

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF MECHANISMS AND LEGISLATION IN THE FIELD OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



**Guidelines and toolkit to support the Office of
the National Coordinator against Domestic
Violence in the implementation, monitoring
and evaluation of actions combating violence
against women and domestic violence**

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MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF MECHANISMS AND LEGISLATION IN THE FIELD OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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“Monitoring and Evaluation of Mechanisms and Legislation in the field of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence”

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*All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

List of Abbreviations

GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
DV	Domestic Violence
VAW	Violence against Women
NCDV	National Coordinator against Domestic Violence
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
KSA	Kosovo Statistics Agency
CG	Coordination Group

Chapter 1

Aim and Scope of the Guidelines

The aim of these guidelines is to support the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence (hereinafter NCDV) and other authorities of Kosovo* in monitoring and evaluating the mechanisms and legislation in the field of violence against women and domestic violence, with a focus on the “National Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women (2022-2026)”. Article 10 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (known as the Istanbul Convention) covers the establishment and role of the co-ordinating body and specifies the requirements of this body in relation to the coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the policies and measures to prevent and combat violence against women (hereinafter VAW) and domestic violence (hereinafter DV). In fact, implementing Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention will in practice also require the implementation of Articles 9 and 11, namely co-operation with non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations, and the collection of necessary data on VAW and DV periodically and in an institutionalised manner. Size, staffing and funding are to be decided by the Parties as well as which entity it shall be answerable to and any reporting obligations it shall have. However, this requirement needs to be understood in the light of Article 7 and 8 of the Istanbul Convention.

These guidelines and toolkit provide recommendations on adequate monitoring and evaluation of mechanisms and legislation in the field of VAW and DV, focusing on supporting the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence in monitoring and evaluating the main instrument in Kosovo* which is the “National Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women (2022-2026)” (hereinafter the Strategy). However, the guidelines and toolkit are designed to be easily adapted to the upcoming Strategy and/or to similar legal instruments.

As well as the Istanbul Convention and its explanatory report, the guidelines are also based on the findings of the analytical report of the Council of Europe, published in 2016, that delved into the common challenges and lessons learned from setting up national coordinating bodies across different European countries implementing the Istanbul Convention or similar treaties (Council of Europe, 2016); the Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO’s baseline evaluation reports (GREVIO, 2022); the government decision 04/83

approved on 11 July 2012 along with its terms of reference and an explanatory note; and the Council of Europe report “Assessment of the alignment of Kosovo’s laws, policies and other measures with the standards of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)” (Council of Europe, 2022). Thus, these guidelines will propose the implementation of Article 10 based on international best practices catered to the specific characteristics and assumptions of the domestic administration structures and VAW and DV issues. The MEL toolkit is composed of the narrative guidelines, MEL Action Plan, as well as the relevant MEL instruments for reporting and tracking progress in annexes A and B (Quarterly Reporting Formats – for all stakeholders, and Indicator Tracking Table – for the Office of the NCDV).

Chapter 2

The Importance of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

A proper Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system sets a plan for the effective, evidence-based approach to implementing programmes and policies, such as the National Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women (2022-2026). It facilitates the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on key indicators to track progress over time and demonstrates outcomes of reforms and capacity strengthening initiatives. MEL supports effective management, learning, and accountability. It also supports informed decision-making and learning by generating actionable information and feedback to reflect on what does and does not work, and why, and uses the findings for a timely course correction.

A MEL plan on the Strategy specifically serves the following functions:

- details the strategy's logic model, objectives, results, and performance indicators that will be used to measure progress and outcomes which implementing partners are responsible for achieving
- explains in detail how the NCDV will monitor and evaluate to determine whether the intended results and outcomes are being achieved
- informs the implementing partners and stakeholders on what works and what does not, progress towards targets, and outcomes
- generates evidence and knowledge to continuously adapt and improve performance from lessons learned and changes to the local context
- supports the use of evidence-based decision-making to improve efficiency and effectiveness and become more accountable and transparent

A good MEL plan will identify and document successes, challenges, and opportunities, including the influence of the local context by collecting, analysing, and using the evidence and knowledge not only to implement the strategy effectively but also to tell compelling result stories. To serve these purposes, a MEL plan should comprise four foundational components:

- 1) the results framework and logical framework that depict the intervention logic of the strategy
- 2) indicators that track progress toward achieving results and outcomes
- 3) monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) methods and tools that generate data and information for adaptive management and to verify and validate the indicators, and
- 4) a learning plan, which integrates research questions, learning activities, and pause and reflect moments to learn and adapt applying knowledge from our experiences and the operating environment.

Collecting and tracking evidence is crucial to a proper MEL system. The main function of a MEL plan is to measure the extent to which objectives have been met and what progress has been made, which aside a narrative description is quantified through progress indicators with respective targets. In some cases, data and relevant information is available through national reports from various agencies, however, more specific information and data relating to the objectives of the strategy or mandate are not readily available from existing or secondary data, and thus must be collected. A baseline study report collects data at the beginning of a mandate, which will serve as a reference for future measurements, to which progress will be compared. Consequently, a midline and endline study report are conducted around the middle and end of a mandate respectively. The midline study measures progress, but also supplies insights on progress and intensity of the course, and many lessons can be learnt and adaptations made for the remainder of the mandate. The endline study supplies relevant data to be compared to the baseline (and midline) data in order to track complete progress of an action or initiative. Besides providing information on the effectiveness of the chosen methods, the endline studies often also inform on issues that are lagging and may need more focus in upcoming mandates or initiatives. Thus, baseline, midline and endline studies are a crucial source for the MEL process. Lessons can be drawn and learnt, and most importantly, they can be used for informing on the starting point, progress, necessary changes of the course or adaptations, achievements and shortcomings to be emphasised in upcoming initiatives.

Chapter 3

Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention – Coordinating body

The adoption and ratification of international treaties is accompanied by a list of commitments and obligations for the parties, to ensure accountability and the protection of citizens, as well as be able to overview and measure effectiveness across different signatory states. Since September 2020, the Istanbul Convention has been part of Kosovo's Constitution, as per the vote of the Assembly of Kosovo* to amend the Constitution to give direct effect to the Istanbul Convention¹. It is therefore directly applicable in the local legal system.

Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention requires the designation or establishment of an official coordinating body, responsible for the coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Convention.

Article 10 – Co-ordinating body

1 Parties shall designate or establish one or more official bodies responsible for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by this Convention. These bodies shall co-ordinate the collection of data as referred to in Article 11, analyse and disseminate its results.

2 Parties shall ensure that the bodies designated or established pursuant to this article receive information of a general nature on measures taken pursuant to Chapter VIII.

3 Parties shall ensure that the bodies designated or established pursuant to this article shall have the capacity to communicate directly and foster relations with their counterparts in other Parties.

1. The Assembly of Kosovo* decides to apply the Istanbul Convention, Council of Europe Newsroom, Accessed at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/-/the-national-assembly-of-kosovo-decides-to-apply-the-istanbul-convention>

Article 11 – Data collection and research

1 For the purpose of the implementation of this Convention, Parties shall undertake to: a collect disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention; b support research in the field of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention in order to study its root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates, as well as the efficacy of measures taken to implement this Convention.

2 Parties shall endeavour to conduct population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention.

3 Parties shall provide the group of experts, as referred to in Article 66 of this Convention, with the information collected pursuant to this article in order to stimulate international co-operation and enable international benchmarking.

4 Parties shall ensure that the information collected pursuant to this article is available to the public.

Articles 10 and 11, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence 2011

More detailed instructions on fulfilling the requirements of Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention are laid out in the Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. This explanatory report states that the coordinating body can be an existing government authority, or a body newly set up for that purpose as the signatory party deems relevant. The number of staff and resources employed by the coordinating body is also left to the discretion of states. With regards to the monitoring role, the coordinating body is expected to monitor how and how effectively policies to combat VAW and DV are being implemented, i.e., monitoring the effectiveness of the National Strategy on the Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women. Finally, the required evaluations mandated by the governing body are expected to scientifically measure effectiveness of specific measures or applied policies and how they are meeting victims' needs, if they have brought a sustainable outcome and/or unleashed unexpected consequences. This implies that states are obliged to: 1) Collect disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on causes of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention; 2) Endeavour to conduct population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention (Council of Europe Istanbul Convention, 2011, p.9).

Thus, the responsible authorities are also tasked with the responsibility of relevant data collection and its proper dissemination to the public. The methods of data collection, analysis and dissemination are also left to the discretion of states, by requesting to fulfill the minimum requirements presented in the Istanbul Convention Explanatory Report.

The second paragraph of Article 10 seeks to ensure proper handling of data and information, whereby the coordinating body is to be informed on a general level of relevant information, without reference to individual cases, so as to maintain integrity and ethical standards of data processing and storage.

Inter-institutional learning from different state parties is covered in the third paragraph, whereby experiences are encouraged to be shared, so that parties can profit from a wide range of lessons learned, both effective and ineffective, adding to the efficiency on a regional level, but also contributing to the harmonisation of practice across different states and regions.

“Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence requires evidence-based policy-making. This implies effectively documenting the magnitude of violence by producing robust, comparative data in order to guide policy and to monitor the implementation of measures to address the problem” (Council of Europe Istanbul Convention Explanatory Report, 2011, p.14).

Article 11 obliges states to collect disaggregated data on an institutional level and periodically. This helps understand the significance of the problems victims face, which can be used to advocate at policy level and raise awareness among the population, but it also encourages victims to report abuse, and thus contributes holistically to tackling DV and VAW, and all forms of violence.

Relevant statistical data may include administrative data and statistics compiled by:

- health care services
- social welfare services
- law enforcement agencies
- judicial data recorded by judicial authorities
- public prosecutors
- NGOs

Furthermore, compiled data can be service-based and agency-based as well as judicial. The idea is that this would give information on the services used by victims of domestic violence including service provision by government agencies - public (and private) health sector, medical care, counselling, housing or other support; help assess the effectiveness of policies in place; estimate the administrative cost of violence; and provide information on the sentences and characteristics of convicted persons as well as conviction rates.

“Under Article 11 of the convention, parties are requested to collect disaggregated statistical data at regular intervals on cases relating to all forms of violence covered by the scope of the convention, for a number of reasons, including ensuring the design and implementation of evidence-based policy making. The judiciary, police, social welfare and health-

care services therefore need to set up data systems that go beyond the internal recording needs of their respective agencies/services and, as a minimum, collect data on victims and perpetrators disaggregated by sex, age, type of violence, the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator and geographical location”(GREVIO, 2022, p.40).

Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention also obliges states to collect DV and VAW related statistics and data that can be pooled together. In 2019, the National Co-ordinator against Domestic Violence launched an integrated database for cases of DV. Six institutions use the integrated database, namely the police, social services (i.e., Centres for Social Work), the Victims Advocacy and Assistance Office, shelters, the Office of the State Prosecutor and the courts. This database aims at generating anonymised statistics tracking a victim’s path throughout the judicial system and support services, by recording information on victims and perpetrators including their sex, age, “municipality of residence”, “disability status”, and “association to the LGBTQ community” (Council of Europe, 2022, p.27).

“The evaluation function is to be understood as implying an independent and scientific assessment, based on robust data, of policies and measures. In this respect, data collection is essential for carrying out robust and scientific evaluations” (GREVIO, 2022, p.37).

Recommendation

While basic information is being collected by institutions such as Kosovo Police and justice and law enforcement institutions in general, not all bodies in the data chain collect relevant data, and often data is not uploaded to digital dossiers in real-time to have a meaningful effect. Thus, in this phase, a realistic recommendation for Kosovo* is to assess the current data flow that comes from different institutions, such as Kosovo Police, and the judicial sector, and determine what data is needed and should be added into standard reporting forms and by which institution. This will shine light on the actual scope of the problem and facilitate a more efficient process.

3.1 Coordinating body

The Council of Europe Istanbul Convention does not determine how these bodies are to be established, what they should look like or how they should function, which leaves discretion to each party to design a coordinating body that is most convenient to their authorities, organisational and social structures. However, the Istanbul Convention general principles have an impact on the level of discretion that State parties have. This implies that the requirements need to be understood in the light of Article 7 and 8 of the Istanbul Convention. That is to say ensuring that the coordination body is doted with

“appropriate financial and human resources” and ensure that policies place the rights of the victims at the centre of all measures and are implemented by way of effective co-operation among all relevant agencies, institutions and organisations (Article 7.2).

The Mid-terms Horizontal Review of GREVIO Baseline evaluation reports (2022)” found that many states have established a kind of coordinating bodies but most do not meet the obligation under article 10, as they do not have a clear mandate, lack of adequate staffing and funding, lack of evaluation functions and lack of independence, lack of cooperation with NGO’s and civil society, mandate limited to specific forms of violence (GREVIO Horizontal Review, 2022, p. 38).

3.2 Overview of Kosovo*’s Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence

Monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategy is the responsibility of the coordinating body – NCDV structures, including the National Coordinator, supporting staff and the Coordination Group/stakeholders. The monitoring and evaluation process is dependent on each of these actors to aggregate, collect, analyse and report relevant data and findings.

Pursuant to Article 92 (4) and Article 93 (4) of the Constitution of Kosovo* and based on the updated regulation 02/2011 on the areas of administrative responsibility of the Prime Minister and ministries, the role and responsibilities of the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence (NCDV) have been regulated with the government decision 04/83 of 11 July 2012. An explanatory note of the decision on the appointment of the NCDV describes the role and responsibilities of relevant positions, staff and the working group, which the current structure is not able to comply with, given the lack of necessary resources.

The lack of resources, both human and financial presents a challenge that could be resolved by enacting a regulation by legal act, such as an administrative order, which would also ensure institutional preservation of the Office following any political changes.

Chapter 4

Guiding Principles for the coordinating body on monitoring and evaluation

In order to combat VAW and DV and to ensure effective implementation of the commitments under the Istanbul Convention, a functional coordinating body is crucial. Factors that contribute to the functionality and effectiveness of the coordinating body range from the coordination and implementation structure, connection to high-level governmental bodies, contributions and expertise of specialised organisations, financial and human resources, and qualitative monitoring and evaluation. Some guiding principles that should be considered are listed below.

4.1 Dedicated coordination and implementation body

Having a dedicated coordination and implementation body, meaning a body that is fully and solely engaged in the role of national coordination against VAW and DV is likely to have far more impact, than adding these duties to officials with already assigned primary duties. Another guiding principle, discussed below, is the importance of high-level connection to decision making, meaning that having a national coordinator at a high governmental level will ensure the issues are prioritised. However, this also has a downside. One of the most important factors for successful coordination has been deemed to be dedicated coordination, however high-level officials already have heavy agendas and long priority lists.

The function of the National Co-ordinator against Domestic Violence depends on the political mandate of the Deputy Minister of Justice, and, currently, an insufficient budget is dedicated to this body. Given that in Kosovo* the national coordinator's role is led by the Deputy Minister of Justice, a high-level role, which is already loaded, employing human resources fully dedicated to administrating the national coordination office is necessary

if the obligations of the convention are to be taken seriously. These staff members would undertake the administrative legwork and serve independently across government changes, while the Deputy Minister would lead meetings, oversight, and advocacy (Council of Europe, 2022, p.7). More details on the respective duties are outlined out in Section 7, on the Coordination Office of the NCDV.

“Bodies that are dependent on the government that is in power... are not adequate for the purpose of Article 10 as they do not ensure the stability that is necessary for the continuity and sustainability of policies and measures. GREVIO has accordingly strongly encouraged these countries, inter alia to assign the role of national co-ordination body or bodies to fully institutionalised entities and to equip these with a clear mandate, power and competences ” (GREVIO Horizontal Review, 2022, p.38)

Recommendation

The full institutionalisation of the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence should be ensured, with a clear mandate, policy objectives and dedicated funding.

4.2 High-level connection to the Government

An important factor for success is for the coordinating body to be well connected to high-level government bodies, to ensure increased access to decision-making on important issues, when issues of DV and VAW will be competing with other priority issues. The Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence in Kosovo* is regulated by the decision of the Government of Kosovo* on the terms of reference and the explanatory note on the appointment of National Coordinator against Domestic Violence, approved on 11 July 2012.

This decision stipulates that the (or one of the) Deputy Ministers of Justice is to take on the role of national coordinator on VAW and DV ¹. This puts the coordinating body in a good position in terms of proximity to high-level governance, however, best practice shows that embedding coordinating meetings into higher-level government meetings, ensures that the priorities of the coordination body are placed on important decision-making agendas (Council of Europe, 2022, p.27).

1. Kosovo* Government decision, 04/83 of 11.07.2012

“Experience has shown that it is difficult to maintain high-level political decision-making bodies, such as meetings of state secretaries or ministers, devoted exclusively to one topic over the long term; the approach of integrating the topic into existing meeting rounds appears to work better. The challenge associated with that approach lies in the competition between topics... []”(Council of Europe, 2016, p.24).

In the context of Kosovo*, this could mean that the coordinating body, which meets monthly in its full formation, could participate in high-level periodic meetings in a smaller formation. This would ensure coordination among all its key players, while also representing its progress and needs at higher level decision-making processes.

4.3 Specialised Expertise and Feedback

Another important factor contributing to effective implementation and high-quality coordination is the participation of non-governmental organisations specialised in VAW and DV in the coordinating body, in line with Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention. As opposed to governmental officials, for which the coordinating body may be a secondary role, these specialised groups are closer to victims/survivors, target groups and beneficiaries, ensuring their interests are represented, and can contribute with updated feedback from the field, the effectiveness of actions and perception of the general public.

“[]... it was indicated to the delegation that more effort from the authorities at central level is needed to tap into the expertise of NGOs and grassroots organisations. Indeed, more systematic co-operation with women’s rights NGOs would be crucial to bring forward the actual needs of women victims of all forms of gender-based violence, to expand promising practices, to avoid duplication between NGO-led programmes and public policies, as well as to better target the allocation of public resources” (Council of Europe, 2022, p. 25).

“The more remote the body doing the co-ordinating is from the work of organisations actively combatting violence against women (e.g. when decisions are taken at a very high administrative or political level), the greater the danger that the needs of victims will not be adequately reflected in the measures developed” (Council of Europe, 2016, p.25).

Recommendation

The regular participation of non-governmental organisations is crucial. These specialised agencies are closest to the issues in the field and have access to important information. While specialist Civil Society Organisations (CSO)s are contacted on an ad-hoc basis by government organisations on specific issues, in terms of monitoring and evaluation, having them participate on a regular basis would allow them to prepare contributions ahead of time and ensure more valuable feedback.

4.4 Budgeting Financial and Human Resources

It should go without saying that dedicated human and financial resources are crucial for an effective coordination body and the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. While the dedication of permanent and fully committed staff was discussed in 4.1 above, human resources in this domain also means engaging professional staff with knowledge of the relevant duties and issues surrounding VAW, DV and also of administration. Additionally, as will be discussed below, monitoring and evaluation functions do incur some inevitable costs in data collection and analysis. Without these, the Coordinating body cannot provide the data it needs to fulfil its monitoring and evaluation obligations.

“The need for adequate resources is obvious in relation to functions such as evaluation and monitoring, which involve the collection of empirical data and the commissioning of research, such as representative surveys. The importance of resources has been emphasised repeatedly with regard to the co-ordination function as well. Without financial underpinning, structures, though they may appear comprehensive and multi-layered to outsiders, will be ineffective” (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 26).

Recommendation

While local authorities have traditionally been supported by international development agencies in conducting necessary data collection and evaluations, best practice foresee that these processes are budgeted for and institutionalised as far as possible. Dedicated financial resources for permanent staff and necessary data collection efforts and periodic evaluations are crucial for monitoring and evaluation of the policies and mechanisms. Aside operations undertaken by the NCDV, the authorities must also allocate necessary funds for non-governmental service providers, such as specialised NGOs.

Chapter 5

Promising best practices, challenges and lessons learned from GREVIO's Mid-term Horizontal Review 2022

The Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports offers a more recent overview of the successful implementation of Article 10 (GREVIO, 2022, p. 37-39). As regards Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention, the Horizontal Review report listed the top promising practices and challenges among the seventeen countries that had been re-evaluated.

5.1 A brief overview of promising best practices

The highlighted good practices come from the seventeen countries evaluated by GREVIO. As a result of the complex and diverse systems of the different countries, the good practices mentioned are not necessarily uniform. However, the values and principles remain the same, and countries are encouraged to adopt practices best adapted to their needs and structures.

5.1.1 A well-functioning/promising co-ordinating body has the following characteristics:

- a clear mandate and set of policy objectives aligned to the Istanbul Convention
- covers all forms of violence against women
- sufficient dedicated annual budget and staff
- fully institutionalised and with diverse representation, including from specialised women's rights organisations and the LGBTI community
- GREVIO has found that improvements in national financial and human resource budgeting is tied to national laws on DV being implemented

5.1.2 Dedicated and independent bodies for data collection and evaluation:

- a dedicated and independent body for the evaluation of policies and measures on VAW
- a separate independent body responsible for co-ordinating the collection, analysis and dissemination of data on VAW
- financial and human resources support for these bodies

5.1.3 Reporting progress to Parliament:

- periodic progress reporting on the National Action Plan on combatting VAW and DV to the national parliament or relevant entities, in line with Article 70 paragraph 1 of the Istanbul Convention

5.2 Most common challenges encountered

5.2.1 Nature of co-ordinating body:

- importance of political independence from ruling governments, in order to ensure the necessary stability to guarantee continuity and sustainability of policies and measures.
- clear mandates to avoid overlapping co-ordination functions.
- ensuring that all forms of VAW are covered as per the scope of the Istanbul Convention.
- GREVIO encourages the establishment of fully institutionalised bodies with clear mandates, powers and competences.

5.2.2 Lack of adequate funding and staffing:

- At least 10 out of 17 parties do not have sufficient allocation of financial and human resources.
- Cutting and decreasing NCDV budgets where they have already been established is highly discouraged by GREVIO.

5.2.3 Lack of evaluation functions and independence:

- In some countries there were no frameworks or policy actions to ensure the evaluation of policies on violence against women.
- In the countries with evaluation mechanisms, the latter were not independent, which is necessary for the independence and robustness of the evaluation process and results.
- GREVIO strongly encourages the authorities to ensure the independent monitoring and evaluation based on quality data of the application of the public policies to prevent and combat VAW.

5.3 Co-operation with NGOs and civil society:

- GREVIO stresses that co-operation with NGOs is essential for ensuring a victim-centred, gender sensitive and human-rights-based approach in policy in combatting VAW.
- Some countries have diminished interaction between NGOs and the coordinating body.
- Co-operation between NGOs and the coordinating body should also extend to monitoring and evaluation functions and should be strengthened.

Chapter 6

Monitoring and Evaluation

As well as coordination and implementation, Article 10 specifies that the co-ordinating body must also ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the convention. Under the Istanbul Convention, monitoring, and evaluation means (1) collecting and analysing data and (2) supporting scientific research and thus measuring the effectiveness of policy measures targeting the combatting of VAW and DV.

6.1 Institutional Independence

The separation of monitoring and evaluation processes from the implementation of policies is treated differently in different states. However, a human rights approach to monitoring and evaluation favours the institutional independence of the entities that conduct these processes. Furthermore, the 2022 Horizontal Review also remarks that the monitoring and evaluation process should be separate from the implementation process, in terms of responsibility, in order to offer objective results (GREVIO, 2022, p.37).

Due to the nature of research entities not being completely independent, and prevalence of evaluation services provided in Kosovo*, in this context it would make more sense for these tasks to be contracted out on a case-by-case basis (e.g. baseline, midterm, endline), while ensuring that the Terms of Reference (ToR) and methodology are overseen and comparable.

Recommendation

In the local context, monitoring of available indicators and data could be performed periodically by the coordinating body, while data not publicly available could be collected and analysed in periodic evaluations carried out by contracted external entities. The contracted external entity could also evaluate the effectiveness of specific policies carried out. In both cases, the mandating institution should not influence the selection of service providers and findings, and all these actions must be budgeted by the authorities.

6.2 Financial Resources

The need for adequate resources is crucial with regards monitoring and evaluation functions, including the collection of empirical data and the commissioning of research, such as representative surveys. The Article 10 study repeatedly highlighted the importance of resources for the co-ordination function.

Necessary financial resources must be dedicated to these activities, especially the external efforts on data collection and evaluations.

*“Without financial underpinning, structures, though they may appear comprehensive and multi-layered to outsiders, will be ineffective”
(Council of Europe, 2016, p.26).*

The 2022-2026 National Strategy commits to the increase in financial resources to support the Office of the National Coordinator and is represented as one of the specific objectives under “III. 1. Strengthening the inter-institutional coordination group at the central level”, with a designated performance indicator “Adequate budget line for strengthening the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence, for effective coordination and monitoring of actions against violence”.

Recommendation

The 2022-2026 National Strategy foresees the determination of the baseline value (for the budget) during 2022. This opportunity could be used, in that the baseline study could also calculate relevant costs covering the functions (human resources) as well as monitoring and evaluation functions, which then need to be budgeted for the 2023 budget of the Government of Kosovo* and onwards. The baseline study itself represents a cost.

Aside from this basic monitoring and evaluation cost, proper budgeting for necessary staff and other studies should also take place.

6.3 Data Collection

Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention sets out the states' obligations towards data collection, and it is important to work towards institutionalised mainstreaming indicators and necessary data collection through existing and new official statistics. The imposed obligations on data collection stipulated in Article 11 include:

- collecting disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the convention
- supporting research in the field of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the convention in order to study root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates, as well as the efficacy of measures taken to implement the convention
- conducting population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of the convention
- providing the group of experts, as referred to in Article 66 of the convention (GREVIO), with the information collected pursuant to Article 11 in order to stimulate international co-operation and enable international benchmarking
- ensuring that the information collected pursuant to Article 11 is available to the public

The revised data collection and reporting tools in the National Strategy are designed in such a way that available data is periodically completed by stakeholders in quarterly reports, while data not readily available is scheduled to be completed by collecting it during the baseline study in 2022 as well as during the midterm and endline studies in 2024 and 2026 respectively. However, neither of these data collection and evaluation tasks seem to be budgeted into the national strategy.

Recommendation

. Improving current databases through an improved case management information system by adding relevant disaggregated data to law enforcement and judicial procedures (sex, age, relationship between victim and perpetrator, type of crime against victim, victim's access to support services and justice, etc.) is crucial to the overall improvement of data, information and progress and costs tracking. Collecting data outside of regular procedures is also very important. The Strategy has made a commitment to collect population wide survey data, as well as data on perpetrators and victims. However, it is scheduled to do so only every four years and the allocated budget in the Strategy does not cover the costs of the activity. Significantly more funds will need to be allocated to realistically implement the activity.

Chapter 7

Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence (NCDV)

In Kosovo* the coordinating body responsible for fulfilling Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention and enacting the agenda to combat DV and VAW is the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence (NCDV). This body also covers Violence against Women (VAW), although this is not included in the official title.

7.1 The foreseen structure of NCDV

The 2012 government decision on the NCDV stipulates that Kosovo*'s efforts in combatting DV and VAW are represented by its Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women, while the highest authority of the Strategy is the NCDV, whereby the Deputy Minister of Justice is automatically appointed as the national coordinator.

According to the decision, the institutional mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of the National Strategy are: 1) The National Coordinator against Domestic Violence (NCDV); 2) the Coordinating Secretariat of the NCDV (CS); and 3) the Coordination Group (CG).

7.2 The National Coordinator against Domestic Violence

The National Coordinator against Domestic Violence is the highest institutional authority governing the issue of DV. The coordinator's duties include the coordination, monitoring and reporting of implementation of policies, activities and actions set out in the strategy on combatting DV. According to the 2012 decision, the role includes:

- responsibility for leading the process of implementation of the approved Strategy and Action Plan on combatting DV and VAW
- responsibility for reporting to the government, parliament, and other coordinating structures
- responsibility for coordinating monthly meetings of the Coordination Group (reporting to parliament is not scheduled and happens on ad-hoc basis, whereby the NCDV briefs the Minister of Justice who reports to Parliament)
- responsibility for chairing the Coordination Group (CG) and arranging regular meetings of this Group and possibility of convening urgent meetings outside the agreed schedule
- providing political support to all relevant ministries and agencies in order to support focal points for the CG

Recommendation

Regulating the roles of the NCDV, the Secretariat and the Coordinating Group through a legal act, such as an administrative instruction would ensure budgeting for permanent non-political full-time staff (at least one) for the secretariat, as well as the essential budget for necessary studies and data collection needed for the monitoring and evaluation processes, such as base-line, midterm and end-line studies, as well as periodic population surveys on DV and VAW, studies with perpetrators and victims, etc. Only through such legal regulation can the sustainability of the NCDV office and the efforts of the Strategy be ensured.

7.3 The Coordinating Secretariat of NCDV

The National Coordinator is to be supported by the secretariat of the NCDV, whose basic tasks and responsibilities are to collect information and data from stakeholder institutions, to analyse and evaluate that data, and to prepare analytical reports for the National Coordinator.

According to the 2012 Decision, the Secretariat is to provide administrative-logistical support to the NCDV for the coordination of all activities against Domestic Violence.

It foresees the engagement of a full-time employee for the Secretariat, responsible for issues of DV (and VAW) only, in order to provide administrative and logistical support for the work of the NCDV and to serve as a reference point.

In lieu of a functional NCDV office in 2012, when this decision was drafted, this employee was to be funded by international development partners for two years and positioned within the Agency for Gender Equality.

Recommendation

It is crucial that any staff member of the NCDV Secretariat is recruited as a public servant, meaning that the position is not political and surpasses any political change or change of government. This is important in order to ensure the implementation of the National Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women, the mandate of which does not necessarily line up with that of the government. In addition, a public servant position would ensure continuity of the NCDV's institutional memory.

Led by the NCDV, the role of the Secretariat includes:

- keeping minutes of Coordination Group (CG) meetings
- ensuring dissemination of all relevant information locally and within the country
- managing a database of projects/contacts, as well as a list of regularly engaged NGOs that is available to the CG and the general public
- assisting the NCDV in all aspects, as required

Recommendation

The addition of the following tasks to the secretariat in relation to monitoring and evaluation:

- coordinating periodic (quarterly) data collection on activity reporting from all relevant stakeholders
- compiling quarterly activity report summaries and prepare relevant reports and presentations
- reporting on relevant performance indicators for the Strategy for which data is available publicly or from stakeholders as per the Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan

- ensuring the undertaking of the baseline, midterm and end-line studies with regards to the national strategy combatting DV and VAW, which collect data not publicly available and measure effectiveness of activities and efforts of the Strategy under its mandate
- coordinating CG meetings, in terms of setting meeting agendas in coordination with specialised DV and VAW CSOs to bring issues forward
- ensuring data backing and storage of quarterly, semi and annual reports, as well as indicator tracking tables, especially in case they are filled online on cloud type platforms that could be overwritten

7.4 The Inter-ministerial Coordination Group (CG)

The same decision from 2012 also foresees the establishment and functions of an inter-ministerial and inter-institutional coordination group, represented by the highest representatives of the below-mentioned institutions:

National level

- Office of the Prime Minister - Agency for Gender Equality (AGE)
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers (MLFT)
- Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration (MIAPA)
- Ministry of Health (MoH)
- Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS)
- Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)

As well other institutions:

- Kosovo Police (KP)
- Kosovo Prosecutorial Council and the Office of the Chief State Prosecutor (KPC) and (OCSP)
- Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC)
- Office for Protection and Assistance to Victims (OPAV)
- Academy of Justice (AJ)
- Coalition of Women's Shelters (CWS)
- Kosovo Statistics Agency (KSA)
- Migration/ asylum services

The 2012 decision foresees three institutions serving as expert observers, while the current NCDV office adds international organisations in the field of VAW and DV to its observers' list: All representatives of the CG act as representatives of their respective ministries/agencies and are responsible for:

- implementation, review, and overall evaluation of the Strategy for combatting Domestic Violence and its Action Plan
- decision-making and voting on adoption of decisions of the CG
- liaising between the CG and their ministries/agencies and ensuring the flow of information
- coordinating inputs from their ministry/agency
- ensuring their availability in terms of time and capacity
- coordinating all activities within Kosovo* ensuring local security and cooperation, including data collection and processing
- providing budget, human resources and coordination
- maintaining regular contact with donors and coordination of meetings in order to coordinate funds and avoid duplication of projects
- meeting regularly (current CG meets on monthly basis)
- calling meetings outside the scheduled calendar if there is an urgent need
- replacing members in special cases only by a person with an equivalent position in the hierarchy of the institution

Recommendation

Budgeting of monitoring and evaluation efforts by the CG or CG members should be clearly defined and supported. As such, some of the necessary data analysis could derive from, or be conducted in collaboration with the Kosovo Statistics Agency and statistical departments of relevant agencies.

7.5 The role of NGOs

The 2012 decision also specifies the role of NGOs in the coordinating body, stating that the participation of civil society in coordination structures is necessary, given the essential role played by NGOs, particularly, in the field of victim prevention and assistance. NGOs will be represented in the CG. In this context, NGOs should be part of the decision-making process and should be consulted in order to obtain their opinion and experience. Given the direct contact of NGOs to the target groups, relevant information and updates to the CG can be addressed by the NGOs, especially regarding recent developments and or issues.

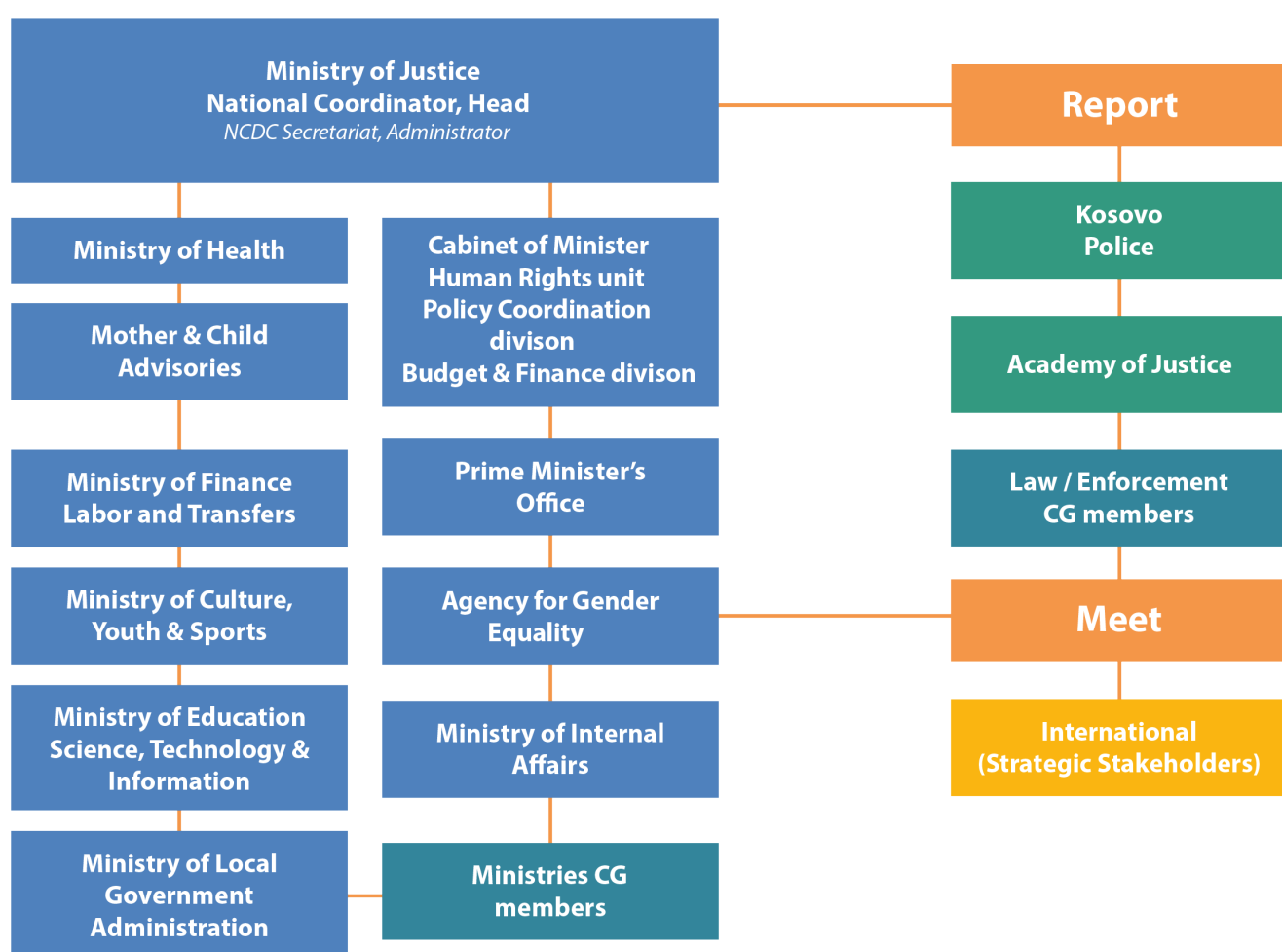
Recommendation

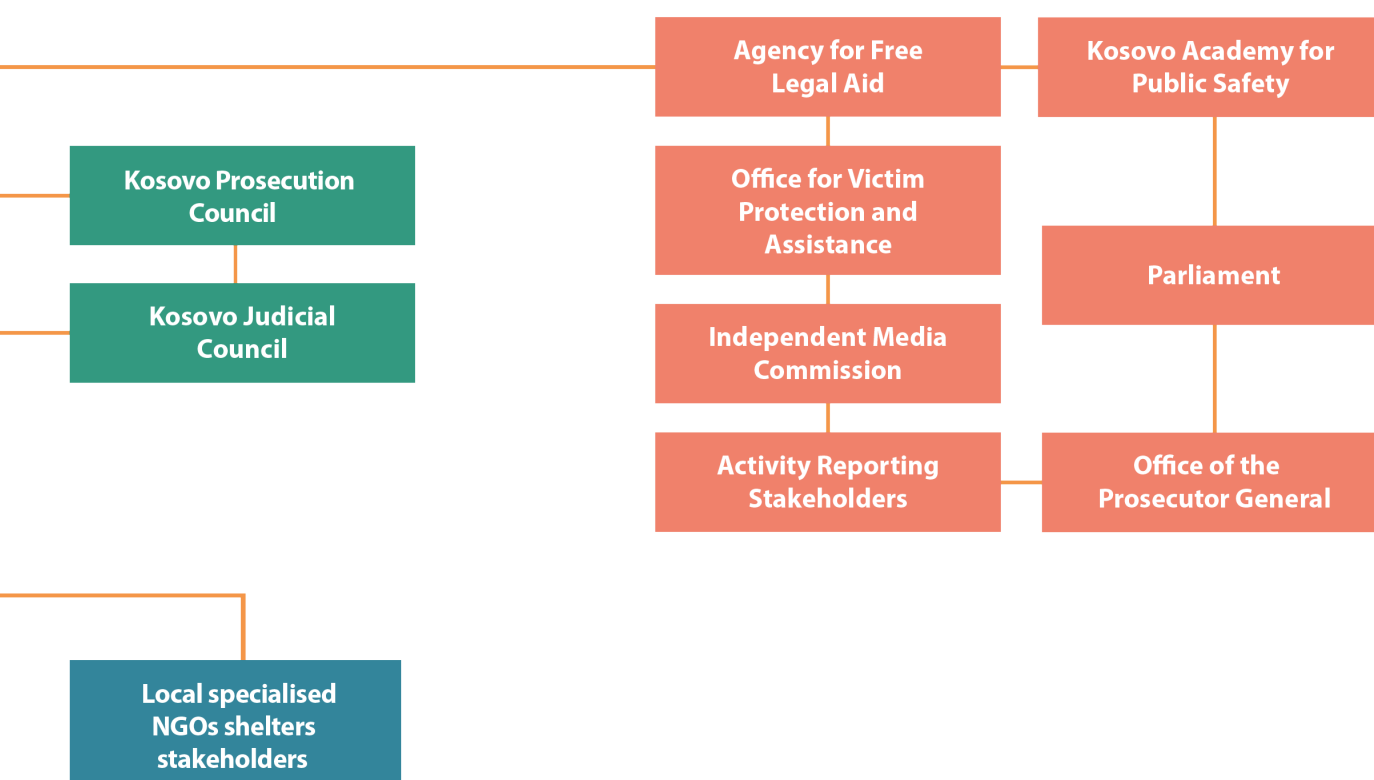
The role of NGOs in regularly bringing issues from the field to the agenda should be supported. This would establish a functional feedback loop. It is also crucial that specialised CSOs working with victims and perpetrators in the field are supported financially and administratively. This could be achieved by allocating time of the CG meeting agenda to issues and topics chosen by NGOs, be it at every, or every other CG meeting.

Chapter 8

Promising best practices, challenges and lessons learned from GREVIO's Mid-term Horizontal Review 2022

The Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports offers a more recent overview of the successful implementation of Article 10 (GREVIO, 2022, p. 37-39). As regards Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention, the Horizontal Review report listed the top promising practices and challenges among the seventeen countries that had been re-evaluated.





DV and VAW Stakeholder Map as of December 2022*

**This stakeholder map may change if relevant legislation determines any alterations*

Chapter 9

National Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (2022-2026)

Kosovo*’s agenda towards combatting DV and VAW is based on the National Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women (2022-2026) and its Action Plan. The national Strategy has a five-year mandate and is made up of strategic and specific objectives tackled through: Identifying and preventing violence (I); Advancing and harmonising public policies with international standards (II); Institutional strengthening in prevention and addressing of domestic violence (III); and Provision of general services and specialised support services to victims (IV).

Conforming with Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention, the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of combatting DV and VAW agenda, through the National Strategy, falls within the responsibility of the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence (NCDV), as well as the Coordination Group, which for the most part consists of, but is not limited to, relevant actors from the Strategy’s Action Plan, as can be seen in the section on Stakeholders. Other actors include sub-divisions of CG ministries and other agencies, depending on the identified actions. The head of the strategy (and the NCDV) is by default the Deputy Minister of Justice, while the Vice-head is appointed from the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) within the Prime Minister’s Office.

All actors contribute towards the Strategy through the Action Plan, which is structured around activities falling into strategic objectives and further detailed into specific objectives, with each activity having targets (and baseline), budget, activity leader and supporters and legal basis identified.

Monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategy and thus combatting DV and VAW in Kosovo* is centred around reporting towards the strategy’s activities as well as indicators of success for the strategic and specific objectives. Data for activity indicators are for the most part supplied by the activity leader/implementing authority, but in some cases covered through additional studies, when relevant data is not readily available. Relevant implementing entities regularly report to the NCDV every three months, while targets are annual and set out initially for the first three years of the five-year mandate of the strategy.

Recommendation

In terms of monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy:

- the evaluation processes should be separate from the implementing authorities, which can be done by outsourcing the baseline, midterm and endline evaluations, but keeping a comparable methodology, so as to compare progress over the course of the mandate
- the baseline study should be conducted as early as possible in 2023 in order to identify missing baseline values and set a baseline context of DV and VAW, as well as analysing which necessary pieces of data can be institutionalised and how
- additional studies should be undertaken and some of those mentioned in the Action Plan, such as the perception survey and study on perpetrators and victims should have realistic funds allocated to them
- data collection should be institutionalised as much as possible, either through additional data collection from implementation partner institutions, disaggregation of data that is already being collected (including necessary updates on data collection/reporting formats) or the engagement of CG partners such as the KSA to undertake regular data collection and analysis tasks
- the NCDV's secretariat staff should be hired permanently, regardless of political changes, and must demonstrate necessary know-how in coordination and M&E.

9.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan 2022-2026

The Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan is tightly connected to the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women (2022-2026) and the foreseen functions of the NCDV, which interactively enable each other. The Action Plan lays out the tasks that need to be performed, in a matrix that for each task identifies the timeframe and frequency in which it should be performed, who is responsible for performing each task and the intended result of each action or task. The list of tasks is based on the guiding principles and recommendations set forth in the previous sections and compose the necessary functions to be completed in order to create a solid M&E system and learning/adaptation agenda.

Activity	Timeframe / Frequency	Responsible	Result
Have NCDV Secretariat position filled	ASAP / once	NCDV	With the necessary HR employed, the day-to-day activities of the NCDV office can be completed
Administer Baseline Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - baseline values for missing data - develop methodology comparable through midterm and end-line studies - cost analysis of necessary M&E functions within the NCDV office (staff, baseline, midterm and endline studies) - cost analysis of additional external data collection and analysis and other evaluations - write ToR, publish and finish selection process with external organisations or NGOs in the selection committee to ensure independence - Publish report/findings 	ASAP / once	NCDV – Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - once baseline values are established, all targets can be set. - once cost analysis is available, proper GK budgeting for the NCDV can take place annually - the baseline study will also determine the necessary studies and evaluations and their costs that are to be conducted during the mandate of the strategy
Coordinate Monthly meetings w/CG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make necessary arrangements for monthly CG meetings - Collect necessary information and finalise agenda in cooperation with stakeholders (on issues other than regular reporting) - Take minutes of meetings and save into backed up data system 	Monthly	NCDV – Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings are held periodically with maximum participation of relevant stakeholders and CG members - Field-relevant topics are brought up and issues addressed
Lead monthly meetings w/CG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moderate meetings - Ensure political backing when necessary 	Monthly	National Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all CG members have opportunity to actively participate - Support advocacy for DV and VAW issues
Coordinate quarterly data and narrative reporting on activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send out necessary notifications on reporting deadlines and reporting forms or links to reach them - Offer support to relevant reporting agencies throughout the reporting phase - Check all data reports, ensure no data is omitted, and if so, ask relevant agency to provide update - Compile quarterly report for the NC 	Quarterly (March, June, September, December)	NCDV – Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper reporting process is ensured and completed in time - Agencies are supported and quality reporting produced - Quarterly reports do not carry errors or data omissions - NC and CG can use quality quarterly reports for advocacy purposes

Data Storage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all relevant NCDV data, including reports, indicator tracking tables, meeting minutes, decisions, memos, studies, contracts, participation lists, meeting recordings are stored safely and secure and backed up - Ensure all quarterly data updates are available and easily accessible to CG - Ensure that no unnecessary personal information of victims, perpetrators, CG members etc., are shared or published 	Continuously	NCDV - Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All NCDV data is safe, secure and appropriately available at any time - CG and reporting members can easily access past reporting when compiling new ones, to distinguish reporting and versions - No one is at risk of having sensitive information exposed
Administer Midterm Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft ToR, including effectiveness, lessons learned and recommendations (with support from specialised international organisations or local specialised organisations) - Ensure methodology remains comparable between midterm and baseline and can offer the same for end-line study - Publish ToR - Coordinate arrangements for selection committee (with external members, ensuring independence) - Publish report /findings 	2024 - once	NCDV - Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure midterm data is available so progress can be measured for indicators where data is not publicly available - Ensure proper evaluation of specific policies has been completed on effectiveness - Ensure findings are presented in a comparable manner from baseline
Administer Endline Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft ToR, including effectiveness, lessons learned and recommendations (with support from specialised international organisations or local specialised organisations) - Ensure methodology remains comparable between endline, midterm and baseline studies - Publish ToR - Coordinate arrangements for selection committee (with external members, ensuring independence) - Publish report/findings 	2026 - once	NCDV - Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure midterm data is available so progress can be measured for indicators where data is not publicly available - Ensure proper evaluation of specific policies has been completed on effectiveness - Ensure findings are presented in a comparable manner from baseline
Administer other relevant evaluations/studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft ToR (with support from specialised international organisations or local specialised organisations) - Publish ToR - Coordinate arrangements for selection committee (with external members, ensuring independence) - Publish report/findings 	Ad-hoc, 2022-2026	NCDV - Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure necessary evaluation reports have been conducted and necessary data is available to determine effectiveness of DV and VAW directed policies

Annexes

Annex A: Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit: Quarterly Reporting Formats – for all stakeholders

Annex B: Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit: Indicator Tracking Table – for Office of NCDV

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