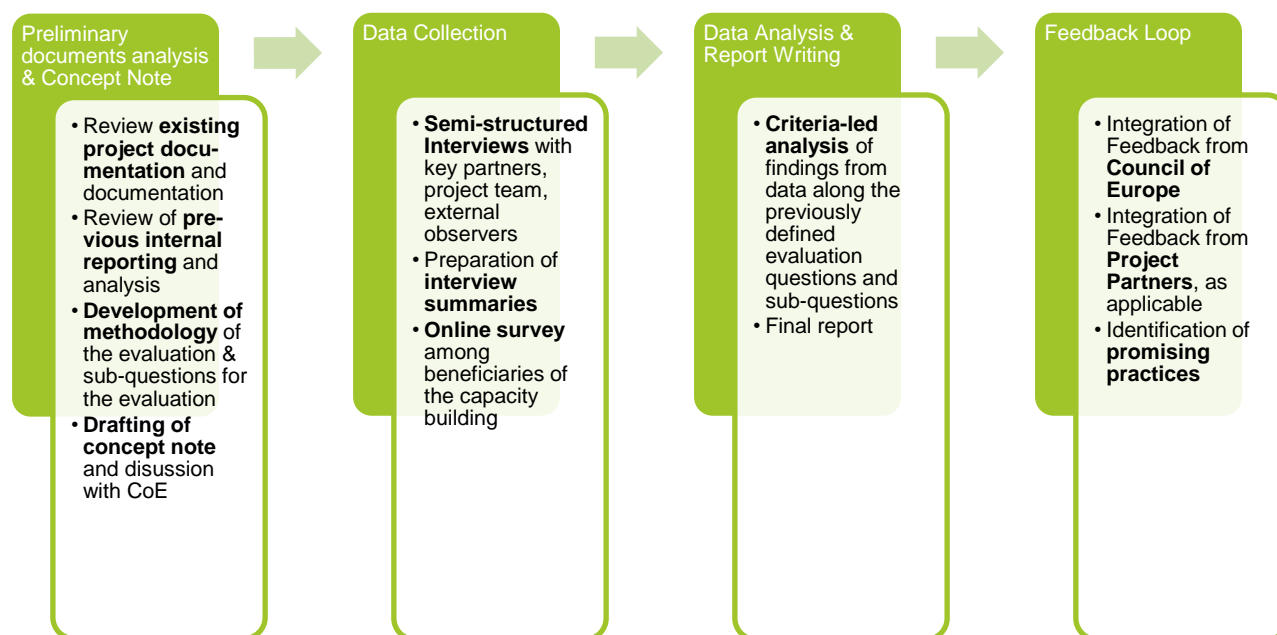
- evaluate the results achieved in the project (effectiveness);
- evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of institutional settings, resources and working methods within the project (efficiency);
- evaluate the added value of partnerships and comparative advantage of the Council of Europe vis-à-vis other international actors active in the field of gender equality in Georgia (added value);
- evaluate the degree to which the project's objectives and results will continue to have an impact in the future (sustainability).

The criteria relevance and impact have not been the focus of this evaluation. However, additional findings gathered during data collection have been nevertheless included, as they present valuable information for the follow-on project.

4. Methodology

Based on the evaluation objectives and the ToR, the evaluation has been conducted in four steps as depicted in the figure below:

Methodological Approach to Final Evaluation of CoE Project



The evaluation has been implemented with a mixed-methods approach to allow for triangulation of data. All collected data have been analysed on the basis of the evaluation matrix included in the concept note provided at inception stage (Annex 1).

The following data collection and analytical methods have been used for this assignment:

(A) Desk study and documents analysis

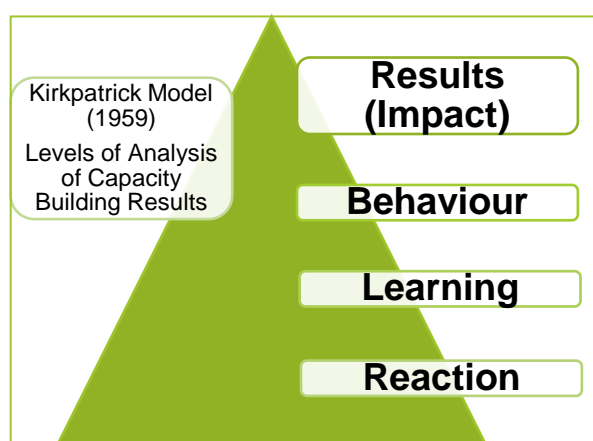
A variety of documents have been systematically analysed and information was triangulated with findings from primary data collection. The analysed documents include project-related documentation (project description, annual reports, SC progress reports, planning documents) as well as secondary literature (e.g. by other international cooperation partners such as UN Women, OECD). A list of the most relevant analysed documents can be found in Annex 3.

(B) Interviews

Interviews and exchanges have taken place with 16 persons. These comprise 3 members of the project team as well as 13 key partners and other stakeholders. The majority of interviewees was female. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to cover all critical aspects while at the same time allowing interviewees to answer openly and include further information not covered. The questionnaire directed at partners can be found in Annex 2. The composition of interviewees can be found in Annex 5. To comply with the rules of the GDPR and to ensure anonymity, all interviews have been randomly numbered and coded in the following format: INT_01; INT_02; etc. Interviewees were selected based on their knowledge of the project and potential ability to contribute to the different evaluation questions (as laid out in the evaluation matrix where groups of interviewees were included as informants for particular questions) and were supposed to include CoE personnel involved in the project, representatives of key partner institutions (e.g. the State Committee), and representatives of non-partner institutions (e.g. other donors, to add an external perspective). Selection and contacting of the interviewees were facilitated by the project team to ensure adherence to the timeframe and minimise the risk of political repercussions.

(C) Online-Survey

An online survey has been conducted in English and Georgian with participants of the capacity build-ings (questionnaire see Annex 4). Respondents received a link to the approximately 15-minute-sur-vey from the project team. In total, 143 persons have participated in the survey. 78 of these have fully completed the questionnaire, 65 persons have submitted partially completed questionnaires. The survey allowed for skipping of individual questions. It must therefore be noted that there is a high number of non-responses in relation to all items/questions. The evaluation team has neverthe-less included partial responses in the evaluation.



The questionnaire contained both quantitative and qualitative items. It was based on the analytical model of Kirkpatrick (see figure on the left). It specifically focused on the higher levels of capacity build-ing results: behaviour (behaviour changes of individ-uals) as well as impact (structural, procedural and performance changes of the involved institutions). The questionnaire can function as a basis for future monitoring of training results.

The sample of 143 respondents consisted of 33.6 % females (n=48), 25.9 % males (n=37) and 40.6 % who did not provide information about their gender (n=58). The average age of the survey partici-pants is 39.2 years. The survey participants had mainly taken part in trainings in 2021 (36.4%), while only 25.2% of the training participants had participated in trainings in 2022. 38.5% did not specify in which year they had participated in a CoE training. Further socio-demographic data was not collected - among others for data protection reasons.

5. Assessment according to OECD-DAC/CoE Evaluation Criteria

5.1. Relevance

Georgia has been a signatory of the Istanbul Convention since 2014 and has ratified it in 2017. The project was initiated in light of the review process of the Istanbul convention and seeks to assist the implementation of recommendations from the convention's monitoring process (baseline evaluation procedure in March 2020). The project addresses these recommendations as well as certain priorities defined in the Council of Europe's draft Action Plan for Georgia, namely:

- promotion of gender equality and preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
- application of European instruments and legal standards by authorities and civil society, especially the Istanbul Convention and other gender equality standards
- application of legal standards and the Istanbul Convention during investigations and judicial proceedings in relation to cases of VAW and DV

The implementation of some of the monitoring recommendations and legal standards is also a precondition for EU accession status. The project thus is in line with both regional and national policies and strategies.

In the choice of its activities, especially with the capacity buildings for law enforcement and judiciary and with the public awareness raising activities, the project implements several of the recommendations by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women. In addition, the project has the potential to contribute to progress with the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the Agenda 2030, notably SDG 5 on Gender Equality. Alignment with international policies and strategies can therefore equally be confirmed. Project partners confirm that the issues touched upon by the project are of high relevance for the involved stakeholders, too. Interviewees named challenges such as high rates of femicides and the need for early prevention and comprehensive awareness-raising or conservative institutions such as the forensic office (INT_03).

The project conducted an initial needs assessment with key stakeholders and partners in 2019 to ensure alignment with partners' needs. The majority of interviewees have confirmed the project's actual orientation on partner needs (INT_04, INT_03; INT_02). This strong orientation of project activities towards the needs of the partners is so far unique and makes the Council of Europe an important cooperation partner (INT_04). For instance, it was reported that domestic violence and sex crimes as well as gender equality are top strategic priorities, e.g. for Georgia's prosecution service. Regarding the capacity building component, the survey results strongly confirm the statements made in the interviews. With regard to the statement "The course provided content that is relevant to my work." the picture is very positive: 21.7% of respondents agree with the statement, while a full 31.5% strongly agree. Only 2.8% of respondents disagreed with the statement. No information on the statement was given by 43.4 % of the survey participants (cp. Figure 1: Relevance of training contents).

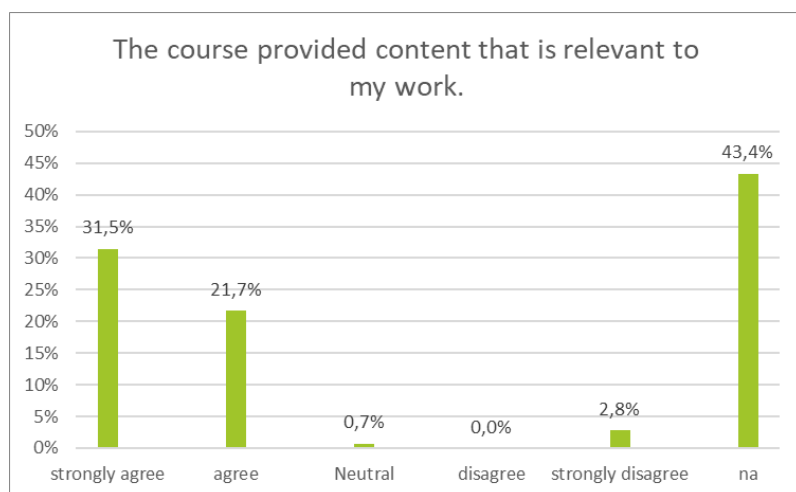


Figure 1: Relevance of training contents

As concluded by the evaluators so far, the project has identified the needs of the beneficiaries in detail, has fully taken them into account and has therefore been able to respond to them in an appropriate manner. In fact, most interviewees have praised the project’s openness to partners needs and flexibility / adaptability. The project must be credited for being particularly successful in its approaches to capacity building with the help of trainings of various types and reaching a high number of beneficiaries for the trainings

(for further details see “Effectiveness”). The project design allowed for adaptation to the complexity of the context at different levels as well as to the circumstances of the Covid 19 pandemic.

In terms of adaptability, a major challenge encountered by the project was the **Covid 19 pandemic**, which slowed down and/or delayed the implementation of planned activities. For example, trainings that were initially planned to be held face-to-face could not be conducted. However, the project was able to find a way to adapt trainings to an online format. Adapting training to Covid 19 conditions also had positive consequences, such as the greater coverage of trainings with the help of the online format (for details see “Efficiency”).

At the end of 2020, a new government with prior **political turbulence** emerged. As interviewees reported, these processes and developments affected the political decision-making processes in Georgia and thus also, in part, activities of the CoE project. The **war in Ukraine** was also a factor that (briefly) slowed down efforts on project activities, as politics was temporarily heavily focused on the issue (INT_02).

5.2. Added Value and Coherence

External coherence, coordination and complementarity: More than ten donors support Georgia in the fight against gender-based violence and in improving gender equality. Stakeholders include international organisations (e.g. UN Women), bilateral donors (e.g. USAID) and local and international NGOs (e.g. Equality now). According to various interviewees, the project cooperates well with a variety of stakeholders and has sought coordination and synergies with other donors (INT_07, INT_14). One interviewee pointed out that cooperation on gender equality issues is not easy and has led to overlaps in the past. However, CoE has been particularly aware of this and has actively tried to improve stakeholder cooperation, e.g. by suggesting regular coordination meeting where needed (INT_07). Other interviewees equally report that CoE took on a coordinating role in the context of stakeholder cooperation, arguably taking on additional coordination tasks that would have been the responsibility of other stakeholders (INT_14). Interviewees praised this coordinative role, which CoE seems to have fulfilled well. CoE was also perceived as more proactive than other stakeholders (INT_15). Cooperation of the project with other stakeholders took place at various occasions, e.g in the development of the sexual violence investigation manual titled “Manual on Effectively

Investigating, Prosecuting and Adjudicating Sexual Violence Cases” (INT_11). According to the project documents, CoE also planned on functioning as a platform for the **exchange of knowledge** and good practices (project proposal). The sharing of information was confirmed by respondents, both in trainings and during the study trip, and has been mentioned as an area that should be further pursued.

In terms of the added value of partnering with CoE, interviewees have highlighted the following aspects:

Expertise: Partners emphasize CoEs technical expertise and good communication (INT_07, INT_13, INT_14, INT_15). While most statements refer to CoE’s expertise related to gender equality and fighting VAWG, others also point out CoE’s greater familiarity with the country context due to its local representations (INT_15).

Alignment with political priorities: Project team members also point out that, while other donors might have greater financial resources, CoE has been successful with its “strategic triangle approach”, relying on the political will enshrined in conventions and the monitoring results to develop relevant and partner-oriented projects (INT_05). One interviewee also highlighted that Georgian institutions prefer to cooperate with CoE, as it is a European institution which makes it easier to align legislation with European standards. Additionally, interviewees pointed out that the fact that CoE is an intergovernmental organization makes its projects more “binding”, as governments have to collaborate with CoE and project activities cannot be ignored (INT_12, INT_14): *“CoE is an international organization and is related to Strasbourg. The Georgian government seemingly feels more accountable towards them.”* (INT_12)

Resources: CoE possesses (financial) resources (including a comprehensive network) to hire internationally renowned experts (INT_12, INT_14).

Reputation: In relation to the specific issue of women’s rights and violence against women, CoE is the leading and guiding body in promoting the establishment and ratification of the Istanbul Convention, which gives CoE and the project a special status (INT_14). This is also one of the primary reasons why smaller civil society organisations benefit from a cooperation with CoE (INT_12).

Internal coherence: Apart from ensuring external coherence and added value in relation to the other donors’ interventions, CoE has also monitored **complementarity with its own other projects in Georgia**. Two other projects implemented by CoE can be linked in terms of content:

- Fight against discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia (DGI, DGII project, ID 1817, 2018–2022)
- Responding to child sexual exploitation and abuse in Georgia (DGII project, ID 185, 1 January 2017 – 31 December 2019)

Based on the project proposal, CoE seeks to avoid duplication of efforts by targeting specific stakeholders with its activities and maintaining communication with the CoE managers working in the relevant areas. This was confirmed by the interviews, where no frictions or duplications of efforts with other CoE projects were mentioned.

5.3. Effectiveness

The project logframe defines the following intended results:

intermediate outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy and institutional framework strengthened for the effective application of European standards, notably the Istanbul Convention and other gender equality standards 2. Authorities have strengthened their capacity to deal with cases of violence against women and domestic violence 3. The general public and authorities have strengthened their awareness on the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence, including gender equality
immediate outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated approaches and multi-agency cooperation models initiated in line with European standards, notably the Istanbul Convention and other gender equality standards 2. Steps taken by public officials (legal professionals, social workers, police officers, etc.) to use obtained knowledge and enhanced skills to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence 3. Awareness raised on gender equality and violence against women and domestic violence among the general public and public officials
outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased knowledge on integrated approaches and multi-agency cooperation in line with the Istanbul Convention and other gender equality standards 2. Increased knowledge and skills among legal professionals, social workers, police officers, etc. on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence 3. Visibility/awareness raising campaign and materials produced on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women

Positive outputs and outcomes were reported across all three components of the project (political cooperation; capacity building; awareness-raising). The results in the various components have been perceived as mutually reinforcing by interviewees. For instance, capacity building measures and trainings reportedly also created awareness on VAWG and strengthened the cooperation of relevant stakeholders with organisations active in the field. Similarly, certain cooperation and joint initiatives are likely to lead to further and long-term improvements of capacities.

Cooperation and strengthened institutions

As outlined in chapter 5.2 (Added Value and Coherence), the project has been highly proactive in coordinating the efforts of various stakeholders and in initiating cooperation. This applies to international as well as national stakeholders, and to state authorities as well as civil society actors.

This **successful intersectoral cooperation** is seen as a prerequisite for long-term effects and changes in the attitudes of the individual actors. It is closely linked to the awareness-raising component by allowing for an exchange of perspectives. The CoE project is particularly distinguished by the fact that, in contrast to previous thematically similar projects, it brings a variety of actors and relevant stakeholders to one table and thus facilitates and supports their cooperation. This applies not only to the efforts related to multi-agency cooperation (component 1), but also in the capacity buildings (component 2). *As one interviewee put it: "It was really interesting to share opinions and experience between NGOs, public and other actors [in the trainings]. As prosecutor you always have your own opinion and perspective, but with further stakeholders, you can look at things differently."* (INT_03)

One very positive result in the context of intersectoral cooperation was that the project succeeded in **initiating cooperation with the National Forensics Bureau and the Bar Association**. These two

institutions had often presented themselves as challenging partners and actors in previous project contexts due to their conservative, antiquated and rigid attitudes and ways of working (INT_02). *"The juridical system is a fortress. Judicial processes often retraumatize victims and it can be hard to work with them. It is a huge step forward that cooperation with them could be initiated."* (INT_07) The fact that above-mentioned organisations could be encouraged to cooperate is perceived by many interview partners as a great success (INT_09, INT_02, INT_07). In addition, the activities even seem to have succeeded in getting employees of the National Forensics Bureau to question their own work and to recognise that there is a certain need for change (INT_02). Many of the interviewees also consider the work on the consent-based definition of rape as a sign that political will for change has been stimulated by the project; it is reported that originally no one had believed that such early cooperation on the amendment would be possible (INT_07). An amendment proposal has now already been brought before the parliament (INT_05). Even very difficult issues, such as the existence of virginity inspections (examination by the National Forensics Bureau of young women to determine their sexual activity), are being tackled in the context of the project's activities: It is reported that a meeting with the relevant Forensics Bureau is planned for October (INT_07). *"The Activities of the Council of Europe's project showed that groups, that are normally on opposite sides of courtroom, have something to share and that there is a common goal."* (INT_06)

Another example documenting this is the **inter-sectoral working group** that has recently been set up and is co-chaired by UN Women and Council of Europe. The purpose of this partner-led initiative is to change the legislation with regard to issues of sexual violence against women (INT_11, INT_13). It had been recognised that there is a need for even stronger cooperation in this area. On the government side, the Ministry of Internal Affairs participates in the working groups. Another important stakeholder is the NDA (National Democratic Institute), which is supposed to help lobby for the issues and the need for political and legislation change (INT_11). *"The sexual violence reform needs consolidation. Amendments should have been implemented already earlier. If there is not a strong lobby, these amendments will not pass and will get stuck in the parliament. Therefore, an intersectoral working group was created. Also, it appeared as if political stakeholders are not speaking to each other. The working group should facilitate processes and consensus finding among stakeholders."* (INT_11)

The (financial) **cooperation with other international institutions and NGOs** working towards the application of the Istanbul Convention could be expanded, e.g. with UN Women, with whom, it is reported, there was no close cooperation before (INT_04, INT_02). Consequentially, victims of sexual and gender-based violence as well as corresponding perpetrators can also be reached indirectly, as these are partly the target groups of NGOs, whereas they are not target groups of the CoE project. (Nevertheless, the project team also states that it would be necessary to do more in these areas, as so far mainly state institutions have benefited from the activities of the CoE project).

Capacity improvements

The capacity building measures are widely praised by participants both in the survey and by interviewees from partner institutions. The survey results show a high level of satisfaction with the trainings

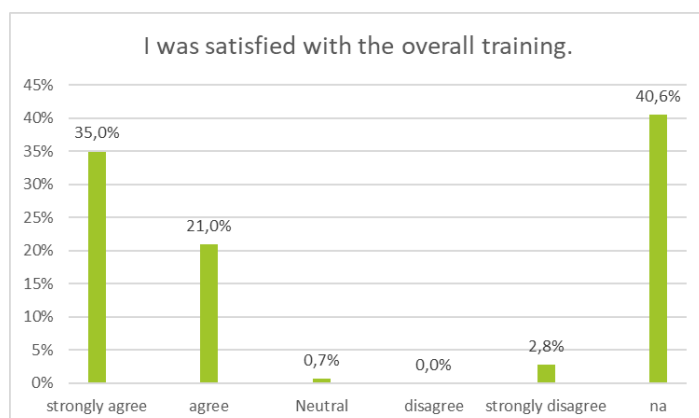


Figure 2: Satisfaction with the training

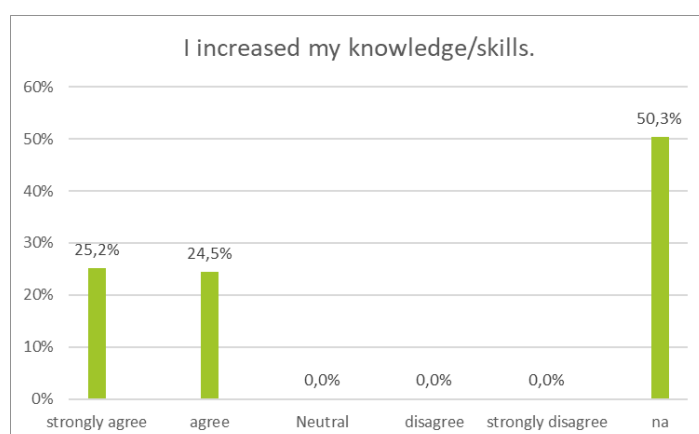


Figure 3: Increase in knowledge / skills

(see Figure 2: Satisfaction with the training). The majority of respondents also understood the learning objectives. 37.8% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement "I understood the learning objectives" and another 16.1% agreed. Only 2.1% of respondents disagreed with the statement at all. Again, 44.1% of respondents abstained.

Partners emphasize the high ownership: After the trainings the modules belong to the organising entity, which owns them and can replicate them without the support of CoE. One stakeholder reports that every year, 80 trainings are conducted. (INT_15)

Interviewees report that as an immediate short-term result, the **capacity buildings** led to increased knowledge on the Istanbul Convention, domestic and gender-based violence, violence against women as well as European legal standards. The findings are confirmed by the survey responses: All respondents who answered this question (49.7 %) have noted an increase in their knowledge or skills have increased as a result of the training (cp. Figure 3: Increase in knowledge / skills)

In the survey, the great majority of those respondents who answered to this question (99%), have stated that they intend to apply their skills. Most also feel that they will be able to do so. The item: "Do you feel as though you can apply what you learned to your work?" was answered by 51.7 % with "Yes" and only 0.7 % with "No" (47.6% did not answer the question). At the same time, respondents listed various (potential) barriers that (might) impede them from applying their skills. These include:

- Little cooperation between state actors and the non-governmental sector, leaving little room for effective advocacy
- Lack of motivation of different actors to support transformation
- Reluctance of women affected by violence to report it to the police
- Low awareness / lack of implementation of existing laws
- Indifferent social attitude towards victims of sexual violence
- Inconsistent approaches by prosecutors and courts: Standards reach work of prosecution earlier than that of courts

- Mistrust of the population towards law enforcement agencies
- Outdated legislative norms (requiring changes, e.g. regarding sufficient evidence)

When asked if they actually were able to apply what they had learned in the trainings within the context of their job, 49.7% of respondents indicated they were able to do so, while only 2.1% indicated they could not. 48.3% of respondents did not answer the item "I was able to apply my new knowledge / skills from the training in my work / job". Respondents also provided examples, e.g. that they could use the acquired knowledge in interview planning, in investigations as well as in general criminal prosecution, or that they were able to differentiate various forms of violence in practice.



Figure 4: Application of knowledge at work

Outside of their work context, less respondents were able to apply their skills. The item "I was able to apply my new knowledge / skills from the training outside of my work / job" was affirmed by only 36.4%, while 14.7% denied it. 49.0% of the respondents abstained or did not answer the item. The following examples were given for application of training contents outside of work:

- In counselling in general
- In contact with children
- In the preparation of educational material

Actual changes that occurred as a consequence of the trainings have been equally perceived by survey respondents, in particular regarding the treatment of victims. The biggest changes that training participants noticed in their work so far include:

- Increased sensitivity for victims of sexual violence
- Simplified communication and easier contact with victims of sexual violence
- Increased empathy for victims of sexual violence
- Awareness of the psychological condition of victims
- Understanding of structural and social backgrounds of violence and its causes
- Increased sensitivity to categories of crime
- Facilitation of victim-centred processes

These changes have also been mentioned in interviews. According to interviewees, capacity building measures created a sensitivity for victims of sexual violence and an understanding of how to deal with them (INT_13). This manifests itself in more sensitivity in interviews with affected persons as well as more sensitivity and a general change of attitude at the systemic level (INT_13).

Interviewees furthermore reported that, improvements in the quality of investigations of crimes of sexual and gender-based violence after trainings could be observed and associated with the trainings (INT_04). According to one interview partner, prosecution of sex crimes has increased by 60 % while the number of convictions increased by 48 % meaning that cases that were previously overlooked are now being investigated (INT_14). *"The criminal justice system seems to be taking such cases more seriously."* (INT_14)

These examples are confirmed by the survey. In a closed question, further positive results of the training that go beyond the individual level have been recorded. Even here, an overwhelming majority of those respondents who answered the question have noted positive changes, e.g. at their

workplace (see Figure 5: Further positive results of trainings). Here again, the application of a victim-centred approach stands out.

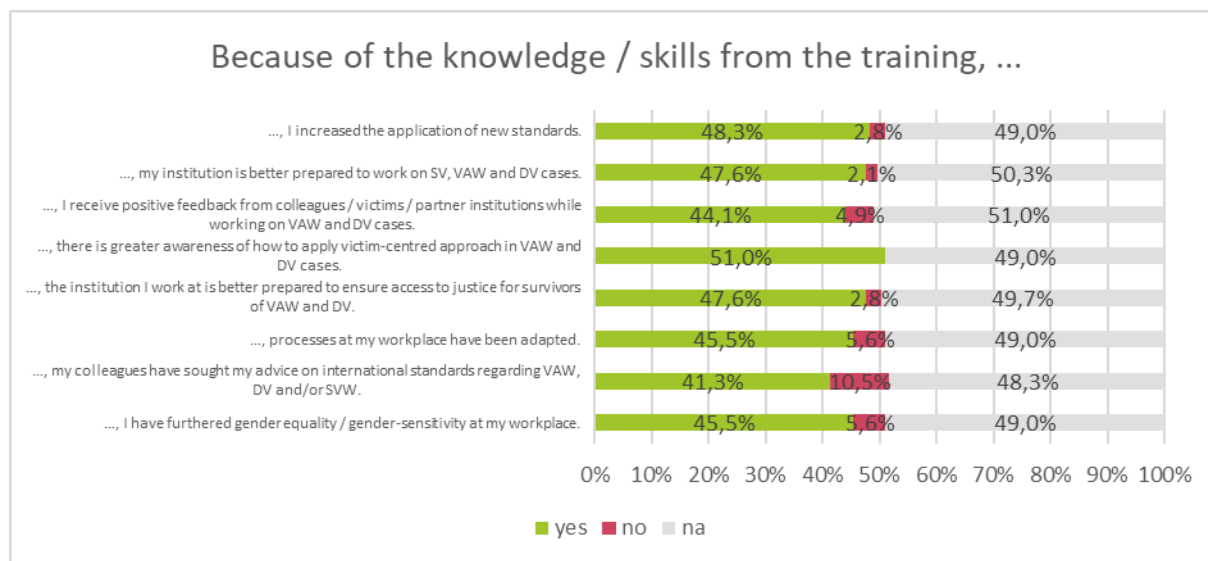


Figure 5: Further positive results of trainings

For the capacity building, the project also achieved remarkable results in terms of **quantity** by reaching a significant number of training participants (e.g. over 100 investigators and prosecutors that took part in trainings) (INT_03).

The project has successfully laid the foundation of further **scaling up of the capacity building results** by implementing mostly ToTs. The involved stakeholders have perceived the trainings as relevant to their work and have continued the efforts initiated by the project. For instance, further trainings might be implemented by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (INT_04, INT_02) itself: As the project's Annual Report states, the project supported the capacity building of Ministry of Internal Affairs investigators on the topic of sexual violence crimes through the development of training modules as well as conducting a training of trainers thereby ensuring sustainability of capacity building in the Ministry (Annual Report, 2021).

CoE also developed training modules on violence against women for the training of lawyers, which are now being used at the law school (INT_14). A specific topic of these modules is e.g. domestic violence (INT_11).

Despite these positive aspects, a further roll-out of capacity building activities was perceived as necessary to also convince those who are sceptical towards these issues and to ensure sustainable changes in mindsets and application of the relevant standards in practice (INT_03; INT_15). The training materials

Survey answers to the question: In your opinion, what has been the most relevant result of the CoE project "Promoting an integrated approach to end violence against women and reinforcing gender equality in Georgia"?

- *The noticeable change in mood, attitude and language of the training participants.*
- *Increased sensitivity with regard to dealing with victims of sexual violence*
- *Equipping relevant actors with knowledge that is passed on in the sense of a multiplier approach*
- *Increased awareness and acceptance of law enforcement personnel*
- *Increased willingness of victims to cooperate with trained personnel*
- *Active qualitative investigation of sexual crimes against women*
- *Training of professionals not only on a legal-technical but also on an emotional level*

developed by the project have been noted as successful products and highly useful in this regard. (INT_09, INT_02)

One unexpected positive result of the trainings offered was that they offered participants an opportunity for exchange, which was actively used by them (INT_02) and in turn spurred cooperation. The trainings also laid the ground for procedural changes. For instance, as a result of the trainings, the Prosecutor's Office is aiming to establish a **specialisation of prosecutors**. Future cases of sexual violence will only be dealt with by those who are specialized in such cases. However, this specialization has not yet been institutionalized as the Prosecutor's Officer reportedly refrained from the formalization of degrees leaving a reform still to be done (INT_11).

Based on the evidence, the capacity building component can be evaluated as highly successful. The scope of positive results covers a wide range, including individual skills and institutional capacities.

Awareness raised

The project successfully increased awareness among both authorities and the wider public.

Awareness-raising measures addressing the general public were considered to be **highly innovative and successful**. The project made use of social media for campaigning, developed videos with role models and approached the topic VAWG with humour and creativity. One key event, the music festival, was highlighted by several interviewees (INT_03; INT_10) as an innovative way of reaching young people and adolescents. The music festival included a treasure hunt as well as a questionnaire ("How sexist are you?"). The various methods used made VAWG very tangible as a topic and created a sense of personal relevance.

Various interviewees report that due to its **unique holistic approach**, the CoE project was able to reach a variety of practitioners and professionals from different professional fields (INT_09, INT_06, INT_03, INT_02), including lawyers, public prosecutors, investigators, public defenders, members of the political level but also, for example, employees of the so-called National Forensics Bureau. It is reported that the CoE has a strong relationship of trust with state institutions (INT_02, INT_09). Because of its participatory approach, its openness to innovative ideas and measures as well as their constant focus on successful project work, many partner organisations find it pleasant to cooperate with the project (INT_04, INT_07, INT_05, INT_05). *"The project always provides us with the best experts of the respective field."* (INT_07)

According to various interviewees, the **"Study on the administration of justice on sexual violence crimes"** was helpful in creating awareness on the topic (INT_02, INT_06). Furthermore, the study could also be seen as a kind of needs assessment as the training measures were designed and implemented based on the study results.

Interviewees noted an increase of awareness on the side of authorities and have mentioned examples for new and improved processes to better cater to the needs of victims (component 1 – framework). As such, persons involved in the process against perpetrators of sexual violence seem to be more sensitised with regard to the victims and how to deal with them. In some cases, victim coordinators have even been appointed to care for the victims.

After the release of offenders from prisons, perpetrators can be supported and accompanied by case managers who also received training (INT_04). This can be seen as a preventive measure, although some interviewees would like to see the project focus even more strongly on prevention in the future (INT_02, INT_04, INT_10). In general – although not systematically recorded – training participants always provided good feedback on the training they attended (INT_04, INT_02).

What have been the project's negative results?

It is reported that there were sometimes resistances from reluctant training participants regarding trainings and their contents (INT_05). In many cases, this was a question of the training participants' acceptance of external providers imparting knowledge on legal issues (INT_05, INT_11). Trainings were in general a complex and difficult task as gender-based and sexual violence – despite not being new topics – are still highly stigmatized and influence people's behaviour latently. This had a negative effect on the trainers and experts who had to manage controversial topics and views: *"For some experts, trainings were so heavy that they were on the verge of burnout. It might be better to have trainings led by more than one expert as things can become very hostile and intensive."* (INT_12)

In a specific training case, an all-male training audience of police officials became reportedly offensive towards the female trainer causing her to stop training (INT_11, INT_12, INT_14), an incident with the potential of jeopardising the relationship with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (INT_14, INT_11). It is reported that the CoE project immediately took measures to remedy this difficult situation for all persons involved and succeeded in maintaining constructive cooperation with all important stakeholders, mainly the ministry of internal affairs (INT_14, INT_11). The united stance of all organisations with regard to the incident was helpful in solving this issue (INT_11).

Harmonising international and local approaches to the training topics seems to have presented a challenge. Trainings were usually provided by a team of two trainers, local and international. In a few cases, the trainers did not agree completely on training contents and contextualization. One partner also found that local partners should have more ownership regarding the choice of trainers and participants. (INT_03, Int_15)

At various instances, there also seem to have been discussions about the participation of CoE project members in trainings. For example, training participants at times demanded CoE to sponsor the activities but not participate in them (INT_05). However, the CoE project staff managed to position itself confidently in relation to this issue and to be present at all trainings as planned.

Factors contributing to project success or underachievement

The project faced various challenges:

Notwithstanding the Covid 19 pandemic, the project partially worked with target groups that were difficult to reach. For instance, one interviewee highlighted the **logistical and administrative challenges** when it comes to the requirements, selection, and availability of judges (little available time, requirement of needing to attend three courses and being specialised in domestic violence).

Some stakeholders were hard to reach due to attitudes. Several interviewees reported that although a fruitful cooperation with all stakeholders could be established during the project, some political stakeholders still **lack the necessary will to change**. According to the interviewees' reports, this was most recently evident in the area of sexual violence and rape. *"It is difficult to achieve structural challenges, e.g. regarding processes of sex crimes. The government is still reluctant to change despite many efforts."* (INT_12)

Various interviewees therefore emphasise the need to continue the project and to provide successful measures with follow-up dates in order to prevent the effects described (INT_02, INT_06, INT_09, INT_14, INT_12, INT_15).

On the other hand, interviewees have equally identified certain success factors of the project. The lack of political will with some stakeholders was probably compensated by the **high commitment** of stakeholders involved in the project (INT_15).

The project also benefitted from CoE's reputation and network. According to the report of one interviewee, the **mere presence of the CoE project** as such is relevant for the success of (joint) project activities, as CoE has the power to promote cooperation between civil society representatives and policy makers (INT_14).

The set-up of the project also helped, involving a variety of relevant stakeholders (at institutional level – not only individuals!) and creating a positive atmosphere and smooth collaboration (INT_15).

One interviewee pointed out the methodology as another potential success factor: on sensitive issues such as domestic and gender-based violence, remote formats might feel more comfortable for participants (INT_03).

5.4. Efficiency

Management of the project is ensured in the CoE HQ (DG II – Gender Equality Division). The project is implemented by a senior project officer (B5), a project communications officer (B4) and a project assistant (B2) in the CoE Tbilisi office and a support project assistant (B1/2) in Strasbourg. Additional expertise is provided by international and local consultants who are involved as trainers, facilitators or advisors. These are usually recruited out of a pool of local or international consultants – however, singular contracts can also be made but lead to greater administrative efforts.

With regard to the financial resources of the CoE project, some interviewees suggested that although CoE was able to work efficiently with the finances, it did not have enough financial resources in general (INT_11, INT_14). More financial resources would be helpful for even smoother planning of project activities in the future.

Due to **fixed-term contracts**, position changes and parental leaves, the project has faced a relatively high staff turnover in the course of its implementation (INT_05, INT_10). Project partners also have the impression that CoE is understaffed and that the project team repeatedly works overtime and at weekends. Especially considering the seriousness of the issue of the thematic focus of the project, interview partners suggest that the CoE project should be equipped with more staff to prevent termination of employment contracts on the part of employees as well as general high fluctuation (INT_14).

However, few frictions in terms of handovers etc. have been reported. The recruitment of appropriate consultants has been challenging at times, too (INT_05). Finding relevant expertise within the consultant pool was not always possible. One interviewee reported that certain further measures could not be pursued due to a lack of suitable consultants (INT_15).

Interviewees report that many of the **processes** at the Council of Europe can be **time-consuming** due to **high bureaucracy as well as hierarchy** and thus slow down planning accordingly (INT_02, INT_07). However, external parties perceive these delays less than the project team itself, which always tries to anticipate them and adapt planning at an early stage (INT_02, INT_03, INT_05, INT_06, INT_07, INT_08, INT_09, INT_10).

Interviewees report that the project worked very efficiently due to its **personnel and management structure** and that positive results are highly attributable to the **professionalism and professional experience of the project staff** (INT_11, INT_12, INT_14). Communication and cooperation with

stakeholders were widely viewed as highly efficient and professional at all times (INT_11, INT_12, INT_13, INT_14). *"The project team members went out of their way to make things happen. They are amazing to work with."* (INT_14)

However, in terms of communication, a few suggestions regarding further improvements were made. A better inclusion of all stakeholders and appreciation of local knowledge was wished for, e.g. through working groups and face-to-face meetings instead of emails and bilateral talks (INT_15).

The project team is characterised by a high level of commitment and passion for the project goals (INT_13). Any problems are tackled flexibly and with a strong will to find solutions, which stakeholders find very helpful in view of the sometimes difficult beneficiaries (INT_14).

According to all externals, any project-internal difficulties due to staff turnover or for other reasons were only barely noticed (INT_09, INT_14). At the conceptual and activity level, interviewees praised the fact that the project had a holistic as well as balanced focus on both prevention and protection (INT_08). In addition, the fields of law enforcement, health and education were also addressed. The **support of the Deputy Public Defender** as well as the **involvement of various international experts** in different project phases and activities further empowered the structural set-up of the CoE project and its work, as interview partners reported (INT_09) as this brought a "raison d'être" and legitimacy thereby enabling the project to move confidently at the political level.

The **Covid-19 pandemic** affected the delivery of project activities: trainings were adapted to an online format resulting in cost reduction and leaving **unspent funds** as well as in reaching higher participant numbers than initially targeted. However, the project team acknowledges that the remote design of activities may have resulted in certain target groups not being included in the activities. At the same time, this number could not be influenced on the part of the CoE project, since training participants registered for trainings independently and proactively. The project team tried to ensure at all times that training participants of all ages, all regions and all genders took part in the trainings. It was difficult to control the active presence and participation of all training participants at all training moments, even though the trainings were designed to be as interactive as possible.

The CoE project **constantly adapted** the project activities to newly emerging or newly discovered needs: for example, activities that had not been planned from the beginning of the project were spontaneously launched (INT_12). In this context, the project has shown a high degree of adaptability.

Although interviewees consistently report that the CoE managed to adapt well to the new circumstances of the **Corona pandemic** (especially at the **organisational level**, e.g. holding all seminars in remote format), there is also the observation that at the **conceptual level**, a certain **lack of flexibility** in relation to activities and their contents exists (INT_08). For example, activities could have been more strongly adapted to the need for education on domestic violence that emerged as a result of the pandemic. One interviewee notes that social media could have been used as a stronger medium for corresponding awareness campaigns as well as for victim education (INT_08).

The project received a cost extension by the amount of €310,000. The initial concern not to be able to spend the overall project budget has been overcome as 90 to 95% of the project budget could be used up by the end of 2022. Overall, the evaluation found **no evidence of misappropriation of funds or overspending**.

5.5. Impact

According to the project logframe, the intended impact of the project is the following: "Contributing to better prevention, prosecution and protection against all forms of violence against women in line with the Istanbul Convention and strengthening gender equality". A second impact that is implied in the project documentation is a greater public awareness and changes in public attitudes regarding VAW and the Istanbul Convention.

Most interviewees stated that it might still be too early to measure the actual impact of the project. However, it is felt that the project activities have led to an increase in the number of prosecutions of SV crimes launched as well as to increased sensitivity of key stakeholders and changes in attitudes and stereotypes. (INT_03)

According to one interviewee, one training participant that had at first been hesitant towards the applicability of the provisions of the Istanbul Convention in their working context, has reported that in a court case, the judge referred to the Istanbul Convention in her verdict (INT_03). This shows that the overall awareness of stakeholders of the Istanbul Convention has increased, among other things, due to the work of the CoE project, which in turn leads to a more favourable implementation environment for the consecutive project.

While interviewees might view the impacts cautiously, one major process initiated by the project includes a **legal amendment pertaining to the definition of rape**. It should be particularly noted that this amendment proposal has not been a top-down approach or process that was automatically set off due to international obligations. Rather, it was preceded by targeted awareness-raising efforts by the project, including the study trip to Sweden. Awareness-raising among key stakeholders can therefore be considered to have been successful, even in the timeframe of the project. Another example documenting this is the **inter-sectoral working group** that has recently been set up.

5.6. Sustainability

According to the project documentation and confirmed by interviewees, the project ensured **ownership and contextualisation** in the development of training contents, tool and guidelines by involving local stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) and local trainers.

For all written outputs, sustainability is ensured by making them available free-of-charge even after the conclusion of certain activities and the project itself. This applies to tools and guidelines as well as training materials or campaigning materials (such as the videos). One product of the project, the **"Manual on Effectively Investigating, Prosecuting and Adjudicating Sexual Violence Cases"**, was praised by various stakeholders and is considered as highly relevant and applicable in the work context by all stakeholders (INT_03; INT_02).

The project has achieved a high level of sustainability by organising the capacity building as **Training of Trainers, followed by cascade trainings** where the original training contents can be scaled and reach a greater group of participants.

Some of the interviewees report **attitudinal changes** among relevant actors. At the same time, interviewees find that (especially in relation to institutions that are predominantly led by men), it is relevant to maintain jointly achieved project successes through regular exchange and follow-up activities as well as through the frequent provision of information and training material. However, many of the interviewees representing the project's feminist partner organisations that advocate for gender equality are sure that achieved results can be sustained in their respective organisations because the will to do so exists anyway (INT_09, INT_06).

Interviewees from state institutions are confident as to the continuation of the capacity buildings (INT_15; INT_03). Interviewees report that the individual courses that are part of the project's activities are embedded in additional capacity buildings tackling the issue of gender equality and gender-based violence from different angles, e.g. focusing on sexual harassment (INT_03). The high numbers of participants, together with this multi-dimensional approach, are a good pre-condition for lasting institutional change, despite certain staff turnovers in the partner institutions.

One major achievement in terms of structural change are the anticipated legal changes through the amendment proposal brought before parliament.

Risks to sustainability

It is reported that the civil as well as the political sector are always subject to **high staff turnover**, which could affect the sustainability of project measures. Interviewees therefore emphasise that tangible research, guidelines and tools, as well as training and training materials, are particularly important in order to maintain effects in subsequent generations of staff. Furthermore, **funding for training** is also addressed as it is often dependent on the donor's ability to provide funding; it would therefore be important to clarify funding and generally anticipate that raising financial resources could be a challenge in the future (INT_07). Likewise, cascade training in the ministerial area is to be promoted more strongly in the future (INT_04). Anti-feminist counter-movements could also pose a threat to project achievements in the future, as one interview partner reports (INT_05).

Some stakeholders expressed doubts about the extent to which attitudinal change has already taken place among high-ranking politicians: *"We do not have the high officials on board including the ones of the ministry of interior. They still do not support the introduction of consent-based rape definition in Georgia. There is a great need to continue to put pressure on them."* (INT_14)

However, the project is aware of this difficulty and has already planned measures to address it: Together with UN Women, the project organised another two-day event for high-ranking managers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In order to ensure their participation, the deputy minister will take part in this meeting, as will the head of the office, Natalia Voutova. In addition, the trainers have been carefully selected: a judge from the Tbilisi Court of Appeal will be present as well as a recognised international expert on sexual violence who knows the Georgian context well and has already conducted trainings for Georgian prosecutors. The project envisages that this constellation will help to prevent possible resistance from the participants.

According to reports from interviewees, a joint working group has now been set up for this purpose (see "Coherence"). However, one interviewee is uncertain to what extent the Parliament will take the recommendations of the working group seriously and implement them. An interviewee states that in this context, it is all the more important to have the support of international organisations such as the Council of Europe (INT_14). Another points to the many external factors influencing sustainability: *"To measure sustainability of activities is especially hard in Georgia as there are so many parallel processes that are beyond one's control impeding progress."* (INT_13).

In the context of the trainings, some interviewees stated that more time should have been allocated to the psychological aspect of the topic of sexual violence against women, as this has a high potential to change attitudes of the target group in the long term. This part of the training could be elaborated and extended for future trainings (INT_13).

Despite some structural changes achieved and an overall positively judged project sustainability, a great majority of the interviewees has recommended the continuation of the project to ensure that results can be safeguarded and scaled up.

6. Conclusion

The evaluation found the project to be highly successful. With a comparably small budget and few human resources, the project has achieved significant results at outcome and partially even impact level. The project is in line with local and international policies and priorities, and takes into account the needs of partners and target groups. CoE took initiative in coordinating not only national state and non-state stakeholders, as foreseen in the project design, but also coordinated international stakeholders.

The evaluation revealed many examples of positive project results in all three components. Synergies have been identified between the different components. The project received overwhelmingly positive feedback in both interviews and survey.

The project benefitted from a holistic approach, involving many different stakeholders. This success factor at the same time required many efforts to reconcile differing perspectives and keep all involved actors on board, which significantly "stretched" the few human resources, namely the project team.

Apart from this, the project results were also found to be sustainable in the long term. The project made use of scaling opportunities (ToTs) and initiated structural and procedural changes. Certain outputs (publications, videos etc.) are available for further use beyond the project timeframe.

7. Recommendations

For the continuation of the project, interview partners recommend a **stronger focus on topics that have yet been underrepresented**, such as sexual violence against women with disabilities. An interviewee reports this to be a topic that has not been dealt with much so far, both internationally and nationally, and thus requires dedication and a strong cooperation in order to provide assistance to investigators and lawyers in general (INT_14). In the survey, this has also been stated as a topic for further learning. Other suggestions from interviews and survey include: sexual violence in adolescence; family violence and sexual crimes; psychology of victims; techniques for interviewing child or adolescent witnesses who have experienced sexual violence; analysis of Court practices, monitoring of perpetrators. Several interviewees also recommended focusing more on victims' support and prevention (INT_04): "*Prevention is paramount in any crime*" (INT_04). It is recommended to CoE staff involved in designing the follow-on project to critically review these suggestions.

Recommended Prioritisation:

To build up on and consolidate the achieved results, the evaluation team recommends to the project team and CoE staff involved in designing the follow-on project to focus on additional topics that are close to current contents of the project. In order to make the approach more holistic, prevention should be included.

To ensure that capacities are built to address the needs of most vulnerable groups in the sense of *Leave no one behind*, trainings should include a section explaining the concept of intersectionality and multiple forms of discrimination. In addition, they should be complemented by optional specialisations, e.g. to address the needs of underage victims or women with disabilities. This should be taken into account by the staff involved in designing the follow-on project as well as by trainers and external experts involved in implementing the training.

Some interviewees think that the **target group could be expanded** by the project in the future: the focus currently lies on specific professional groups. To achieve long-term and impact level results, interviewees recommend rolling out measures to reach all (or most) of these groups, as well as including professionals beyond these groups and the local population (INT_12, INT_15). Specifically, interviewed stakeholders suggest that [further] capacity building should also be carried out for judges as currently, there is no compulsory training for them. This CB would (still) have to be flanked by further complementary CB activities for other professional groups and young academics (INT_03, INT_12). One survey respondent suggested expanding the trainings to training institutes of the respective professional groups. Another recommends the integration of the training series into the training of law enforcement personnel as a compulsory part of the training. Inclusion of the ministry of education, the police academy, or service providers and state funds to enhance and strengthen referral mechanism. Other suggestions for additional target groups include people in rural areas and particularly vulnerable regions, women in politics at local level, or decision- and opinion makers (potential change agents). It is recommended to CoE staff involved in designing the follow-on project to critically review these suggestions.

Recommended Prioritisation:

The evaluation team in this respect also recommends to CoE, taking into account the limited human resources of the project, to first focus on scaling up and further rolling out the existing activities with existing target groups. In the awareness-raising component, work with change agents is recommended as this has proven to be a promising practice in other gender-related projects. This recommendation is directed at CoE staff involved in designing the follow-on phase of the project, but also at Georgian partners who will have to be involved in identifying such change agents.

All interview partners plead CoE for follow-up measures in order to maintain the effects achieved in the long term. In addition, **all of them plead for the continuation of measures** that have been successful so far, since in the eyes of all of them only vehemence and continuous confrontation can lead to long-term change on a structural and socio-political level. *"Even though there is a lot of energy put into the project, it feels like a lot has to be done still. Attitudes do not change fast in this masculine post-soviet society. Follow ups are therefore essential."* (INT_13) Survey respondents have equally reiterated the need for continued and further capacity building by CoE.

As far as the pending **amendment of the law** to introduce a consent-based definition of rape is concerned, major steps are still necessary, according to the interviewees (INT_05). In order to push this process forward, lobbying should take place and further project partners should be found to advocate for the amendment (INT_14). While this process can be supported by CoE, this recommendation must be primarily directed at Georgian partners and the overall group of national and international stakeholders in this field (e.g. the intersectoral working group, donor community etc.).

Based on the survey results and some interviews, a few challenges remain for transferring knowledge and skills into work structures. To alleviate these, it is recommended to trainers and CoE project staff to include more practical examples (case-based training approach) and to further specify the training contents.

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Criterion	Question	Sub-questions / suggested changes / specifications	Source / basis for evaluation	Possible evaluation method
<i>Efficiency</i>	To what extent could alternative working methods or institutional settings have led to the achievement of comparable or better results?	Additional question: To what extent have working methods and institutional settings been conducive to the achievement of results?	Evaluation of project planning documents / initial needs assessments Perspective project team Perspective of target groups	Documents analysis Interviews Online survey
<i>Sustainability</i>	To what extent it can be expected that the benefits/results of the project will continue after the completion of the project?	Specifications: Which benefits / results of the project have been achieved in terms of capacity building, structural and institutional changes? In how far do partners have the capacity to maintain and continue project results? What are the biggest risks to the durability of the project results? What was /is being done by the projects or its partners to reduce the risks to the durability of results? Are the measures sufficient to manage the risks to the durability of results?	Perception of project team Perception of key partners Perception of external observers Review of Country Reports / News Reports on political developments	Interviews Literature review
<i>Added value</i>	To what extent does the Council of Europe have a clear comparative advantage vis-à-vis other international actors in the implementation of the project's objectives?	Specifications: What other organisations are active in the field? How do CoE activities duplicate or complement efforts of other organisations?	Documentation on other organisations' activities Perspective project team Perspective target group Perspective external observers	Desk research on other organisations' activities Documents analysis Interviews Online survey
	To what extent is the effectiveness of the project higher due to the fact that it was	Specification: What qualities / competences / other assets does CoE have	Documentation on other organisations' activities	Desk research on other

	implemented by the Council of Europe?	in this field that other organisations cannot provide?	Perspective project team Perspective target group Perspective external observers	organisations' activities Documents analysis Interviews Online survey
	What added value the project partnerships have brought in terms of implementation and achievement of results?		Documentation on other organisations' activities Perspective project team Perspective target group Perspective external observers	Desk research on other organisations' activities Documents analysis Interviews Online survey
<i>Effectiveness</i>	What are the main factors contributing to project success or underachievement? How might this be improved in the future?	Additional question: What have been the project's positive and negative, intended and unintended results? What have been the project's main challenges during implementation? (How) were these addressed? To what extent have adjustments during the implementation phase contributed to reaching better results?	Evaluation of project documentation (esp. periodic and progress reports) Perspective project team Perspective of target groups Perspective of partners	Documents analysis Interviews Online survey

Annex 2: Interview guideline

1. Please describe your role and responsibilities in relation to the project.
2. Is there anything YOU would like to learn with this evaluation?
3. What have been the project's positive results?
4. What have been the project's negative results?
5. Which project result are you most proud of?
6. Where do you think the project could have done better?
7. Have there been any unintended results?
8. What are the main factors contributing to project success or underachievement? (challenges, enabling factors)
9. In how far has CoE's institutional setting helped or hindered the achievement of results?

10. How did you perceive cooperation and communication with CoE?
11. Which benefits / results of the project have been achieved in terms of capacity building, structural and institutional changes?
12. Do you think, in your institution, the project results can be maintained in the long run?
13. What other organisations are active in the field?
14. Are the different activities coordinated?
15. Have you noticed any synergies or – on the other hand – duplications of efforts?
16. What comparative advantage do you think CoE has in implementing this project? What qualities / competences / other assets does CoE have in this field that other organisations cannot provide?
17. What can other projects learn from this project?
18. Is there anything you would like to recommend for the continuation of the project?

Annex 3: Bibliography

- Council of Europe: Draft Project Description of Activities "2610 - Promoting an Integrated Council of Europe: Draft Project Description of Activities "2610 - Promoting an Integrated Approach to End Violence Against Women and Reinforcing Gender Equality In Georgia" including Logframe
- Council of Europe: Annual Report 2020 "Promoting an Integrated Approach to End Violence Against Women And Reinforcing Gender Equality In Georgia"
- Council of Europe: Annual Report 2021 "Promoting an Integrated Approach to End Violence Against Women And Reinforcing Gender Equality In Georgia"
- Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) (2022)
- Progress Report of Steering Committee Meeting 2022
- Progress Report of Steering Committee Meeting 2021
- Communication Plan (2021)
- Work Plan (2022)
- OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (2019): Country Profile of Georgia
- UN WOMEN (2021): Country Gender Equality Profile Of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia (The publication was prepared within the framework of the UN Women-implemented project "Good Governance for Gender Equality in Georgia" supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Gvantsa Jibladze, Nana Chabukiani and Maya Komakhidze.)

Annex 4: Composition of interviewees

Total: 16

Female: 14; Male: 2

Project Team: 3; Key Partners: 8; Cooperation Partners and External Observers: 5

Annex 5: Information on the team of evaluators

The team of evaluators consisted of two female evaluators which were chosen based on their complementary expertise and experience in working together as a team, also in previous CoE assignments:

Lena Siemon Marques is an expert in monitoring and evaluation as well as in cross-cutting issues such as gender equality. Lena studied international political management in Bremen and obtained a master's degree in African studies from the University of Oxford. She has already worked for think tanks, research projects and political education institutions as well as for numerous development cooperation projects and has a sound background in the fields of education, governance, international politics and policy analysis.

Lena has carried out and managed various evaluation assignments for Mainlevel Consulting in a wide variety of sectors. She supported GIZ supported in the development of quality criteria for the integration of gender equality in German development cooperation projects. Lena has extensive experience with the integration and evaluation of cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, empowerment of young people and the realization of children's rights. In one of her most recent assignments, she led a team evaluating the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights SRHR Nexus Initiative, which supports an international group of high-level government officials in promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights in UN negotiations. She evaluated a regional project of the German Trade Union Confederation's training center in Asia to strengthen women and young people in the trade union movement. She is also evaluating a project for public finances in Burkina Faso, which supports the anchoring of children's rights and gender equality in the budget.

With more than ten years of consulting and research experience, Lena has considerable expertise in interdisciplinary quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. She speaks German, English, French and Portuguese.

For the CoE Georgia Assignment, Lena was responsible for the timely and high quality implementation of the evaluation and contributed with her sectoral expertise on VAW, GBV and DV as well as European political frameworks, policies and legal standards.

Anne Scherer is a psychologist and has in-depth knowledge of quantitative research methods and statistics, statistical software programs such as SPSS Statistics, and test construction and experimental research design. As a former organizational and personnel development consultant, she has gained extensive knowledge and experience in the application of qualitative research methods, such as conducting and evaluating interviews. At Mainlevel, Anne is currently involved in various projects and evaluations. In addition, she is jointly responsible for the implementation of several central project evaluations for the Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) GmbH. With her psychological background, Anne accompanied and advised on the research design and the creation of interview guidelines, and supported with data collection and analysis.

Annex 6: Results framework

The project has three components:

- 1 strengthening the capacity of public officials (legal professionals, social workers, etc.) on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;
- 2 conducting analysis on policy frameworks and practices to improve them in the field of VAW and DV;

3 raising awareness on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence.

A. Logframe

Impact

Contributing to better prevention, prosecution and protection against all forms of violence against women in line with the Istanbul Convention and strengthening gender equality

Intermediate outcome(s)

1. Policy and institutional framework strengthened for the effective application of European standards, notably the Istanbul Convention and other gender equality standards
2. Authorities have strengthened their capacity to deal with cases of violence against women and domestic violence
3. The general public and authorities have strengthened their awareness on the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence, including gender equality

Immediate outcome(s)

- 1.1. Integrated approaches and multi-agency cooperation models initiated in line with European standards, notably the Istanbul Convention and other gender equality standards
- 2.1. Steps taken by public officials (legal professionals, social workers, police officers, etc.) to use obtained knowledge and enhanced skills to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence
- 3.1. Awareness raised on gender equality and violence against women and domestic violence among the general public and public officials

Outputs

- 1.1.1. Increased knowledge on integrated approaches and multi-agency cooperation in line with the Istanbul Convention and other gender equality standards
- 2.1.1. Increased knowledge and skills among legal professionals, social workers, police officers, etc. on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
- 3.1.1. Visibility/awareness raising campaign and materials produced on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women

Annex 7: Survey questionnaire (attached separately)