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Evaluation report

Council of Europe

External evaluation of the project "Strengthening the Capacity of Bar Associations and Lawyers on European Human Rights Standards" (SCoBAL) (2018 – 2022)

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Executive Summary

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The "STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF BAR ASSOCIATIONS AND LAWYERS ON EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS" (SCoBAL) project's overarching goal was to aid in Türkiye's successful implementation of European human rights standards by improving Turkish bar associations' and lawyers' abilities to execute these standards under the representation of the UTBA (Union of Turkish Bar Associations). The project's duration went from April 2018 to June 2022.

The project operated at a time when the human rights situation as well as the situation for human rights advocates and lawyers in Türkiye has seen multiple challenges, thereby increasing the importance of addressing lawyers as a target group within the context of SCoBAL project. Among the conextual challenges faced by the project and partially limiting its results were: continued pressure on and persecution of human rights activists and lawyers, legal amendments undermining the right to legal counsel , incidents of political influence on courts, judges and prosecutors, continued pressure on women's rights and LGBT rights and withdrawal from the CoE Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in 2021, deterioration for certain human rights in the context of the COVID19 pandemic (increase in domestic violence, new regulations for social media posts), increasing pressure on freedom of expression (e.g. through new law on social media 2020), increased allegations of torture, ill-treatment, and cruel and inhuman or degrading treatment in police and military custody and prison.

Three fields of activities defined the work of the SCoBAL project: Institutional Capacity Building, Individual Training/Capacity Building as well as facilitation of cooperation and networking.

One of the primary responsibilities of bar associations is to defend and protect the rule of law and human rights leading to the founding of Human Rights Centers (HRCs) on local bar association level. As a needs assessment by the SCoBAL project detected, institutional capabilities of the HRCs as well as their capacity for human rights training and coordination with the UTBA are in need of further improvement. In order to increase the institutional capabilities of Human Rights Centers and to enhance coordination and cooperation between them and the UTBA, the project supported seven different regional pilot bar associations. Functioning of HRCs was also to be strengthened by means of the elaboration of a common Draft Regulation. SCoBAL project also provided individual training and capacity building: training modules and materials were developed for bar association members. Furthermore, a number of practitioners were able to complete study visits and internships in selected departments of the CoE, the ECHR and other HRCs of European member states. Also, a turkish adaptation of various Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) online courses was carried out. Lastly, cooperation and networking between UTBA, HRCs and further stakeholders was enhanced by launching a project website, by establishing frequent meetings and holding several conferences as well as organising several awareness-raising / outreach events with the purpose of distribution of findings and information of joint project activities.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The project has been assessed based on the standardised CoE evaluation criteria aligned with those developed by the OECD/DAC for international cooperation (relevance, coherence (added value), effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability).

Mainlevel has complemented the evaluation questions along the CoE criteria developed by the SCoBAL project. In cooperation with the project, the evaluation questions were operationalised during the inception phase

For this evaluation, the data collection methods of a documents analysis as well as semi-structured key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) have been applied. Interviews and FGDs were conducted remotely. When needed, a translator was provided by the project. Interviews and FGDs were conducted with: members of selected bar associations, The Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA), non-novernmental organisatons, Ministry of Justice, CoE Programme Office, academia, Central Finance

and Contracts Unit, EU representatives and selected training participants. Altogether, 14 persons have been consulted for this evaluation. The evaluators consider such a small number of interviews to be a significant limitation to the representativeness of the present evaluation; nevertheless, the evaluation team judges the evaluation results to be valid in terms of the identified weaknesses and strengths of the SCoBAL project.

ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO OECD-DAC / COE EVALUATION CRITERIA

In the following, it is described to what extent the OECD-DAC / CoE evaluation criteria have been met.

RELEVANCE

A needs assessment of the institutional capacity of the pilot bar associations and HRCs was done, according to which a Strategic Action Plan to strengthen the functioning of the HRCs was drafted. The assessment found that the institutional structures of bar associations are weak and rely on informal arrangements and commitment of individuals. The HRCs vary considerably in structure, size and effectiveness. The efficiency of established reporting mechanisms allowing to report violations of human rights is low and hindered by various factors, e.g. the absence of an adequate budget to recruit human rights experts or to provide human rights training. Also, HRCs find themselves depending strongly on bar associations.

As a consequence, the following objectives for the SCoBAL project were identified (among others): need for a more effective and better resourced network of bar association human rights bodies; need for a uniform database to assess the violations of human rights reported; need for a common standard of human rights reporting in the bar associations. Based on the findings regarding the capacity needs, a HRC capacity building approach was adopted consisting of cascade trainings, seminars on human rights, translations of materials, reports, preparatory papers and information, brochure on the HRC of the UTBA as well as specific handbooks and guides for lawyers. Furthermore, an IT-Tool, iHMNet, was built to develop a communication network between the UTBA and the HRCs of bar associations serving as a database of practices related to human rights violations at local level. Awareness-raising/outreach meetings were to increase the visibility of the SCoBAL project. According to interviewees, the content of capacity building corresponded greatly to the learning needs of legal experts as well as of the HRCs.

As concluded by the evaluators, the SCoBAL project has identified the needs of the beneficiaries in great detail but has only been able to respond to some of them. As greatest deficiency, the evaluators identified the unmet need for funding for HRCs. Nevertheless, the project must be credited for its successful approaches to capacity building. The project design was assessed as challenging but appropriate as the design allowed for adaptation to the complexity of the context.

The Covid 19 pandemic significantly slowed down, delayed or even stopped the implementation of the SCoBAL project's activities. The project was able to find innovative ways to adapt trainings to an online format leading to greater coverage of trainings and a higher number of participants. Furthermore, several internal changes in UTBA also impacted the work of the project. The evaluation team finds that the SCoBAL project has been able to produce appropriate responses to challenging changes and was even able to use the complex and challenging pandemic situation to its advantage.

ADDED VALUE

The ScoBAL project has professed awareness of other CoE, EU and UTBA projects as well as activities of other international organisations in the area of human rights promotion and/or with lawyers as the primary target group. On the basis of the information available, no major duplications of efforts have been identified by the evaluation in the field of individual capacity building. Further projects seem to focus on other or specific aspects of human rights such as children's rights, women's rights or rights of asylum seekers. However, a few interviewees were unsure if there really are no overlaps with other projects or possibilities for increased cooperation, as many courses in the area of human rights do exist. No systematic donor coordination seems to be done by the EU delegation, other donors or the Turkish authorities. Regarding the areas of institutional capacity building for HRCs and bar associations, no

similar projects could be identified. In terms of cooperation and synergies, synergies with a project on ombudsman institutions were pointed out the evaluation team. The mid-term evaluation confirms the positive anecdotal evidence on added value, in addition stating that stakeholders find SCoBAL to provide significant added value in the fields of rights to a fair trial, freedom of assembly and expression and track record due to its ties to the ECHR. CoE was well prepared to implement the SCoBL project due to its well established expert network. These findings could not be triangulated with information of stakeholders from other organisations.

EFFECTIVENESS

As the projects objective was to strengthen the capacities of Turkish bar associations and lawyers in the implementation of the European human rights standards, three specific objectives were defined: (1) The institutional capacity of the Human Rights Centres of the Bar Associations in 7 pilot provinces is strengthened and co-ordination between them is improved; (2) The capacity of lawyers to apply European human rights standards in their daily work is enhanced; (3) The co-operation between the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and Human Rights Centres of local bar associations is fostered.

Overall the **functionality of the HRCs** has increased through the the capacity building of lawyers that run the HRCs and the support through tools such as the development of the digital database. However, unadressed challenges to the effectiveness of HRCs remain, among them the lack and unreliability of funding. Furthermore, the biennial change of commissions immensely effects the functionality of HRCs since knowledge transfer is not guaranteed. Furthermore, the use of the online library is still perceived as low among other things due to insufficient promotion but also due to its very recent establishment. However, the access to publications in Turkish language is in general appreciated. These findings were reflected in the mid term evaluation survey's results. Indicators for specific objective 1 have been (over)achieved. Overall, the first specific objective has only been achieved partly. While the Indicator values are impressive, there are no baseline values to compare them to. Furthermore, concerns remain regarding the increased ability and functionality of HRCs.

Respective activities to achieve the second objective of **increasing capacities of lawyers to apply European human rights standards** were: SCoBAL training sessions, translation and national adaption of a selection of online courses by the European Programme for Human Rights Education of Legal Professionals (HELP), development and translation of training materials and publications.

94 trainers were trained in the delivery of HELP training sessions, 6 HELP courses were adapted into Turkish, 3 HELP tutor training sessions were organized, additional publications were made during the extension period of the project and 8200 lawyers were trained on protection of human rights and ECHR. Books published under the project are accessible online and were also distributed to bar associations. Representatives from bar associations reported a significant increase in awareness about human rights. In line with these findings are the results from the survey of the mid-term evaluation which in the context of the training materials are found to be good. Indicators for specific objective 2 have been (over)achieved. The second objective has been fully achieved.

The development and implementation of IHMNet is particulary important when it comes to the **co-operation between the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and Human Rights Centres**. Recipients of the application reportedly appreciate the platform highly. Furthermore, a draft regulation for the UTBA's Human Rights Centres was prepared and approved providing a consolidated legal framework. Indicators for specific objective 3 as well as the third objective have been achieved.

In summary, the project's activities were mostly implemented as planned and quantitative targets were achieved. Qualitative assessment of the objectives does however show that objective 1 could not fully be achieved.

EFFICIENCY

Financial efficiency of the project could not be assessed thoroughly as the evaluation team was not provided with the budget or other financial documents of the project.

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, training participants encountered some challenges such technological barriers and absence of a cancellation system for online trainings. The IT tool, iHMNet, was found to be an efficient and effective tool for communication and for delivering the training courses as it provides a platform for bar associations to connect and share knowledge. Substantial funds were assigned to the development of the tool. The evaluators were not provided with credentials to access the IT tool, which is why its efficiency could not be assessed.

The extension of the project period due to the pandemic resulted in the inclusion of additional beneficiaries in the project on the one hand as well as in additional staff costs on the other hand, thereby reducing the overall cost efficiency.

There is some anecdotal evidence that there has been an improvement in communication and cooperation between institutions and with the stakeholders as a result of the project's work. However, certain areas of concern remain making coordination challenging such as the dependent nature of the HRCs, the lack of resources they are facing and overlapping mandates of UTBA and HRCs. Frequent changes in management structure of UTBA and HRCs reinforce these challenges.

IMPACT

Intended changes at impact level have been defined in the project's overall objective. The project was meant to contribute to the effective implementation of human rights standards in Türkiye. This was measured by the following indicators: (1) increase of the admissibility rate at the European Court of Human Rights; (2) number of applications made against Türkiye before the ECtHR; (3) number of judgments of ECtHR finding Türkiye in breach of the ECHR.

The indicators chosen for the SCoBAL project on impact-level are highly context-dependent. Intended high-level changes could therefore not be achieved.

There is evidence for achieved impact in the form of changes among the target group, such as raised awareness and knowledge of human rights standards as well as improved communication between legal experts and citizens. Furthermore, the functioning of HRCs has greatly improved as a result of the HRC regulation. Improvements in the networks and cooperation across bar associations have also been reported.

SUSTAINABILITY

The SCoBAL project has been able to create outputs that can be re-used or built-up upon including online trainings and training material, an e-library with free access, translations of relevant literature into Turkish, elaboration of a HRC-regulation (making HRCs more functional and independent), adaptation of HELP online courses as well as the IT-Tool iHMNet (providing an archive and institutional memory and a secure environment to work on common files). Skills acquired on individual level will most probably remain as extensive capacity building or training has been provided to UTBA and bar associations. Especially trained trainers bear a potential to continue to share knowledge learned, even if not in the scope of SCoBAL activities. Such enhanced individual capacities will structurally reinforce capacities of bar associations as well as the UTBA. However, evaluators still found a great need for further training opportunities. The potential of iHMNet should also be used further and user training might still be needed, especially if the tool is to be used for monitoring and reporting purposes in the future. It should also be ensured that the e-library is further promoted. The adaptation of various HELP Online Training Courses is considered hightly sustainable making HELP more inclusive and relevant for the Turkish target group with highly relevant topics to be explored by legal experts.

In contrast to these achievements, challenges to the sustainability of SCoBAL's project activities and outcomes were identified. For example, the project did not respond to the sustainability of HRCs. Despite the establishment of a regulation for HRCs, it is unclear to what extent the centers will be able to apply it in case of no or few financial resources and the fact that the independence from bar associations is still pending. Further challenges to sustainability are the lack of capacity to transfer expertise in bar associations and HRCs.

OVERALL SUCCESS FACTORS

Success factors to the implementation of the project were:
• Rapid and meaningful adaptation of the training offer to the pandemic circumstances;
• High quality training materials and sustainable products and training: development of further usable products and processes;
• Training of trainers within a cascade model with the capacity to conduct online and face-to-face training independently of SCoBAL.

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Abbreviations

CoE	**Council of Europe**
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HELP	European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
HRCs	Human Rights Centers
IHMNET	project IT-Tool
INGOs	International non-governmental organisations
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ISP	Indicative Strategy Paper
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer
NGOs	Non-governamental organizations
OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SCoBAL	Strenghtening the Capacity of Bar Associations and Lawyers on European Human Rights Standards
ToR	Terms of References
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UTBA	Union of Turkish Bar Associations
VAW	Violence against women

1 Introduction

Mainlevel Consulting AG has been contracted by the **Council of Europe** (CoE) to conduct an evaluation of the regional project "STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF BAR ASSOCIATIONS AND LAWYERS ON EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS" (SCoBAL). The project is co-financed by the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Türkiye and CoE, its overall objective is to contribute to the effective implementation of European human rights standards in Türkiye while its specific objective is to strengthen the capacity of Turkish Bar Associations and lawyers in implementing European human rights standards.

The SCoBAL project contributes to Türkiye's efforts to align and improve the standards of the Turkish judicial system with the European Convention on Human Rights and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. SCoBAL, as described, is a joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU) and is funded by the EU, Türkiye and the Council of Europe. This funding is provided in the context of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), which is the means "by which the EU has been supporting reforms in the enlargement region with financial and technical assistance (…)" (EC on IPA). With the help of IPA, beneficiaries are assisted in implementing the necessary political and economic reforms and are prepared for the rights and obligations that come with EU membership. Türkiye is one of the current candidate countries seeking EU membership. Contractual relations between the EU and Türkiye have existed for many decades, and the country has been an important partner of the European Union, particularly in recent years due to cooperation in the wake of the EU-Türkiye migration pact ("EU Pact on Migration"). Türkiye's possible accession to the EU has been discussed since the 1990s, and the country was granted candidate status in 1999. Türkiye therefore implemented reforms under the comprehensive "Judicial Reform Strategy," while the IPA financial assistance was used to further complement national efforts in the accession process. The concept of "rule of law and fundamental rights" is defined as one of the priority thematic areas in the Indicative Strategy Paper (ISP) for Türkiye, defining the priorities for EU financial assistance to support Türkiye in the accession process:

"The European Commission's 2018 Enlargement Strategy reaffirms the need to address fundamental reforms first. For Türkiye, this means an even stronger focus on democracy and governance, the rule of law and fundamental rights and measures to encourage socioeconomic development in line with the country's specific needs." (EC 2018, p. 16)

"Reforms in the field of rule of law and fundamental rights remain strategic priorities for the EU cooperation with Türkiye with a view to reverse the backsliding over the recent period. Türkiye has to considerably further lift up its track record on fundamental rights, including in freedom of expression and media, and freedom of assembly. Priority shall be given to the prevention of violations of the ECHR (…) and for further legislative changes in line with the ECtHR case law. (…) Intersectional discrimination in the judicial system is furthermore one of the main barriers in terms of women's equal access to justice. (…) EU assistance should be linked to the conditions of a political and legal environment that allows the judiciary to perform its duties in an independent and impartial manner, strengthen its responsibilities, with the executive and legislature fully respecting the separation of powers." (EC 2018, p. 30)

The following results were expected to be achieved through the implementation of the project:
- The institutional capacity of the Human Rights Centres of the Bar Associations in 7 pilot provinces is strengthened and co-ordination between them is improved.
- The capacity of lawyers to apply European human rights standards in their daily work is enhanced.

- The co-operation between the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and Human Rights Centres of local bar associations is fostered.

The Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA) as well as local bar associations in Türkiye are the target groups as well as final beneficiaries of the SCoBAL project. The Lead Institution is the Directorate for EU Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2 Evaluation objectives

As per the Terms of Reference (ToR), the purpose of this evaluation is to assess the project's ambitions in terms of scope of its outreach, as well as progress towards its objectives and achieved results. As such, it will provide a detailed assessment of the project's outputs and outcomes in relation to the project's logical framework and implementation context. It will also reflect on strengths and weaknesses in the project's design which may have affected its success.

As defined in the ToR, the intended objectives of this evaluation were the:

- assessment of the progress against the objectives and indicators of achievement at the end of the project and formulation of recommendations to all partners for sustaining the results achieved as well as better implementation of future similar projects;

- assessment of relevance and added value of the CoE in connection with the implementation of the project;

- assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project;

- provision of directions/recommendations for the further implementation of the Action (i.e. any follow up project/intervention).

In the ToR, CoE had compiled a list of evaluation questions which follow the CoE evaluation criteria as well as the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. These have been operationalised in an evaluation matrix that formed part of the inception report.
Further information on the approach can be found in chapter 4. The evaluation matrix including all questions can be found in Annex 2.

3 Background on the project "Strengthening the Capacity of Bar Associations and Lawyers on European Human Rights Standards"

Figure 1 Selected pilot provinces (Source: Open source 2022)

The "STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF BAR ASSOCIATIONS AND LAWYERS ON EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS" (SCoBAL) project's overarching goal was to aid in Türkiye's successful implementation of European human rights standards, whereas its specific goal was to improve Turkish bar associations' and lawyers' abilities to execute these standards. The project's duration was 48 months (April 2018 - June 2022).

In order to increase the institutional capabilities of their Human Rights Centers (HRCs) and to enhance coordination between them and the Union of Turkish Bar Associations, the project supported bar associations in seven pilot provinces. As well as facilitating cooperation between the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA) and HRCs of local bar associations and other (inter)national stakeholders working on the protection of fundamental rights, it also strived to improve the abilities of lawyers to apply European human rights standards in their daily work.

The UTBA is a professional organisation with public institution status and functions as an umbrella body representing local bar organizations. In all 81 of Türkiye's provinces, local bars have been founded to represent the legal professionals there; depending to a recent change in the Attoneyship Law, Ankara and Istanbul provinces have two bar associations, therefore Türkiye has 83 bar associations in total. All bar associations take part in the formation of the UTBA. One of their primary responsibilities is to defend and protect the rule of law and human rights which led to the founding of Human Rights Centers (HRCs) on local bar association level.The HRC's work provides a solid foundation for other attorneys to build upon as they monitor the advancement of the human rights situation in Türkiye. In this regard, the UTBA's HRC published a number of reports on numerous human rights concerns. However, the institutional capabilities of the HRCs inside local bar organizations, as well as their capacity for human rights training and coordination with the UTBA, needed further improvement.

Three fields of activities defined the work of the SCoBAL project: Institutional Capacity Building, Individual Training/Capacity Building as well as facilitation of cooperation and networking.

Institutional capacity building concerned the work of the Human Rights Centers, whose functioning was to be strengthened, among other things by means of the elaboration of a common regulation, the Draft Regulation. In addition, selected practitioners were able to complete study visits and internships in selected departments of the CoE, the ECHR and other HRCs of European member states. Furthermore, training modules and materials were developed for members of bar associations. Also, a national adaptation of various Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) online courses was carried out. The Council of Europe Programme on HELP is to enhance the capacity of judges, lawyers and prosecutors, in all Council of Europe member states and beyond, to apply the European human rights standards in their daily work by means of online courses that cover a range of human rights topics. HELP Courses have been published in Turkish on the HELP E-learning platform.

To enhance cooperation and networking between UTBA and HRCs and further stakeholders, frequent meetings were set up, a project website was established and several conferences as well as awareness-raising / outreach events were held with the purpose of distribution of findings and information.

The project operated at a time when the human rights situation in Türkiye in general as well as the situation for human rights advocates and lawyers specifically was marked by multiple challenges. The following contextual challenges (see also HRW 2019, 2020, 2022; CoE 2020) have been encountered by the project and have partially limited its results, but also increased the importance of addressing lawyers as a target group:

- continued pressure on and persecution of human rights activists and lawyers (criminal investigation, arbitrary detention)
- legal amendments undermining the right to legal counsel
- incidents of political influence on courts, judges and prosecutors
- legal amendments for bar associations allowing multiple bar associations and thus reducing the influence of large bar associations (especially in cities) by dividing them along political lines and limiting their institutional freedoms and resources
- continued pressure on women's rights and LGBT rights and withdrawal from the CoE Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Instanbul Convention) in 2021
- deterioration for certain human rights as a consequence of (or justified with) the COVID19 pandemic (increase in domestic violence, new regulations for social media posts)
- increasing pressure on freedom of expression (e.g. through new law on social media 2020)
- increased allegations of torture, ill-treatment, and cruel and inhuman or degrading treatment in police and military custody and prison
- persistent defiance of a binding European Court of Human Rights judgment on the release of Osman Kavala

4 Evaluation methodology

4.1 Methodology

The project has been assessed based on the standardised evaluation criteria of the Council of Europe which are aligned with those developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria (updated 2020)[1] for international cooperation are **relevance, coherence (added value), effectiveness**, **impact, efficiency** and **sustainability**. One major difference between OECD/DAC and CoE terminology

Figure 2 - OECD-DAC Criteria

is the criterion "added value" (CoE) which slightly differs from the criterion "coherence" in the OECD/DAC framework. While coherence focuses on how well the intervention fits into the landscape of all interventions in the sector, added value emphasizes the unique features of CoE interventions compared to those of other stakeholders and is defined as the "ability of the Council of Europe, through its specific approach, composition and working methods to make a significant contribution." (CoE Evaluation Guidelines)

The evaluation questions along the CoE criterion had been developed by the project and included in the ToR. Mainlevel has complemented them, ensuring unambiguity, and has reviewed their relation to the evaluation criteria. In cooperation with the project, the evaluation questions were operationalised during the inception phase. This information is compiled in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2).

For this evaluation, the following data collection methods have been applied:

(1) Documents Analysis
As part of a desk review, Mainlevel conducted a systematic and comprehensive document analysis. Documents have been provided by Council of Europe. Some additional secondary sources have been researched by Mainlevel to inform the evaluation.
Relevant documents included:

- Periodic and progress reports
- Budget and monitoring documents
- Coordination Meeting minutes
- Steering Committee minutes
- Needs Assessment Report
- Human Rights Centre Regulation
- Midterm evaluation
- Further context-relevant documents by EU, CoE and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs)
- Further written project outputs (manuals, baseline studies etc.)

The list of documents and literature which informed this evaluation can be found in Annex 1.

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[1] http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

(2) Semi-structured key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions:
Key informant interviews were mostly conducted as semi-structured interviews to ensure that interviewees were guided into the foreseen direction but had the liberty to share their individual experiences. A respondents list can be found in the following. Interview guidelines and questionnaires for the different stakeholder groups in Annex 3.
Interviews were conducted remotely. In one case, a translator was needed and provided by the project. In some cases, focus group discussions were held instead of interviews. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with:

- Members of selected Pilot Bar Association
- The Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA)
- Non-Governmental Organisatons
- Ministry of Justice
- CoE Programme Office and project team
- Academia
- Central Finance and Contracts Unit
- EU representatives
- Training participants
- The Lead Institution – Directorate for EU Affairs

Altogether, 14 persons have been consulted for this evaluation: 3 from the project team, 5 from the pilot bar associations, 5 from other partners and 3 training participants (including those from the bar associations).

4.2 Limitations and difficulties encountered during the evaluation

While the Mainlevel evaluation team strived to implement the evaluation rigorously, several factors have limited the validity and representativeness of the evaluation results:
- A **tight time frame** had been set for the evaluation. After the start of the evaluation was slightly delayed, and even less time was available for the data collection than originally planned. Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach the targeted number of interview partners as potential interview participants were often not available for interviews or there was no response to contacting attempts by the evaluation team. Thus Mainlevel was only able to talk to 12 interview partners. Although a triangulation of interview data was carried out, e.g. via documents analysis, the evaluators consider the fact that only such a **small number of interviews** could be conducted to be a serious limitation that significantly limits the validity of the present evaluation. It also affects the **gender-sensitiveness** of the evaluation as availability of information of female interviewees was also limited.
- In addition, there were **technical problems in the context of the remote evaluation** as interview participants encountered difficulties with the internet connectivity or the communication software. Although the Mainlevel evaluation team reacted flexibly to such challenges with spontaneous invitations to other available media, interviews were repeatedly interrupted by such technical issues.
- In some cases, the **language barrier** impeded communication between interviewees and the evaluation team as well as the fluidity of the conversation. Conducting the interviews in English may have sometimes limited respondents' ability to express their opinion. Some written outputs could not be analysed in-depth by the evaluation team.
- Lastly, it should be mentioned that **availability of project documents** was limited. This has impacted further on validity, as they were of special significance for triangulation with the limited interview data.

The evaluation team ultimately decided against presenting the codes of interviews in order to ensure the anonymity of all interviewees. Since comparatively few people were interviewed for an evaluation, the evaluation team fears that individuals can be identified on the basis of codes used. The evaluation team cannot rule out such triangulation and therefore refrains from using codes and instead refers to the term "see interviews" in interview transcripts.

CONCLUSION – overall validity of evaluation
Overall, the evaluation team judges the evaluation results to be valid in terms of the weaknesses and strengths of the project that have been identified. While not representative, the results form a solid basis for the continuation and potential improvement of the project.

5 Assessment according to Council of Europe evaluation criteria

In the following sections, information is provided on how the evaluation team evaluated the project against the Council of Europe evaluation criteria. The following sections are to be considered in connection with the evaluation matrix. The tables show the respective section of the individual criteria.

5.1 Relevance

For the relevance chapter, several aspects have been taken into consideration: a) the extent to which the project responds to local challenges, b) the extent to which needs of implementing partners and target groups are adressed, c) the extent to which the project is in line with the objectives of the stakeholders and d) to what extent the project continued to address the the objectives of the stakeholders under changing circumstances.

Alignment of the project with the needs and capacities of the stakeholders and affected people.

As described in the first Progress Report, a **needs assessment of the institutional capacity of the pilot bar associations as well as their respective HRC** was done, according to which a Strategic Action Plan to strengthen the functioning of the HRCs was drafted. The project found that the institutional structures, systems and informal relationships within bar associations (BAs) involved in the delivery of support for human rights vary considerably. Overall the structures appear weak and rely heavily on informal arrangements and commitment of individuals. The human rights centres (HRCs) that are under the BAs vary considerably in structure, size and effectiveness. A couple of BAs established human rights bodies with paid staff, offices and other resources, while most of the others have less formal arrangements with staff working on a voluntary basis (Human Rights Training Needs Assessment Report, 1st Progress Report). The efficiency of established reporting mechanisms allowing lawyers and other individuals to report violations of human rights is low and hindered by various factors, such as the absence of an adequate budget to recruit human rights experts or to provide human rights training as well as the lack of common standards of human rights reporting in general (1st Progress Report).
The independence of each bar association, the lack of resources of both the human rights work in the bar association and at the level of the UTBA and their overlapping mandates make coordination difficult and often sporadic (Institutional Needs Assessment Report).

The issues analysed in the project's Needs Assessment Reports, resulted in the identification of the following core requirements and objectives for the project:

- Need for a more effective and better resourced network of bar association human rights bodies which was met via the development of the online tool iHMNet.
- Need for a uniform database, as a portal to assess the violations of human rights reported to the bar associations and to help increase cooperation between the UTBA's HRC and local HRCs.
- Need for a standarised mechanism on collecting, retaining and searching violations of human rights in the bar associations.
- Need for a common standard of human rights reporting in the bar associations
- Need for branding of the bodies, bodies need to institutionalised and recognised. Absence of branding for these bodies made the work of the lawyers more difficult and less safe.

Based on the findings regarding the capacity needs **a HRC capacity building** approach was adopted consisting of cascade trainings, seminars on human rights, translations of materials, reports, preparatory papers and information, brochure on the HRC of the UTBA as well as specific handbooks and guides for lawyers. Furthermore, an IT-Tool, now named iHMNet, was built to develop a communication network between the UTBA and the HRCs of bar associations serving as a database of practices related to human rights violations at local level. Lastly, awareness-raising/outreaching meetings were to increase the visibility of the SCoBAL project (1st Progress Report). As interviewparners confirmed, the content of the capacity building corresponded greatly to the learning needs of Turkish lawyers as well as of the HRCs: *"It is especially important to teach individuals how to apply the law. Also, trainings about articles of the convention are needed. For online education, the SCoBAL project selected crucial as well as interesting topics."* (see Interviews). Besides the capacitiy development needs identified, the main challenges perceived by the stakeholders and beneficiaries during the interviews were:

- **Funding:** The bar asocciations do not get any specific funding for the running of the human rights centres from the government or other donors that support them such as the UN and other NGOs. Therefore the problem arises that the bar asscociations have to balance their budget between their projects. This often results in very low budgets for activities related to the human rights centres: *The HRCs are low on staff, there is no additional funding, only voluntary participation. None of the Associations has allocated funding for the HRCs which is the biggest problem. Some Bar Associations are applying for external funding to increase the capacity of the centres."* (see interviews).
- **Reporting of Human rights violations:** The stakeholders highlighted the need to have access to assess the violations of human rights reported to the bar associations and to help increase cooperation between the UTBA's HRC and local HRCs (see interviews)
- **Access to documents**: The stakeholders highlighted the need to have access to assess the relevant publications and documents from everywhere. This became even more important during COVID 19. *"The previous team kept publications at their office. They did not take it away."* (see interviews)
- **Motivation and maintaining high voluntary work input**. As the HRCs depend largely on the voluntary commitment of lawyers at the BAs there is a need to keep motivation up and prevent a certain work tiredness from creeping in: *"There is also huge work at the centre to manage such as – meeting clients, going to police station etc. Motivation comes through little events and sharing experiences ."* (see interviews)
- **Autonomy vs dependency on BA:** Need for more autonomy of the HRCs as difficulties when the leadership of the bar association changed and of an alleged change of political direction by the bar association leadership itself. *"The human rights centres are not autonomous and do not have enough capacities to make decisions eg. decisions on budgeting."* (see Intrviews with BA)

The project only addressed the listed challenges and needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries partially, as the project did not respond to some of the core needs, such as financial needs of the bar associations in regard to the human rights centre as well as travel costs and material needs (see interviews). The project

also did not respond to the sustainability of human rights centres -e.g. through making funding available (see interviews)

As concluded by the evaluators and also based on the data collected, the project has identified the needs of the beneficiaries in great detail but has not fully taken them into account and has therefore only been able to respond to the detected needs in part. As the greatest deficiency, the evaluators identified the unmet need for funding for HRCs, which are otherwise heavily dependent on bar associations. No according activity to address this need became evident during the course of the evaluation.

Nevertheless, 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.

The project design was assessed as challenging but appropriate: The design allowed for adaptation to the complexity of the context at different levels and to the circumstances of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Reaction to change / adaptability

Furthermore, it was examined to what extent the project was adapted in the course of implementation due to changes in the framework conditions. This includes reaction to changes during project implementation, also in the context of change offers (e.g. local, national, international, sectoral changes, incl. state-of-the-art, sectoral know-how).
One of the major challenges was the **Covid 19 pandemic**, which significantly slowed down, delayed or even stopped the implementation of the activities that were pending according to the Strategic Action Plan due to precautionary measures taken by national authorities (2nd Progress Report). For example, trainings that were initially planned to be held face-to-face could not be conducted (see Interviews, 3rd Progress Report). However, the project was able to find a way to adapt trainings to an online format. Furthermore, planned study visits and internships in other European member states also had to be cancelled due to travel restrictions and there were temporary restrictions at the CoE to accept interns as well as long-term visitors (2nd Progress Report). However, adapting training to Covid 19 conditions also had positive consequences, such as the greater coverage of trainings with the help of the online format (see interviews):

"For an online setting, a second version of trainings had to be compiled leading to two sets of training methodologies. Both can be used. Due to the new online format, many more people attented the trainings which made it easier to reach the defined participants targets. Also, trainings were used as an opportunity to network and to share experiences." (see interviews)

Elections of pilot bar associations were were postponed for more than a year due to Covid-19 restrictions causing delays in the implementation of the project and leading to difficulties in communication as the HRCs were expected to change after the elections (Periodic Report 6th project Steering Committee). This resulted in the boards of local and national bar associations holding back on important decisions (out of respect for future boards to be elected). Despite the uncertainty at management level, the SCoBAL project team reported to have collected data from the bar associations to ensure achievement of indicators of the project (Periodic Report 6th project Steering Committee). As described in project documents, it has been challenging to collect feedback from pilot bar associations, e.g. regarding the utilisation of the IT tool, now named IHMnet (Periodic Report 6th project Steering Committee).

Internal changes in UTBA also impacted the work of the project:

"An amendment to the bars was adopted which allowed for opening up additional bars. As UTBA has representatives from each bar depending on the size of the city, chaos was created within the leadership

in UTBA as well as in pilot bars leading to significant delays in activities in which the UTBA and bars should have taken part". (see interviews)

All in all, the evaluation team finds that the SCoBAL project has been able to produce appropriate responses to challenging changes over the course of the project period. In addition, the project was also able to use the complex and challenging pandemic situation to its advantage and, with the help of the trianings in the online format, reached far more people than originally planned.

5.2 Added Value/Coherence

The chapter on added value looks at the exent to which the project was a substantial added value when compared with activities carried out by other international organisations in this field or compared to non-intervention. Several specific aspects were taken into account to assess this: What other organisations are active in this field?, How do CoE activities duplicate or complement efforts of other organisations?; What qualities / competences / other assets does CoE have in this field that other organisations cannot provide?; What would have happened without the project.

Complementarity is a major condition for aid effectiveness. The ScoBAL project has professed awareness of other CoE, EU and UTBA projects as well as activities of other international organisations in the area of human rights promotion and/or with lawyers as the primary target group. A list of projects working in this or adjacent fields has been shared with the evaluation team. A few further projects have been mentioned by interviewees.

CoE / EU projects include:

- European Union (ProtectDefenders.eu)
- Council of Europe (Women's Access to Justice)
- UTBA – has its own education centre and provides trainings for lawyers

Other stakeholders operating in the area of human rights capacity building among lawyers include:

- UNHCR (Strengthening legal protection and access to justice; Translation support line)
- UNICEF (Children's Access to Justice)
- Private academies – courses have to be paid for

On the basis of the information available online, no major duplications of efforts have been identified by the evaluation in the field of individual capacity building. According to the project team and other interviewees, other projects also focus on other or specific aspects of human rights such as children's rights, women's rights or rights of asylum seekers. The CoE project put specific emphasis on European human rights standards. However, a few interviewees were unsure if there really are no overlaps with other projects or possibilities for increased cooperation, as many courses in the area of human rights do exist. No systematic donor coordination seems to be done by the EU delegation, other donors or the Turkish authorities (see interviews)

Regarding the project's activities in the areas of institutional capacity building for HRCs and bar associations, no comparable projects could be identified by the evaluation team.

In terms of cooperation and synergies, an EU delegation representative pointed to synergies with a project on ombudsman institutions. CoE supported with improving the project that had been unsuccessful in the past. The project also enjoys a high reputation within the Council of Europe and has been identified as a good practice as it was the first big-scale project implemented with lawyers as main beneficiaries (Excerpt 11th Management Meeting / 7th SCM, May 2022))
The mid-term evaluation confirms the positive anecdotal evidence on added value, in addition stating that "A number of stakeholders, including bar associations, shared the view that the Council of Europe provides significant added value especially in the fields of rights to a fair trial, freedom of assembly and expression due to its extensive experience and track record due to its ties to the ECHR." (CSES 2021)
According to one interviewee, CoE was well prepared to implement this specific project, as it has a very

good expert network (superior to that of other organisations), which can be seen as a major added value of implementation by CoE. (see interviews)

However, these findings could not be triangulated with information of stakeholders from the other organisations, as no interviews have been conducted with them at this point.

5.3 Effectiveness

Effectiveness evaluates how and to what extent and with which quality the project has achieved its objectives and results. Effectiveness looks into the achievement of activities, outputs and outcomes. Furthermore the chapter looks at a) the reasons for the achievement and non-achievement of expected results b) the extent to which adjustments during the implementation phase contributed to reaching better results and c) the extent to which the project contributed to gender equality.

The projects objective was to strengthen the capacities of Turkish bar associations and lawyers in the implementation of the European human rights standards (SCoBAL Inception Report, 2018). According to the inception report this objective was operationalised, with three specifics:

(1) The institutional capacity of the Human Rights Centres of the Bar Associations in 7 pilot provinces is strengthened and co-ordination between them is improved;

(2) The capacity of lawyers to apply European human rights standards in their daily work is enhanced;

(3) The co-operation between the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and Human Rights Centres of local bar associations is fostered.

Institutional capacity of the Human Rights Centres

Overall the **functionality of the HRCs** has increased through the a) the capacity building of lawyers that run the HRCs and b) the support through tools such as the development of the digital database. Both activities were appreciated and interviewees believed that the increased capacities among lawyers helped the functionality of the HRCs.
However, challenges to the effectiveness of HRC remain, that were not sufficiently addressed by the project. For example, the lack of funding and unreliability of funding makes it challenging for HRCs to operate. While some bar associations are applying for external funding to increase the capacity of the centres, this kind of funding is not guaranteed and depends on the willingness of the bar assciations. The change of commissions every two years is a further challenge and immensely effects the functionality of HRCs.Once a bar association management changed, the capacities are lost. There is no guarantee that the new management will engage in human rights issues. Furthermore, during the evaluation there were concerns by some interviewees regarding the use of the online library that the SCoBAL project established. Due to insufficient promotion the use of the online library is still perceived as low. However, this finding may be preliminary, as the online library was only established recently. Interviewees mentioned that Lawyers at Bars were not using the e-library and some of the functions of the digital database were not working (see interviews). Others however appreciated the lasting service and wide access to publications in Turkish language.

The results from the 2021 survey among 100 respondents in September 2021 reflect the challenges the Bar Asssociations and HRC continue to face in achieving a higher functionality. Regarding the role of HRCs in preventing human rights violations and networking with human rights institutions, more than 50% of interviewed beneficiaries and stakeholder believe that the HRCs are ineffective.
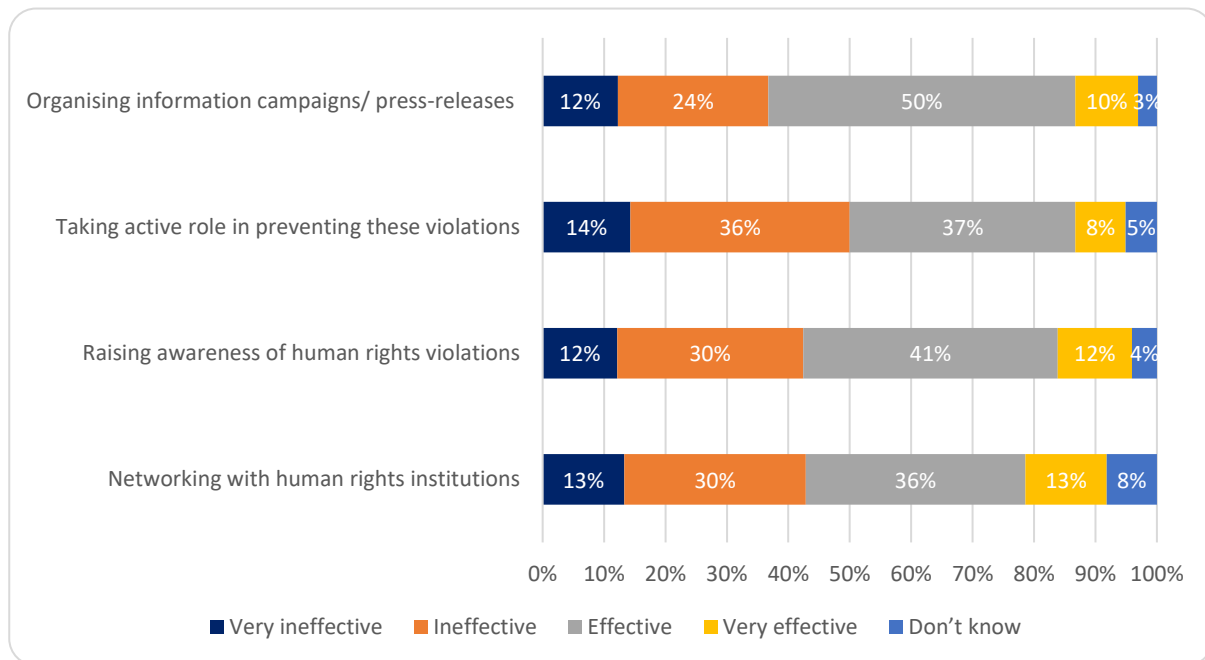
The following table shows the level of achievement of indicators for specific objective 1.

Indicators as per Inception report **Specific Objective 1:** The institutional capacity of the Human Rights Centres of the Bar Associations in 7 pilot provinces is strengthened and co-ordination between them is improved;	
Indicators and trarget values	**Current values**
Sub-ojective 1.1.: Increase of cases analysed and reported by the HRCs: **Indicator 1.1.1 :** Number of citizens applied to HRCs for information. **Target value:** Around 700 citizens applied to HRCs for information.	*1223 citizens applied to HRCs for information*
Sub-ojective 1.2 : Increase of public access and trust in HRCs given their increased analytical and investigative capacity. **Indicator 1.2.1:** Number of cases being analysed and reported by the end of the Action **Target value:** 35 cases being analysed and reported by the end of the Action.	*153 cases analysed and reported by the HRCs*
Sub-objective 1.4: Networks with international HR institutions and HR institutions of other EU member states **Indicator 1.4.1 :** Number of lawyers and relevant staff from UTBA and local bars visited European institutions and HRCs in other EU member states; **Indicator 1.4.2 :** Number of lawyers from UTBA and local bars visited CoE;	*7 networks were established* 50 lawyers and relevant staff from UTBA and local bars visited European institutions and HRCs in other EU member states 41 lawyers from UTBA and local bars visited CoE;

Indicator 1.4.3 : 24 lawyers from the bars and UTBA were placed in European institutions and HRCs in other European countries	24 lawyers from the bars and UTBA were placed in European institutions and HRCs in other European countries

Table 1: Overview of Indicator achievement specific objective1

Overall, the first specific objective "The institutional capacity of the Human Rights Centres of the Bar Associations in 7 pilot provinces is strengthened and co-ordination between them is improved" seems to have been only partly achieved. While the Indicator values are impressive, there are no baseline values to compare them to. Furthermore, during the interviews many stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the increased ability of HRCs to handle human rights cases in the furture.

The capacity of lawyers to apply European human rights

The capacity of lawyers to apply European human rights standards in their daily work is enhanced. Activities for this objective aimed at building the capacities of lawyers were:

- **SCoBAL training sessions** delivered by trainers who had previously participated in a training-of-trainers (ToT) programme.

- Translation and national adaption of a selection of online courses by the **European Programme for Human Rights Education of Legal Professionals (HELP)**

- **Development and translation of training materials and publications**

Overall 94 Trainers were trained in the delivery of HELP training sessions. 6 HELP courses were adapted into Turkish, 3 HELP tutor training sessions were organized, additional publications were published during the extension period of the project and 8200 lawyers all around Türkiye were trained on protection of human rights and ECHR. One interviewee shared "*The ToT was very successful, it is a very common component but often not efficient or well implemented. In this project, the lawyers in the bar associations are pushing the trainers to share their knowledge*" (see interviews) Books published under the project were accessible online on the website, and these books were distributed to all bar associations in Türkiye by the UTBA. During the evaluation representatives from bar associations reported that their awareness about human rights and amongst the other lawyers that participated increased greatly. For example, one representative of a bar association said*: " For me personally,so many things I didn't understand before. For eg. International rights such as right to a fair trial.* "(see interviews). One interviewee shared: "*Not all lawyers are good with English, translation of documents and HELP courses was very beneficial* " (see interviews) Another representative stated: *"With the project through online programmes, we could reach every kind of lawyers in Türkiye. I saw changes in the behaviour of the target group and have feedbacks on the same. Still have connections with lawyers in the cities and I can say they benefit through this programme and use the information for their work".* "(see interviews). Another lawyer stated: *"In my daily work, thanks to the project, I apply the materials and tools"* "(see interviews).

The following table shows the results from the survey of the mid-term evaluation from October 2021. 66 of the 100 respondents find the quality of the training materials satisfactory, 20 find them very good. Nevertheless, during the evaluation, interview partners repeatedly complained that there was a lack of participation in online trainings and many participants did not respond or did not even show up after registering. The project team reports that they quickly noticed a pattern, with usually only one-third of those registered showing up for the trainings. The project team therefore decided to admit more people to the courses knowing that not all those registered would appear to the trainings.

„What is your impression of the quality of the training materials?" Answer Choices	Responses	
Very good	20%	20
Satisfactory	66%	66
Not satisfactory	13%	13
Very satisfactory	1%	1
Total	**100%**	**100**

The following table shows the level of achievement of indicators for specific objective 2.

Indicators as per Inception report **Specific Objective 2:** The knowledge and skills of lawyers to apply European human rights standards in their daily work is enhanced.	
Indicators and trarget values	**Current values**
Sub-ojective 2.1: Substantial number of lawyers gained experience in analysing cases according to European human rights standards via access to the training programme "European Programme for Human Rights Education of Legal Professionals (HELP)" **Indicator 2.1.1:** Training modules prepared;	 **Indicator 2.1.1:** six HELP courses were adapted into Turkish;
I**ndicator 2.1.2** : 50 lawyers to train their colleagues and work in HRCs are trained	**Indicator 2.1.2:** 94 lawyers trained with the delivery of 2 HELP training of trainers together with the International Relations Department of UTBA (8th Coordination Meeting)
I**ndicator 2.1.3**: 5000 lawyers all around Türkiye are trained on protection of human rights and ECHR	**Indicator 2.1.3**: 8 200 lawyers all around Türkiye are trained on protection of human rights and ECHR *(*8th Coordination Meeting)
Indicator 2.1.4: Publication of training materials and reference books in Turkish	**Indicator 2.1.4:** books published under the project were accessible online on the website, and these books were distributed to all bar associations in Türkiye by the UTBA 8th Coordination Meeting)

Table 2: Overview of Indicator achievement specific objective 2

The second objective "The knowledge and skills of lawyers to apply European human rights standards in their daily work is enhanced" has been fully achieved.

The co-operation between the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and Human Rights Centres

Regarding the co-operation between the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and Human Rights Centres of local bar associations is fostered the development and implementation of IHMNet stands out. While there were initial issues in training Bar Associations how to use IHMNet and some initial technical issues interview partners appreciated the platform very much: "*The online tool provides a platform for the bar associations to connect. The Bar associations have independent structural compositions and different management systems, they were not connected before"* (see interviews) Further indicators regarding the annual UTBA reports were also achieved. Similarly, taking into account the needs assessment findings and recommendations, a draft regulation for the UTBA Human Rights Centre was prepared and approved by the executive board of the UTBA. This provided a consolidated legal framework applicable for all local bars in relation to their structure, organization, functioning, responsibilities, staffing and financial aspects.

Indicators as per Inception report	
Specific Objective 3: The co-operation between the Union of Turkish Bar Associations and Human Rights Centres of local bar associations is fostered.	
Indicators and trarget values	**Current values**
Sub-objective 3.1.: Strengthened network of HRCs of bar associations and UTBA **Indicator 3.1.1:** An online communication network among HRCs and online discussion forum for lawyers are functional	*The final version of IHMnet was uploaded to beneficiary's server and an administrative user was given to each bar association.* *The final version was uploaded to beneficiary's server and an administrative user was given to each bar association.*
Sub-objective 3.2: Risk areas for the prevention of human rights violations are identified in co-operation with HRCs **Indicator 3.1.1.** 2 annual reports prepared by the UTBA	*6 reports have been published in co-operation with HRCs* *8 regulations were accepted by the Boards of all 7 pilot bars and UTBA.*
Sub-objective 3.3: Regulations of bar associations revised to establish proper functioning of the HRCs. **Indicator 3.1.2.** Draft regulation prepared	

Table 3: Overview of Indicator achievement specific objective 3

The project's activities were mostly implemented as planned within the framework of the project and quantitative targets were achieved. However, the qualitative assessment of the objectives showed that objective 1 regarding the effectiveness of HRCs was not fully achieved.

SCoBAL's contribution to gender equality

As per the 3rd Progress Report, Cross Cutting Issues, such as equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming, played a role in the SCoBAL project to the following extent: 40% of the national and international consultants who worked for the project to date are women; among the participants in the activities and meetings, women accounted for about 40% of all project partners and stakeholders. Thisinformation was confirmed by interviewees: *"Specific measures ensured gender equality such as equal participation in trainings. There was also one Turkish language HELP course on domestic violence."* (see interviews).

Up to 60% of participants of ToT Programme and cascade trainings were women even though this number could not be influenced on the part of the SCoBAL project, since training participants registered for trainings independently and proactively.

At the level of the project design, the Strategic Action Plan ensured equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming for the UTBA and the Bar Associations and promoted the need for a specialised training for lawyers in areas such as violence against women and domestic violence. Overall, training curricula were developed to reflect equal opportunities and gender aspects: *"In general, the SCoBAL project was very sensitive about the topic of gender."* (see interviews).

Despite these successes, interviewees report that there is still a lack of experience among lawyers and bar associations on how to implement gender equality in the context of legal work. Although the project provided various countermeasures and activities to address this challenge, the impression during the evaluation was that trainings could have been even more relevant to the topic. In addition, the evaluation team could not find any evidence that the SCoBAL project had collected and analyzed monitoring data in a gender-disaggregated manner, nor had the mid-term evaluation disaggregated data accordingly.

Thus, the evaluation team finds that, in light of Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, more SCoBAL project work should have been done on gender equality issues to ensure that these are still sufficiently addressed and that women's rights are consistently taken into account in the day-to-day work of lawyers, bar associations and the UTBA.

5.4 Efficiency

This section analyses the extent to which the project delivered results in an economical and timely manner. To judge the efficiency of this project, the cost and time efficiency in achieving the intervention objectives and the efficiency of the communication and cooperation set-up were taken into consideration.

Although the mid-term evaluation report 2021 and some of the interviewees during this evaluation point out that the budget allocated for the project was sufficient and also efficiently used, financial efficiency of the project could not be assessed as the evaluation team was not provided with the budget or other financial documents of the project during this evaluation.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the delivery of the project and the project activities had to be delivered online. The mode of trainings changed from face to face trainings before the pandemic to online trainings during the pandemic and the modules were adapted to the online format. The online setting resulted in cost reduction and left some unspent funds. "*There was some unspent money because the covid activities had to be done online. These unspent funds were reallocated and efficiently utilised during the extension period of the project.*"- "(see interviews)*.. Funds could be saved due to online settings of measures.* "(see interviews).

Although some interview participants shared that adapting to online trainings had positive consequences as it helped reach out to more training participants from different bar associations, many stated that they preferred face to face trainings over online trainings. Some of the challenges cited over online trainings include technological barriers for the older participants "(see interviews)., absence of cancellation system for online trainings making participation numbers unclear, and timing of trainings. "*Online trainings were hard, participants switched off cameras, mics, ice-breaking activities needed but doesn't work well in online. People have a habit of applying if there is a certificate, but trainings were held during week days, lawyers are busy and can't participate.*" (see interviews).

The IT tool is seen as an efficient and effective tool for communication and for delivering the training courses. It provides a platform for bar associations to connect and learn from each other.The pilot bars and UTBA are able to see the database of each other with this communication mechanism. The IT tool and mobile application are considered very useful for enabling coordination amongst the lawyes across Türkiye "(see interviews). "*IT tool-very good for communication*" "(see interviews)*. IT tool-easy platform for training* "(see interviews) *The online tool provides a platform for the bar associations to connect. The Bar associations have independent structural compositions and different management systems, they were not connected before.*" "(see interviews). Significant funds were allocated to the development of this tool deemed efficient for communication between the BAs and the UTBA (8th coordination meeting) There was a delay in the overall process of the tender for development of the IT tool (İHMnet) which affected the project's timeline (see interviews). However, the IT service provider company worked faster to deliver the finalised version of the IT Tool (İHMnet). (6th project Steering Committee). The team of evaluators for this evaluation were not provided with the log in credentials for the IT tool to access the details of the tool and fully assess its efficiency.

Interviews suggest that the extension of the project period primarily due to the covid 19 pandemic resulted in adding more beneficiaries to the project. *"Extension was very beneficial for trainings, as more people could be trained* "(see interviews). However, it only resulted in additional staff costs and not necessarily any additional results thereby reducing the cost efficiency. For example,: "*Time extension*

reduced the efficiency because costs for staff were high "(see interviews)*. Funds allocated to activities compared to those allocated to staff were not considered to be sufficiently balanced.

Interview feedback from some of the interviewees suggests that there has been an improvement in project's communication and cooperation set up between institutions and with the stakeholders as a result of the project. *The cooperation between the centre and the local bars is increasing* " (see interviews); *"believe we have a very good cooperation system and work well together"* "(see interviews). However, the independent nature of the HRCs like the Bar associations, the lack of resources both the human rights work in the bar association and at the level of the UTBA and their overlapping mandates make the coordination difficult and often sporadic between the different bar associations and the UTBA (Needs assessment report, Addendum-Description of Action). Effective coordination between the lead institute and the management is also very essential as the lead institute is responsible for carrying out overall coordination and monitoring for the project. However, this area was highlighted as problematic (see interviews). There is also often a lack of communication due to changes in management structure every two years which was pointed out by majority of interview participants. "*I did not participate in previous meetings and we were not informed about the process related to IHMNet".* (see interviews). Frequent management changes also hamper or pose a risk to end the previously developed good relationship between a bar association and NGO thereby hampering the cooperation process (Institutional Needs Assessment Report). The report also highlights the need for extra resources for the UTBA HRC, as it notes that most bar associations do not have websites devoted to their human rights work and the existing websites are mostly outdated which can impact efficiency and sustainability of the project. There is also a need for the UTBA HRC to improve its institutional memory and its online presence.The bodies needs to be instituionalised and recognized. *People need to know what we do. We need solutions like publishing/advertising of bar associations, billboards displaying that we have a human rights centre too, we need promotion and advertising* (see interviews)

There is also a need for an effective communication system between the Lawyer's Right Centres functional in every pilot bar association and the HRC whenever the lawyers' rights were at stake. (eg. Arrest of lawyers) (Institutional Needs Assessment Resport)

To coordinate human rights activity and assist with the promotion and protection of human rights by lawyers in Türkiye efficiently there is a need for better resourced network of bar association human rights centres and efficient coordination and communication mechanisms between the institutions.

5.5 Impact

This section analyses the project's (potential) contribution to higher-level effects. This includes long-term results or results of broader scope than those evaluated under the criterion effectiveness. It assesses the ultimate significance and transformative changes initiated by the project and how the project has facilitated the achievement of overarching development goals.
Intended changes at impact level are defined in the project's overall objective. The project was meant to contribute to the effective implementation of human rights standards in Türkiye. This was measured by two indicators:

Overall Objective			
	Indicator	**Indicator achievement in 10/2020 (according to mid-term report)**	**Updated figures**
To contribute to effective implementation of European human rights standards in Türkiye.	Increase of the admissibility rate at the European Court of Human Rights	Admissibility rate of applications with lawyers increased 5%	*Numbers of Admissible Cases Raised Significantly (2019: 37 2020: 28 2021:456)*
	number of applications made against Türkiye before the ECtHR	Number of pending applications allocated to a decision body v. TUR in 2020: 9,900	*2021: 13700*
	number of judgments of ECtHR finding Türkiye in breach of the ECHR	Number of judgements finding at least one violation in: 96 Number of inadmissibility decisions on the grounds of Rule 46 and non-exhaustion of domestic remedies. According to the information provided by the ECtHR in the past three years (2017-2019) between 60% and 75% of the files v. TUR rejected for Rule 47 were presented by a lawyer. In 2019: 4880 inadmissibility decisions (the latest statistics available as of 31/08/2020).	Number of judgements finding at least one violation in: 76 Applications declared inadmissible or struck out 2019:4,880 2020: 6397 2021: 5654

All interviewees stated that no direct contribution to impacts in the sense of high-level development results could be observed at the current point in time. The indicators chosen for the project describe such results and are highly context-dependent. Overall, unfortunately, Türkiye's human rights situation has been marked by multiple challenges over the period of implementation (cp. chapter 3). This has limited the projects results and in turn its contribution to intended high-level changes at the current point in time.

Interviews for this evaluation as well as survey results of the mid-term evaluation indicate that impacts in the form of changes among the target group have been achieved. Interviewees pointed out that awareness and knowledge of human rights standards have been raised. Training participants have improved in terms of communication with citizens. Another indirect result of the project is the improved quality of applications of NGOs. Some interviewees, among them the project team, stated that as a result of the HRC regulation, the functioning of HRCs has greatly improved. Others pointed to improvements in the networks and cooperation across bar associations and regions (see interviews).

5.6 Sustainability

In the section on sustainability, the long-term results and lasting effects of the project are examined: which structural changes have taken place that will remain? Which outputs can still be used in the future? Will implementing organisations be able to continue their work without the funding and support of CoE? The SCoBAL project has been able to create **outputs that can be re-used or built-up upon** if shared. These outputs include online trainings and training material, an e-library with free access, the IT-Tool iHMNet together with its mobile application. Furthermore, translations of sector-specific literature into Turkish has been undertaken and a regulation for HRCs has been adopted. In addition to the outputs that benefit the work of UTBA, HRCs and bar associations, also CoE itself developed products that will still be available and possibly applicable in future contexts, such as the translated HELP online courses.
In the framework of the project, **digital formats** for training and meetings were adopted and digital literacy among participants of trainings was strengthened. Even if digital formats might not be the preferable approach in times where face-to-face meetings are possible again, they increase the resilience of the implementing partners for future similar (pandemic) crises.
As described above, interviewees had reported **HRCs** were facing challenges such as a lack of capacity, dependence on the respective bar associations as well as financial and budgeting constraints. Furthermore, a high fluctuation in bar association management frequently leads to a organisational discontinuity. Based on these shortcomings and needs, a directive for HRCs, the Draft Regulation, was developed within the course of the SCoBAL project to set a general normative framework (Draft Regulation HRC of the UTBA). The Regulation specifies duties and activities of HRCs as well as further organs of the centres (such as Head, Steering board, Scientific-Advisory Board). Furthermore, it defines the coordinators of HRCs to be responsible for coordination between the HRCs and the UTBA and is thus to be understood and appreciated as a long-term instrument with the potential to regulate work of all HRCs.

"After the installment of regulation, the HRCs became more independent." (see interviews)

As **capacity building or training** has been provided to UTBA and bar associations, skills that were acquired in this context will remain, at least on the individual level. Trained trainers bear a strong potential to continue to share knowledge learned, even if not in SCoBAL-organized trainings. These increased individual capacities will also structurally reinforce the participating bar associations as well as the UTBA. Interviewees are certain that many of the products developed by SCoBAL will continue to be used in the long term: *"The project provided tools for its sustainability, e.g. trainer tools. Sustainability will be ensured."* (CFCU). In a few cases, trainers are already continuing to deliver trainings that they had provided under the SCoBAL project in their own bar associations (8th Committee Meeting protocol).

However, interviewees stated a **need for further training opportunities** (see interviews) and continuity of the need to complete online trainings: *"We should make trainings and workshops continue even after the project."* (see interviews)

As described in the 8th Coordination Meeting protocol, all **publications and books published under the SCoBAL project** are accessible online, and were distributed to all bar associations in Türkiye by the UTBA. *"The translation of important books regarding European rights is a big earning."* (see interviews). Furthermore, guidebooks were translated into Turkish and published. For example, around 41.950 copies of the ECHR have been printed and distributed to Bar Associations and Law Faculties to raise awareness specifically on the 15th Protocol to the ECHR (7th project Steering Committee).
The **IT-Tool iHMNet**, now ready to use, provides an archive and institutional memory and offers customised media and a secure and closed environment allowing to work on common files. The potential of this tool should continue to be exploited by Bar Associations and HRCs in the future, although training may still be needed. Likewise, the tool could be used for monitoring and reporting purposes wherever

possible (8th Coordination Meeting). "*The IT tool and mobile application will have a sustainable effect.*" *(see interviews)*

The **online library** that the SCoBAL project has been able to establish is also an important aspect for the sustainability of the project, as it is a crucial means to access resources about human rights, women's and children's rights. Currently it counts with more than 1000 Turkish language books on human rights law and the ECHR, with unlimited access for everyone interested. Already in the context of the SCoBAL project, the online-library has not been promoted sufficiently (8th Coordination Meeting). In the future, it should be ensured that all relevant experts know about the library in order to use it extensively and accordingly. "*An electronic library has been established and all pilot bar associations emphasized the importance, high number of publications available.*" (see interviews)

The **HELP Online Training Courses** must also be mentioned in the context of sustainability. The adaptation of various courses to the Turkish context can be considered a great success with high potential for sustainability, as it makes the HELP offering more inclusive and relevant for the Turkish target group (6th project Steering Committee Protocol). The topics of the HELP courses (among them Admissibility criteria, The right to liberty and security, data protection and privacy rights, property rights, violence against women and domestic violence, introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR) are highly relevant and will remain attractive for legal experts in the long term.

Furthermore, **study visits** that were completed during the SCoBAL project duration facilitated the establishment of networks and created new synergies for co-operation in various areas, in particular, human rights and commerce, protection of lawyers, trial monitoring and strategic litigation (7th project Steering Committee). "*All lawyers expressed that they benefitted a lot from the study visits even though only 24 study visits could take place due to travel restrictions as a result of the pandemic.*"(see interviews)

Despite all remarkable aspects described above, it is necessary to point out some shortcomings in terms of sustainability of the project's activities and products:

As described, the SCoBAL project did not respond to the sustainability of HRCs, e.g. through making funding available. Despite the fact that a common regulation has been developed for all centers, it remains uncertain to what extent the centers are able to follow the regulation meticulously in case there are no or few financial resources for HRCs. As some of the interviewees expressed with concern, the success of the centers' work may continue to depend on the commitment of individuals in the future (see interviews), with greater institutionalization and independence from the bar associations still pending (see interviews). Respondents view this very critically with regard to the sustainability of the centers *"The work of HRCs must not rest solely on the shoulders of individuals as it might lead to problems in sustainability in the long term. Most lawyers are working in HRCs on a voluntary basis."* (see interviews)

Further challenges to sustainability were identified, such as a lack of capacity to transfer expertise in bar associations and associated HRCs as knowledge management might continue to be affected by frequent changes in the management of the centers as well as by a lack of financial and personnel resources. The regulation developed in the context of the SCoBAL project does not make any innovations in this regard (apart from establishing that HRC are funded by the Bar Associations, which in turn creates a dependency). Knowledge management should therefore become an internal focus of the bar associations and the HRCs to ensure that staff turnover does not lead to a loss of valuable organizational and sectoral knowledge in the HRCs, especially since human rights is still an underdeveloped field of expertise in the bar associations (see interviews). In this context, the continued use of the developed IT tool, iHMNet, should also be ensured.

Lastly, interviewees noted that now that SCoBAL has been able to reach many legal experts through online trainings, a focus should be placed on more in-depth learning content within trainings. (see interviews).

Overall, the evaluation team came to the conclusion that the UTBA, the bar associations and the Human Rights Centers as a direct target group of the project were able to acquire significant relevant knowledge in the field of human rights with the help of the SCoBAL project's advisory work. Overall, the project was able to develop diverse and innovative products in the context of its project activities, from which the main beneficiary can benefit in the long term, provided that the potential of products is fully exploited, which will require a strong commitment on the part of the beneficiaries. However, challenges to the sustainability of the capacities were identified, such as lack of funding for the HRCs with multiple negative consequences such as lack of capacity for the transfer of knowledge in the HRCs.

According to one periodic report (7th project Steering Committee), synergies for cooperation have been identified and exploited with a study visit to Austria during which networks between lawyer organisations and human rights centres and NGOs in Vienna could be created. Cooperation potentials lie specifically in the areas of human rights and commerce, protection of lawyers, trial monitoring and strategic litigation.

6 Conclusion: Challenges and Success Factors

To facilitate learning from the outcomes of this evaluation, this section corroborates key factors of success and central challenges of the project. Efforts and positive achievements relating to the key factors of success (which sometimes overlap) have the potential to bolster current achievements, mitigate current or future risks, or be applied to other similar projects.

8.1 Challenges

The core aspects that challenged the implementation of the project were:

- **COVID-19 pandemic:** The effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on the project were so severe that it was at times impossible to implement the project efficiently and effectively. The Covid 19 pandemic also delayed bar association elections, which led to hesitant, non-proactive behavior by the then-existing boards of associations, which did not want to make authoritative decisions out of respect for soon-to-be-successors.
- **Lack of financial resources of HRCs**: the inability of the project to influence the HRCs access to financial resources was its biggest weakness as the lack of financing is the biggest risk to the durability of project results.

8.2 Success Factors

The core success factors to the implementation of the project were:

- **Adaption to COVID 19:** rapid and meaningful adaptation of the training offer to the pandemic circumstances, development of online training material

- **Sustainable products and training**: development of many sustainable products and processes, such as translation of books, development of an online library and of an IT tool for communication. Furthermore, the SCoBAL project managed to double the number of lawyer HELP tutors ensuring HELP courses will be more easily organized by local bar associations.

- **Quality of training materials**: the quality of training materials and the training content were huighlighted as very enriching and beneficial by the stakeholders.

- **High quality training with dedicated trainers:** about 94 experienced trainers trained by SCoBAL are ready to conduct online and face-to-face training independent of the project. For example, Diyarbakır Bar has already conducted training with SCoBAL trainers in its own capacity.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations are based on the findings discussed in the previous sections. The recommendations are grouped into two groups. Group one is primarily addressed to the CoE project team working on the follow-on measure of the project. Group two is addressed primarily to the implementin partners

9.1 Recommendations to CoE

All recommendations below addressed to the CoE project team and concern the adaption of the intervention within the follow-on measure.

- **Expanding the target group**: With lawyers, the project has addressed a key target group and change agent in the implementation of human rights standards. However, in order to change the overall justice system and ensure a sustainable and holistic implementation of such standards, other target groups in the justice system (e.g. judges and prosecutors) could also be addressed.
- **Monitoring of training participation**: in the future it will be important to monitor and record the actual training participation, ensuring that trainees actively participate and engage.
- **Branding of the HRCs:** There is a need to target the branding and advertisng of the HRCs in the future
- **Monitoring and reporting:** a standardised process for monitopring and reporting should be established across the BAs. Impact indicators should be reviewed to better account for external factors.
- **Cooperation with EU:**Stregthening of cooperation and coordination between CoE and the lead institutions (EU Affairs Expert)

9.2 Recommendations for implementing partners

All recommendations below are addressed primarily to the partners of the project:

- **HRCs:** focus on **internal knowledge management**, provision of **secured financial resources**; Motivate lawyers of bar associations to engange/involve more in HRC, emphasize the relevance of HRC and promote HRC's work.
- **iHMNet:** Ensure the continued use of the developed IT tool, iHMNet, by promoting the tool and inviting bar association members to work with the tool whenever possible.

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Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Criterion	Question	Sub-questions / suggested changes / specifications	Source / basis for evaluation	Possible evaluation method
Relevance	To what extent did the project address identified needs of target groups (lawyers)?	*Specifications:* How did the project identify / assess needs of target groups? How and to what extent were these needs addressed?	evaluation of project planning documents / initial needs assessments perspective project team perspective of target groups	documents analysis interviews
	To what extent did the project take into account the needs of individual Bar associations (Pilot bars) and the UTBA?	*Specifications:* What specific needs of individual Bar associations (Pilot bars) and the UTBA were identified? How and to what extent were these addressed?	evaluation of project planning documents / initial needs assessments perspective project team perspective of target groups	documents analysis interviews
Added Value	Was there a substantial added value in the CoE implementing this project when compared with activities carried out by other international organisations in this field or compared to non-intervention?	*Specifications:* What other organisations are active in this field? How do CoE activities duplicate or complement efforts of other organisations? What qualities / competences / other assets does CoE have in this field that other organisations cannot provide? Was there a substantial added value in the CoE implementing this project when compared to non-intervention?	documentation on other organisations' activities perspective project team / CoE perspective target group representatives perspective external observers	desk research on other organisations' activities documents analysis interviews

Effectiveness	To what extent the project achieved its expected results, bearing in mind the project's initial indicators? What are the reasons for the achievement and non-achievement of expected results?	**Specification:** for activities in the area of capacity building, focus on levels 2 and 3 of the Kirkpatrick model	project documentation (esp. periodic and progress reports) perspective project team perspective of target groups perspective of partners perspective of external observers	documents analysis interviews
	To what extent have adjustments during the implementation phase contributed to reaching better results?	**Additional questions:** What have been the project's main challenges during implementation? (How) were these addressed?	evaluation of project documentation (esp. periodic and progress reports) perspective project team perspective of target groups perspective of partners	documents analysis interviews
	To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality?	-	evaluation of project documentation (esp. periodic and progress reports) perspective project team perspective of target groups perspective of partners	documents analysis interviews
Efficiency	Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner to achieve the intervention purpose?	-	evaluation of project documentation (esp. periodic and progress reports, budget documents, planning documents) perspective project team and CoE	documents analysis interviews
	To what extent alternative working methods led to the	-	perspective target groups	documents analysis interviews

	achievement of more qualitative or cost-effective results?		if possible, comparison with similar interventions / good practices in this field	
	To what extent has the Council of Europe's organisational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the outputs?	-	evaluation of project documentation (esp. periodic and progress reports, budget documents, planning documents) perspective project team and CoE perspective of partners	documents analysis interviews
	Additional question: How did the project set-up (team composition, choice and number of partners, communication and cooperation mechanisms etc.) support the delivery of outputs?	-	perspective project team and CoE perspective of partners	interviews
Potential Impact and Sustainability	To what extent the project contributed to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by all individuals without discrimination in Türkiye?	*Additional questions / items:* Development of civil liberties score in Freedom house Global Freedom Index. How is the development of fundamental rights and freedoms in Türkiye perceived by project partners? How large is the contribution of the project to an improvement	Review of Freedom Index Review of studies on civil rights in Türkiye Perception of project partners Perception of project staff and partners	documents analysis Interviews Interviews

		development of fundamental rights and freedoms in Türkiye		
	What changes have occurred among target groups as a result of the project's activities, particularly in connection with the Council of Europe's standards? Has there been any negative or unintended effect of the project?	***Separation:*** What changes have occurred among target groups as a result of the project's activities, particularly in connection with the Council of Europe's standards? Has there been any negative or unintended effect of the project?	Perception of project staff and partners Perception of project staff and partners	Interviews
	To what extent was the project supported and owned by institutional project partners?	***Additional Questions:*** How high was the ownership of the project results on the partners side? What have the partners done and invested in order to maintain or scale up project results?	Perception of project staff Perception of project staff and partners	Interviews
	What is the likelihood that the benefits from the intervention will be maintained in the mid-term (3-5 years) after the end of the project?	***Additional Questions:*** 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?	Perception of project staff Review of Country Reports / News Reports on political developments Perception of project staff and partners	Interviews Literature review

		Are the measures sufficient to manage the risks to the durability of results?	Perception of project staff and partners	
	What would be required to increase the sustainability of the results?	(see above)	(see above)	(see above)

Annex 3: Interview Guidelines / Questionnaires

Exemplary interview guideline *(adapted to the interviewee as needed)*

[Intro, information about confidentiality, …]

- Could you please state your name and role in relation to the project?
- Could you also tell us a bit more about the project? What activities did you implement? What makes the project special?
- How would you describe your members / target group?

Relevance:
- In your regional / professional context, do you consider the project to be relevant? How?
- How would you describe the main challenges in your sector / field / region? Did the project address those?
- How would you describe your (specific) needs and expectations towards the project? What did the project support you with, and did it correspond to your needs and interests?
- How did the project contribute to your organisation's objectives?

Effectiveness / Impact

- What result / achievement are you most proud of?
- What changed for you because of the project?
- Have you learned anything specific with the project? Do you apply these learnings? Please provide examples.
- Can you think of results achieved on impact level?
- Have there been any unintended, positive, or negative results? Anything you didn't expect?
- What challenges did you encounter during implementation? How did you address them?
- Have your members / target groups changed their behaviour / performed differently after participating in the project? Can you give any examples?
- To what extent has the Project contributed to gender equality?
- How would you describe your contribution to the project?
- Do you think, the project results can be scaled up / transferred to further contexts or regions?

Added Value
- What other organisations are active in this field? Do you cooperate with other donors / international stakeholders?
- How do CoE activities duplicate or complement efforts of other organisations?
- What qualities / competences / other assets does CoE have in this field that other organisations cannot provide?

Efficiency
- How efficient would you rate your cooperation and communication with the project (5 very efficient, 1 not efficient at all)? Can you explain? What have been challenges in the cooperation?

Sustainability
- How would you rate the project's sustainability? Can you name any evidence for preservation of results?
- What would be different, had the project not taken place?
- Are there any risks for results being lost?