

EVALUATION REPORT

FINAL EVALUATION

**OF THE UN WOMEN PROJECT “ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY
FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT
IN NATIONAL REFORMS, PEACE AND SECURITY IN UKRAINE”
(MAY 2017 – FEBRUARY 2022)**

The Final Evaluation was conducted between May and November 2021



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus Disease 2019 |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| EPIC | Equal Pay International Coalition |
| GEWE | Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment |
| HRBA | Human Rights-Based Approach |
| IDPs | Internally Displaced Persons |
| LGBTQI+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Other Non-binary Identities |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NAP 1325 | National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NWM | National Women’s Machinery |
| OECD-DAC | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee |
| UAH | Ukrainian Hryvnia |
| UN | United Nations |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNSCR 1325 | United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security |
| WPS | Women, Peace and Security |

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ukraine context overview

Ukraine has experienced acute political, security and economic challenges over the past eight years. Despite a challenging economic and security environment, the political leadership of Ukraine continues to be broadly committed to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) principles. This commitment is notably enshrined in the ratification of a number of relevant human rights treaties and international agreements and the development of policy instruments to advance GEWE.

To support the implementation of various GEWE laws and policies, the Government of Ukraine established the National Women's Machinery (NWM),¹ which includes a wide range of responsible parties, complex accountability and reporting arrangements² but low public financing. Challenges remain in regard to the implementation of GEWE policies, especially for the benefit of the women and girls facing multiple forms of marginalization and discrimination, in large part because of a lack of adequate



Grass-root women activists discussing the State Social Program on Equal Opportunities For Women and Men, Consultative meeting of Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine with the regional state administrations and local hromadas, 17 September 2018, Dnipro, Ukraine. Photo: UN Women/Oleksandr Myshko

- 1 Broad parameters of the NWM are outlined in Chapter II of the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men.
- 2 Description and annexes of the NWM are adapted from the UN Women Ukraine draft report “Functional analysis of the scope and distribution of powers at the national, regional, and local institutional levels for the implementation of gender equality policy”, updated after public consultations in September 2020.

financing³ and a wide variance in the capacity of key NWM actors, especially at decentralized levels. Moreover, gender equality and women's rights are inconsistently considered a high priority among policymakers both at the national and local level, and the technical capacities of the policy implementers, in relation to GEWE, need to be improved.

Evaluation approach

The goal of the project “Enhancing Accountability for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in National Reforms, Peace and Security in Ukraine” was to achieve transformative results for GEWE in Ukraine by integrating gender and women’s human rights commitments into national reforms and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) processes, as well as by putting mechanisms in place for adequate financing, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). As such, the project was operating at the national level with no specific interventions at decentralized levels.

The overall objective of the final evaluation is to assess the progress made towards the achievement of the set outcomes and objectives and to analyse the results achieved and challenges encountered. The specific evaluation objectives focused on assessing project relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The information generated by the evaluation will be used by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and by stakeholders to develop effective GEWE strategies.

The evaluation applied a non-experimental theory-based contribution methodology. As the project was heavily focused on policy advice and advocacy, the evaluation team reconstructed the project theory of change and used it as the overarching theory to understand how changes happened at the strategic and operational levels. Contribution analysis was used to develop an overall performance story and assess plausible project contributions to the observed changes. A mixed-methods approach was applied, involving a blend of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods such as a desk review, interviews, focus

groups and a survey of the project’s training beneficiaries. Triangulation was applied for consistency, validity and reliability.

Findings and conclusions

CONCLUSION 1:

The project remained highly relevant to the national priorities in the area of GEWE as well as the international human rights commitments of Ukraine from its design stage through its implementation. Increasing demands for UN Women support from the national partners may warrant prioritization of these areas of support.

The project design was successful in ensuring that its results were seen as a shared responsibility between the Government and UN Women. Some aspects of project design were strong, including its well-focused and holistic approach to advancing changes at the legislation and policy level, as well as its emphasis on evidence and using international effective practices. The project shortcomings included its too-wide spread and limited focus on the implementation of promoted policies and strategies. Some project components did not have corresponding indicators, while some indicators were focused only on outputs.

The project was highly relevant and was fully in line with the national priorities in the area of GEWE as well as with the international human rights commitments of Ukraine. The project remained relevant in time, as demonstrated by the national and programmatic documents developed during its lifetime and which the project continues to influence. A good indicator of the project’s relevance was the increasing number of national and international partners willing to collaborate with the project and UN Women. The project showed fluidity, striking a balance between planned interventions and the room to maneuver to effectively respond to challenges, such as those posed by COVID-19.

³ Government of Ukraine, *The ninth periodic report of Ukraine on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (2021). Only UAH 1,245,000 was provided for in the state budget for the period 2017–2020 to implement the actions on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and UAH 4,797,620 was provided for in local budgets (regional state administrations).

CONCLUSION 2:

The project was highly successful in strengthening an enabling environment by building broad cross-sectoral support for GEWE through enhanced coordination and collaboration at the national, regional and local levels.

The project promoted effective NWM coordination

and supported improved cross-sectoral collaboration that enabled better-coordinated policy responses. As GEWE advancement requires effective cross-sectoral collaboration, the project supported the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and other partners of the NWM to improve intersectoral collaboration and focus on results, which can be considered as one of the project's important strategic contributions. The project missed an opportunity to work more closely with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that core policy initiatives promoted by the project have adequate budget allocations for implementation.

The project collaborated extensively and effectively in some areas such as statistics with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to localize the Sustainable Development Goals, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on WPS, the Council of Europe on the Roma Strategy, multiple civil society organizations (CSOs) and others. The project did not explore the possibilities of participating in the "Delivering as One" joint UN projects, which would have enabled the project to develop and test operational aspects of the developed policies on the ground and conduct budget estimates.

CONCLUSION 3:

The project had some notable and impactful successes, particularly in the WPS sector, and laid solid foundations in the area of governance. Capitalizing on these gains will require strategic vision, a focus on adequate government budgeting, capacity development of the policy implementers and creative approaches to communication.

The project was effective, and the overwhelming majority of targets will most likely be achieved by February 2022. Institutional, legislative and capacity development activities have generated increased institutional ownership for GEWE across different political levels and central ministries, but the 'depth' and sustainability of the changes were inconsistent. Ownership has been considerable at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Policy and the National Agency for Civil Service. For some other counterparts, the long-term effectiveness is less certain.

"The project managed to achieve significant and extensive results in multiple areas. It was responsive and effective." – Senior government official

CONCLUSION 4:

Results were achieved in an economically efficient manner and with manageable transaction costs. The project was effectively managed, but the lack of a dedicated M&E position made assessment of project progress vis-à-vis results inconsistent.

There was near consensus among the partners that the interventions' results have been achieved with little waste and duplication. The project's positioning in the 'centre of the reforms' allowed the project to establish strong connections with other organizations, including other UN agencies and CSOs. Oftentimes, these partnerships resulted in joint or cost-shared activities.

The project management was very professional and well organized. In the absence of a dedicated M&E staff member, the project did not consistently capture progress with regard to its long-term outcomes, such as the effects of UN Women interventions on policy implementation results that affect, in particular, the most vulnerable women.

CONCLUSION 5:

Sustainability of the gains made by the project, and the enhanced impact for women, will require a strategic and coordinated approach addressing all aspects of the policy cycle from policy design to implementation and reporting, with targeted capacity development of key partners, including decision makers, and an explicit focus on social norms change to support GEWE. The operationalization of the 'leave no one behind' principle and broad CSO involvement is critical for successful impacts for the most vulnerable groups.

With few exceptions, the overall sustainability level of the project was found to be adequate.

In those instances where the government partners were fully engaged in GEWE legislation and policy development and there was a strong high-level political willingness to pursue GEWE, fuelled by a strong national consensus and by external partners' advocacy, such as in the WPS sector, sustainability was ensured and relevant GEWE policies were well implemented. In other areas, where the national strategies and programmes were too ambitious and unfunded and where the implementation was delegated to the local level where the capacities were limited, sustainability remains a concern.

Lessons learned

- High political commitment to GEWE is critical, but frequent turnover of government officials increases a risk to long-term GEWE reforms.
- Policy reform requires work at all stages of the policy cycle: design, budgeting, piloting and implementation.
- GEWE advancement is linked to other reforms such as public administration reforms and decentralization, and it requires work with multiple stakeholders. In this context, a highly functional and centrally positioned NWM is crucial for success.
- The increased availability of sex-disaggregated evidence and data and gender-related statistics is critically needed to support evidence-based

programme strategies, policy reforms and advocacy in Ukraine.

- The engagement of international partners, e.g. NATO, with strong leverage power can make a critically positive contribution to building high-level support of the WPS agenda.
- The project relied heavily on national consultants who provided entry points/connections to high-level government officials and resulted in positive policy reform, but this model needs to be reviewed in regard to institutional capacity development and sustainability.
- A change in social norms regarding GEWE is a key factor that impacts the depth, reach and sustainability of all formal institutional policy reforms and programmatic interventions.

“Gender norm change takes time, and it’s difficult because people don’t believe it’s as big of a problem as it is – we need to make it visible.” – UN Women staff

Recommendations

The main challenges moving forward include the complex economic and social realities of Ukraine. Conflict and challenging economic and social conditions, including the recovery process after COVID-19, create multiple and changing government priorities where the focus on GEWE may be overshadowed by other priorities. The realities of the protracted conflict in the east of the country, the Government's inconsistent commitment and ability to advance systemic reforms, and economic hardships are some of the challenges that UN Women will continue to face in advancing GEWE.

Recommendations for UN Women

To strengthen

- Refine and reduce the number of partnerships with national institutions – and subsequently, the project's GEWE reform agenda – in order to ensure in-depth and targeted investment in the implementation of new strategies and policies. (High priority, short term)

- Ensure a strong and well-funded project component on advocacy and capacity development for budget commitments to GEWE in all its new projects, as appropriate. (High priority, immediate)
- Ensure that any policy reforms promoted by UN Women explicitly promote the ‘leave no one behind’ principle to impact the lives of women in marginalized communities and those with intersectional challenges, such as rural women, Roma women, women with disabilities and LBTQI+ women. (High priority, short term)
- Strengthen internal M&E, tracking and reporting by allocating more budget and dedicated personnel and by improving the quality and relevance of M&E systems. (High priority, immediate)

To continue and/or scale up

- Scale up work with the private sector and specifically as an avenue for sustainable approaches to women’s economic empowerment. (High priority, long term)
- Expand work with women’s civil society to continue the strategic shift away from the focus on bilateral implementing partnerships towards movement-building in a way that addresses genuine concerns of women and implements the policies that address their needs. (High priority, short term)

To start doing

- Ensure that any new initiative of UN Women has concerted and specific programming around institutional social norms change that will promote broader buy-in for GEWE initiatives. (High priority, long term)
- Include specific modules (as relevant for various target groups) on implicit bias and gender stereotypes in future national-level reform project capacity development approaches. (High priority, long term)

Recommendations for the institutions constituting the National Women’s Machinery

- Adopt a clear strategy to consolidate and reinforce the national and local capacity of the NWM to support implementation and reporting on key GEWE commitments.
- Ensure that all GEWE-related action plans have budgets, clear targets, well-defined responsible parties and well-articulated implementation and reporting procedures, including the institutionalization of platforms for public/CSO engagement.

Evaluation report structure

This report presents the findings of an independent evaluation of the UN Women project “Enhancing Accountability for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in National Reforms, Peace and Security in Ukraine” (hereinafter the project) that was commissioned by the UN Women Country Office in Ukraine and conducted between May and November 2021. Chapter 1 presents the country context, including a high-level overview of Ukraine’s progress in advancing the gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) agenda and contains a brief project overview. Chapter 2 presents the subject, objective and scope of the evaluation as well as its methodology. Chapter 3 presents detailed findings for two project components. Chapter 4 contains conclusions and lessons learned. Chapter 5 formulates detailed recommendations that are presented separately for the Government of Ukraine and for UN Women.

The annexes include a wide range of documents referenced throughout the report, including the evaluation terms of reference, evaluation matrix, results matrix, bibliography, a list of interviewed individuals, questionnaires, summaries of key findings from a survey conducted, and other additional information.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND: COUNTRY AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 Broad country context

Ukraine has experienced acute political, security and economic challenges over the past eight years. Large-scale demonstrations in Kyiv in late 2013 led to a change in government in February 2014. The Crimean Peninsula was annexed by the Russian Federation,⁴ followed by the armed aggression of the Russian

Federation against Ukraine in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk.⁵ In May 2014, Petro Poroshenko won the presidential election on a pro-Western platform, and two months later, Ukraine signed the EU Association Agreement. To halt the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, the so-called Minsk process was



Plenary session of the Consultative meeting of Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine with the regional state administrations and local hromadas, 17 September 2018, Dnipro, Ukraine. Photo: UN Women/Oleksandr Myshko

4 UN General Assembly, *Resolution 73/263 (2019)*. Available at https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/263.

5 See the Law of Ukraine “On the peculiarities of state policy to ensure the state sovereignty of Ukraine in the temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions”.

launched in September 2014, although fighting continued despite various ceasefire agreements. The ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has had a severe impact on the national economy and social capital. By 2021, the ongoing conflict took the lives of more than 10,000 civilians and displaced around 1.5 million, more than 1 million of whom are women.⁶

The upheaval in society and the conflict in eastern Ukraine have weakened the rule of law, increased corruption and led to widespread and often severe violations of human rights, in areas both under and outside of government control.⁷ In 2016, the Government adopted the basic documents on security and defence reform: the Strategic Defence Bulletin and the State Programme on Armed Forces Development until 2020. These documents initiate the transformation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine into a more modern and efficient army that will function in accordance with NATO standards.

The current president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, was elected on 21 April 2019. On 21 July 2019, President Zelenskyy's Servant of the People Party won the parliamentary elections, giving them 60 per cent of the seats in Parliament. The President and the Government have both committed to an ambitious and wide-ranging reform agenda.

From 2014 until 2021, the Government undertook a number of economic and social reforms such as fiscal consolidation, reforming energy tariffs and social assistance, restructuring the banking sector, establishing anti-corruption agencies, decentralization

and transforming public administration. Ukraine's economy has been hit hard by the COVID-19 outbreak. Going forward, growth is expected to remain modest at 1.5 per cent in 2021, rising to about 3.7 per cent by 2023.⁸ Ukraine's governance system has slightly improved over the past eight years but remains weak, with endemic corruption and strong interest groups undermining reform efforts.⁹

1.2 Context regarding gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)

Despite a challenging economic and security environment, the political leadership of Ukraine continues to be broadly **committed to GEWE principles as part of the country's European and Euro-Atlantic integration**.¹⁰ This commitment is notably enshrined in the ratification and joining of the relevant human rights treaties and international agreements, including the following:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979)¹¹
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) (1995)¹²
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325)¹³
- The Sustainable Development Goals
- The G7 Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality initiative¹⁴

6 *Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan*. Available at <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/document/ukraine-2021-humanitarian-response-plan-hrp-enua>.

7 UN Women Ukraine, *Project Document "Gender Equality at the Centre of Reforms, Peace and Security (2017–2021)"*.

8 See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ukraine/overview#3>.

9 According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, compared to 2015, Ukraine gained 3 points in 2020, with a score of 33 (0 being highly corrupt, 100 being 'very clean'), ranking it 117th out of 180 countries. See <https://ti-ukraine.org/en/news/temporary-success-ukraine-in-corruption-perceptions-index-2020/>.

10 In 2014, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was signed, entailing a commitment to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in employment, education, training, the economy, and in society and decision-making.

11 OHCHR, "UN Treaty Body Database: Ratification Status for Ukraine". Available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=183&Lang=EN.

12 OHCHR, *25 Years in Review of the Beijing Platform for Action*. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/SRWomen/Pages/BeijingPlatformforAction.aspx>.

13 Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, "Ukraine – 1325 National Action Plans". Available at <http://1325naps.peace-women.org/index.php/ukraine/>.

14 Further information can be found at <https://www.elysee.fr/admin/upload/default/0001/05/e8aa2525311a98227c935900abefdc7eb911896.pdf>.

- The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC),¹⁵ led by UN Women, the ILO and the OECD
- Action plan on the implementation of the Biarritz commitments²³

The following national legislative and policy instruments were adopted to comply with the international commitments and advance GEWE:

- Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men¹⁶
- National Human Rights Strategy¹⁷ and Action Plan to Implement the National Human Rights Strategy of Ukraine for 2021–2023¹⁸
- State Social Programme on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the period up to 2021
- National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations set forth in the Concluding Observations of CEDAW for the period up to 2021¹⁹
- National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” for the period up to 2020²⁰ and the second National Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” by 2025²¹
- State Social Programme on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence by 2025²²

The new Electoral Code’s 40 per cent gender quota, which was adopted in December 2019, introduced a long-desired temporary special measure enabling women’s increased political representation, which engendered political discourse.²⁴ The Government has developed a new draft State Strategy on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men by 2030, which is under finalization and includes a sweeping agenda based on the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The 2013–2014 Maidan Revolution in Ukraine clearly marked the start of a new wave of civic enthusiasm for change, but it also represented a demand for more meaningful participation and accountability, where women play an active and equal role. The protests provided women with the space and opportunity to adopt and assert new gender roles including them as political actors.²⁵ **The majority of CSOs working in women’s human rights and gender equality have a focus on women and girl’s education, followed by economic and political empowerment, addressing violence against women and girls and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.**²⁶ There is significantly less representation working with underrepresented,

15 For more on EPIC, see <https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/>.

16 Law of Ukraine “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men”. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2866-15#Text>

17 Decree of the President, No. 119/2021 of 24 March 2021 “National Human Rights Strategy”. Available at <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/1192021-37537>.

18 Action Plan to Implement the National Human Rights Strategy of Ukraine for 2021–2023. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/756-2021-%D1%80#Text>.

19 National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations set forth in the Concluding Observations of CEDAW for the period up to 2021. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/634-2018-%D1%80#Text>.

20 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 113-r of 24 February 2016 “National Action Plan for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 ‘Women, Peace, Security’ until 2020” (revised in 2018). Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/113-2016-%D1%80#Text>.

21 National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” by 2025. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1544-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

22 State Social Programme on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence by 2025. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/145-2021-%D0%BF#Text>.

23 Action plan on the implementation of the Biarritz commitments. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1578-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

24 Офіційний вебпортал парламенту України, “Виборчий кодекс України”, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/396-20>.

25 Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, *Voices from Ukraine: Strengthening the Role and Contribution of Ukrainian Women in Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation* (September 2014).

26 UN Women, *Capacity needs assessment of women’s groups and CSOs advocating for gender equality and women’s rights in Ukraine* (2019, unpublished). Available at <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/capacity-needs-assessment-of-womens-groups-and-civil-society-organizations-in-ukraine>.

marginalized groups, such as Roma women and the LGBTQI+ community.²⁷

To support the implementation of various GEWE laws and policies, the Government established the National Women’s Machinery (NWM),²⁸ which includes a wide range of responsible parties, complex accountability and reporting arrangements²⁹, and low public financing. Key elements of the NWM include the following:

- Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (the Parliament): leads the legislative work and oversees the implementation of the respective GEWE laws³⁰
- Parliament Commissioner on Human Rights (Ombudsperson): supervises the monitoring of equal rights and opportunities for women and men
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: responsible for policy and coordination work advancing GEWE, with the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration serving as the chair of the NWM in the Government
- Ministry of Social Policy: responsible for the development and implementation of the state gender equality policy and programmes
- Central and regional (oblast-level) executive authorities: responsible for the implementation of relevant policies and programmes at the sectoral and local levels
- Civil society organizations (CSOs)

See Annex 1 for further details of the NWM structure in Ukraine.

In 2017, the Government raised gender policy priorities to the highest political level by tasking the **Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration**³¹ with the coordination of state policies on gender equality. Moreover, the **Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy**³² was appointed within the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The Government Commissioner (K. Levchenko) has been working since 2018, was elected as a Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Commission in November 2020, and was nominated by the Government of Ukraine as a candidate for the CEDAW Committee. In 2020, 2,991 draft regulations³³ were monitored under the Commissioner’s guidance to assess whether they take into account the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

The creation of the Government Commission on the Coordination of the Central Executive Bodies on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men in 2020, as the key coordination mechanism in the NWM under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, is further indicative of the Government’s high-level commitments to GEWE and has facilitated high-level coordination and advocacy on issues related to GEWE. As mentioned above, since independence, Ukraine has acceded to virtually all conventions on human rights and gender equality, is an active actor in the

27 Ibid.

28 Broad parameters of the NWM are outlined in Chapter II of the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men.

29 Description and annexes of the NWM are adapted from the UN Women Ukraine draft report “Functional analysis of the scope and distribution of powers at the national, regional, and local institutional levels for the implementation of gender equality policy”, updated after public consultations in September 2020.

30 There are two committees with specialized sub-committees working on issues related to gender policy implementation: (1) the Sub-Committee on Ukraine’s International Commitments on Human Rights and Gender Equality of the Committee on Foreign Policy and Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation; and (2) the Sub-Committee on Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Committee on Human Rights. The Inter-Factional Caucus ‘Equal Opportunities’ is also part of the Parliament and focuses on facilitating the legal implementation of the policy on equal rights and opportunities of women and men in different areas of life. See the UN Women Ukraine draft report “Functional analysis of the scope and distribution of powers at the national, regional, and local institutional levels for the implementation of gender equality policy”, updated after public consultations in September 2020.

31 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 296 of 18 April 2016, as amended on March 2017, <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/296-2016-%Do%BF>. New Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers, No. 274 of 25 March 2020 “On the Responsibilities of Deputy Prime Ministers”, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/274-2020-%Do%BF#n149>.

32 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Order No. 390 of 7 June 2017 “On the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy”.

33 Government of Ukraine, *The ninth periodic report of Ukraine on the implementation of CEDAW*.

implementation of UNSCR 1325, and most recently in 2020, joined the Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality. In 2020, the Government also approved the Concept of Gender Equality Communication to help overcome harmful gender stereotypes and manifestations of gender inequalities in Ukrainian society. The Commission's work helps with the systematic coordination and communication between deputy ministers on matters related to GEWE and specifically gender equality policy implementation. Under this mechanism, the protocol orders, with the indication of a clear time frame to execute the tasks assigned, are provided.³⁴

Challenges remain in regard to the implementation of GEWE policies, especially for the benefit of women and girls facing multiple forms of marginalization and discrimination, in large part because of a lack of adequate financing³⁵ and a wide variance in the capacity of key NWM actors, especially at decentralized levels. Gender equality and women's rights are inconsistently considered a high priority among policymakers both at the national and local level. The technical capacities of the policy implementers, in relation to GEWE, vary among institutions and between the national, regional and local level. In addition, the lack of political will is a challenge to gender equality advancement at the local level.³⁶ Moreover, the weak rule of law, gaps in cross-sectoral coordination and inconsistent engagement with relevant civil society actors, especially at the local

level, along with low levels of accountability, impact GEWE policy implementation. Other barriers include the lack of gender-related and sex-disaggregated data³⁷ and widespread harmful gender stereotypes. Some areas where GEWE realization require additional focused efforts include the following:

- **Women's low participation in civic and political decision-making:** The levels of participation by Ukrainian women in political and civic processes are low, especially in higher positions. Women are underrepresented in the Parliament; until 2019, they comprised only 11 per cent of parliamentarians and 21 per cent after the 2019 elections.³⁸ The share of women in the oblast, rayon and council levels have increased – from 15 per cent in 2015 to 28 per cent in 2020, from 24 per cent to 34 per cent, and from 29 per cent to 33 per cent, respectively.³⁹ However, the share of women in settlement and village councils in 2020 decreased to 38 per cent (from 46 per cent) and 41 per cent (from 56 per cent), respectively.⁴⁰ The low representation of women not only pertains to politics; women in Ukraine are also underrepresented in business and leadership roles.
- **Gender-based violence:** It remains widespread and is the most persistent violation of women's rights in Ukraine. According to official data, the police received almost 209,000 reports of domestic violence in 2020, with 182,000 cases reported by

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid. Only UAH 1,245,000 was provided for in the state budget for the period 2017–2020 to implement the actions on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and UAH 4,797,620 was provided for in local budgets (regional state administrations).

36 For example, see UNDP, *Участь жінок у політиці та прийняття рішень на місцевому рівні: досвід, виклики і потреби* [Women's Participation in Politics and Decision-Making at the Local Level: Experience, Challenges and Needs], https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/uk/home/library/democratic_governance/womens-political-participation.html.

37 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 1517-r of 2 December 2020 "The Issues of Data Collecting for the Monitoring of Gender Equality". Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1517-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

38 TheGlobalEconomy.com, "Ukraine: Women in Parliament" [dataset]. Available at https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Ukraine/Women_in_parliament/. Gender quotas in parliamentary elections are often met on paper only. For example, the discrepancy between the high number of women candidates and the women who were elected to hold office can be explained by loopholes in the current legislation. A gender quota is required only for nominations; however, 18 days before the election, the candidates can drop out. Even after being elected, candidates can abandon their posts. Some parties were intentionally looking for 'technically' women candidates to register on the list but who would otherwise leave the election process. Women also face many pressures from more powerful and influential politicians, deal with harassment and denigrating comments, are required to adhere to traditional gender roles, and have difficulties fundraising resources to run in the elections.

39 "Statement No. 4 on the Interim Results of Gender Monitoring of Ukraine's Local Elections Held on 25 October 2020", <https://www.uwf.org.ua/en/news/12053>.

40 Ibid. This decline can be explained in part by the expansion of the decentralization reform. Some experts say that women's chances of being selected depend on the access to finances and the real power of the offices they are running for: the lower the access, the higher the chances. See Центр 'Синергія', «Децентралізація як виклик для жінок у владі» [Centre 'Synergy', "Decentralization as a Challenge for Women in Power"], <http://www.centri-synergia.cv.ua/detsentralizatsiya-yak-vyklyk-dlya-zhinok/>.



Women and men gathering together in the city centre to mark the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence towards women and girls, Kharkiv, 25 November 2017, Kharkiv. Photo: UN Women/ Oleksandra Gunko

women. This is 47 per cent more than in 2019.⁴¹ One regional study estimates that 75 per cent of women in the country said that they had experienced some form of violence since the age of 15, and one in three had experienced physical or sexual violence.⁴² National institutions have no methodology for systematic data collection on gender-based violence. Lastly, available prevalence data do not reveal the magnitude of the problem, as only 30 per cent of survivors report cases of gender-based violence due to stigma, the lack of trust in the relevant institutions and inadequate essential services.

In response to these issues, the Government has made recent and important strides in regard to the provision of essential response services

to gender-based violence. For example, in early 2021, the Government approved a state social programme to prevent and combat domestic and gender-based violence until 2025. Advocacy by the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration resulted in state budget allocations for specialized support services at the regional and local level.⁴³ In 2021, the additional funding would be allocated to open 28 shelters, 39 day centres and 58 counselling services and to purchase 40 cars for mobile teams of social and psychological assistance to victims of domestic violence. The Government has also established a toll-free hotline (15-47) for victims of gender-based violence to call that operates around the clock.⁴⁴

41 See <https://mvs.gov.ua/uk/news/news/policiya-ta-organi-vladi-mayut-objednati-zusillya-dlya-zaxistu-ditei-i-postrazdalix-vid-domasnyogo-nasilstva-igor-klimenko>.

42 Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Well-Being and Safety of Women* (2019). Available at <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/publications/well-being-and-safety-women>.

43 Government of Ukraine, *The ninth periodic report of Ukraine on the implementation of CEDAW*.

44 Ibid.



Anastasia Muntyan, a Roma woman who lives in a village near Kyiv, Ukraine in December 2017. Photo: UN Women/Volodymyr Shuvayev

Conflict-related sexual violence is a significant issue. In its analysis of the period between 14 March 2014 and 31 January 2017, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) concluded that “there are no grounds to believe that sexual violence has been used for strategic or tactical ends by Government forces or the armed groups in the eastern regions of Ukraine, or by the Russian Federation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea”.⁴⁵ Conflict-related sexual violence is underreported due to a variety of factors, such as the culture of silence about sexual and reproductive issues; national, regional or local taboos; risks of stigmatization and reprisals; the narrow association of conflict-related sexual violence

exclusively with rape and the poor understanding of the whole spectrum of conflict-related sexual violence; the lack of adequate physical and mental health support; the trauma and retraumatization associated with conflict-related sexual violence; the lack of confidentiality; the lack of trust in the justice system; and the poor domestic criminalization and practice of engagement with this category of crime on the psychological, investigative, prosecutorial and adjudicative levels.⁴⁶

- **Disproportionally negative effects of COVID-19 on women:** Existing manifestations of gender inequality have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 global pandemic. For example, many women

⁴⁵ OHCHR, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine, 14 March 2014 to 31 January 2017* (2017).

⁴⁶ See the following document produced by the project: *Matrix of the Early Warning Indicators of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine*.

experienced an increase in unpaid domestic and childcare work, a loss of income and employment (as women comprise 75 per cent of self-employed microenterprises and the informal employment sector), stigmatization of those who work in medical and social-service fields (the majority of whom are women), gender-based violence due to the lockdown and confinement conditions, and the lack of access to protection and support services.⁴⁷

Certain groups of women, in addition to suffering from discrimination directed against them as women, also suffer from multiple forms of discrimination based on such grounds as ethnic identity, disability, age and sexual orientation and gender identity (LBTQI+). They also suffer from ongoing conflicts and other factors,

affecting those who are internally displaced persons (IDPs) or veterans as well as survivors of gender-based violence including conflict-related sexual violence. The continuing exclusion of women facing multiple forms of discrimination from the policymaking and reform processes tend to keep them left behind. Such groups include, but not limited to, women living below the poverty line, women with disabilities, rural women, young women, older women, ethnic minorities (particularly Roma), women IDPs and LBTQI+ women. Social stereotypes and stigmatization double the pressure on women living with HIV, especially in rural areas, who face challenges in accessing social and legal protection as well as access to quality psychological, social and medical services.

⁴⁷ United Nations in Ukraine, *Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Ukraine: Response and Recovery Plan* (2020). Available at <https://ukraine.un.org/en/103300-assessment-socio-economic-impact-covid-19-ukraine>.

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Description of the subject of the evaluation

The subject of this evaluation is the project “Enhancing Accountability for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in National Reforms, Peace and Security in Ukraine”. The project was funded by the Government of Sweden for a total of US\$5,524,239 and with a time frame from 1 May 2017 until 28 February 2022. There is a no-cost extension until 28 February 2022. The goal of the project was to achieve transformative results for GEWE in Ukraine by integrating gender and women’s human rights commitments into national reforms and WPS processes, as well as by putting mechanisms in place for adequate financing, implementation and M&E. As such, the project operated at the national level with no specific interventions at decentralized levels.

The project included two main outcomes and six outputs. Its core expected outcomes included the following:

- **Outcome 1** – The national mechanism on gender equality and key government institutions integrate gender equality provisions and priorities into national reforms planning and budgeting in line with the international and national commitments
 - **Output 1.1:** The national institutional mechanism has enhanced capacity to ensure government-wide gender mainstreaming in policies and reforms
 - **Output 1.2:** Key government institutions in charge of the reforms have enhanced capacity to analyse, formulate and execute gender-responsive policies, reforms, plans and budgets
 - **Output 1.3:** Gender equality advocates and women’s groups have enhanced capacity to demand accountability and transparency of decision-making and spending for gender and Women, Peace and Security commitments

- **Outcome 2** – Enabling an environment for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security commitments is created
 - **Output 2.1:** Coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implementation of the NAP 1325 through national reforms at national and local levels are in place and include women’s groups
 - **Output 2.2:** Security institutions adopt and implement comprehensive multi-year sector action plans on UNSCR 1325, which are adequately financed and monitored
 - **Output 2.3:** Gender equality advocates and women peace activists have and use knowledge and tools to promote evidence-based advocacy for the increased participation of women in the security sector and effective civilian oversight

The project partnered with a wide range of stakeholders from the Government, civil society and the private sector. Key government partners and the primary targeted duty bearers include, specifically, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, the Ministry of Social Policy, the Parliamentary Inter-Factional Caucus ‘Equal Opportunities’ and relevant parliamentary committees working on GEWE and human rights. The project also worked with other public institutions, including the State Statistics Service of Ukraine focusing on the availability of gender-related and sex-disaggregated data, the National Agency for Civil Service on the training of civil servants, and other key ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Defence). Key rights holders engaged in the project include CSOs representing diverse groups of women and gender equality advocates and private sector actors engaged in a gender-equality-related communication campaign (HeForShe). For more information on project stakeholders, please see Annex 2.

The project operated predominantly at the national level (Kyiv), with some communication and capacity development outreach at the regional level.

The project expected to ensure that national reforms and government institutions' planning and budgeting are inclusive of women and are informed by the conflict's profound impact on gender relations and roles. The project planned to contribute to the implementation of the following international commitments on GEWE and WPS made by the Government: the Beijing Platform for Action; CEDAW and its Optional Protocol and General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (2013); and UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), its subsequent resolutions and its National Action Plans. The project also planned to support the implementation of Ukraine's State Programme on Equal Opportunities and other GEWE commitments.

2.2 Evaluation objectives and scope

This is a mandatory external final evaluation that was conducted by UN Women in the fifth (final) year of the project according to the UN Women Evaluation Policy and with **the main purpose of assessing the achievement of the project results and performance and identifying lessons learned, best practices and challenges**. Findings from the final evaluation will inform the future work of UN Women Ukraine and feed into the development of the next UN Women Ukraine Strategic Note 2023–2027. The evaluation was expected to support enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and for learning from experience to inform the future operations of the UN Women Country Office in Ukraine. This evaluation was built on the findings and recommendations drawn from the midterm evaluation carried out in 2019.

The overall objective of the final evaluation was to assess the progress made towards the achievement of the set outcomes and objectives and to analyse the results achieved and challenges encountered.

The specific evaluation objectives were as follows:

- To analyse the relevance of the project implementation strategy and approaches to the development of gender-responsive policies, accountability, frameworks and gender-responsive national reforms

- To review the relevance of the logical framework and respective monitoring and evaluation plan of the project
- To assess the effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project's results
- To assess the sustainability of the results and the feasibility of ongoing, nationally led efforts in the thematic areas tackled by the project from the viewpoint of national ownership, accountability, national capacity development, partnership and coordination between UN Women and other development partners
- To document lessons learned, best practices, success stories and challenges to inform the future work of UN Women in the framework of gender-responsive governance and WPS
- To assess how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals in Ukraine
- To analyse the relevance of UN Women's approach in the implementation of the project initiatives at the national and regional levels against the outcomes of the UN Women Strategic Note
- To identify strategies to replicate and scale up the identified best practices of the interventions during the implementation

The scope of the evaluation was consistent with the evaluation terms of reference (see Annex 3). The evaluation team covered both project components for the entire project duration (2017–2021). The evaluation examined the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and coherence, consistent with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) guidance and international practices as presented in Table 1 below. The evaluation team also developed key lessons learned to inform future UN Women programming. Data collection methods are presented in Annex 4.

TABLE 1
Evaluation criteria for the project under evaluation

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Relevance | The relevance of the project activities to the needs of GEWE advancement in Ukraine. The evaluation examined the extent to which UN Women was able to conduct a determinants analysis and properly identify systemic barriers to GEWE advancement. Additional aspects of relevance that have been examined include the relevance of the interventions to the priorities and objectives of the Government and its international commitments and priorities identified by non-government actors in the area of GEWE. |
| Effectiveness | The extent to which the expected results and system-level changes (e.g. an enabling environment, policy advice, capacity development) intended by the project have been realized, as well as whether a project contribution has been demonstrated. |
| Efficiency | The evaluation does not present a ‘value for money’ or full efficiency analysis, but it does present comments on the allocation of resources under the project and their deployment relative to the results generated. The evaluation has examined whether the project employed the best mix of core roles, designed to complement the efforts of other partners and the aspects that should be enhanced to ensure better project efficiency, such as coordination. |
| Sustainability | Dimensions of sustainability that were assessed included the extent of the government commitment to advancing GEWE in upcoming national programmes and forthcoming legislation and support through targeted budgets. In addition, the evaluation examined the extent to which the project interventions enhanced key factors that need to be in place for the long-term realization of GEWE (e.g. an enabling legal and regulatory framework, accountability systems, capacity development of policy implementers, inclusion of subnational governments, improved cross-sectoral collaboration). |
| Coherence⁴⁸ | The extent to which the project work on GEWE was aligned with and complementary to relevant interventions implemented by UN Women in Ukraine and by other partners and whether synergistic effects were achieved. |

Expected users of the evaluation findings and recommendations

The information generated by the evaluation will be used by different stakeholders to contribute to building the evidence base on effective strategies for strengthening the support to the Government and other stakeholders in gender-transformative reforms in Ukraine and to facilitate UN Women’s strategic reflection and learning for programming in the area with the aim to increase the sustainability of the results beyond the project. The main users of the evaluation include the UN Women Country Office in Ukraine as well as the Government of Sweden (project donor) and key national stakeholders, such as the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration; the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy; line ministries; regional and local authorities; and CSO partners. The evaluation team provides practical recommendations in this report, and it can be expected that they will inform the joint actions on

strengthening the NWM and GEWE advancement. Parliamentarians, for example, can use the evaluation findings in their work on GEWE legislation as well as to monitor the country’s progress towards national goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and international commitments such as CEDAW. Line ministries can use the evaluation findings to improve their compliance with the national GEWE legislation and design programmes and services advancing the rights of women, with a focus on vulnerable groups. Further details of the evaluation team’s stakeholder analysis can be found in Annex 2.

2.3 Methodology

The evaluation consisted of three main stages. At the evaluation inception stage, the evaluation team conducted a number of kick-off Zoom calls with the project team. The meetings clarified UN Women’s expectations and ensured that the evaluation team was fully aware of the parameters of the final deliverables.

⁴⁸ The criteria can be found at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

The evaluation team undertook a preliminary review of the key documents shared by the project and conducted an evaluability assessment to inform the scope, timing, key questions and steps towards the evaluation. The evaluation team reviewed the project theory of change and the project documentation to examine the underlying hypotheses, as well as assess whether the bottlenecks, stakeholder analysis, assumptions and risks were still relevant and correct. The evaluation team assessed whether the available indicators and data/evidence collected by the project team were sufficiently robust and whether assessable and reliable information was available.

The evaluation team found that the project was very complex as it addressed such diverse areas as policy change, capacity development and dominant social view changes, and it deployed different delivery modalities and monitoring instruments. **The evaluation team concluded that there was a satisfactory level of information to answer many of the evaluation questions (see Annex 5), but additional information had to be collected to provide rich and consistent evidence on the project's effectiveness and sustainability of its contributions.** The evaluation team developed a comprehensive evaluation framework (see Annex 6 for evaluation matrix) with linkages to specific evaluation instruments that reflected these findings of the evaluability assessment.

The evaluation applied a non-experimental theory-based contribution methodology, applying the OECD-DAC criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and was guided by the principles of gender-responsive evaluations. A careful sampling methodology was developed to select interviewees and focus group participants to ensure the proper representation of project partners and beneficiaries. The evaluation team tried to ensure a balance of beneficiaries (e.g. small and large CSOs), government partners (e.g. line ministries and other central executive bodies), roles in policymaking (e.g. senior management and mid-level public servants), UN sister agencies and other international partners (e.g. directly partnering with the project and those who are not partnering), and donors (e.g. funding the project and those working in relevant areas). As the project was heavily focusing on policy advice and advocacy, the evaluation team reconstructed the project theory of change and used it as the overarching theory to understand how changes happened at the

strategic and operational levels. Contribution analysis was used to develop an overall performance story and assess plausible project contributions to the observed changes. The evaluation team also applied outcome harvesting by using a meta-synthesis methodology to combine and compare qualitative data by hand, which was substantiated and validated through interviews and focus groups. The evaluation aimed at generating forward-looking and actionable recommendations to ensure that the analytical and planning needs of UN Women and the stakeholders were fully met.

The evaluation team had identified a number of methodological limitations that included resourcing and timing restrictions, which limited the ability to conduct a full, in-depth assessment of all project-diverse components. The main challenge, however, was that the project is multilayered and combines policy advocacy, capacity development, awareness-raising interventions and other elements that required tailored evaluation tools. The complexity and diversity of GEWE policy areas covered by the project required a sophisticated policy cycle analysis going beyond such traditional measures as policy adoption at the higher level to include such aspects as examination of budget allocations, implementation of policies on the ground (including the accountability of local authorities and the levels of institutionalization of training) and changes in beneficiaries' views and practices. To address these challenges, the evaluation team used diverse tools and tried to involve as many beneficiaries and partners as possible. Other methodological limitations along with corresponding mitigation strategies are listed in Annex 7.

The inception phase resulted in the inception report, which included the methodology, a detailed work plan, a comprehensive set of the proposed data collection and evaluation tools, and the proposed roles and responsibilities of the parties in the evaluation process, as well as a suggested outline of the final evaluation report. The evaluation team received various comments on the inception report that were addressed.

The second, online field phase consisted of an in-depth desk review to gather secondary quantitative and qualitative data as well as field work to collect primary data from key stakeholders at the national and local levels, based on the data collection tools discussed below. The project partnered with a wide

range of stakeholders from the Government and the civil society sector, and the evaluation team ensured that the voices and views of all of these partners were reflected in the evaluation report by making the field phase participatory through the engagement of duty bearers such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine (as the highest governmental entity coordinating the implementation of gender equality policy), the Parliament and line ministries; rights holders, including diverse CSOs representing and supporting women, especially those facing multiple forms of discrimination; international organizations and donors, including UN agencies; and consultants and contractors who were engaged by the project.

The evaluation team ensured that its obligations (i.e. independence, impartiality, credibility, avoiding of conflicts of interest, accountability) were met and that all analyses were sufficiently transparent and explicit to produce robust and reliable findings that would be replicated by an independent team using the same evidence. **The evaluation methodology combined results-based management with a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to programming and evaluation.** The HRBA was guided by five core principles: normativity, participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency.

Disability was included in the evaluation design, findings, conclusions and recommendations. Through the desk review, interviews and focus groups, the evaluation team explored how the project has contributed to advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities through both of its components. As the primary focus of the project was to advance legislative and policy GEWE changes, the evaluation team assessed whether the promoted policy changes were detailed and disaggregated enough to address the complex barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities.

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Guidance on Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation⁴⁹ was applied throughout the evaluation. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Office has

developed the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS), which adapted UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System to guide evaluation managers and evaluators on what constitutes a good-quality report at UN Women. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with UN Women evaluation guidelines; the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation; the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System; the UN Women Evaluation Handbook on how to manage gender-responsive evaluation;⁵⁰ and the performance indicators of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).⁵¹

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATIONS BY UN WOMEN

- National ownership and leadership
- UN system coordination and coherence with regard to GEWE
- Innovation
- Fair power relations and empowerment
- Participation and inclusion
- Independence and impartiality
- Transparency
- Quality and credibility
- Intentionality of use of the evaluations
- Ethics

The evaluation team collected evidence against each criterion for each area under consideration. Cumulatively, the evidence available against each question and for each area provided evidence to inform the responses to the evaluation questions. In order to assess the attainment of stated targets for outputs and outcomes, the evaluation team collected and carefully assessed data and evidence provided by the project and collected through secondary data analysis, taking into account contextual factors.

49 UNEG, *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance* (2011). Available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>.

50 UN Women, *Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation* (2015). Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>.

51 UN-SWAP implementation focuses on results and includes monitoring the activities and outcomes for gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results. See <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>.

A mixed-methods approach was applied, involving a blend of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods from different data sources and using different analysis methods to arrive at findings, conclusions and recommendations. Triangulation was applied for consistency, validity and reliability. The evaluation draws on the totality of evidence collected.

The methods utilized the best mix of data-gathering tools to yield the most reliable and valid answers to the evaluation questions and generate maximum learning within the limits of resources and availability of data. The data collection methods are presented in Annex 4.

- **Desk review:** For purposes of this evaluation, the project created a OneDrive folder with all of the relevant information that can be easily accessed by team members. The evaluation team reviewed all of the relevant project and programme documents; the reports of previous evaluations, research and studies; government strategies and policy and legal documents; and primary and secondary data reports. The team then performed the initial validation of resources and the final definition of the scope for the evaluation. It helped identify additional sources of secondary data as well as specific methodological difficulties that may be encountered throughout the evaluation process. The desk review also helped identify those areas where primary data were needed to complement limitations in terms of the quality and availability of secondary data. The bibliography can be found in Annex 8. The desk review informed the evaluation team's assessment of the project's progress that was captured in the results framework template in Annex 9.
- **Interviews:** The evaluation team conducted more than 60 semi-structured interviews with a diverse range of partners such as government officials, CSOs and international organizations, among others. This method was selected to obtain diverse perspectives, including those from experts and non-experts, beneficiaries and partners, and those familiar and unfamiliar with the project's work in the areas of GEWE, including their perceptions. It enabled a rich understanding of different perspectives about the project programming. Through interviews, the evaluation team explored the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and coherence of the project. As the interventions

implemented by the project were too complex and diverse, the interviews were very different; hence, key informant interview guides were not developed. See Annex 10 for a list of key informants interviewed and the questionnaires.

Interview questionnaires were shared with the interviewees in advance to facilitate more informative interviews. In semi-structured interviews, the evaluation team used the questions shared in advance as guideposts, helping ensure that the conversation stayed on track, while allowing it to evolve organically to explore in-depth the areas of the informants' expertise.

- **Focus group discussions:** Two focus group discussions were conducted via Zoom calls with representatives of CSOs engaged through a contractual agreement in the WPS component (three individuals) and representatives of CSOs engaged through a contractual agreement in the governance component (two individuals). A small number of participants were asked to answer a set of targeted questions. The evaluation team encouraged the participation of all individuals invited and kept a neutral stance throughout the focus group. Focus group participants were encouraged to agree or disagree with one another to reveal and explore different perspectives on an issue and to collect a range of opinions and ideas. The results of the focus groups were recorded and analysed. Further details on the focus group discussions can be found in Annex 11.
- **Online survey of capacity development activity participants:** A survey of 191 beneficiaries (57 per cent of whom were women) of various training opportunities was conducted to strengthen the outcome-level evidence and data and was added at the evaluation team's discretion to maximize the evidence collected during the reality of COVID-19. The data collected were processed in accordance with the indicators of the evaluation matrix. Further details on the survey can be found in Annex 12.

Given the complexity of the project evaluation, the consultants provided regular updates to UN Women on their progress to ensure ongoing alignment with UN Women expectations and to quickly resolve any emerging challenges. When innovative approaches were identified that could be scaled up to advance GEWE, the evaluation team conducted 'deep dives'

to collect the necessary practical details to inform the recommendations. Phase 2 was completed with a debriefing session with UN Women on the preliminary findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

During Phase 3, the evaluation team analysed the evidence and data collected during the first two phases and integrated said evidence into the draft evaluation report, in accordance with the UN Women guidelines. The draft report was shared with UN Women and other partners for feedback that was received, analysed and addressed in the final version of the report.

The evaluation followed the UNEG Norms and Standards as well as the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.⁵² The evaluation team was independent, impartial, free of any conflicts of interest and accountable for its findings and recommendations. Where appropriate, the national and UN Women project interventions were assessed through the prism of Ukraine's commitments with regard to such human rights treaties as CEDAW and the progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The human rights angle was captured through evaluation questions.

The evaluation blended confirmatory analysis (determining the extent to which specific, expected results outlined in the project document were achieved), exploratory analysis (examining what happened and what is currently happening without preconceived notions) and forward-looking analysis (identifying strategies and approaches that worked and have a strong potential to be effective in the future).

2.4 Evaluation management

The evaluation management structure included a number of key components. UN Women appointed an officer who served as the Evaluation Task Manager and who was responsible for the day-to-day management of the evaluation and ensured that the evaluation was conducted in accordance with the relevant policies.⁵³ The logistical details of the evaluation were co-managed by UN Women and the evaluation team. Short biographies of the evaluation team members

can be found in Annex 13. The evaluation process was supported by the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Evaluation Specialist.

An evaluation management group, comprising the Evaluation Task Manager and delegated staff members by the UN Women Country Representative, was established to oversee the evaluation process, make key decisions and quality-assure the different deliverables. The evaluation management group quality-assured and approved all deliverables. The group was also responsible for coordination in the field (online) including logistical support during field missions (online).

An evaluation reference group was established to include key national stakeholders from the Parliament, Government, CSOs and development partners and was an integral part of the evaluation management structure. The purpose of the evaluation reference group was to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scope of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs, and provide feedback throughout the process. The inputs of the group's members strengthened the quality and credibility of the evaluation process.

The **evaluation quality assurance process** included a checklist of at least four items that the evaluation team followed for quality assurance:

1. A discussion of the inception report and plans of action to ensure that the evaluation team's understanding of what was required corresponded to UN Women expectations and evaluation standards
2. A presentation and discussion of the preliminary findings
3. A review of a draft, or mid-point, of the evaluation
4. A review to accept the quality of the completed report

Adjustments were made to reflect feedback at each of these points. This process ensured that multiple opportunities were provided to resolve issues and challenges throughout the evaluation exercise.

52 See <http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp> and <http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines>.

53 These included the UN Women Evaluation Policies, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System and other key relevant guidance documents.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Assessment of the project design

The goal of the project was to achieve transformative results for GEWE in Ukraine by integrating gender and women’s human rights commitments into national reforms and WPS processes, as well as by putting mechanisms in place for adequate financing, implementation and M&E. The project expected to ensure that national reforms and government institutions’ planning and budgeting are inclusive of women and are informed by the conflict’s profound impact on gender relations and roles. The project planned to

contribute to the implementation of the following international commitments on GEWE and WPS made by Ukrainian Government: the Beijing Platform for Action; CEDAW and its Optional Protocol and General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (2013); and UNSCR 1325, its subsequent resolutions and its National Action Plans. The project also planned to support the implementation of Ukraine’s State Programme on Equal Opportunities.



CSOs and women’s groups in Ukraine and their colleagues from Belarus and Moldova sharing best practices in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 21 June 2019, Kyiv, Ukraine. Photo: UN Women

As presented in the **PROJECT DOCUMENT**, the project's theory of change includes the following transformative pathways: **IF** (1) governance and national reforms integrate gender equality and WPS commitments; (2) the capacity of the national institutional mechanism on gender equality is strengthened for government-wide mainstreaming of gender in policies and reforms; (3) key government institutions have the capacity to implement commitments through sectoral reforms, plans and budgets; (4) oversight and coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the gender equality and WPS commitments are set and operational; (5) favourable social attitudes and gender awareness are promoted among duty bearers and rights holders; and (6) women's groups, having the capacity and opportunity, demand for their rights and priorities in reforms, **THEN** the transformative results for gender equality and women's empowerment will be achieved **BECAUSE** the implementation of the international and national gender equality and WPS commitments will be well coordinated, financed and monitored.

FINDING 1:

The project components were well balanced and complementary to achieve the project's diverse range of objectives. The project design was successful in ensuring that its results were seen as a shared responsibility between the Government and UN Women. The theory of change, however, was very ambitious, covered many areas and did not take into consideration all of the conditions necessary to achieve transformative results for GEWE on the ground. Although the project document lists the CSOs that were consulted, the evidence of their specific contribution to the project design was not available.

The project design was well structured and justified and included two outcomes and six outputs (three per outcome). The outputs and outcomes were coherent and logically interlinked. The project represented a complex, cross-sectoral initiative combining a wide approach (e.g. intersectoral coordination and M&E mechanism; several involved public institutions from defence, security, public administration reforms or public outreach initiatives) with an in-depth approach (e.g. gender mainstreaming and tailored thematic capacity strengthening of each targeted institution).

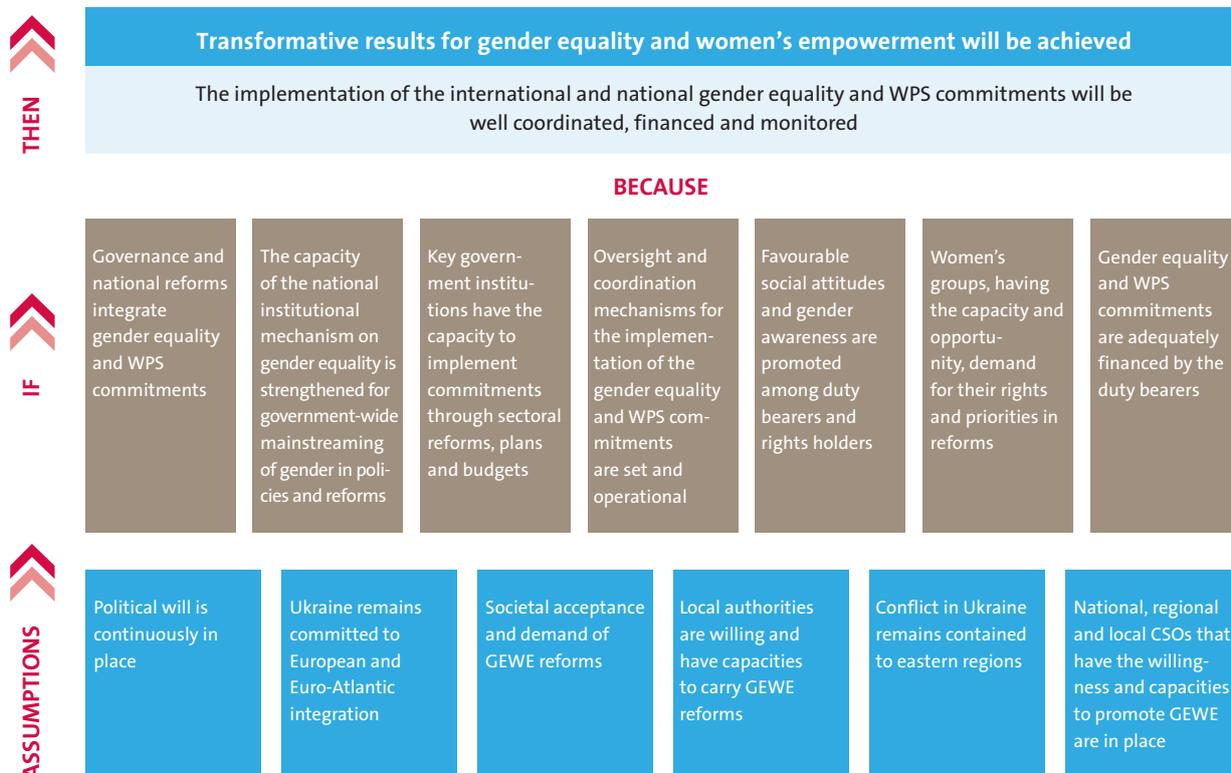
Project interventions were informed by solid analysis seeking to enhance the alignment of the national

policy framework with international norms and address systemic issues faced by women. The project design was very ambitious and included a range of well-balanced and complementary components, such as institutional technical and analytical support through the use of consultants placed at key government partner institutions; policy-level interventions focused on embedding GEWE into policies and regulations; capacity development of key partners; strengthening the coordination, monitoring and evaluation system of the NWM, which represents one of the core elements of the project; and outreach and public awareness initiatives, including grass-roots-level actions targeting IDPs, women living with HIV, Roma women, women veterans and women with disabilities. The project design correctly identified a need to improve gender-related and sex-disaggregated data to improve the evidence base supporting the development of policies and interventions advancing GEWE.

The evaluation team reconstructed the project's theory of change as presented in Figure 1 below. The theory of change provided a broad assessment framework for this evaluation. It included a description of the assumptions and a graphic illustration linking the project's core activities and expected results (i.e. outputs, outcomes and impacts).

The project design has a strong approach towards partnering with diverse national stakeholders to ensure project ownership and sustainability. Their roles in the project are well outlined, and on that basis, the evaluation team produced a comprehensive

FIGURE 1
Reconstructed project theory of change



stakeholder mapping and assessment that can be found in Annex 2. The project design identified some vulnerable groups of women to be supported and involved by the project. Although the project document lists the consulted CSOs representing vulnerable groups, the evidence of their specific contribution to the project design was not available.

The evaluation team believes that for such a complex project, it is worth distinguishing between the pathways to transformative change (that the project is contributing to) and the 'assumptions' (external conditions under which the pathways would enable the envisioned transformative change and that may be, to a larger extent, outside of the control of the project). 'Transformative change' in gender equality

is understood as a shift beyond individual self-improvement among women and towards transforming the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities,⁵⁴ while the 'pathways' are the processes of change or the 'skeleton' of the project to achieve transformative change. The midterm evaluation suggested adding one additional assumption: gender equality and WPS commitments are adequately financed by the duty bearers.⁵⁵ The evaluation team agreed with this recommendation and expanded the number of external assumptions (see the yellow boxes in Figure 1 above) that have to be in place for the project's theory of change to be realized. Risks are not included in this reconstructed theory of change, as they were outlined in detail in the project document.

⁵⁴ *Measuring Gender-Transformative Change: A Literature Review and Promising Practices*. Emily Hillenbrand, Nidal Karim, Pranati Mohanraj and Diana Wu. October 2015.

⁵⁵ Gheorghe Caraseni and Aleksandar Zivanovic, *Enhancing accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment in national reforms, peace and security: Mid-Term Evaluation Report* (UN Women Ukraine, 2019).

FINDING 2:

The project Results and Resources Framework (RRF) was well structured and captures some important results that were logically linked to project activities, but some project components did not have corresponding indicators, and some indicators were focused only on outputs.

The project's results were tracked using the indicators outlined in the RRF, developed at the project design stage. Each outcome had one indicator to track the results against, and each output had one to two indicators (a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators), which were to be collected and reported against on a quarterly basis in the project monitoring framework. The RRF had a certain budget allocated for M&E; however, these costs were budgeted only for evaluation. Monitoring costs were not reflected in the original RRF.

The project design correctly identified core venues and activities to achieve expected results, but it was less clear in identifying indicators to capture project attribution and contribution to broader results, such as those captured in the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPF). Some indicators, such as indicator 1.1.1 ("Presence of coordination and M&E mechanisms for government-wide gender mainstreaming in policies, reforms, planning and budgeting"), are strategic and outcome focused, but most indicators were reduced to output measures (e.g. indicator 1.3.2: "Number of position papers/statements by gender advocates on implementation and spending for gender equality in reforms") and did not focus on the outcomes or impacts, such as improved outcomes for women, the use of knowledge products developed and changes in perceptions of groups targeted through awareness-raising campaigns.

The evaluation team found that the existing theory of change and the indicators did not accurately reflect all of the project activities. For example, the theory of change did not reflect such initiatives as the HeForShe campaign, the award for women in arts, engagement with the private sector (StarLightMedia, Urban Space 500) or the Ukrainian Women's Congress. Some of the outcome indicator baselines were not available at the start of the project and were collected later.

3.2 Relevance

Relevance was assessed by the evaluation team by exploring the degree of the project's alignment with the needs of GEWE advancement, national priorities, Ukraine's international commitments and the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries. The assessment of relevance was based on the analysis of the national and local context and the challenges to GEWE advancement.

FINDING 3:

Partners and beneficiaries found the project highly relevant. The project was consistent and directly supported the Government with meeting its international GEWE commitments and the development of respective national strategies and plans. The project stayed in the centre of gender reform in Ukraine and was able to work with government institutions and areas that were previously closed off to conversations about GEWE, such as the security and defence sector. The project was flexible and responsive and took advantage of emerging opportunities, but frequent and extensive demands from the national partners for project support created a significant ad hoc workload and managerial burden.

The project extensively collaborated with the NWM, including the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy and the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. Additionally, the project collaborated closely with the Parliament, the central executive bodies, women's CSOs, the private sector, the media and development partners at the national level. The Advisory Group's meeting minutes and other project documentation confirmed the extensive involvement of key national partners in setting the project priorities and in monitoring the project's progress.

UN Women's reputation, impartiality, political sensitivity and international expertise in GEWE were the major project advantages. The project was praised by

all key informants for its impartiality, which was critically important to generate the trust needed to provide policy advice that would be accepted by the national partners. Key informants from the Government, the private sector, civil society and international development partners appreciated the project as an efficient and proactive partner responsive to government priorities and the country's GEWE needs. The relationship between the project and its main government partners was characterized as strong and positive by the interviewees representing key national institutions, with long-term partnerships extending beyond the project. The project's main value proposition lied in its expertise in providing relevant international, regional and local expertise to address GEWE concerns. A good indicator of this reliance on project expertise was the increasing numbers of national and international partners willing to collaborate with the project and UN Women.

Key informants confirmed that the project was able to adapt to political opportunities and was seen as 'politically savvy' and able to take advantage of political opportunities. The project established a project Advisory Group that included the donor, UN Women senior management and key national counterparts that helped the project stay relevant and promptly respond to emerging opportunities.⁵⁶ Despite frequent turnover of the key decision makers, the project was able to build awareness and broad buy-in of newly appointed leaders in the need for GEWE. The project brought in international expertise and exposed the national decision makers and technical experts to the best international approaches to GEWE.

“UN Women is very cooperative and open to explore synergies, sharing tasks and providing their expertise to others.” – UN agency representative

The project listened to partners' needs at different levels (political, executive, technical) and promptly

addressed them. The project was overwhelmed with diverse requests for support coming from the national partners, to the point where it became challenging for the project to stay focused on core policy areas through deep and consistent involvement.

FINDING 4:

The project supported a gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 and adapted its work to be relevant to this changing context.

The COVID-19 pandemic is far more than just a healthcare crisis, as it affected almost each area of the social, economic, political and cultural life of the country. It revealed the systemic weaknesses in the national governance system, such as underdeveloped evidence-based policy processes, weak outreach and risk communication practices, and poor healthcare infrastructure. The project promptly responded to the need for critical data and policy advice. It produced a range of analytical and policy materials and conducted knowledge-generation and dissemination activities on gender-sensitive responses to COVID-19. The evaluation team confirmed that the Rapid Gender Assessment of the Situation and Needs of Women in the Context of COVID-19 in Ukraine⁵⁷ was used for longer-term support to women veterans and women IDPs with rehabilitation, empowerment and capacity development. The assessment informed the development of the national COVID-19 response and programming of some UN agencies, as well as the comprehensive UN Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan.⁵⁸

The project was responsive to the COVID-19 challenges by reprogramming some of its activities and adjusting its operations. It quickly adjusted to the COVID-19 realities by starting to operate remotely and conducting virtual meetings with diverse partners. Some of the activities were moved into the virtual space or

⁵⁶ Minutes of the meetings in 2018, 2019 and 2020 of Project Advisory Group for the project “Gender Equality at the Centre of Reforms, Peace and Security”.

⁵⁷ See <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/rapid-gender-assessment-of-the-situation-and-needs-of-women>.

⁵⁸ United Nations in Ukraine, *Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Ukraine*.



Women Participants at the International Forum “Women, Peace and Security”, 15 September 2016, Kyiv, Ukraine. Photo: UN Women/Volodymyr Shuvayev

substituted with others to ensure progress towards the targets and objectives. For example, the project did not conduct travel or face-to-face events and did not produce hard copies of knowledge products. Instead, the trainings were delivered online. Although some national partners observed that it was challenging for some training beneficiaries to adjust to the new modality of training delivery, they quickly learned and found it effective. The project adjusted the focus of its communication activities in response to COVID-19 to include, in particular, raising awareness on social media about the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups of women by sharing first-hand accounts in short videos, which received more than 10,000 views on the UN Women Ukraine Facebook page, and promoting the findings of the rapid gender assessment through a series of infographics, which received more than 20,000 views.

3.3 Coherence

The evaluation team examined the extent to which project work on GEWE advancement was aligned and complementary to the relevant interventions implemented by other partners and whether synergistic effects were achieved. An internal coherence assessment focused on the synergies and interlinkages between the project and other interventions carried out by UN Women. An external coherence assessment examined the consistency of the project with other actors’ interventions in the same context, including complementarity, harmonization and coordination with others.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ For the OECD criteria, see <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

FINDING 5:

The project promoted effective NWM coordination and functioning and supported collaboration among relevant line ministries. Diverse and extensive partnerships with the private sector and media were established and maintained. Some opportunities to build a close relationship with the Ministry of Finance, critical to the budgeting of GEWE policies advanced by the project, remain underexplored.

FINDING 6:

The project was successful at leveraging key UN and other international development partnerships that were essential to supporting the implementation of the GEWE normative and policy frameworks promoted by the project. The project was aligned with the UN Partnership Framework (2018–2022). The project underexplored the possibilities of participating in joint UN “Delivering as One” projects.

Evidence collected through the review of the project and government documents and as corroborated by stakeholder interviews showed that the project’s support and engagement strategies were appropriate and well targeted. The project supported improved cross-sectoral collaboration that enabled better-coordinated policy responses. As GEWE advancement requires effective cross-sectoral collaboration, the project supported the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and other partners of the NWM to improve intersectoral collaboration and focus on results, including within the Gender Equality Sectoral Working Group of the Donor Coordination Mechanism; this focus can be considered as one of the project’s important, strategic contributions.⁶⁰ The project also supported the operations of the Government Commission on the Coordination of the Central Executive Bodies on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, led by the Deputy Prime Minister and consisting of gender focal points of the central executive bodies. The Commission was responsible for delegating tasks in line with the Deputy Prime Minister’s Protocol Order in regard to monitoring the implementation of GEWE policies across sectors.⁶¹ The project, however, missed an opportunity to work more closely with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that all national policies and programmes that the project was contributing to had sufficient budget resources to be effectively implemented.

The project established partnerships with various private sector institutions to enhance large-scale outreach in support of GEWE; they included Ukrainian Fashion Week, Ekonomika+, Petcube and many others. The project also partnered with the Public Broadcasting Company and diverse private sector media partners such as Platfor.ma, Elle Ukraine and others. The project documentation very clearly outlines the key partners and their roles in the project. Partners were very positive in their feedback on their partnership with the project, which can be attributed to a strong emphasis on relationship management by the project. Externally, the project collaborated extensively and effectively in such areas as statistics with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to localize the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on conflict-related sexual violence, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on WPS, the Council of Europe on the Roma Strategy, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on gender-based violence and domestic violence, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on WPS, other relevant projects funded by Canada, and multiple CSOs, among others. There was no evidence of ‘competition for funding’ between UN agencies, other partners and UN Women, which is a positive indicator of the effectiveness of UN Women’s relationship management. The partners not only exchanged information about their work but also drew on each organization’s comparative strengths. The project

⁶⁰ According to the meeting minutes from 2020

⁶¹ Protocol order session of the Government Commission on the Coordination of the Central Executive Bodies on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, 15 March 2021

closely collaborated with other UN Women projects, such as the “Decentralization Reform of Ukraine” project and the “WPS and Ending Violence against Women” project. More specifically, the project deliberately focused on national-level reform and sought to coordinate with other projects for a decentralized approach by sharing information and aligning and synchronizing activities to achieve synergy and maximize effects.

The evaluation team found that while the project was fully aligned with Outcome 3 (“Democratic governance, rule of law and civic participation”) of the 2018–2022 UN Partnership Framework, it did not explore possibilities to participate in “Delivering as One” joint UN projects, especially at the regional and local levels. Such participation could have promoted synergies and complementary expertise and increased the impact to the final beneficiaries. It also would have enabled the project to develop and test operational aspects of the developed policies on the ground and conduct budget estimates. Work at the regional and local level makes sense given that the space for dialogue that is opened up at this level provides opportunities for

rights holders to engage directly with service providers who are duty bearers. This would have allowed the project to better capture the needs of the most vulnerable groups of women and assess the local funding and capacity gaps to address them properly.

3.4 Effectiveness

Effectiveness was assessed by examining the extent to which the project attained planned objectives and results. Using the reconstructed theory of change and results framework, the evaluation team analysed to what extent the project activities contributed to the attainment of planned outputs and outcomes, including changes to the operating space and progress towards national development priorities and internationally agreed-upon development goals and obligations under the conventions. Using the evidence collected, the evaluation team analysed the factors that contributed to or hampered the achievement of results. Although the project’s impact is outside the scope of this evaluation, the evaluation team assessed potential long-lasting effects produced by the project interventions on advancing GEWE.



Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Kateryna Pavlichenko is presenting the results, conclusions and recommendations of the national study “Understanding Masculinity in the Security Sector of Ukraine”, 25 March 2021, Kyiv, Ukraine. Photo: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine

FINDING 7:

The project was verifiably effective in terms of achieving most of the planned outputs as detailed in the reconstructed theory of change and results framework. The evaluation team concluded that the overwhelming majority of targets as outlined in the results matrix in Annex 9 will be achieved or exceeded by February 2022. The project did not support the implementation of strategies and policies on the ground through piloting or by developing operational protocols and other instruments, which limited the impact of the project on the final beneficiaries.

“The project managed to achieve significant and extensive results in multiple areas. It was responsive and effective.” – Senior government official

Both the project and the context within which it operated underwent significant changes over the course of project implementation, such as project team turnover, targeted government representatives' turnover and changing priorities and roles within key government institutions. Despite these internal and external challenges, the project was highly successful in conducting a dialogue with the national partners to reach a shared vision on GEWE policy options to be pursued. The government representatives were deeply appreciative of the project's support. Its interventions were informed by an in-depth assessment of the national partners' capacity needs.⁶²

The evaluation team found that the project contributed to improving the NWM and its operations as

well as significantly enhanced the national legislative and policy frameworks to support GEWE. The project's support has contributed to more professional development of GEWE strategies and policies and has improved the technical capacities of all partners supported. The interventions at the policy level among national ministries and other central executive bodies were informed by solid analysis.⁶³ Ownership has also been considerable at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Policy and the National Agency for Civil Service. For some other counterparts, the long-term effectiveness is less certain.

The evaluation team concluded that all outputs listed in the project results framework were achieved and even exceeded, but it was unlikely that indicator 1.1.2 (“Ministry of Economic Development has the knowledge and skills to design and/or refine a system to track and make public allocations for gender equality (including ODA)”) would be achieved.⁶⁴ The evaluation team was also concerned whether the budget allocations at the national, regional and local level would be adequate to implement the wide range of policies and programmes that were informed by the project work. A more detailed assessment of the achieved outputs can be found in Annex 9.

Some specific project contributions to those results with transformative potential include the following:

- Support in the development and adoption of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Decree “On Approval of the State Social Programme on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men up to 2021”.
- Support in the development of the second NAP 1325 that was adopted by the Government.⁶⁵

62 See the following document produced by the project: Methodology for conducting capacity needs assessment of governmental authorities on gender mainstreaming in reforms, planning and budgeting (2018).

63 See the following document produced by the project: Report on the Results of the Capacity Needs Assessment of the Selected Central Executive Bodies on Gender Mainstreaming in Reforms, Planning and Budgeting (2020).

64 Starting from 2019, the functions on the Official Development Assistance Coordination have been transferred to the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Directorate of the International Development Assistance. The project continued its technical support through the partnership with the newly established Directorate.

65 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 1544-r of 28 October 2020. Available at <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-zatverdzhennya-nacionalnogo-a1544r>.

- Incorporation of the project recommendations into the first Voluntary National Review (VNR)⁶⁶ on the Sustainable Development Goals; the Roma Strategy and its Action Plan; and other documents.
- Support of gender audits/assessments that were completed in a number of ministries, with some ministries (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) acting upon the audit's recommendations.⁶⁷ Other ministries, such as the Ministry of Justice, appreciated the support, but the actions on recommendations provided were limited to training programme adjustments.⁶⁸
- Technical support of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine to develop the National List of 226 Indicators for Gender Equality Monitoring,⁶⁹ which were adopted by the Government in 2020. Government commitment to collect gender-specific data was secured, and technical support provided by the project was appreciated,⁷⁰ but implementation is still in progress.
- Support in developing and piloting the methodology to capture the "Ratio of duration of unpaid domestic work between men and women" was provided to the Ministry of Social Policy, but the prospects of implementation of a fully fledged national survey were unclear when this evaluation was underway.
- The State Service on Ethnic Policy integrated gender considerations into the new Roma Strategy and Action Plan,⁷¹ drafted in 2020, by accepting 26 of the 36 UN Women recommendations,⁷² including the collection of sex-disaggregated data and measures to address the needs of Roma women.
- Contribution to Methodological Recommendations on Gender Impact Assessment of Sectoral Reforms.⁷³
- Contribution to the Instruction on the Integration of Gender Approaches in the Process of Development of Legislation and Normative Acts.⁷⁴
- Contribution to the Methodological Recommendations on the Amendment of Collective Agreements with Provisions to Ensure Equal Rights of Women and Men in Labour Relations.⁷⁵
- Support in improving the cross-sectoral collaboration of UN Women.
- Support of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration in improving coordination and financing for gender equality through aid effectiveness by chairing a high-level Gender Equality Donors Group with development partners.⁷⁶

66 Available in Ukrainian at <https://www.me.gov.ua/Documents/Detail?lang=uk-UA&id=aofc2a99-ada3-4a6d-b65b-cb542c3d5b77&title=DobrovilniiNatsionalniiOgliadSchodoTsileiStalogoRozvitkuVUkraini>. Available in English at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26295VNR_2020_Ukraine_Report.pdf.

67 The project supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with tailored Gender Equality Audit Methodology and high-quality expert support to complete the audit and implement its recommendations. The UN Women "Gender Equality Audit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine" report was well received and acted upon by the Ministry.

68 See the following document produced by the project: Identification of the Needs of Staff of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine in Training and Support for Gender Mainstreaming, Summary of the Survey Results.

69 Adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 1517-r of 2 December 2020 "The Issues of Data Collecting for the Monitoring of Gender Equality". Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1517-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

70 The project developed a very practical capacity-building plan to strengthen the knowledge and skills of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine staff and their overall capacities for the collection, processing, analysis and reporting of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics along with other technical support materials.

71 The project contributed to the development of a high-quality, gender-responsive evaluation of the "Strategy for the protection and integration of the Roma national minority into Ukrainian society until 2020" Final Evaluation Report (2019), which informed further work on enhancing the gender dimension of the Roma strategy.

72 A comparative table of the accepted recommendations is given at the official website of the State Service on Ethnic Policy. Available at <https://dess.gov.ua/roma-strategy/>.

73 Ministry of Social Policy, Order No. 257 of 14 April 2020. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/vo257739-20#Text>.

74 Ministry of Social Policy, Order No. 86 of 7 February 2020. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0211-20#Text>.

75 Ministry of Social Policy, Order No. 56 of 29 January 2020. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/vo056739-20#Text>.

76 See the terms of reference of the Thematic Government - Donors Group on Gender Equality.

- Support of the Parliament of Ukraine in adopting the amendment to the Electoral Code of Ukraine⁷⁷ that strengthens the sanctions for non-compliance with the 40 per cent gender quota; and Law No. 3695 on paternity leave,⁷⁸ which introduced gender-balanced provisions of parental and paternity leave, including a mandatory 14 calendar days of paternity leave to be granted by employers for fathers.

The evaluation team confirmed that overall, the project made a significant positive contribution to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- **Goal 5 – Gender Equality**

- **Target 5.1:** “End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere”
- **Target 5.5:** “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”

- **Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities**

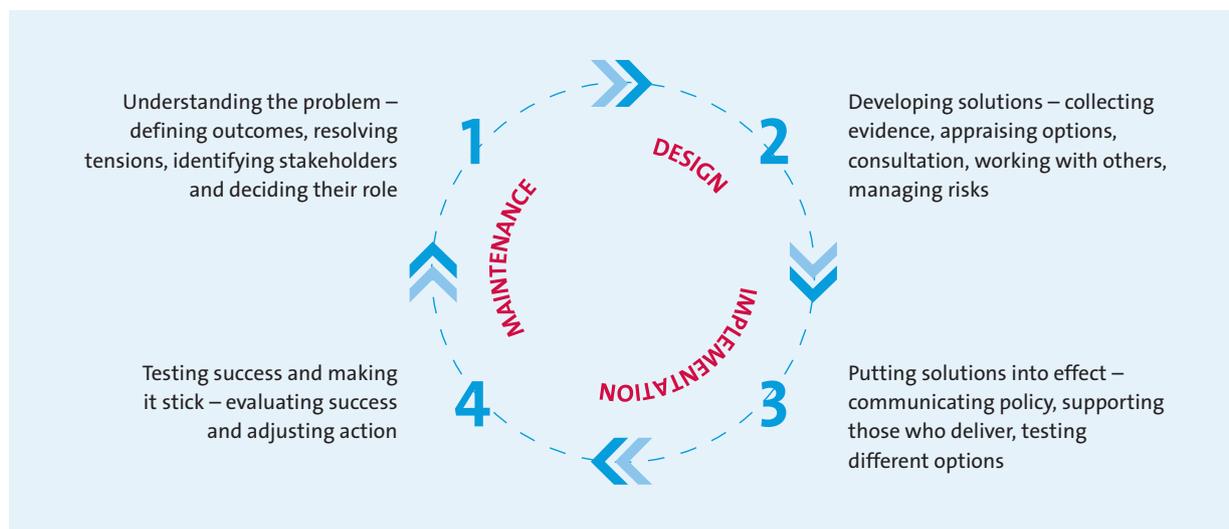
- **Target 10.3:** “Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard”

- **Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**

- **Target 16.b:** “Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development”

As presented in Figure 2 below, a policy cycle is a set of logical steps starting from the development of policy options to consultations, making a policy decision, securing funding and outlining operational implementation processes to implementation on the ground. Once a final policy decision is made, the policy is implemented and monitored through regular performance measurement and adjusted, if necessary.⁷⁹

FIGURE 2
Typical policymaking process



Source: National Audit Office, *Modern Policy-Making: Ensuring Policies Deliver Value for Money* (London, 2001).

77 Law of Ukraine No. 805-IX of 16 July 2020 “On the amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine on the improvement of electoral legislation”. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/805-20#n287>.

78 Law of Ukraine No. 3695 of 19 June 2020 “On the amendments to some legislative acts on ensuring equal opportunities of caring for a child for his/her mother and father”. Available at https://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=69204.

79 For more on the role of ministries in the policy cycle, see SIGMA, “The Role of Ministries in the Policy System: Policy Development, Monitoring and Evaluation” (2007), SIGMA Paper No. 39.

In the evaluation team’s assessment, the project overemphasized the policy development stages at the expense of supporting the policies’ proper implementation. In Ukraine, many laws and policies adopted by the Government remain statements of good intention often without sufficient follow-up implementation and proper reporting. Only some regional and local partners made some steps forward on the practical implementation of national strategies and policies.⁸⁰ One of the project’s expected outputs was that the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture has the knowledge and skills to design and/or refine a system to track and make public allocations for gender equality (including Official Development Assistance). The Methodology and Guidance for Gender-Responsive Finance Monitoring, based on the OECD-DAC gender marker, was developed by the project but was not yet implemented. This is an indirect indicator of systemic challenges with securing budget allocations for GEWE strategies and policies.

“When conducting a legal assessment of some policies, I was able to find parts that were discriminating women.” – Project training beneficiary

The evaluation team recognized that the project had limited resources to support the nationwide implementation of all strategies and policies that it contributed to, as achieving sufficient coverage to

make a difference at the regional and local level would require significant resources. Although the project recommended localizing NAP 1325 implementation in the midterm evaluation report,⁸¹ it missed an opportunity to deepen its understanding of the realities on the ground⁸² and support policy implementation by developing a few pilots⁸³ to obtain a reliable assessment as to whether a policy is likely to work in practice and achieve its objectives, as well as develop operational protocols and guidance on policy implementation. Such protocols usually cover the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in delivery, the resources that have to be allocated to the policy (including money, skills and infrastructure) and how performance is to be reported. The integration of gender into policies is a first and critical step, but improvements in gender-responsive outcomes will only result from implementation, monitoring and review so that future UN Women interventions can be informed by this experience. The project produced a number of information-rich gender profiles of regions that could have been used to support strategy and policy implementation at the local level, but it is unclear how extensively they were used by local authorities.⁸⁴ Some regional consultations and seminars to raise the awareness of the regional authorities on the policies of providing gender equality were conducted, but they did not significantly improve regional or local compliance with GEWE strategies and policies.⁸⁵ As some key informants indicated and some ministries mentioned in their written submissions, there is a significant need to promote gender-responsive budgeting across all sectors and levels of government.

80 As reported by the project in its annual donor reports in 2018, two oblasts localized the national gender equality policy at the end of 2018: Ternopil Oblast State Administration adopted the Action Plan on the National Action Plan on CEDAW Implementation; and Khmelnytsky Oblast State Administration adopted the Action Plan on the National Action Plan on CEDAW Implementation. In addition, Kherson Oblast State Administration appointed a gender adviser to the head of the administration.

81 As mentioned in the project’s annual donor report for 2019.

82 Some key informants mentioned that the project do not have a solid or comprehensive understanding on GEWE on the ground, particularly in the areas affected by the conflict.

83 The project’s midterm evaluation of the Ukrainian National Action Plan on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” until 2020 found, for example, that the NAP 1325 insufficiently uses piloting and localization of tasks and activities. Utilization of such approaches will enhance the implementation of the WPS agenda at the local community level.

84 See the following document produced by the project: Gender Profiles for 25 oblasts (2018).

85 See the materials from regional consultations and workshop/educational seminar on the priorities of the policy of providing equal rights and opportunities, and its localization (2018).

FINDING 8:

The evaluation team found that the most significant and long-lasting results were achieved by the project in advancing the WPS agenda. WPS is a priority for UN Women, and success can be partially attributed to the effective support of UN Women management.

The evaluation team found the project work in the area of WPS to be an excellent example of how significant changes can happen if policy-level support, capacity development, and support with policy implementation, monitoring, and engagement of CSOs

and other key stakeholders are pursued at the same time. Its interventions were based on solid analysis of the governance of the security and defence sector in Ukraine.⁸⁶ The project “Gender Impact Assessment of the Security and Defense Sector in Ukraine” conducted in 2017 found that “gender equality is not regarded as a part of the reform of the security and defense sector by leaders in the sector. [...] As a consequence, gender is not mainstreamed in the day-to-day work of these institutions and is not given much consideration at the strategical, operational, and tactical levels.” In the evaluation team’s assessment, partly due to project interventions, security and defence leaders in 2021 regarded GEWE as one of their priorities, and a number of steps were taken at the strategic,⁸⁷ operational⁸⁸



Army psychologist Natalya Stypuk conducting an instructing workshop for women and men on active service, 2016, Ukraine. Photo: UN Women/Mytsyk L.

86 See the following document produced by the project: Analysis of integration of gender perspective into the governance model of the security and defence sector reform in Ukraine.

87 The project supported, for example, the “Analysis of disciplinary codes and codes of ethics on observance of human rights, prevention and response mechanisms to discrimination and sexual harassment at the workplace in the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs system” (2020); the Law of Ukraine “On amendments to certain laws of Ukraine concerning the provision of equal rights and opportunities for women and men throughout their service in the Ukrainian Armed Forces and other military formations” (October 2018); and the Action Plan of the Ministry of Defence on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for 2018.

88 To support the implementation of strategies and policies, the project conducted the “Analysis of infrastructural and logistical conditions for men and women in service positions in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its central executive bodies” (2020).

and tactical⁸⁹ level to implement GEWE on the ground. The project's guides,⁹⁰ trainings, study tours and information exchanges⁹¹ were found useful by key informants.⁹² The project also provided training to the mass media on how to cover WPS.⁹³ A number of trainings were delivered for targeted groups of women such as veterans and focused on developing needed labour market skills.⁹⁴

“UN Women’s comparative advantage is its work in WPS.” – National consultant

Due to the project's support, provided in coordination with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Government Commissioner, the security and defence sector became open to constructive dialogues on GEWE. One of the key results of this coordination and cooperation was the institutionalization of the guidelines on integrating gender approaches for training specialists in the security and defence sector of Ukraine.⁹⁵

Key informants from the Parliament and other state institutions highly praised the project for its role in developing a comprehensive Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine⁹⁶ and indicated broad, wide government ownership and support of the strategy. Some provisions of this strategy were then translated into a legal framework, approved by the Parliament in 2021.⁹⁷ It also served as the basis for the development of a matrix of early warning indicators on conflict-related sexual violence, in partnership with the Government Commissioner.

The policy approaches recommended by the project were not only accepted but acted upon to advance the equal rights of men and women in the security and defence sectors. The National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (NAP 1325) for the period 2016–2020,⁹⁸ which was broadly well aligned with the resolution,⁹⁹ has become a multilateral platform, bringing together multiple partners. The Ministry of Defence made practical steps towards the integration

89 See, for instance, the road map/action plan for gender mainstreaming in the policies and procedures of the Ministry of Justice, Draft plan for building capacity of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine to integrate gender approaches in 2019–2021; Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, Action Plan for Implementation of Gender Policy by 2021.

90 Toolkit on the Application of International Standards for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men in the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and its Respective Institutions of Security Sector, Coordinated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (2017). The Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming in the Curricula of the Security and Defence Sector were institutionalized.

91 International conference “National action plans for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security – Best practices, lessons learned and ways forward for Ukraine”; international conference “Journalism and conflict: A gender perspective”, 2018; international conference “Gender Mainstreaming in the Curricula of the Education Institutions of the Security and Defence Sector”, Kyiv, 2019.

92 UN Women Study Tour to Sweden for an Exchange of Experience on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Security and Defence Sector, in particular on Mainstreaming Gender in the Curricula of the Education Institutions of the Security and Defence Sector; and the study tour to Georgia on the National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, an opportunity for representatives of government and civil society from Moldova and Ukraine to benefit from Georgia's experience and lessons learned, 2018.

93 Event report: “Implementation of National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security” Training for Mass Media (2017).

94 Ukrainian Women's Veteran Movement reports on capacity-building and the empowerment of women veterans from 2020.

95 In addition to direct technical assistance, the project developed a range of practical tools to support GEWE implementation in the defence and security sectors, such as “Guidelines on integrating gender approaches in training specialists for the security and defence sector of Ukraine”. A more comprehensive overview of all activities can be found in the National Consultant's report to support comprehensive gender mainstreaming and the integration of the Women, Peace and Security agenda into the higher education curricula of security and defence sector institutions, 2019; and the final report on progress, achievements, lessons learned, recommendations.

96 The Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine (2018) was developed with the technical and financial support of UN Women Ukraine and the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine in consultation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine.

97 On 20 May 2021, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the Draft Law No. 2689 “On Amendments to Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Implementation of Provisions of International Criminal Law and Humanitarian Law”.

of the NAP 1325 in its sector and accepted a number of the project recommendations.⁹⁸ In 2018, the Ministry introduced the changes to the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men During Military Service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and Other Military Formations”, which abolished a number of restrictions on women serving in the military. In recent years, Ukrainian women have been given the opportunity to serve in almost all military positions in the Armed Forces. As a result of these measures, 15 per cent of military personnel are women. In order to realize the equal rights of men and women, the Ministry of Defence developed Resolution No. 486 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 15 May 2019 “On Amendments to the Regulations on the Military Lyceum”, which provided young women with the opportunity to study in military (naval) lyceums. In 2020, for the first time in the history of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, 22 women were admitted to military lyceums, while in 2021, there were already 80 women enrolled. It is expected that implementation of the second National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2021-2025)⁹⁹ will further expand the rights of women in the military and security sectors. The evaluation team appreciated the pragmatic and clear approach of the Ministry of Defence in promoting GEWE as key informants well identified the areas that they plan to address, including, for example, the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs was another security institution that has been working on integrating the WPS agenda in the security sector and law enforcement reform. Partly due to the project’s work, the share of women police officers in the National Police of Ukraine increased from 16 per cent in 2016 to 22 per cent in 2021; and in the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the share of women increased from 12 per

cent in 2016 to 19 per cent in 2021. In the National Guard of Ukraine, there were no women staff in leading positions in 2016, while in 2021, they constitute 7 per cent of institutional leadership. As of 1 January 2021, 41 per cent of senior staff positions in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the territorial bodies, institutions, establishments and enterprises that it oversees were occupied by women. Key informants indicated that the Ministry has a clear plan of action on how to advance GEWE and intends to conduct a gender audit/assessment in the National Guard, further open women’s access to the ministry-run educational institutions and focus on the prevention of violence in the workplace.

FINDING 9:

The capacities of supported duty bearers were strengthened through training and direct support. Institutional capacities to provide GEWE training of public servants have been strengthened. There is a risk of capacity replacement as some decision makers perceive the project’s consultants as permanent staff assigned to their institutions.

The project has significantly contributed to the capacity development of civil servants from the stakeholders’ institutions and local administrations. The National Agency for Civil Service institutionalized five curricula for gender equality training for civil servants in 2019 and 2020 in the Ukrainian School of Governance and will continue the curricula development in 2021 to ensure the presence of comprehensive gender equality training for the civil service. The key informants mentioned, for example, that in 2019, the National Agency for Civil Service launched the training course

98 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 113-r of 24 February 2016 “National Action Plan for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 ‘Women, Peace, Security’ until 2020” (revised in 2018). Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/113-2016-%D1%80#Text>.

99 See, for example, the project’s midterm evaluation of the Ukrainian National Action Plan on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 “women, peace and security” until 2020 (2018).

100 Recommendations accepted were a wide range and included the inclusion of women into military education, the elimination of barriers to career advancement, improvements to social protection, the provision of free transportation, support with housing of women veterans and many others. See, for example, the following document produced by the project: ‘Invisible battalion 2.0’ – Women veterans returning to peaceful life (Sociological Research).

101 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 1544 of 28 October 2020 “National Action Plan for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 ‘Women, Peace, Security’ until 2025”. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1544-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

“School of Trainers on Gender and Legal Examination”, while in 2020, a general short-term professional development programme titled “Integration of a Gender Approach in the Development of Regulations” was developed jointly for civil servants of central executive bodies (350 civil servants underwent advanced training). In total, in 2020, 8,179 civil servants and 1,912 local officials were trained in gender equality.

Institutional foundations for continuous capacity improvements have been established and strengthened. The National Agency for Civil Service confirmed that GEWE training would be institutionalized and that resources produced with project support would be widely used in various gender trainings.

Although the project did not have a robust system to assess long-term practical use of knowledge and skills acquired through trainings, the interviewees provided overwhelming evidence on how they applied new knowledge. Almost all informants highly praised the project’s capacity development activities. The trainings’ beneficiaries most appreciated the practical side of training, through which they were introduced to practical aspects of GEWE application.

The mean score for the post-training self-assessment in the survey for training participants was 7.22 on a 10-point scale (7.49 for women, 6.98 for men), indicating a 1.72-point increase in self-assessed knowledge of GEWE (a total change of 2.06 points for women and 1.28 points for men) from the pre-training self-assessment score. However, men self-assessed their baseline knowledge higher than women and picked lower scores for the post-training assessment. The training “Gender Mainstreaming in the Security and Defence Sector” had the largest change in self-assessment scores – from 5.5 pre-training to 7.5 post-training. Further, 63 per cent of women and 45 per cent of men said that they apply their new knowledge and skills “often” and “all the time”.

The survey also asked participants to provide examples of how their new skills and knowledge were applied in their professional lives. The most relevant responses are quoted as follows:

- “I pay more attention to these issues in the course that I teach.”
- “When conducting a legal assessment of some policies, I was able to find parts that were discriminating women.”

- “I developed operating procedures for hiring new employees.”
- “I use it as a head of the gender advisory unit in the military academy where I work.” (five similar responses)
- “I wrote articles on gender issues; I also teach on gender policy.”
- “The teaching curriculum was updated.” (nine similar responses)
- “I rebalanced the gender composition of the department’s leadership.”
- “I use examples and cases from the training in my own lectures and seminars.”
- “I highlight the gender composition of temporary commissions and use gender-sensitive language.”
- “We included gender consideration in the construction project at one of the government buildings.”

As some key informants suggested, trainings can reflect sector specifics and include some practical policy and programmatic work exercises to demonstrate how GEWE can be included in regular ministry work and be more relevant and effective. In the survey of training participants, many shared that they adjusted their academic curriculum at military academies or developed gender mainstreaming action plans, while others stated that they changed their recruitment policies or the composition of their management boards.

By placing consultants in the targeted institutions, the project not only provided timely and high-quality GEWE policy advice but also contributed to improving internal policy processes, organizational efficiency and institutional learning. The consultants worked jointly with the national decision makers and senior public servants in providing quality, independent, forthright and objective advice to political leaders. The consultants built good working relationships with the government officials, but there were instances when consultants placed in government offices were overburdened with tasks not directly relevant to GEWE policy advice and their terms of reference, which diverted their focus from the priority policy issues identified by stakeholders at the very beginning of their deployment. The evaluation team was concerned that these situations may ultimately result in mission creep where the consultants gradually get more and more involved in operational functions that should be performed by public servants.

The majority of government partners agreed that the project succeeded in bridging the critical, short-term and sometimes long-term capacity gaps. Some key national partners, including the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and the Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, expect the project to continue or even expand its support through the national consultants. Despite its appeal to address short-term capacity gaps and meet demands, the evaluation team is concerned that the modality of placing consultants on long-term assignments increases the risks of capacity substitution as some national partners expect UN Women to continue placing its consultants in supported institutions.

The evaluation team found that capacity gaps in ministries and especially at the regional and local levels are significant. Many national partners lack the institutional capacity to advance GEWE, especially in terms of practical implementation, and would depend on future assistance and resources from outside donors.

FINDING 10:

The project supported the ‘leave no one behind’ agenda, but progress was uneven, limited by data and strategy gaps as well as inconsistent partnerships with CSOs representing marginalized communities to make the perspective of the ultimate beneficiaries better represented at the national and local levels.

The evaluation team recognized that there are significant gender-related statistics and other data gaps that prevent a high-quality analysis of the barriers to gender equality and human rights realization faced by the most vulnerable women such as rural residents, IDPs, ethnic minorities, women and girls with disabilities and others. It can be expected that once the gender-disaggregated data are available and data producers start following the high-quality gender-sensitive data

toolkit¹⁰² developed by the project, the data to support evidence-based decision-making will be available to develop better-targeted support focusing on the most vulnerable groups of women.

The demand side of accountability, i.e. the rights holders, is generally considered weak in Ukraine, and human rights awareness particularly among women and men in vulnerable groups remains low.¹⁰³ The project did not have a comprehensive approach to obtain the necessary evidence, including through CSO engagement to make the perspective of the ultimate beneficiaries (such as of women with disabilities, women IDPs and others) better represented at the national and local levels. There were also strong calls from key informants for UN Women to actively increase its engagement with marginalized groups through its programmatic and normative work and to support the institutionalization of platforms representing these groups.

“CSOs are the institutional memory – therefore, what is needed is real, effective CSO and government cooperation, especially at the local levels.”
– UN Women staff

Civil society is one of UN Women’s most important constituencies to lead, promote and coordinate efforts to advance the full realization of women’s rights and opportunities. Women’s groups and CSOs in Ukraine represent a potentially critical social movement for addressing and overcoming many of the gender-based inequalities prevalent in the country.

FINDING 11:

The project’s work on social norms change to support GEWE was promising and has a strong potential to contribute to ongoing systemic changes.

¹⁰² See the following document produced by the project: Gender-Sensitive Data – Collecting, Analysis, Monitoring and Reporting in Ukraine: A Toolkit for Data Producers (2021).

¹⁰³ UN Women, *Analysis of vulnerabilities of women and men in the context of decentralization in the conflict-affected areas of Ukraine* (2017). Available at <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/12/analysis-of-vulnerabilities-of-women-and-men-decentralization-in-the-conflict-affected-areas-ukraine>.



Grass root women activists at the Seminar on Human Rights for Rural Women, 18 October 2017. Photo: UN Women/Volodymyr Shuvayev

The empowerment of women may not be sustained unless there are real shifts in social norms. The change in social norms remains a relatively under-analysed, under-developed and under-measured area that requires first deepening the analysis of and then targeting the context-specific attitudes, stereotypes and perceptions held by men, women, boys and girls.

“Some senior managers in public administration remain skeptical about the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment.”
– Ministry staff

Engaging influencers, changing behaviours among individuals and changing professional practices are long-term objectives. The project implemented a wide

range of awareness-raising campaigns at the national and regional levels,¹⁰⁴ including media contests, and provided guidance to journalists on how to conduct gender- and conflict-sensitive reporting.¹⁰⁵ The number of fans and followers of UN Women’s social media where the project information was available has been constantly increasing. In 2019, for example, more than 50 per cent of Facebook page visitors were women located in Kyiv.¹⁰⁶

The **HeForShe** campaign drives for awareness, enabling men to identify with the issues of gender equality and the crucial role that they can play in their own lives, and at more structural levels in their communities, to end the persisting inequality faced by women and girls. To reach the awareness goals, different tools were used: publications, social media activities, events and partnerships. HeForShe

104 Media Coverage of the Regional Consultations of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration in 2018

105 See the project’s Guidelines for Gender and Conflict-sensitive Reporting: Standard Operating Procedures on how to conduct monitoring on gender-sensitive reporting by journalists of the Public Broadcasting Company.

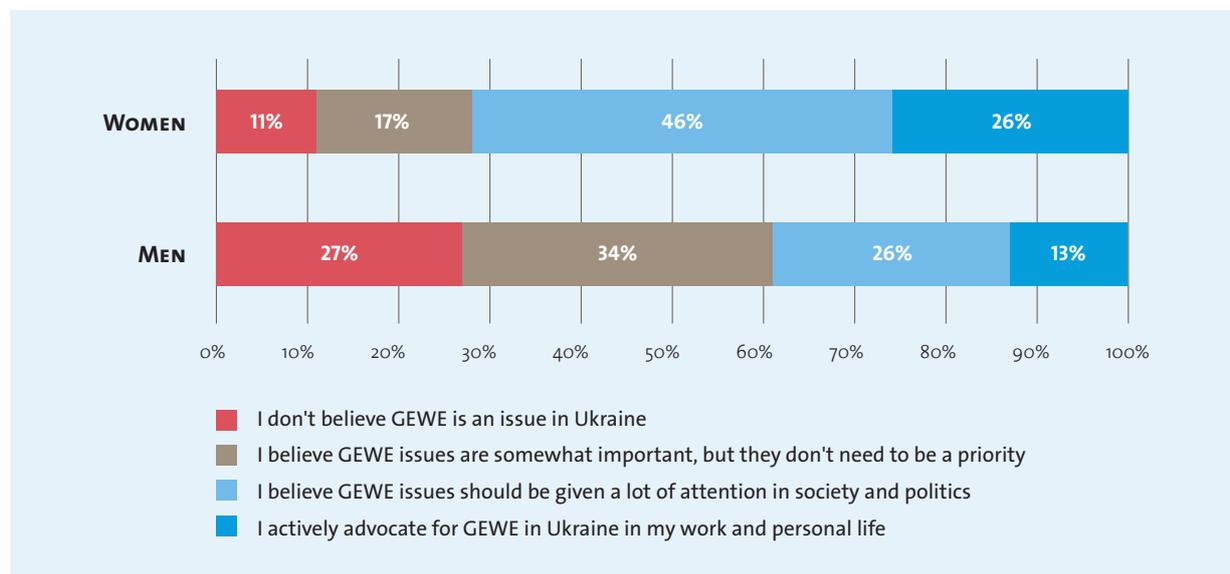
106 UN Women, *Communications 2019 Year in Review*.

advocacy supports UN Women Ukraine’s policy and programming agenda by engaging men and boys in the achievement of its strategic country objectives: Governance and Leadership; Ending Violence against Women and Girls; and Women, Peace and Security. The HeForShe campaign was engaging leaders from diverse and influential fields, such as in academia, sports, the arts, the private sector, government and more, to serve as public advocates for change and to commit to concrete progress towards gender equality within their own fields and institutions. The campaign in Ukraine provided opportunities for a younger generation of activists, as well as marginalized groups, to get involved. The media, social media and universities were key to reaching the target audiences.¹⁰⁷ In the evaluation team’s view, the HeForShe campaign is an innovative approach, having engaged men and boys in gender equality advocacy and included more than 40 strategic partnerships with various entities. Many key informants highly evaluated the campaign, and it was extensively supported by some national government institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰⁸ Although the M&E of the HeForShe campaign was

weak and the benchmark data were not collected, the number of people engaged and interested in it was continuously increasing.

The HeForShe campaign is innovative and well received by the diverse partners and beneficiaries. In the absence of a comprehensive Communication for Social Change Strategy and Action Plan, which would have contained tailored communication strategies to focus on core target audiences and would have included audience-specific analysis, communication objectives and activities, the campaign is unlikely to achieve transformative results. Social normative change is a lengthy process that requires long-term investment to materialize transformative results. Although the project supported the development of the Concept of Gender Equality Communication¹⁰⁹ (by 2025), which was approved by the Government in 2020, it is expected that the strategy would act as a road map for the Government to conduct communications campaigns on promoting GEWE, but the action plan on its implementation was not available when this evaluation was underway.

FIGURE 3
Response of UN Women training beneficiaries to a question on GEWE importance



¹⁰⁷ UN Women, *HeForShe Report 2018* (2019).

¹⁰⁸ A range of activities pursued through HeForShe in Ukraine by the project was very diverse. See, for instance, HeForShe in Ukraine 2019 Strategy Note.

¹⁰⁹ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 1128-r of 16 September 2020. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1128-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

The importance of GEWE was explored through the survey of training beneficiaries. The respondents were asked to assess their current perception of GEWE issues in Ukraine by choosing from four options. The options and the distribution of responses are presented below:

- I don't believe GEWE is an issue in Ukraine **(18 per cent)**
- I believe GEWE issues are somewhat important, but they don't need to be a priority **(24 per cent)**
- I believe GEWE issues should be given a lot of attention in society and politics **(38 per cent)**
- I actively advocate for GEWE in Ukraine in my work and personal life **(20 per cent)**

As the section on COVID-19 outlined, the project faced significant challenges associated with the pandemic, but it quickly responded to them with innovative approaches to the delivery of training and policy advice that were well received by the beneficiaries. It generated new knowledge and practices that would most likely be continued after the project's completion. **No unintended results were discovered by the evaluation team.**

3.5 Efficiency

Efficiency was assessed by evaluating the extent to which the management of the project ensured timeliness and an efficient utilization of resources to achieve its objectives, including budget monitoring. The evaluation team assessed whether, given the budget, the specified output could have been achieved at a lower cost. As some elements of the project's interventions included elements of soft assistance (e.g. regulations and guidelines development, training, awareness-raising), it makes the application of conventional efficiency indicators to these areas not feasible. As a result, the evaluation does not present a 'value for money' or full efficiency analysis, but it does present comments on the allocation of resources under the project and their deployment relative to the results generated.

FINDING 12:

Results were achieved in an economically efficient manner and with manageable transaction costs. The project delivered within the initial budget and generally without significant deviations from intended project results, with only minor delays due to COVID-19. The project's cost-effectiveness was enhanced by synergetic efforts with other projects of UN Women, other UN agencies and international organizations.

The evaluation team found that UN Women allocated sufficient resources to achieve the project objectives. The evaluation team concluded that the project was able to achieve results in an economic manner and with manageable transaction costs. Although some national partners interviewed for this evaluation could not answer the questions on efficiency as they were not familiar with the project's financial management, those who were more closely involved with the project's operations confirmed that the results were achieved with little waste and duplication. The reported financial data indicate that there was straightforward spending as per the approved budget by UN Women, with funds spent in an accountable and cost-effective manner. The partners were keen to emphasize both the flexibility and adaptability of the project during its implementation.

Interviewees reported that, on the whole, project activities were implemented on time. No significant delays in activity implementation took place, with the exception of the masculinity study with the Ministry of Internal Affairs that took three years to complete, instead of one.

The project's positioning in the 'centre of the reforms' allowed the team to establish strong connections with other organizations, including other UN agencies and local CSOs. Oftentimes, these partnerships resulted in joint or cost-shared activities, such as the Ukrainian Women's Congress, the Rapid Gender Assessment of the Situation and Needs of Women in the Context of COVID-19 in Ukraine and others. Such an approach allowed UN Women to stay present in all relevant areas of governance and WPS in Ukraine while efficiently spending financial and human resources.

At the same time, this practice makes it more challenging to directly attribute results to UN Women, as often initiatives have varying degrees of contribution (i.e. only technical support, only financial support or a combination of both). UN Women also contributed to the drafting of many relevant legislative acts that were adopted or under consideration, piggybacking on the initiatives of other stakeholders.

The project optimized efficiencies through the following strategies:

- Local experts and organizations were engaged whenever possible, instead of more expensive international consultants.
- Reclassification of the project manager position from an international to national one resulted in significant cost savings.
- Open, transparent and value-for-money UN Women procurement processes were utilized.
- Procurement was conducted in bulk for a number of UN Women projects.
- Printing costs were reduced as materials produced were disseminated through online platforms and on flash drives.
- Cost-sharing initiatives were employed with other organizations.
- Innovative online training modalities were used.

The evaluation team agreed with the project team's projections of using 100 per cent of the budget by the end of February 2022. Despite the impact of COVID-19, which affected some activities such as face-to-face training, round-table discussions, international/regional travel and other activities that had to be cancelled due to travel restrictions and security measures, the budget was effectively realized. One of the factors that added to the timely and effective implementation of budgets included the flexibility of the project design, which allowed UN Women to react to the changes in the context and reallocate the budget if needed. In addition, partners also adapted rapidly to the changing context and ensured effective implementation of the planned activities, without jeopardizing their quality, in online environments. The evaluation team learned about the willingness of some private companies to closely collaborate with UN Women.

FINDING 13:

The project was effectively managed. The staffing structure was efficient, and the mix was appropriate, but the large number of national consultants placed in ministries made it somewhat challenging to manage. The lack of a dedicated M&E position made assessment of the project's progress and results inconsistent.

All key informants were of the opinion that the project had been well managed and that the management was very professional and well organized, which was supported by the project documentation. The interviewees indicated that the project was responsive to partners, with a high level of leadership and commitment, being open to new solutions, bringing 'value added' and being well placed to support the Government in advancing the GEWE agenda. The management and consultants were praised for their responsiveness, their focus on results, and the quality and relevance of the policy advice and other support provided. It seems that the project manager was overburdened with a high volume of time-consuming policy, operational and administrative tasks of overseeing a wide range of consultants placed in line ministries and other components of the NWM at the expense of spearheading strategic interventions focusing on deepening the project's impact.

The project was producing regular, clear and well-written monitoring and donor reports, including by individual consultants. Project documentation contained detailed descriptions of the results achieved, the budget expenditure and other information that was set out in a concise and constructive manner. The changes to the RRF were made in response to COVID-19 realities and were well documented.

An essential element of managing the results framework is the need to review and adjust measures and expectations over time as more experience and understanding are acquired, especially in COVID-19 realities and a political climate of high turnover. It is unrealistic to expect that the project would be able to identify a perfect set of results, activities and objectively verifiable indicators that would last for the whole project duration. Although some M&E work was undertaken by the project, in the absence of a

dedicated M&E staff member, the project did not consistently capture progress with regard to its long-term outcomes. Specifically, some critical elements were not systematically captured, such as the effects of UN Women interventions on policy implementation results that affect the most vulnerable women in particular, as well as the contribution of project capacity development interventions to improve the ability of national institutions to produce better-focused GEWE policies and programmes. Some innovative, promising areas of social norms change were pursued through such interventions as the HeForShe campaign; and others, where the measurement of results was challenging, were not pursued, which limited the extent of evidence to support further work in these areas. Moreover, the project did not have the necessary skill set to support monitoring capacity of the NWM. In its 2017 donor report, the project indicated that “many government institutions do not have monitoring systems in place to track progress relevant to gender equality commitments.”

The M&E framework was not comprehensive enough to support proper outcome-level monitoring to assess the project’s contribution to long-term strategic goals; this was complicated by the fact that for many targets, such as improving the NWM, trainings of public servants and others, the national partners played a significant role. Their contributions were not well delineated and captured through corresponding indicators. Often, the measurement of inputs and activities was overemphasized at the expense of focus on attaining broader and strategic development goals, and subsequent reporting focused mainly on activities and outputs. The project monitoring system, for example, effectively captured such output indicators as the number of individuals trained or resources/knowledge products developed rather than a change in knowledge, skill or attitudes or utilization of analytical materials in policymaking.

3.6 Sustainability

Sustainability was assessed by examining the extent to which the benefits achieved by the project are sustainable (i.e. are likely to continue beyond the intervention cycle). Specifically, the evaluation assessed to what extent the outcomes and benefits generated by the project would continue to exist after the project’s conclusion. It also evaluated the effectiveness of the project’s strategies to enhance

sustainability. Sustainability was analysed from various perspectives: legal/policy, institutional, capacity development and financial.

The core dimensions of sustainability that were assessed by the evaluation team included the following:

- The extent of government commitment to advance GEWE
- The adoption and implementation of laws, policies and regulations promoted by the project, including its recommendations
- Improvements to the enabling factors for the long-term realization of GEWE rights such as accountability systems and the capacities of NWM components and national, regional and local governments
- Public statements by political figures as to the importance and commitment of the Government to sustain GEWE reforms

The evaluation found that the project and its partners were able to ensure national ownership of most of the project results; however, it would be important to continue maintaining focus on the implementation of policy reform and institutional capacity development.

FINDING 14:

Sustainability was broadly supported by strategic government commitment and ownership of GEWE. There is a relatively high probability that the project’s advice incorporated in the legislative and institutional reforms would be sustained over time. Frequent turnover of senior decision makers, changes in government budget allocation priorities, weak local capacities and underdeveloped accountability mechanisms may inhibit the sustainability of sectoral and local implementation results.

The evaluation team found that the project managed to build a strong sense of ownership of GEWE reforms among a range of key decision makers and mid-level public servants. Prospects of sustainability were enhanced by strengthening the capacities of the NWM to lead and coordinate GEWE reforms. The following

institutional changes to which the project contributed are most likely to be sustainable:

- Ukraine became a full member of the Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality,¹¹⁰ an international initiative of equal rights and opportunities, setting the commitment to develop barrier-free and inclusive public spaces, educate children on the principles of equality between women and men, prevent violence and reduce the gender pay gap, while creating opportunities for men to take care of children.
- The Cabinet of Ministers adopted the National Action Plan¹¹¹ to implement the Biarritz Partnership in Ukraine in October 2020.
- The second NAP 1325 was adopted by the Government.
- In 2020, Ukraine also joined EPIC, the UN Women-ILO-OECD initiative for equal pay.¹¹²
- The Cabinet of Ministers adopted the State Social Programme on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence until 2025. The Government has already started the process of preparing the next strategic document.
- The adopted Law “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Granting Status and Social Guarantees to the Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO)” provides women who participated as volunteers in the ATO in the east with an opportunity to be formally recognized as veterans and apply for social guarantees and benefits.¹¹³
- The Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration has improved GEWE coordination among donors working in Ukraine through the establishment of the Intersectoral Working Groups on Gender Equality.¹¹⁴ It is co-chaired by a representative of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy and the development partners (Canada and Sweden). The project supported the facilitation of the meetings of the Sectoral Working Group on Gender Equality, compiling the gender equality priorities of the development partners using the Common Results Framework of the Sectoral Working Group on Gender Equality, and managing a matrix of donor-funded gender equality projects.
- The Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy is well institutionalized and capacitated.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs mainstreamed gender equality in its work through the implementation of its Strategy and Action Plan on Ensuring Equal Rights of Women and Men.¹¹⁵
- There is a strong commitment of some ministries such as the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs to advance GEWE. The gender unit in the Ministry of Internal Affairs is institutionalized.

110 Ukraine joined the Biarritz Partnership; see <https://www.elysee.fr/admin/upload/default/0001/05/e8aa2525311a98227c935900a-befdc7eb911896.pdf>.

111 The Cabinet of Ministers adopted the National Action Plan to implement the Biarritz Partnership, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/uryad-shvaliv-plan-zahodiv-z-realizaciyi-partnerstva-biarric>.

112 EPIC is the Equal Pay International Coalition and is led by the ILO, UN Women and the OECD. The Coalition’s goal is to achieve equal pay for women and men everywhere. By bringing together a diverse set of actors with different areas of focus and expertise, EPIC supports governments, employers, workers and their organizations to make concrete and coordinated progress towards this goal. EPIC is currently the only multi-stakeholder partnership working to reduce the gender pay gap at the global, regional and national levels. Ukraine is now developing the Strategy on Narrowing the Pay Gap: Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, draft documents discussion, draft Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On the Adoption of the National Strategy to Reduce the Gender Pay Gap till 2023 and an Action Plan on Its Implementation” (me.gov.ua).

113 Law of Ukraine No. 329-IX “On Amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine regarding granting status and social guarantees to the participants of the anti-terrorist operation (ATO)”. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/329-20>.

114 The project supported the facilitation of the meetings of the Intersectoral Working Groups on Gender Equality, compiling the gender equality priorities of the development partners using the Common Results Framework of the Sectoral Working Group on Gender Equality, and managing a matrix of donor-funded gender equality projects.

115 Strategy on Ensuring Equal Rights of Women and Men in the Diplomatic Service by 2025 and the 2020 Action Plan on its implementation, informed by findings and recommendations of the gender equality audit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Such practical steps as the mentoring of women diplomats, the support of women leaders in the Ministry and others were implemented.

- Knowledge of GEWE is now required for some categories of senior public servants; an amended procedure for the selection of public service officials introduced mandatory competencies on gender equality for some groups of civil servants.

“You can’t underestimate [UN Women staff’s] work on the 1325 strategy and action plan. They have made a big difference in having this topic prioritized within the Government.” – UN agency representative

While some changes are systemic, with high sustainability prospects, the evaluation team was concerned that the institutionalization of ‘gender advisors’ in all targeted line ministries has been inconsistent. In some ministries, they are not designated, while in others, they may not have the necessary capacity and influence to effectively advance GEWE. The evaluation team found that strategically, the sustainability of results for GEWE reforms may be stymied due to the limited accountability of key national, regional and local partners for actual implementation. The accountability and reporting requirements of all partners in the NWM remain complex and not well supportive of effective GEWE agenda implementation.¹¹⁶

“The need to prepare gender advisors – they need a lot of practical trainings to develop skills to do their job.” – Ministry staff

FINDING 15:

Surveyed training beneficiaries confirmed that they have become more confident to implement GEWE as a result of taking the trainings. The national authorities have committed to continue with and expand a range of GEWE trainings introduced by the project.

The evaluation team found that gender training is relatively well institutionalized in the Government partly due to extensive project methodological and technical support.¹¹⁷ The project delivered a wide range of trainings on GEWE for various audiences that were well received by the beneficiaries.¹¹⁸ There is a high demand for gender training among public servants, and the National Agency for Civil Service made significant progress by increasing the number of training opportunities available and integrating gender considerations into the public administration reform process through the institutionalization of gender equality training for civil servants.¹¹⁹ The agency allocated sufficient funding to training on gender equality that would enable trainings to continue and expand in the long term.¹²⁰ Some other trainings focused specifically on the staff of the Ministry of Justice and covered gender analysis of the legislation.¹²¹ Key informants in the security and defence sectors confirmed that they adopted a number of training approaches and adjusted their training curricula to reflect GEWE in response to project recommendations.¹²²

116 The project produced an analysis of the NWM that can be found in the draft report “Functional analysis of the scope and distribution of powers at the national, regional, and local institutional levels for the implementation of gender equality policy”, updated after public consultations, September 2020. The functional analysis was presented and discussed in 2019 during the multi-stakeholder meeting with the participation of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Members of Parliament, the Ministry of Social Policy, CSOs and development partners. As some changes took place in the composition of the NWM in 2020, the functional analysis has been updated by UN Women to reflect it and has been submitted to the Government for validation.

117 See the following document produced by the project: Strategic Training Framework on Gender and Women, Peace and Security of the Security and Defense Sector in Ukraine 4 June 2018, Preliminary report on assessment of training options and outline of process to develop strategic training framework.

118 Two 2-day trainings on “Integration of the equal rights and opportunities of men and women to the activities of executive bodies in realization of reforms”, 2017; and training on capacity-building on the monitoring of national and international commitments on gender equality for the experts of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, members of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Harmonization of the National Indicators of Gender Equality with International Standards (3 July 2019).

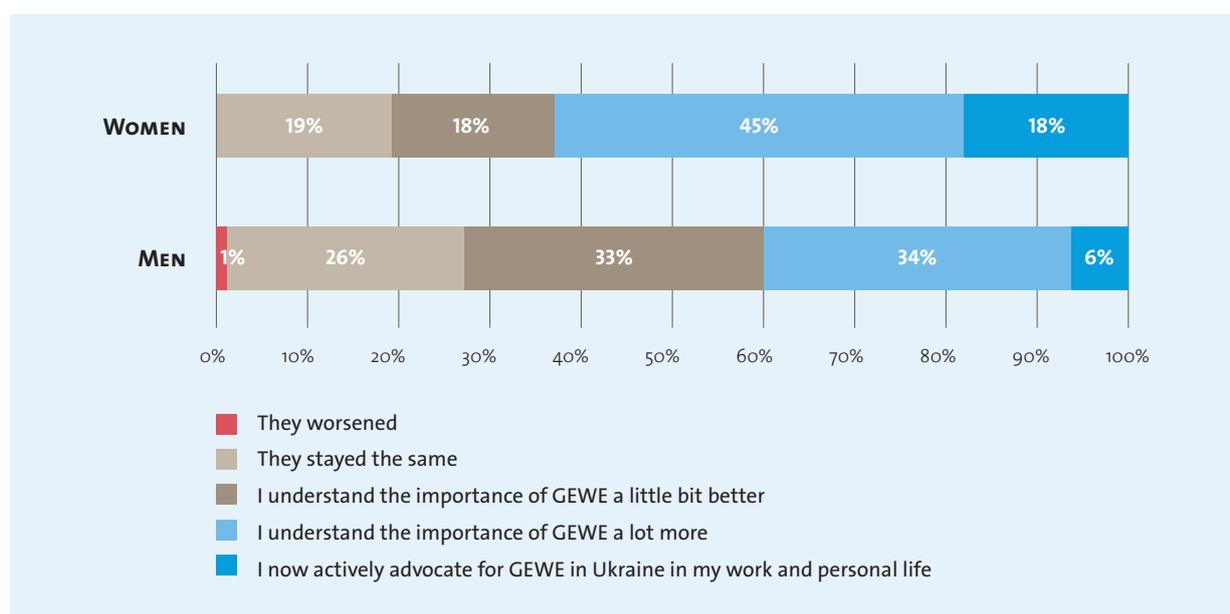
119 To support the National Agency for Civil Service, the project conducted working meetings with relevant partners, supported drafting various training programmes and provided curricula development. See the project’s final report about progress of the initialization of the professional training of civil servants on gender analysis of legislation.

120 Some new training programmes adopted and implemented by the National Agency for Civil Service include: Gender Approaches in Human Resources Management in Civil Service, Gender Mainstreaming in the Process of Drafting Normative Acts, etc.

The evaluation team found that many of the training beneficiaries can be champions of GEWE reforms in their respective institutions, which is critical for the sustainability of project results. Many of them have significant experience in different government institutions and are trusted by decision makers. Equipped with the knowledge and skills in GEWE, they can convince decision makers of the importance of GEWE and provide practical support.

The trainings' beneficiaries who were interviewed for this evaluation were asked to assess how participation in project training events has impacted their perceptions of GEWE with four options to choose from, and they provided the following responses as captured in Figure 4 below. As the figure presents, the majority of respondents indicated that they understand the importance of GEWE a little bit better or a lot more, thus confirming the effectiveness of the trainings delivered.

FIGURE 4
Response of training beneficiaries to the question, “Have the perceptions and beliefs around gender equality and women’s empowerment changed because of your participation in UN Women training event(s)?”



FINDING 16:
 High-quality practical resources and advice developed with the project’s support are available, and some of them were used, but it was difficult to assess whether they will continue to be used by decision makers and other targeted groups.

The evaluation team found that all knowledge products developed by the project are of high quality and relevant to the realities of Ukraine. The evaluation team confirmed that the Rapid Gender Assessment of the Situation and Needs of Women in the Context of COVID-19 in Ukraine¹²³ was used for longer-term support to women veterans and women IDPs with rehabilitation, empowerment and capacity development. Some of the knowledge products, such as the

121 Conducted by the project: online training "Gender Analysis of Legislation: from Concepts to Implementation Practices", online training "Implementation of the State Policy of Gender Equality in Public Authorities".
 122 See, for instance, the project’s “Handbook on the Strategic Training Framework on Gender and Women, Peace and Security for the Ukraine Armed Forces”.
 123 See <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/rapid-gender-assessment-of-the-situation-and-needs-of-women>.



Brian Heilman, Senior Research Officer of Promundo-US discussing the implementation of the Masculinity Study in the Security Sector of Ukraine with the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and National Academy of Internal Affairs, 18 September 2019, Kyiv, Ukraine. Photo: National Academy of Internal Affairs

“Analysis of integration of gender perspective into the governance model of the public administration reform” and “Gender analysis of Ukraine’s justice sector reform’s governance model and relevant policies, legal acts and strategies”, contain solid analysis and practicable strategic recommendations. Some of them are developed for public servants to support their gender assessment of draft laws and contain concrete steps that have to be undertaken in such reviews.¹²⁴

Partly as a result of being spread too thin, and due to the limited attention paid to the effective dissemination of knowledge products, the project underutilized its strong position with the NWM and other stakeholders to disseminate these products consistently,

extensively and effectively, supporting their use in policymaking. Some project-supported products, such as the gender self-assessment of the State Emergency Service, informed some components of the Sectoral Action Plan on the NAP 1325 implementation. Some analytical documents developed by the project, such as the gender analysis of public administration reform, informed the acceptance of the Order of the Deputy Prime Minister on gender mainstreaming in public administration.¹²⁵ The evaluation team found that some innovative research and practical recommendations directed at psychologists in the National Police, National Guard and State Border Guard were not widely disseminated among target audiences.¹²⁶

124 Produced by the project: Практичний посібник з проведення гендерно-правової експертизи актів законодавства та проектів нормативно-правових актів [The Practical Guide to Gender Analysis of Legislation and Draft Regulations] (2020). Available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/1/the-practical-guide-to-gender-analysis-of-legislation-and-draft-regulations>.

125 The Order mandated the central executive bodies to (a) introduce gender competencies and build the capacities of civil servants from all categories; (b) mainstream gender equality in human resource policies for the civil service; (c) develop a matrix of national indicators of gender equality; and (d) integrate gender equality into regional development planning.

126 See, for example, the project’s “International men and gender equality survey, special edition: Security sector in Ukraine”, February 2021.

FINDING 17:

CSOs were empowered, but their continuous involvement in policymaking depends on their increased capacities and the openness of the Government for continuous dialogue.

Overall, the project knowledge management activities were inconsistently aligned with the project's policy advocacy work and did not engage a broad range of stakeholders, including CSOs.

The project made an important contribution to strengthening the capacities of some CSOs and the institutionalization of CSOs' participation in GEWE policy dialogue at the national level. There were examples where CSO involvement in national legislative and policy reforms was more permanent such as WPS, while in other cases, there was limited participation of CSOs representing or supporting the most vulnerable groups of women in policy reform mechanisms, such as in the design of social services. To a large extent, the active role of civil society in maintaining project results depends on the Government's willingness to engage with CSOs who monitor and advocate for legislative and policy reform.

The project did not approach building effective cooperation relationships with CSOs strategically. The project provided capacity development support and supported CSOs in contributing to the development of the Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals;¹²⁷ a shadow report to the CEDAW Committee (90 women's CSOs from 20 regions of Ukraine were engaged); the NAP 1325;¹²⁸ the Roma Strategy (11 Roma CSOs were involved);¹²⁹ and the National Strategy on Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Viral Hepatitis for the period till 2030.¹³⁰ CSOs that were engaged by the project or collaborated on joint policy initiatives reported that they recognize the project as

a crucial and important actor and greatly appreciated its capacity development support in the areas of policy advocacy, but they also highlighted the importance of a more long-term, participatory and results-oriented cooperation strategy.

FINDING 18:

GEWE legislation, institutional settings and improved capacities at the national and local levels are important and necessary for GEWE advancement, but in conditions of decentralization, they are not sufficient to secure long-term GEWE improvements at the local level.

Continuous strong political will and the commitment of multiple stakeholders and their capacity are needed, but equally important is the demand from rights holders. Strategically, the rights holders have to be empowered to make the existing formal institutions work. Key informants described various regional mechanisms engaging CSOs in relevant GEWE work, but they indicated that these practices are inconsistent. In the evaluation team's view, these local accountability mechanisms have a strong potential to create and institutionalize demand for change on the ground, and they may succeed if scaled up nationwide.

Overall, the project made a positive contribution to improving the GEWE situation in Ukraine. Through the survey conducted for this evaluation, the project's training beneficiaries were asked to assess how the situation with GEWE has changed in Ukraine since 2017, with four options for their response. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that it somewhat or majorly improved, as Figure 5 below presents. There was no statistically significant difference in the responses between women and men.

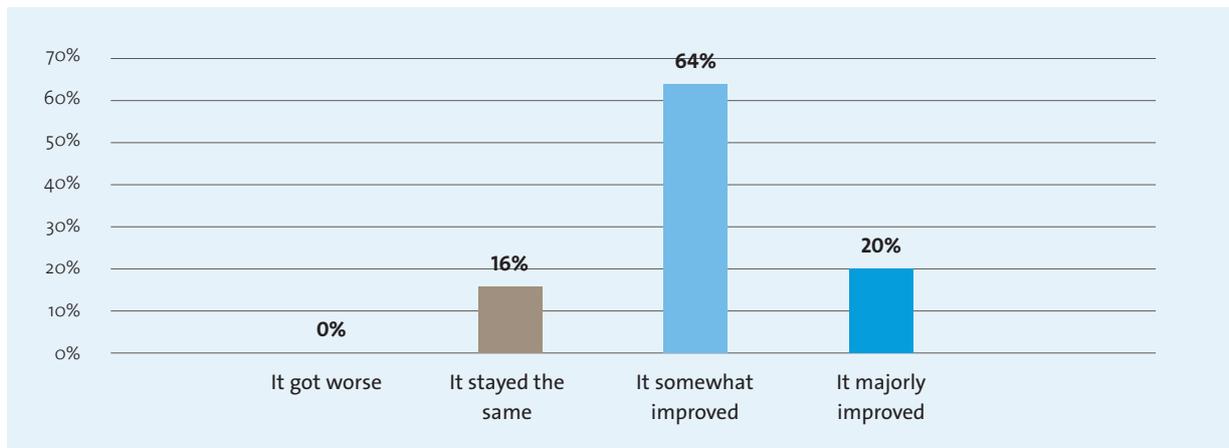
127 See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26295VNR_2020_Ukraine_Report.pdf and the project's "Consultations with Representatives of Civil Society Organizations and Gender Experts: Discussion on the draft National Voluntary Review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (VNR)", 19 May 2020.

128 See the following document produced by the project: Recommendations of women's CSOs to the NAP 1325.

129 See the following document produced by the project: Recommendations for Public Consultations on the Roma Strategy.

130 Adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 1415-r of 27 November 2019. Available at <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-shvalennya-derzhavnoyi-strategii-a1415r>.

FIGURE 5
Survey respondents' assessment of GEWE situation developments in Ukraine



Anna Aryabinska, a mentor at the peer support group, who is living with HIV. Photo: UN Women/Volodymyr Shuvayev

4. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 Conclusions

UN Women's neutrality, impartiality, international expertise and reputation in advancing the GEWE agenda are major advantages when engaging in complex and often sensitive dialogue with the national partners. The evaluation team evidenced impressive technical sophistication and the commitment of management and staff, who showed remarkable expertise, flexibility, creativity, innovative thinking and dedication. The project's strength also lied in its ability to draw on global and national expertise and to include stakeholders, including at the centre of the Government, in national dialogue on GEWE.

CONCLUSION 1:

The project remained highly relevant to the national priorities in the area of GEWE as well as the international human rights commitments of Ukraine from its design stage through its implementation. Increasing demands for UN Women support from the national partners may warrant prioritization of these areas of support.

The project design was successful in ensuring that its results are seen as a shared responsibility between the Government and UN Women. Some aspects of project design were strong, including its well-focused and holistic approach to advancing changes at the legislation and policy level, as well as its emphasis on evidence and using international effective practices. The project shortcomings included its too-wide spread and limited focus on the implementation of promoted policies and strategies. Some project components did not have corresponding indicators, while some indicators were focused only on outputs. The evaluation team found that the project was very complex as it addressed such diverse areas as policy change, capacity development and dominant social view changes,

and it deployed different delivery modalities and monitoring instruments.

The project was highly relevant and was fully in line with the national priorities in the area of GEWE as well as with the international human rights commitments of Ukraine. The project remained relevant in time, as demonstrated by the national and programmatic documents developed during its lifetime and which the project has influenced. A good indicator of the project's relevance was the increasing number of national and international partners willing to collaborate with the project and UN Women. The project showed fluidity, striking a balance between planned interventions and the room to maneuver to effectively respond to challenges posed by COVID-19.

CONCLUSION 2:

The project was highly successful in strengthening an enabling environment by building broad cross-sectoral support for GEWE through enhanced coordination and collaboration at the national, regional and local levels.

The project promoted effective NWM coordination and supported improved cross-sectoral collaboration that enabled better-coordinated policy responses. As GEWE advancement requires effective cross-sectoral collaboration, the project supported the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and other partners of the NWM to improve intersectoral collaboration and focus on results, which can be considered as one of the project's important strategic contributions. The project missed an opportunity to work more closely with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that GEWE considerations are firmly embedded into the financial normative framework of Ukraine.

The project collaborated extensively and effectively in some areas such as statistics with UNDP to localize the Sustainable Development Goals, NATO on WPS, the Council of Europe on the Roma Strategy, multiple CSOs and others. The project did not explore the possibilities of participating in the “Delivering as One” joint UN projects, which would have enabled the project to develop and test operational aspects of the developed policies on the ground and conduct budget estimates.

CONCLUSION 3:

The project had some notable and impactful successes, particularly in the WPS sector, and laid solid foundations in the area of governance. Capitalizing on these gains will require strategic vision, a focus on adequate government budgeting, capacity development of the policy implementers and creative approaches to communication.

The project was effective and delivered results by promoting policy expertise. The overwhelming majority of targets will most likely be achieved by February 2022. Institutional, legislative and capacity development activities have generated increased institutional ownership for GEWE across different political levels and central ministries, but the ‘depth’ and sustainability of the changes were inconsistent. Ownership has also been considerable at the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Policy and the National Agency for Civil Service. For some other counterparts, the long-term effectiveness is less certain. The project succeeded in delivering results with transformative potential in a number of areas, such as policy advice contributions to the first Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals and to the Roma Strategy and Action Plan; the support of gender audits/assessments in a number of ministries; the promotion of disaggregated gender equality monitoring indicators; the contribution to methodological recommendations on the gender impact assessment of sectoral reforms; and others. The most significant long-lasting results were achieved in advancing the

WPS agenda, where, thanks to project support, the number of women in the military and security sectors increased, including in senior positions. The capacities of supported duty bearers were strengthened through trainings and direct support. The institutional capacities of the National Agency for Civil Service to provide GEWE training to public servants were strengthened. The project did not support the implementation of strategies and policies on the ground through piloting or by developing operational protocols and other instruments, which limited their impact on the final beneficiaries. The most vulnerable groups were not well identified, partly due to the lack of quality disaggregated gender data, and were not well supported. The project’s work on social norms change to support GEWE was promising and has a strong potential to contribute to ongoing systemic changes.

CONCLUSION 4:

Results were achieved in an economically efficient manner and with manageable transaction costs. The project was effectively managed, but the lack of a dedicated M&E position made assessment of project progress vis-à-vis results inconsistent.

There was near consensus among the partners that the interventions’ results have been achieved with little waste and duplication. The project’s positioning in the ‘centre of the reforms’ allowed the project to establish strong connections with other organizations, including other UN agencies and CSOs. Oftentimes, these partnerships resulted in joint or cost-shared activities.

The project management was very professional and well organized. In the absence of a dedicated M&E staff member, the project did not consistently capture progress with regard to its long-term outcomes, such as the effects of UN Women interventions on policy implementation results that affect, in particular, the most vulnerable women.

CONCLUSION 5:

Sustainability of the gains made by the project, and the enhanced impact for women, will require a strategic and coordinated approach addressing all aspects of the policy cycle from policy design to implementation and reporting, with targeted capacity development of key partners, including decision makers, and an explicit focus on social norms change to support GEWE. The operationalization of the 'leave no one behind' principle and broad CSO involvement is critical for successful impacts for the most vulnerable groups.

With few exceptions, the overall sustainability level of the project was found to be adequate. In those instances where the government partners were fully engaged in GEWE legislation and policy development and there was a strong high-level political willingness to pursue GEWE, fuelled by a strong national consensus and by external partners' advocacy, such as in the WPS sector, sustainability was ensured and relevant GEWE policies were well implemented. In other areas, where the national strategies and programmes were too ambitious and unfunded and where the implementation was delegated to the local level where the capacities were limited, sustainability remains a concern.

In general, the project effectively captured the outputs, or tangible results, of its interventions but had inconsistent mechanisms and practices to record and analyse outcome measures (both short-term and intermediate-term) that are the effects or impacts of the outputs. Results-based management was not fully implemented through the planning, achieving and demonstrating results stages, with main gaps in setting measurable baselines, targets and indicators and the effective monitoring of project strategic results and impact on the ground.

4.2 Lessons learned

The evaluation team identified the lessons learned as described below.

High political commitment to GEWE is critical, but frequent turnover of government officials increases a risk to long-term GEWE reforms. The frequent reshuffling of government ministers and deputy ministers and the limited institutional memory in a context of low government official capacity to implement, monitor and report undermine progress on various GEWE commitments. Although the newly elected leadership of 2019 demonstrated increased political will to advance GEWE by joining and adopting new GEWE commitments, as well as establishing a Gender Equality Coordination Mechanism led by the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the high turnover rate of government officials is a risk to the efficient use of project resources and the sustained focus on outcomes.

Policy reform requires work at all stages of the policy cycle: design, budgeting, piloting and implementation. Many GEWE strategies, policies and programmes adopted by the Government remain statements of good intention often without sufficient follow-up implementation and proper reporting. The project achieved some remarkable successes in regard to policy development and the adoption of national GEWE strategies and plans that reflect the best international practices. Technical assistance at the 'design' phase of new government policy and programmatic initiatives does not guarantee their implementation. Programmatic initiatives aimed to achieve high-level impact and sustainability must seek to address all bottlenecks in regard to budgeting, policy piloting/testing and implementation, including building a demand side for GEWE strategies and developing plans on the ground through empowered and engaged CSOs. The background of decentralization means that future projects need to focus on strengthening the regional and community-level capacities for the implementation of GEWE policy reforms and, in particular, the implementation and monitoring of the new State Strategy on Ensuring Equal Rights of Women and Men.

GEWE advancement is linked to other reforms such as public administration reforms and decentralization, and it requires work with multiple stakeholders. In this context, a highly functional and centrally positioned NWM is crucial for success. Working on issues of GEWE reform in Ukraine requires partnerships with a wide array of state institutions. The complexity of



Zoya (call sign), a paramedic and sanitary instructor with the Medical Unit “Hospitaliers”, 2016, Ukraine. Photo: UN Women/Olena Maksymenko

international GEWE commitments and state priorities in regard to decentralization requires strong coordination by the NWM to ensure effective implementation of the reformed policies and new state programmes, including the appropriate funding, accountability and reporting requirements. The project correctly focused on improving the coordination of the NWM, but lines of reporting and accountability of all NWM components for GEWE policies and plans remain underdeveloped, which undermines the sustainability of project results, specifically in relation to improvements to the lives of the most vulnerable women and girls.

The increased availability of sex-disaggregated evidence and data and gender-related statistics is critically needed to support evidence-based programme strategies, policy reforms and advocacy in Ukraine. Sex-disaggregated data and gender-related statistics are critical tools for policy reform, advocacy and

accountability. A policy reform-focused project relies heavily on these data to understand the positions of women and girls in key sectors and social circumstances in order to capture the changes to those positions as a result of policy reforms. Unfortunately, the availability of sex-disaggregated data and gender-related statistics in Ukraine remains extremely low.¹³¹ This is in spite of notable efforts by the project to strengthen the development of national statistics and the analysis of gender-disaggregated statistics.

Without adequate gender-related statistics and sex-disaggregated data, government officials are unable to plan programming and policies in a GEWE-responsive fashion, the NWM cannot operate effectively, and CSOs are unable to advocate for change using up-to-date evidence. The continuous monitoring of women and girls ensures the timely identification of needs and barriers and the development of interventions

¹³¹ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, Resolution No. 1517-r of 2 December 2020 “The Issues of Data Collecting for the Monitoring of Gender Equality”. Available at <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1517-2020-%D1%80#Text>.

addressing the most urgent barriers. In addition to collecting the data, it is important to create demand for these data and build the capacity of GEWE stakeholders to use these data in policy and programme planning and monitoring.

The new State Strategy on Ensuring Equal Rights of Women and Men will use the approved gender equality indicators adopted by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. This may provide an opportunity to push forward the collection, management and analysis of gender equality data.

The engagement of international partners, e.g. NATO, with strong leverage power can make a critically positive contribution to building high-level support of the WPS agenda. The principle that women's full participation is essential to the respect of their rights is underpinned by NATO's common values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. Accordingly, NATO recognizes the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls, the vital roles women play in peace and security, and the importance of incorporating gender perspectives in all that it does. Ukraine's commitment to European and Euro-Atlantic integration and its extensive partnership with NATO was an excellent entry-point for the project's strategic and consistent engagement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, while staying committed to UN principles of impartiality. This ensured that the WPS agenda was addressed through this central NWM body and resulted in numerous accomplishments regarding WPS. Chief among them was the adoption of the second NAP 1325 until 2025.

The project relied heavily on national consultants who provided entry points/connections to high-level government officials and resulted in positive policy reform, but this model needs to be reviewed in regard to institutional capacity development and sustainability. The project relied heavily on national expert consultants who provided targeted policy review, training, institutional support and coordination services to a wide array of government institutions. While there was no question that these resources were skilled and capable of the work, the model has created sustainability challenges. The model cannot be sustained over time, nor can it easily be scaled to broaden future project impact. Moreover, there was no indication of an increased commitment by government officials to dedicate internal resources to this type of technical work in the future. In fact, the opposite was true: key GEWE actors were demanding more national UN Women consultants to continue their work in their institutions.

A change in social norms regarding GEWE is a key factor that impacts the depth, reach and sustainability of all formal institutional policy reforms and programmatic interventions. The stereotypes and internal biases of key government personnel remain a major barrier to policy reform and, now, specifically GEWE policy implementation and budgeting. Future policy reform efforts should expand capacity development efforts to include strategic and well-designed social norms change interventions, including platforms and spaces for reflection on unconscious bias related to gender and workplace culture that impedes the advancement of GEWE not only at the policy level but also institutionally. A continued focus on institutional gender audits is a good place to start – but with financed, concrete actions to address the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of the leaders who guide institutional priority-setting and culture.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The main challenges moving forward include the complex economic and social realities of Ukraine. Conflict and challenging economic and social conditions, including the recovery process after COVID-19, create multiple and changing government priorities where the focus on GEWE may be overshadowed by other priorities. The realities of the protracted conflict in the east of the country, the Government's inconsistent commitment and ability to advance systemic reforms, and economic hardships are some of the challenges that UN Women will continue to face in advancing GEWE.

5.1 Recommendations for UN Women

The following recommendations are aligned with the key findings of the evaluation and are divided into three categories: programmatic areas to strengthen, to continue or scale up, and to start. They include a prioritization assessment summary that includes key action points.

To strengthen

RECOMMENDATION 1:

UN Women should refine and reduce the number of partnerships with national institutions – and subsequently, the project's GEWE reform agenda – in order to ensure in-depth and targeted investment in the implementation of new strategies and policies.

Informed by findings: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 14, 15, 16, 18

A more narrowed focus, based on a thorough analysis of vulnerabilities and determinants, defined through extensive structured and continuous consultations with the national partners, including CSOs, would allow for more in-depth technical support in regard to GEWE policy implementation and monitoring. To do this, UN Women should focus on targeted technical support to the head of the NWM and its role in supporting the implementation of the new State Strategy on Ensuring Equal Rights of Women and

Men and potentially in supporting the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention). This would require continual updates to the functional capacity of the NWM, specifically in regard to coordination, accountability and reporting.

UN Women is advised to rebalance its strategic policy and capacity development support to ensure proper focus on the budgeting and implementation of policies and programmes. As many programmatic decisions in Ukraine are and will be further delegated to the local level, UN Women is advised to advocate that any new GEWE strategies, policies and programmes have the appropriate budget allocations, well-identified parties responsible for their implementation and clear reporting and monitoring procedures. UN Women is strongly advised to partner with other international partners supporting strategic aspects of decentralization reforms to ensure that GEWE is well reflected in new public administration arrangements. Key technical support should be given to relevant institutions in regard to monitoring the new state strategy indicators, ensuring and tracking budgeting allocations.

In addition to ongoing partnerships with the head of the NWM through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, the Ministry of Social Policy should be considered as an avenue for targeted technical support. In 2017, the CEDAW Committee expressed its concern that “the administrative reform of 2010 and the related restructuring has weakened the national machinery for the advancement of women and resulted in a lack of continuity in gender equality policies.” The Ministry of Social Policy's departments working in policy reform and implementation both lack capacity due to frequent changes in the structure of the Ministry, systemic understaffing and limited budgetary funding. However, the recently established central executive body, the National Agency of Social Services, will take over policy implementation functions and will have territorial branches in all regions of Ukraine, offering a unique opportunity for targeted technical support for policy implementation.

UN Women should remain open to emerging priorities, but a clear and co-designed project scope with the key representative of the NWM can help limit

non-strategic use of programme resources and foster a sense of ownership with external stakeholders.

| PRIORITY: HIGH | IMPACT: MEDIUM | TIME FRAME: SHORT TERM | DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM |
|--|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| <p>Actions for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an updated functional analysis of the NWM,¹³² and use its results to inform future project design in regard to targeted technical support of the NWM for improved coordination, reporting and accountability as it relates to the implementation and monitoring of the new State Strategy on Ensuring Equal Rights of Women and Men. Part of the functional analysis can include a review of the numerous capacity assessments of state institutions that have been conducted to date in order to help identify specific areas for future technical support.¹³³ • Facilitate co-designed processes for future reform projects with key stakeholders from the NWM to maximize buy-in and reduce the risk of ad hoc requests that jeopardize the efficient use of project resources. • Explore and exploit synergies with other projects implemented by UN Women and other partners that have a considerable local presence to pilot new GEWE solutions. • Support the newly established National Agency of Social Services in defining their responsibilities in regard to implementing the new State Strategy at the regional level. • Advocate for ensuring that any new GEWE strategies and policies have implementation plans that include the timetable for delivering a policy, the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in delivery and the resources allocated to the policy (including money, skills and infrastructure), and discuss how potential barriers are to be tackled and how performance is to be reported and monitored to ensure appropriate accountability. • Ensure that the engagement of national and international UN Women consultants with the NWM and other partners is time limited, has specific deliverables, with the exact scope of work, and outlines the reporting and accountability requirements. | | | |

RECOMMENDATION 2:
UN Women should ensure a strong and well-funded project component on advocacy and capacity development for budget commitments to GEWE in all its new projects, as appropriate.

Informed by findings: 6, 7

A key challenge linked to GEWE policy reform is in regard to budget allocations for GEWE policy implementation and the international and national commitments thereof. UN Women should consider key partnerships with the Ministry of Finance in order to advocate, in partnership with other NWM partners, for adequate GEWE financing.

| PRIORITY: HIGH | IMPACT: MEDIUM | TIME FRAME: IMMEDIATE | DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM |
|---|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <p>Actions for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish partner relationships with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that any new GEWE state strategies, policies and programmes have the appropriate budgets. • Advocate for the Government to increase, track and publish domestic public allocations and financial resources for gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s rights at the national and subnational levels.¹³⁴ | | | |

132 The analysis can build on the project’s draft report “Functional analysis of the scope and distribution of powers at the national, regional, and local institutional levels for the implementation of gender equality policy” (2020).

133 To some extent, this deeper analysis can be based on the project-supported study “Agency for Legislative Initiatives, Analysis of Key Entry Points and Opportunities for Gender Mainstreaming into Public Administration and Civil Service Reform” (2018).

134 The evaluation team strongly supports this recommendation of the UN Women report “Advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Ukraine through effective development cooperation and finance”.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Ensure that any policy reforms promoted by UN Women explicitly promote the ‘leave no one behind’ principle to impact the lives of women in marginalized communities and those with intersectional challenges, such as rural women, Roma women, women with disabilities and LGBTQI+ women.

Informed by findings: 10, 18

UN Women is advised to continue its work on gender-disaggregated statistics to inform the development of policies and support targeting the most vulnerable groups and women and, at the same time, increase decision makers’ awareness of quality disaggregated data so that any new data will reach ‘fertile ground’. Future GEWE policy reform work should seek to strike an important balance between targeted support to

duty bearers and the increased visibility and engagement with CSOs who represent the most vulnerable women and girls. This likely will require UN Women to work with new organizations outside of the GEWE CSO paradigm that will likely require additional capacity development support. In particular, focus should be given to ensuring representation from rural areas and creating regional-level platforms into which these groups can input policy reforms and programme design.

In this regard, continued support with respect to UNSCR 1325 should build upon national-level successes to focus on addressing the needs of conflict-affected women in eastern Ukraine. WPS has been an area of immense success for the project as well as an area of strategic interest among donor groups. As such, UN Women should continue this work but with a refined strategy, focusing on the implementation of defined actions as well as the capacity development of CSOs to support this implementation and related accountability.

| PRIORITY: HIGH | IMPACT: HIGH | TIME FRAME: SHORT TERM | DIFFICULTY: HIGH |
|--|--------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Actions for consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify CSOs that support and represent the most vulnerable groups of women and that have limited institutional capacity to engage in policy dialogue with the national and regional authorities. Seek flexible partnership arrangements to allow for these CSOs to partner with UN Women through better-established organizations with long-standing relationships with the UN Women. Develop plans to support these organizations to strengthen their capacities to engage in GEWE policy development and monitoring, including in advocacy.• Continue work on disaggregated gender statistics, and support their use in policymaking.• Continue work in WPS, and focus on the implementation of the NAP 1325 in the regions and particularly in regard to a focus on women affected by conflict, including IDPs and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. | | | |

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Strengthen internal M&E, tracking and reporting by allocating more budget and dedicated personnel and by improving the quality and relevance of M&E systems.

Informed by findings: 1, 2, 13, 14, 16

There is a need to strengthen the project’s M&E architecture and reinforce the culture of a results chain, so that monitoring and measuring the midterm (outcome-level) and long-term (impact) changes would become an integrated approach and a valued exercise that can be undertaken systematically.

Realistically formulated results, proper planning, communication, improved coordination and effective monitoring can keep the project theory of change and RRF relevant and useful throughout its cycle. The results framework for upcoming projects should have a consistent set of indicators that are relevant to the expected outcomes, as well as have adequately specified baselines, targets, intermediate milestones and time frames. UN Women can be held accountable for meeting its targets only if the indicators can credibly be attributed to UN Women. UN Women is advised to improve the linkages of its projects’ results frameworks, with more focus on long-term results and impacts. Theories of change should be well articulated, should be interlinked so that it provides clear and elaborate change pathways, and should

provide justification for the selected course of action so that the stakeholders are able to trace a clear and compelling storyline from the outputs expected to the outcome indicators and to specific indicators in the national plans and programmes.

It is advisable to strategically invest in strong M&E systems. Given the length and budget of the project, the

M&E budget should reflect the costs spent not only on decentralized evaluations but also on monitoring. The M&E plan should reflect data collection activities, such as national surveys, external legislation analysis and institutional capacity assessments, that could be used to inform decision-making and planning of the project team and the participating institutions.

| PRIORITY: HIGH | IMPACT: HIGH | TIME FRAME: IMMEDIATE | DIFFICULTY: LOW |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <p>Actions for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a theory of change that is more flexible in responding to the emerging needs throughout the course of the new project's implementation. It is advisable to introduce a practice of reviewing theories of change mid-cycle to ensure their relevance and effectiveness and inform corrective actions if needed. • Secure resources for a full-time M&E specialist to enable comprehensive M&E, with a focus on new policy initiatives. • Identify outcome-level indicators to track future reform work to understand the impact of the policy intervention on the lives of the most vulnerable women and girls, with a focus on targeted beneficiaries (e.g. the use of new skills acquired, following training on gender mainstreaming in policymaking). Identify at least two or three indicators per outcome, using various data sources (primary and secondary). • Develop corresponding tools to monitor the project's progress towards attaining new goals, such as the effectiveness of online-based interventions, in light of the fact that some activities were cancelled or revised to address the realities posed by COVID-19. | | | |

To continue and/or scale up

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Scale up work with the private sector and specifically as an avenue for sustainable approaches to women's economic empowerment.

Informed by findings: 7, 18, 12

The private sector is a vital stakeholder in achieving global goals for women's economic empowerment. With access to networks of financial, physical and social capital, the private sector creates and shapes opportunities for women across all industries and sectors. The private sector not only creates jobs, but it also provides an important pathway to self-reliance and sustainability. It remains important that the private sector recognizes its role in promoting women's economic empowerment through better business practices in areas such as safe working environments, hiring and recruitment, and technical training. Likewise, to leverage the strengths of the private sector and accelerate women's economic empowerment nationally, public and non-governmental actors alike must partner and engage with the private sector.

The project successfully engaged with a number of private sector actors working in Ukraine, specifically under its HeForShe campaign using the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). The WEPs provide guidance to businesses on how to promote GEWE in the workplace, marketplace and community and are informed by international labour and human rights standards; as such, the principles are grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, GEWE. Given the expressed need of improved economic empowerment opportunities for women, upscaling successes in private sector engagement in this regard is strategic as well as innovative in the Ukrainian context.

Traditional women's economic programmes focus on access to education, financial support, training and employment opportunities rather than taking a more integrated approach based on a human rights framework that delivers the broader conditions necessary for women to thrive. Lastly, there is an opportunity and desire to increase collaboration and improve communications between the women's rights sector and corporations working on women's economic empowerment programmes.

| PRIORITY: HIGH | IMPACT: HIGH | TIME FRAME: LONG TERM | DIFFICULTY: LOW |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <p>Actions for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in research to highlight a context-specific business case for gender equality within a few targeted private sector models prevalent in Ukraine. Develop concept notes on projects that could emerge out of successful partnerships or initiatives implemented as a part of the project and that could be offered to a range of donors and included in the upcoming Strategic Note (e.g. women’s economic empowerment with the private sector; HeForShe in targeted government institutions; combating sexual harassment in public and private institutions). Upscale (and document) UN Women’s promotion of the Women’s Empowerment Principles with private sector actors in Ukraine to foster business practices that empower women. These include equal pay for work of equal value and zero tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace. | | | |

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Expand work with women’s civil society to continue the strategic shift away from the focus on bilateral implementing partnerships towards movement-building in a way that addresses genuine concerns of women and implements the policies that address their needs.

Informed by findings: 1, 17, 18

UN Women is advised to advocate for a need to introduce legislative provisions for CSO involvement in GEWE policy discussions and monitoring and to facilitate regular meetings of organizations representing vulnerable groups of women with respective

national partners, ministries and other central executive bodies. Proactive measures should be adopted to consult groups that are traditionally excluded or underrepresented. Additional training may be provided to the staff of the NWM components on how to manage the policy consultation process with women’s organizations, including the development of clear and well-focused documents for consultations with stakeholders, working with individual organizations to solicit their feedback, analyse the feedback received and address the inputs received in policy and programmatic work. Training can be provided to organizations representing and supporting the most vulnerable groups of women at the local and regional on such topics as advocacy and persuasiveness skills in working with decision makers, taking into consideration the realities of the decentralization process.

| PRIORITY: HIGH | IMPACT: HIGH | TIME FRAME: SHORT TERM | DIFFICULTY: HIGH |
|---|--------------|------------------------|------------------|
| <p>Actions for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance to national, regional and local partners on the logistics of GEWE public engagement, including the time frame and costs, the tools to capture the feedback and gather information, the risks and other implementation considerations. Evaluate the capacity of CSOs to advocate for the implementation of key GEWE policy and programme reforms. Support regional events with GEWE CSOs operating at the regional level, targeting specifically CSOs representing and supporting the most vulnerable women. | | | |

To start doing

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Ensure that any new initiative of UN Women has concerted and specific programming around institutional social norms change that will promote broader buy-in for GEWE initiatives.

Informed by findings: 11, 18

As part of this, future projects should include support to targeted institutions for combating sexual harassment (such as what was done with the National Agency for Civil Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and strategically engaging with men.

UN Women should build upon successes in GEWE policy reform by creating an enabling environment for policy implementation. Addressing key internal

institutional barriers to effective GEWE policy buy-in will be crucial. As such, new programmes working with national government institutions and stakeholders should seek to address personnel biases and stereotypes in regard to GEWE as well as institutional culture, practices and internal policies that are contradictory to GEWE policies and that prevent these institutions from ‘walking the talk’.

A key aspect of this work should be on the design of future advocacy and mass media approaches. Specifically, these communication efforts should be designed to align with predefined target groups and relevant key messages by target group to ensure overlap with other interventions and their target beneficiaries and stakeholders.

| PRIORITY: HIGH | IMPACT: HIGH | TIME FRAME: LONG TERM | DIFFICULTY: HIGH |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <p>Actions for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a thorough stakeholder analysis to identify key target groups within defined beneficiaries, and conduct rapid research to highlight effective messages for these groups to promote GEWE in targeted institutions (for example, using HeForShe). • Select specific sub-thematic areas and activities within which to focus social norms change strategies, prioritizing those that allow for leveraging work in other areas for maximum effect. Strengthen and adopt new monitoring methods that provide evidence of the effectiveness of social norms change efforts over time. | | | |

RECOMMENDATION 8:
 Include specific modules (as relevant for various target groups) on implicit bias and gender stereotypes in future national-level reform project capacity development approaches.

Informed by findings: 11, 18

In conjunction with Recommendation 5, UN Women should ensure that all training methodologies and approaches used in future national reform projects include training materials and modules that address issues related to implicit biases and gender stereotypes, including specifically issues of sexual harassment in the workplace. These topics should be given sufficient time in a standard training package and should also include other evidenced-based, adult learning methodologies proven to foster critical reflection necessary for shifting personal attitudes and beliefs. UN Women

should ensure the adequate adaptation of different training content and methodology according to the target audience, specifically with regard to age.

Part of this work should include a thorough review of the capacity development materials to date in order to ensure an adequate focus on these topics, integrated both as stand-alone sessions as well as integrated across all relevant modules and ensuring that relevant methodologies are employed to maximize effectiveness. As part of this, UN Women should consider reviewing the qualifications of contractors who develop and facilitate trainings.

An important aspect of this work will be to ensure that training participants include men in equal number. In the majority of institutions that partner with UN Women at the national level, high-level officials and key decision makers are men. In that regard, it is crucial to ensure that they are targeted for this training and are enlisted to support future GEWE policy work.

| PRIORITY: HIGH | IMPACT: HIGH | TIME FRAME: LONG TERM | DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <p>Actions for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire an expert to conduct a review of previously developed institutional training modules to ensure that they adequately address issues related to unconscious bias and gender stereotypes of the individuals in those institutions. • Continue collaborating with the National Agency for Civil Service and other relevant partners to institutionalize gender trainings across all sectors and at the regional and local level. Develop training modules in such areas as the prevention of violence in the workplace. | | | |

- Have UN Women consider developing online courses and trainings for local and regional partners responsible for the implementation of strategies and policies and to explicitly address bias. Implementers, including men, must thoroughly understand the policy, its rationale and its intent and should not have any biases to ensure effective implementation.
- Develop a network of high-level men in targeted government institutions who are trained in GEWE, anti-discrimination, sexual harassment policies and the importance of equal representation in staffing. In this regard, it will be important to have both men and women as training facilitators.

5.2 Recommendations for the institutions constituting the National Women’s Machinery

The following recommendations align with the evaluation findings as well as with the CEDAW Committee’s Concluding Observations and Recommendations from 2017.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Adopt a clear strategy to consolidate and reinforce the national and local capacity of the National Women’s Machinery to support implementation and reporting on key GEWE commitments.

The NWM in Ukraine has made significant strides in regard to the coordination of GEWE across government institutions, especially at the national level. However, gaps remain specifically in regard to the implementation of key GEWE commitments and the necessary capacity thereof. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, in close collaboration with the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, is advised to define the accountability to and monitoring of the compliance to GEWE commitments through the NWM and with regional state administrations. UN Women can provide technical support based on mutually agreed needs and priorities.

A key part of this work should focus on a clear monitoring responsibilities matrix for the new State Strategy on Ensuring Equal Rights of Women and Men that clearly outlines the responsible actors in regard to implementation and that sets out clear strategies for accountability, especially in regard to budget allocations for implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Ensure that all GEWE-related action plans have budgets, clear targets, well-defined responsible parties and well-articulated implementation and reporting procedures, including the institutionalization of platforms for public/CSO engagement.

Promote a more consistent approach to the development of GEWE action plans to ensure that the implementation and reporting procedures are outlined in sufficient depth, that interministerial issues have been resolved, that cross-sectoral concerns have been addressed and that there is sufficient budget and technical support available to support plans’ implementation. It is necessary to strengthen government M&E systems to ensure that measurable outcomes and the impact of newly established policy or state programmes are well monitored. M&E information can improve the quality and effectiveness of the Government’s decisions and support its accountability. Proper platforms and mechanisms for public/CSO engagement should be expanded for all GEWE strategies, policies and plans.¹³⁵

When new policies and strategies are developed, it is advisable to use policy piloting to obtain a reliable assessment as to whether a policy is likely to work in practice and achieve its objectives. As all policies are based on many assumptions, such policy piloting/modelling can test and validate these assumptions. Policy piloting could also determine whether the vulnerable groups really benefit from the policies and could more accurately assess the costs of implementing the policy nationally. It could also determine whether UN Women can support the technical aspects of piloting.

¹³⁵ The UN Women Capacity Needs Assessment of Women’s CSOs mentions: “As CSOs have indicated low level of engagement in the monitoring of the government programmes, it is recommended that the government also invest in the capacity building of the civil society”. See <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/capacity-needs-assessment-of-womens-groups-and-civil-society-organizations-in-ukraine>. The interviews conducted by the evaluation team validated this observation/recommendation.

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