



**Final Evaluation of the project:
Gender Equality in Political Leadership
and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020)**

**Final Evaluation Report
September 2021**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation team would like to thank all those at UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, local authorities, the Committee on Equal Opportunity for Men and women of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the Turkish Grand National Assembly in general, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, civil society organizations and all others who made themselves available for interviews and consultations.

Our thanks in particular to UN Women Turkey Country Office, the project team and management, a special word of thanks to Ms. Duygu Arıř and Mr. Arif Mert Öztürk for their support during the evaluation, particularly in facilitating the set of interviews with target groups and other stakeholders.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Name
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
EOC	Committee on Equal Opportunity for Men and women of the Turkish Grand National Assembly
EQ	Evaluation question
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FACE Form	Funding Authorisation and Certificate of Expenditures Form
FR	Final Report
GE	Gender Equality
GERAAS	Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System
GNAT	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SBP	Strategy and Budget Department of Presidency
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SDD	Strategy Development Department of Turkish Grand National Assembly
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SQ	Sub Question
OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVI	Objective Verifiable Indicators
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDCS	United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy
UNDCS	United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy
UNDP	The United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	The United Nations Evaluation Group
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAWiP	Violence against Women in Politics
WPP	Women Political Participation
YEPPs	Youth Economic Empowerment Project of UN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The main purpose of the *Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020)* final evaluation is to assess the project's programmatic progress and its end-stage performance by comparing expected results to final outcomes. The evaluation has followed the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency, impact and sustainability) as well as applying human rights and gender equality criteria.

The evaluation scope includes the full project implementation period, from its launching on 15 December 2014 to its completion on 31 December 2020. This final evaluation considered all aspects of the project and covered all implemented activities. In terms of geographical scope, the assessment focuses on four of the Turkish provinces (Adana, Ankara, Gaziantep, and Izmir) where the project implemented major activities.¹

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this final evaluation was based on the terms of reference (ToR), and included a comprehensive desk review, which entailed analysing received project-related and other relevant documentation. The desk review was complemented by a significant consultation programme, which involved interviews with key project personnel and with representatives from key project partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries, project donors and Turkey's political parties. In terms of data gathering, the principal methods used were analysis and note-taking from the body of project documentation, in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The focus group discussions included local political and experience sharing workshops, a women councillor's meeting and a gender-sensitive media training. In total, 32 consultations were carried out during the evaluation work programme, involving 55 persons; and the gender breakdown was 80% women and 20% men, (specifically 44 women and 11 men).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020)* project supported women's political leadership and participation in decision-making processes in Turkey. The project had three interrelated components that involved partnering with key stakeholders, institutions and actors in order to increase women's political participation and leadership in Turkey. The project's three components were: i) adoption and implementation of legal frameworks; ii) promotion of gender-responsive measures within relevant institutions; and iii) implementation of advocacy activities led by gender advocates to establish a dialogue with decision makers.

With financing support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and UN Women as the principal implementing organisation, in collaboration with the technical implementing partner the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the project's main partners and beneficiaries were the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Men and women (EOC), national public institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), local administrations and youth and university students.

¹ Note that in addition to the four provinces focused on in this evaluation, the project also targeted the provinces of Eskisehir, Mugla and Samsun.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The evaluation findings, and the wider evaluation of the project, take into account the increasingly difficult political environment in which the project had to work, including the impacts of the EOC chair and primary implementing partner shifting from an initially committed and supportive and beneficiary to an uncooperative and obstructive partner, and the challenges of the wider political environment. The immense difficulty of the implementation environment can possibly be best understood by noting that UN Women remained the only UN agency operating in Turkey during the project implementation period.

RELEVANCE

The project is relevant to Turkey's national policies and planning documents, specifically the '2014-2018 Development Plan' and the '2019-2023 Development Plan',² as can be seen, for example, in government decisions to improve women's participation in decision-making processes and efforts to raise awareness on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). The project's relevance to these development plans can be further seen in its capacity development and awareness-raising activities on GRB with staff from the parliament and line ministries, which corresponded to the needs and policies outlined in the development plans and the action plans. The relevance of the project to national policies and plans can also be seen in the 'Annual Action Plans of the Presidency'. Actions proposed in the Annual Action Plans, which complement the development plans, were aligned with the project's actions. For example, the 2019 annual plan aimed at using GRB tools and women's active participation in decision-making processes for policies and programmes to ensure gender equality; the 2020 annual plan targeted the implementation of activities that would encourage active women's participation in politics through cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on the topic. Project work, such as capacity development in GRB, supported these plans.

The project's triple-pronged approach has also been relevant to the UN Development Cooperation Strategy (UNDCS),³ the UN Women Strategy and Work Plan⁴ and to Sida's Strategy.

Further, Sida's 2014-2020⁵ strategy included a result area that focused on increasing women's enjoyment of their rights and enabling greater opportunities for women to exercise democratic influence. The project's overall aims of achieving gender equality in women's political participation and enhancing gender advocates' exertion of influence for legal frameworks to achieve gender equality are in line with this results area.

The project is also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG Goal 5, Goal 10 and Goal 16, and to the UNDCS Result 2 and Result 5 on gender equality and women's

2 The primary objectives of the 2014-2018 Development Plan were to increase the role of women in social, cultural and economic life, to protect the family and improve its status and to enhance the public unity within the framework of gender equality. The main objectives 2019-2023 Development Plan are to prevent all kinds of discrimination against women, to ensure that women benefit from equal rights, opportunities and facilities in all areas of social life and to promote women's empowerment.

3 For example, the project's focus complements UNDCS 2016-2020 Result 5 (Outcome 3.1) of "improved legislation, policies, implementation and accountability mechanisms to enable equal and effective social, economic and political participation of women and girls by 2020."

4 UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which included appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the contribution to the gender responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs. Together with the UN Women strategic Note 2019-2022.

5 Result Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey, p.17, <https://www.regeringen.se/49b72b/contentassets/12a89180bafb43e3823b6c6f18b6d86a/results-strategy-for-swedens-reform-cooperation-with-eastern-europe-the-western-balkans-and-turkey-2014-2020>

empowerment in the context of women's political participation gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

The project is also aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment, such as the UN International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which emphasize support for women's participation in political life at all levels. The project also responded to the needs of national and local-level project partners and beneficiaries, with, for example, significant needs analysis work on Members of Parliament (MPs) and by project design being informed by officials from the EOC and the Secretary General's Office.

COHERENCE

The project showed coherence with the 2014-2017 and the 2018-2021 UN Women Strategic Plans. Regarding the UN Women Strategic Plan for 2014-2017, the project was particularly coherent with Impact 1 ("women lead and participate in decision-making at all levels") and Impact 6 ("a comprehensive set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment is in place that is dynamic, responds to new emerging issues, challenges and opportunities, and is applied through action by governments and other stakeholders at all levels"). Regarding UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021, the project was coherent in terms of the impact of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, including women's full enjoyment of their human rights, and is particularly aligned with Strategic Plan Outcome 2 ("women lead, participate in, and benefit equally from government systems") and Strategic Note Outcome 1.1 ("national and local level authorities with multi-stakeholder engagement, implement new and existing international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment through gender-responsive plans and budgets").

EFFECTIVENESS

Although the pace of activity implementation had been somewhat slow given the difficult political context and implementation environment, most project activities were implemented (this includes originally planned activities and activities later included in the project document revision).

Outcome 1 of the project ("legal frameworks and policies to advance gender equality and women's right to participate in decision-making are reformed/adopted and implemented") was not fully achieved. This shortcoming resulted from the significant adverse impacts of external factors that were outside the project's control. These factors included the shift in the government system to a presidential system, which had a crippling effect on the Parliament's legislative and oversight powers, which, in turn, reduced the potential effectiveness of the gender-sensitive legislative reviews foreseen by the project.

A second key work focus under Outcome 1, increasing the capacity on GRB and partnering with the EOC of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), also faced significant challenges linked to the political context, including the March 2015 closure of the TGNA and several subsequent elections that affected the election of the committees for almost seven months, creating further implementation delays.

Outcome 2 ("women's leadership and participation in politics are promoted by gender-responsive measures (parliamentary mechanisms, processes and services)") was partially achieved despite the significant challenges related to the political context. Relevant context includes the government's change in its approach to gender inequality and the increased power of the executive, which not only reduced the power of parliament but also discouraged government officials from taking

initiatives to advance gender equality. The project made some progress under Output 2.1 “strengthened capacity of the EOC to ensure the TGNA adopted policies, legislation and procedures that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.” Output 2.2, “strengthened capacity of Parliament to enhance women’s increased participation in politics, including in leadership positions”, was also partially achieved, with the capacity development support delivered. Such support included, for example, a Women’s Leadership Workshop, which was organized in late 2016 to strengthen women parliamentarians’ leadership communication skills and facilitate the exchange of experiences.

Despite significant challenges, the project also partially achieved Outcome 3 (“legal frameworks and policies to increase women’s leadership and political participation are influenced by gender equality advocates”). These challenges include the TGNA lacking a structured participatory mechanism that allowed regular and efficient relations among gender equality advocates and policymakers, a limited civic space, and the increasingly polarized environment in which CSOs operated (fuelled in part by the increasingly divided political landscape and amplified in social media). For example, Output 3.1 (“strengthen dialogue mechanisms and enhanced policy space to enable gender equality advocates and civil society to promote gender equality and women’s political participation”) was partially achieved by fostering local-level policy dialogue through a 2016 regional consultation meeting in Kars.

EFFICIENCY

Assessing the project’s implementation and management efficiency needs to take into account the impacts of the post-launch changes in Turkey’s political context, particularly the EOC chair’s shift to an uncooperative and obstructive partner. The limitations of having a single primary beneficiary and partner were further increased when the national political context turned to disfavour a gender equality agenda.

The project made significant efforts to adapt to the changing and less favourable operating environment, including extending technical, capacity building and support services to other relevant stakeholders, including the Strategic Department in the TGNA, the Plan and Budget Committee, Local Authorities, EOC’s legislative experts, CSOs, MP women candidates, local-level political parties and academics. Furthermore, through an amendment of the project’s activities, the project targeted key municipal-level political stakeholders and continued its implementation focusing at local authority level.

Some project implementation challenges were the result of project design rather than project management. The project design’s narrow focus on the EOC and TGNA reduced the scope for adaptation as the political operating environment and openness to gender equality declined. Evaluation consultations showed a high appreciation for the support, reactivity and attentiveness of the UN Women project team; evaluation informants frequently praised the quality of numerous project outputs, particularly the gender-related legislative reviews and the training materials.

IMPACT

The project’s capacity development on GRB and support for its application established the first step for institutional adoption and raised awareness on gender equality. The projects incorporation of GRB training and guidelines as part of its training curricula for any EOC/TGNA newcomer is an example of an impact that will have recurrent impacts. Furthermore, the training provided for local-level women political candidates and newly elected representatives fostered space for political dialogue and trust; future UN Women projects will be able to build on this trust.

Stakeholder interviews during the evaluation revealed that they considered project activities to have empowered them at the local, national and individual levels. Examples of such knock-on impacts included interviewees mentioning elaborating materials and content for their work, collaborating more with diverse stakeholders and incorporating GRB dimensions into other projects. This suggests that there were likely to be additional knock-on impacts that were not monitored by the project.

SUSTAINABILITY

Some project benefits should continue after project completion due to the raised awareness of gender issues and improved capacities of partners involved in gender equality. Given the significant challenges faced and the adverse political context, it is likely that sustained impacts will be more ad hoc than systematic in nature. Likely sustained impacts include stakeholders' continued use and application of GRB following the training received and increased capacities from the training of trainers workshops. The trust built over the projects' lifetime is likely to generate new openings and opportunities for UN Women to advance gender equality in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: Relevance

The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project's objectives and focus were relevant to the national priorities and policies of the Turkish Government and to international normative gender instruments and conventions. However, due to the complex and challenging political context in Turkey, this relevance on its own proved insufficient to ensure the expected support from both the government and the main initial beneficiary (EOC).

Conclusion 2: Coherence

UN Women's support to the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was particularly coherent with both UN Women's and Sida's policies. This coherence facilitated flexibility and adaptation of the latter when implementation issues arose.

Conclusion 3: Effectiveness

The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project only partially achieved its targeted results, primarily due to several external political factors and challenges, and to a lesser extent, due to a lack of a sufficiently strategic political implementation.

Conclusion 4: Impact

The overall impact of the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was positive, despite the difficult and highly challenging political environment. The challenging implementation context provided valuable learning opportunities for UN Women and partners in finding effective entry points to promote and advance a gender equality agenda in challenging and hostile environments; in this regard, the project should be seen as an investment from which future results and achievements will be reaped.

Conclusion 5: Efficiency

The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was partly efficient in its implementation.

Conclusion 6: Sustainability

Some actions of the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project show prospects for sustainability, such as continued gender equality promotion through GRB. Sustainability prospects will be partly strengthened by continuing support to the different target groups, particularly women MPs and women electoral candidates.

Conclusion 7: Human rights

Despite not achieving its targeted outcomes, the project was important in keeping alive the issues of women's rights and gender equality in an adverse political environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: When designing and implementing projects to promote women's empowerment and political participation, UN Women Turkey should develop a strategic policy dialogue capacity that includes a human rights-based approach to present the rights of men and women in the context of the country's culture and regional ethnicity.

Recommendation 2: UN Women Turkey Country Office should continue to focus on the political party code and the election code in its work on promoting women's empowerment; these national legislative frameworks are critical to increasing women's political participation.

Recommendation 3: UN Women Turkey Country Office needs to consider the limitations observed during this evaluation exercise, in terms of learning for future programming, including the achievability of outcomes and the coherence of planned activities and approaches to delivering these outcomes.

Recommendation 4: UN Women Turkey Country Office should use the project's implementation experience to reflect on developing and expanding its range of approaches and capabilities to deliver future gender equality and women's participation gains in Turkey in the future.

Recommendation 5: UN Women Turkey Country Office should strategically leverage the privileged trust developed with key national Turkish counterparts, including the TGNA, line ministries and municipalities. UN Women Turkey should expand its support for local women candidates and elected officials across the country. These efforts should incorporate lessons learned from this project.

1. CONTEX OF THE PROJECT

1.1. TURKEY'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In recent decades, Turkey has taken significant steps to secure equality at the constitutional level.⁶ After a 2004 amendment, Article 10 of the Constitution currently reads: “everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds. Men and women have equal rights, and the Turkish State has an obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. Measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality.”⁷ Although the amendment is considered a significant step towards securing gender equality⁸ – it is not sufficient in itself; secondary legislation, policies and regulations are required to ensure that its overarching principles are being implemented.

This amendment, together with an amendment to Article 90,⁹ is of particular significance because Article 90 suggests that any international agreement that Turkey enters into would take precedence over national legislation. In this sense, international agreements such as CEDAW — to which Turkey is a signatory — become integral to any analysis of secondary legislation that regulates gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

An analysis of secondary legislation on gender equality and its responsiveness to gender equality in Turkey demonstrates that amended Article 10 has not resulted in concrete actions in secondary legislation (see Table 1).

Table 1: Overview of Secondary Legislation on Gender Equality and its Responsiveness to Gender Equality¹⁰

Related Legislation and Existence of Regulation in Relation to Gender Equality	Yes	No
Law No:298 Law on Basic Provisions on Elections and Voter Registers Official Gazette, Date:2/5/1961 Number: 10796		X
Law No: 2839 Law on Election of Members of Parliament		X

6 A recent development that hampers these efforts was a 20 March 2021 Presidential Decree that withdrew Turkey from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). This decision was critical, as it reflects the government's overall approach to gender equality, which should be taken into consideration for future work.

7 Constitution of Republic of Turkey, Art. 10

https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf?TSPD_101_R0=08ffcef486ab2000b48b52f6cec1f535b516b9c2004a2eea3bdc92063a263397f9821cc8d54ffe4e08516272c014300095e4ae7ef2649b1841fd861b41bf0e233f805abda3a57ee05122252211337e62a1778c41f6d0640e795e37caaf23205b

8 Üskül, Zafer, (11 May 2014), “Recent Constitutional Amendments are Positive” <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/33949-son-anayasa-degisiklikleri-olumlu>

9 “International agreements duly put into effect have the force of law. No appeal to the Constitutional Court shall be made with regard to these agreements, on the grounds that they are unconstitutional. (Sentence added on May 7, 2004; Act No. 5170). In the case of a conflict between international agreements, duly put into effect, concerning fundamental rights and freedoms and the laws due to differences in provisions on the same matter, the provisions of international agreements shall prevail” Constitution of Republic of Turkey, Art.90

https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf?TSPD_101_R0=08ffcef486ab2000b48b52f6cec1f535b516b9c2004a2eea3bdc92063a263397f9821cc8d54ffe4e08516272c014300095e4ae7ef2649b1841fd861b41bf0e233f805abda3a57ee05122252211337e62a1778c41f6d0640e795e37caaf23205b

10 Sancar, Serpil Prof., (2018) Gender Equality in Participation in Political Decisions, Mapping and Evaluation, CEID, p. 58 <http://www.ceidizleme.org/medya/dosya/94.pdf>

Related Legislation and Existence of Regulation in Relation to Gender Equality	Yes	No
Official Gazette, Date:13/6/1983 Number: 18076		
Law No:2820 Law on Political Party Official Gazette, Date: 24/4/1983 Number:18027		X
Law No:6271 Law on Election of President Official Gazette, Date: 26/01/2012 Number:28185		X
Law No: 2972 Law on Elections of Local Administrations and Neighbourhood Mukthars and Board of Elderman Official Gazette, Date:18/01/1984 Number:18285		X
Law No: 3376 Law on Referendum for Constitutional Amendment Official Gazette, Date:28/5/1987 Number: 19473		X
Law No: 5302 Law on Special Provincial Administration Official Gazette, Date:4/3/2005 Number:25745		X
Law No:5216 Law on Greater Municipality Official Gazette, Date:23/7/2004 Number:25531		X
Law No:5393 Law on Municipality Official Gazette, Date:13/7/2005 Number:25874		X
Law No:6253 Law on Administrative Organisation of the TGNA Official Gazette, Date:18/12/2011 Number: 28146		X
Law No:657 Law on Civil Servants Official Gazette, Date:23/7/1965 Number: 12956		X
Law No: 979 Law on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies Official Gazette, Date:8/6/2011 Number:27958		X
Law No: 5251 Law on the Organization and Duties of the Directorate General on the Status of Women Official Gazette, Enactment Date: 27/10/2004	x	
The Advisory Council on the Status Women(Law No: 5251 Law on the Organization of the Directorate General on the Status of Women, Article 15)	x	
Law No: 5840 Law on the Committee of Women Men Equal Opportunities Official Gazette, Date:24/3/2009 Number:27179	x	
Law No: 7062 Law on the Organisation and Duties of the High Election Board Official Gazette, Date:12/12/2017 Number:30268		X
Law No:3152 Law on the Organisation and Duties of the Interior Ministry Official Gazette, Date:23/2/1985 Number:18675		X
Law No:217 Decree on the Organisation and Duties of the State Personnel Department Official Gazette, Date:18/6/1984 Number:18435		X

The limited progress in enacting related legislative and policy change is reflected in data that shows that women continue to be underrepresented in several sectors. Turkey has seen a steady increase in the number of women in elected office at the parliamentary level, rising from 14.7 per cent ¹¹ in the

¹¹ "Women's representation as MPs has increased", 2018, Anadolu News Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/kadin-milletvekillerinin-temsil-orani-artti/1189573>

2014 elections to 17 per cent in the 2018 elections. However, this increase has not been matched at the local level; according to the local election results in 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014, women in Turkey were represented by 10,72 per centage at local assemblies, 2.86 pre centage at mayoral offices and 5 per cent in provincial assemblies.¹²

The 2019 local elections resulted in 43 women being elected as mayors and 1,071 women were being elected as mukhtars.¹³ This means women's representation is at 3 per cent for mayoral offices and 2 per cent at the mukhtar level. As of 2018, women held 7.8 per cent of decision-making positions in the civil service, including ministers, deputy ministers, general directors, heads of department and heads of divisions.¹⁴ The Central Bank of Turkey has had only one woman council member.¹⁵ The Constitutional Court has had only male presidents for the last 11 years.¹⁶ The percentage of women rectors at universities is 20 per cent for universities with charity status and 3 per cent for public universities.¹⁷ Finally, there are no women CEOs at any of Borsa Istanbul stock exchange's BIST 50 companies.¹⁸

These percentages illustrate that a sizeable gap remains in women's participation in decision-making across several levels and sectors. This disparity is overridingly caused by existing patriarchal and social norms, which also dominate political parties' mindset, narrative and structure. Measures to increase women's political participation should be discussed and developed within the context of these data since sectors are interlinked with each other throughout Turkey's socioeconomic and political system.

Turkey is a signatory to various international agreements and conventions that provide a framework for policies to achieve gender equality. As previously noted, Constitution Article 90 clearly states that the provisions of international agreements prevail over differences with national laws. In this sense, the international agreements that Turkey has ratified have an integral role in determining gender equality policies and, moreover, define the obligations that Turkey needs to fulfil.

In addition to international agreements, Turkey has signed on to international declarations and commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which entail developing and implementing policies within the frameworks of those documents.

Table 2: International Agreements and Conventions that Form the Basis for Achieving Gender Equality¹⁹

Agreement / Convention Name	Enforcement Date	Turkey's Ratification Date
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights	1948	1949

12 Akpınar Ece İrem, Dokuzcan Hilal, Karaoğlu Nuray, Kaşıkırık Ayşe (2020) 2019 Local Elections Through a Gender Equality Perspective, Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates , p.9, http://ka-der.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/KA.DER_Sivil-Dusun_Kitapcik.pdf (Turkish only)

13 Elected through direct popular vote, mukhtars are village representatives. They have an active role to ensure the security of the village, for the procurement of all public services and for facilitating the work of central government agencies.

14 Akdoğan, İtir, (2019) Women's Participation in High-Level Decision-making, TESEV, p.15 https://www.tesev.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/rapor_ust.duzey_.karar_.almada.kadin_.katilimi.TR_.ENG_.pdf

15 Ibid., p.17

16 Ibid., p.20

17 Ibid., p.21

18 Ibid., p.17

19 Sancar, Serpil Prof., (2018) Gender Equality in Participation in Political Decisions, Mapping and Evaluation, CEID, p. 35 <http://www.ceidizleme.org/medya/dosya/94.pdf> The most relevant agreements within the context of the project were included in this table.

Agreement / Convention Name	Enforcement Date	Turkey's Ratification Date
United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	1976	2000
Convention on Political Rights of Women	1953	1960
United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	1981	1985
Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	1954	1954
Council of Europe – European Urban Charter I	1992	1992
European Social Charter	1999	2004 (With reservations)
EU Charter of Fundamental Rights	2000	
Council of European Municipalities and Regions – The European Charter for Equality of men and women in local life	2006	
European Urban Charter II	2008	2008

Article 25 of the United Nations International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights²⁰ contains the following provision: “every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in Article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors; (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.”

This should be interpreted with General Comment No. 25, which provides details on the essence of the right to participate in political life and emphasizes states’ duties to secure this right. Although the Comment does specifically refer to women’s political participation, it underscores citizens’ rights to participate in the conduct of public services without any discrimination.²¹

The first three articles of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women,²² another agreement that Turkey has ratified, are: “Article 1 Women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination; Article 2 Women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination; Article 3 Women shall be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.” The Convention on the Political Rights of Women does not include any articles intended to end the actual inequalities that women face. Further, due to the lack of an investigative organ established through the convention, its impact has remained limited. Thus, its existence is merely supportive of efforts for the implementation of rights enshrined in the convention.²³

Turkey’s adoption of CEDAW represents an important milestone towards achieving gender equality because ratifying states are obligated to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to ensure that women can exercise and enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms in the same

20 International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

21 Sancar, Serpil Prof., (2018) Gender Equality in Participation in Political Decisions, Mapping and Evaluation, CEID, p. 37

22 Convention on Political Rights of Women, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1954/07/19540707%2000-40%20AM/Ch_XVI_1p.pdf

23 Ibid., p. 38

way as men do.²⁴ Moreover, signatories must allow the CEDAW Committee to scrutinize state efforts to implement the treaty by reporting to the body at regular intervals.²⁵

Turkey's signing of the Beijing Declaration and the Action Plan without any reservations requires concrete actions to be taken and strategies to be implemented under 12 areas. Platform for Action Strategic Objective G.1. defines concrete actions to be taken by the governments and political parties to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.²⁶ Similarly, Strategic Objective G.2. aims to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership and thus defines actions for governments, national bodies, political parties, NGOs and other actors.

1.2. GENDER GAPS AND CONCERNS IN TURKEY

In representative democracies, political parties provide platforms to publicly discuss policy and opportunities for citizens to actively participate in decision-making processes and to run for elected office. In this sense, party structures should create enabling environments for all citizens to be involved in the political process. However, according to the 2020 Global Gender Gap Report, the widest gender disparity remains in its political environment sub-index; women are severely underrepresented.²⁷ Despite some progress, only 25 per cent of this gap has been closed, and no country has yet to completely close the gap.²⁸

Article 83 of the Political Party Law of Turkey states, "political parties shall not uphold aims or engage in activities against the principle that every person is equal before the law with do discrimination based on language, race, colour, gender, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, and similar."²⁹ While the 2004 constitutional amendment provides a framework for equality, the Political Party Law and the Election Law level do not include measures (temporary or otherwise) to bolster women's participation. Such measures have been left to the discretion of individual parties and governments, which have not yielded results.

In light of this, the CEDAW Committee's 7th Periodic Review asked the Government of Turkey "to explain why no efficient measures have been taken, such as statutory quotas or other numerical targets, to ensure, in practice the equal representation of women in the above-mentioned entities, in particular Parliament, the Government, the judiciary and civil service."³⁰ In its response to the CEDAW

24 Article 7 of CEDAW reads as follows: States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; and (c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

25 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'What is the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women', <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/DailyLife.aspx>

26 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome, p.122, https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf

27 World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report 2020", p.10 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf

28 Ibid., p.10

29 Political Parties Law, Republic of Turkey, (1983), Art. 83 (Law Number 2820 adopted on 22/4/1983, official Gazette Date 24/4/1983, codex order 5 volume 22 page

290) https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/7853/file/Turkey_law_political_parties_1983_am2014_en.pdf

30 Shadow NGO Report on Turkey's Seventh Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for Submission to the 64th Session of CEDAW (July 2016)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/TUR/INT_CEDAW_NGO_TUR_24253_E.pdf

Committee's List of Issues, the Government of Turkey made a general reference to amendments to various pieces of legislation and included figures that reflected the increase in women's representation at the parliamentary level.³¹ Some political parties have implemented temporary special measures, and some have taken decisions at a leadership level. However, none of these actions has led to a satisfactory increase in women's political participation. In addition to factors such as male-dominated political structures and sociocultural roles attributed to women,³² a significant factor is the absence of a 'vertical party'³³ mechanism that would lead to women being listed in winning positions. The overall political context in Turkey and an increasingly conservative approach towards gender equality have shaped civic groups' advocacy capacity and activities. Combined with the physical limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, channels for gender advocates to establish a dialogue with decision makers are diminishing. The absence of regular, principle-driven public-sector consultations and participatory processes also significantly hampers civic groups' advocacy efforts. The lack of such mechanisms creates a disabling environment for rights-based groups' advocacy efforts, particularly for civic groups with a gender focus.

Although their empowerment and participation in political life are essential from an equality perspective, there is limited analysis and data on vulnerable women's groups. For example, there are no special measures to ensure the political participation of women with disabilities or data on their representation.

Although there is a rule making it mandatory to employ persons with disabilities, it is unevenly implemented across sectors, and relevant administrative sanctions are effectively unenforced. The public sector favours the employment of men with disabilities. While women with disabilities are typically among the last group to be employed, they are often the first to be laid off. According to TurkStat (2019), the labour force participation rate of women with disabilities is only 12.5 per cent.

While women's overall literacy rate is 95.3 per cent, it is only 67.6 per cent for women with disabilities. The years of education among women with disabilities is lower than that of men with disabilities at all educational levels. Girls with severe disabilities do not usually attend formal education and are directed to open high schools. Only 1 in 10 children with disabilities benefits from inclusive/integrative education, significantly reducing girls' chances of attending schools.

Similarly, the participation of LGBT+ women remains a 'red line' in politics and is never openly discussed. LGBT+ women also experience gender-based discrimination in employment and cannot participate in the labour market with their open identities. LGBT+ women also have to hide their identities in education. Educational boarding facility regulations involve ambiguous criteria, such as "acting against public morals" or "not leading a chaste life." These subjective criteria are often used to justify discrimination against LGBT+ women.³⁴

1.3. GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATING AND LEADERSHIP

31 List of issues and questions in relation to the seventh periodic report of Turkey, Replies of Turkey (2016), p.13

32 Yavuzçehre -Savaş, Pinar, Ciğeroğlu-Öztepe, Misra (2016), "The Representation of Women in Turkish Local Governments", European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, Vol.2, Issue2, p.211, http://journals.euser.org/files/articles/ejis_jan_apr_16/Pinar.pdf

33 The vertical party system, (also known as a 'zipper mechanism') is a method of drawing up party lists in proportional representation electoral systems. It requires candidates on the list to alternate between men and women in order to secure equal representation in candidacy and potentially elected members.

34 The Executive Committee on NGO Forum for CEDAW, Shadow Report on the 8th Periodic Review of Turkey, to be Submitted to the 81st Session of CEDAW

The Council of Europe noted that there is a strong correlation between the type of electoral system and the number of women in national parliaments. It underlines that the functioning of electoral systems and political institutions, including political parties, may hamper women's participation in political and public life. Thus, the Council of Europe recommended that where electoral systems are shown to have a negative impact on women's political representation in elected bodies, member states should adjust or reform those systems to promote gender-balanced representation.³⁵

This recommendation is in line with several research studies that have concluded that majoritarian systems impede the election of women because political parties tend to nominate candidates that are likely to be elected. In contrast, proportional representation systems tend to lead to a higher proportion of women in parliaments. Findings reveal that during the last three decades, there has been a significant increase in women's parliamentary representation where proportional representation systems exist, whereas limited advancements have been achieved in majority systems.³⁶

Electoral system dynamics are not the only structural factor that affects women's political participation — Turkey's proportional system has not resulted in the outcome of increased women's participation at the desired level. Conditions such as a male-dominated political party structure and a lack of temporary special measures, combined with a majoritarian electoral system, further hinder women's political representation.

Socioeconomic, historical, cultural and political factors affect women's ability to successfully run for office. Patriarchal norms that define men as breadwinners (and political actors) and women as at-home caregivers intimidate and discourage women from taking active roles in politics.

Political finance also exerts a growing influence on politics, particularly as election campaigns have become more expensive. Political finance regulations aim to level the playing field by reducing election costs, preventing corruption and increasing oversight.³⁷ Including gender perspectives and measures in such regulations would promote and encourage women's participation in politics.

All political parties in Turkey require registration fees from candidates. While many parties apply a partial waiver for women candidates, the fees remain high; women who lack sufficient economic assets and have less access to fundraising networks than men do are disadvantaged at the outset.³⁸

In the 2018 general elections, the Justice and Development Party, the Republican People's Party and the İyi Party waived 50 per cent of their registration fees for women candidates (charging 3,000 Turkish Liras (TL), 5,000 TL and 2,500 TL, respectively). The People's Democratic Party (HDP) did not require any registration fees from women candidates. Although the party has not achieved 50 per cent gender equity, the number of women candidates from HDP was the highest among all political parties (33 per cent of candidates were women). This absence of a registration fee was, among other factors, unique

35 Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Recommendation No. (2003) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, p.5, <https://rm.coe.int/1680519084>

36 CDL-EL (2009) 004 European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission) Report on the Impact of the Electoral Systems on Women's Representation in Politics. Adopted by the Council for Democratic Elections at its 28th meeting (Venice, 14 March 2009) and the Venice Commission at its 79th plenary session (Venice, 12-13 June 2009) Michael Krennerich (Expert, Germany) June 2009 Study No. 482/2008 p. 8, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2009\)029-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2009)029-e)

37 International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance IDEA, Netherlands Institute for Multi Party Democracy (2017), Women's Access to Political Finance: insights from Colombia, Kenya and Tunisia, Fact Sheet p.3, <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/womens-access-to-political-finance-insights-from-colombia-kenya-and-tunisia.pdf>

38 Ibid., p. 3

to HDP and contributed to the higher number of women candidates on its roles. The Nationalist Movement Party did not apply any waivers to women.

Overall political party and election finance policies are another factor that affects women's political participation. These policies determine the frame and legality of incomes and expenditures during an electoral campaign and in periods between elections.

Article 61 of the Political Parties Law³⁹ lists the main income revenues for political parties, broadly categorized as fees from members and candidates, revenues from assets, donations and state funding. State funding is given to all political parties that pass a 7 per cent national threshold in the most recent general election. State funding deepens democracy at the grass-roots level, serves as an incentive to achieve pluralism in political representation and encourages women's participation in politics. The extent to which state funding serves these purposes is unknown because sex-disaggregated data on political party spending is unavailable.⁴⁰

By some estimates, candidates in the 2018 general elections spent a total of 336 million TL.⁴¹ The total cost of elections demonstrates that candidates do not depend solely on party revenues but instead use their own sources or reach out to donor networks. This highlights the need for measures to remove financial barriers for women and to level the field for fair representation.

1.4. GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN POLITICS

Violence against women in politics has long been widespread, but until recently was not considered as a deliberate tactic to intimidate women and prevent them from participating in politics.⁴² Two IPU studies which were published in 2016⁴³ and 2018⁴⁴ have revealed that sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians are widespread globally, although to different degrees.⁴⁵ Eighty-two per cent of all women MPs who participated in the study surveys experienced psychological violence (including sexual and sexist remarks, intimidation and threats, pictures published with humiliating or sexual connotations). Sixty-five per cent of these women have been subjected to sexist remarks, in most cases made on parliamentary premises by male colleagues from both opposing and their own political parties. Twenty-five per cent of respondent MPs had suffered physical violence, and

39 Political Parties Law, Republic of Turkey, (1983), Art. 61 <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.2820.pdf>

40 Gençkaya, Ömer Faruk (2015), "Finance of Politics and Election Campaigns: Competitiveness, Transparency and Accountability", Democracy Barometer Analysis Report, Checks and Balances Network, p.53 https://dengedenetleme.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Siyasetin_ve_Sec_im_Kampanyalarinin_Finansmani.pdf

41 "The Bill for June 24 Elections is 12 billion USD", (23 June 2018), Sözcü Newspaper, <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2018/ekonomi/24-haziranin-faturasi-12-milyar-dolar-2481465/>

42 The Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women in Politics (December 2020) <https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2020-12/shadow-pandemic-violence-against-women-in-politics>

43 Inter-Parliamentary Union (2016), "Sexism harassment and violence against women parliamentarians", Issues Brief, <http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf>

44 Inter-Parliamentary Union (2016), "Sexism harassment and violence against women parliamentarians", Issues Brief, <http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf>; Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018), "Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe", Issues Brief, <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2018-10/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-in-parliaments-in-europe>

45 Inter-Parliamentary Union (2016), "Sexism harassment and violence against women parliamentarians", Issues Brief, <http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf>; Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018), "Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe", Issues Brief, <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2018-10/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-in-parliaments-in-europe>

20 per cent had been sexually harassed.⁴⁶ The data demonstrate the commonality of the problem, the lack of state interest in addressing the problem and the discouraging environment it creates for women's political participation.

There is growing evidence that information and communications technologies (ICTs), especially social media, are frequently used as tools of gender-specific electoral and political violence.⁴⁷ Social media outlets that permit perpetrators to remain anonymous have the capacity to amplify the violence against women in politics. The speed and scope of information dissemination magnify the impacts of this effect.⁴⁸

There is a significant need to raise awareness on the issue of violence against women in politics; misconceptions about the nature and prevalence of the problem are widespread. Further, legal measures beyond existing penal codes are non-existent. In Turkey, there is a general lack of awareness on the issue and its impacts on women's equal political participation. Turkey lacks a clear definition of violence against women in politics and definitions of terms such as harassment, sexism and cyber violence. The topic requires further attention from decision makers, international organizations and gender equality advocates.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES IN THE TGNA

Because a considerable section of the project focused on legislative review with a gender equality perspective, a description of the TGNA legislative process, the role of EOC (the primary project partner) in the overall legislative process, and how bills are referred to committees would provide the context within which the project was implemented.

The TGNA bylaws are the main legislative framework that determines the legislative process, the Parliament's oversight powers and the function, authority and the relations among departments, key staff and political offices. Although the bylaws have been amended several times since being enacted in 1973, they have not been comprehensively revised since the governing system changed to a presidential system. Currently, the parliamentary committees where the draft legislation is reviewed and deliberated remain relevant to legislative and policy processes.

However, in many cases, TGNA committees do not function as platforms to analyse and review draft legislation.⁴⁹ Committee ineffectiveness is based on various factors, such as the dominance of government-party MPs (the chairs of the committees are from the government party), MPs acting in line with party directives rather than focusing on the essentials of the draft legislation, the government's push for its own legislative agenda through MPs from the same party and the lack sufficient time for MPs to review the draft legislation.

The legislative process of TGNA committees can be outlined as follows:

46 Inter-Parliamentary Union (2019) "Guidelines for the Elimination of Sexism and Harassment and Violence Against Women in Parliament" p. 11 <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reference/2019-11/guidelines-elimination-sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-in-parliament>

47 International Foundation for Electoral Systems, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (2019), "Violence Against Women in Elections Online: A Social Media Analysis Tool", p. 9, https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/violence_against_women_in_elections_online_a_social_media_analysis_tool.pdf

48 Ibid., p.9

49 İstanbul Policy Center and Sabancı University, (2014), "Anayasa Reformu Aracılığıyla Denge ve Denetleme Sistemi'nin Güçlendirilmesi", p. 19, https://dengedenetleme.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Anayasa_Reformu_Aracilig_i_ile_Tu_rkiye_de_Denge_ve_Denetleme_Sisteminin_Gu_c_lendirilmesi.pdf

1. Referral of the draft legislation to the Secretary Generals' Office: Under the current system, all draft legislation prepared by MPs are sent to the Speaker's office for evaluation. The Speaker later directs draft legislations to the Laws and Regulation Department, which is under the Secretary General's office in the parliament.
2. Evaluation of the bills and referral to the committees: The Committees Division within the Laws and Regulations Department evaluates the bills based on criteria defined in the parliament's bylaws and criteria developed based on precedent. Similar referrals to committees and implications on budget or budget items in the bill will also be considered during this evaluation process. The Committees Division will also determine the primary committee that will deliberate on the bill and the secondary committees whose expertise and comments will be sought during the primary committee's deliberation of the bill. The secondary committee prepares a report to be discussed by the primary committee.

The EOC was established in 2009 through law and not through an amendment to the parliamentary bylaw.⁵⁰ This presents certain limitations in referring bills to the Committee as the primary committee because the precedence criterion, which considers existing rules and procedures, plays an important role in the referral process. With this law, the Committee was enshrined as an authorized body of the TGNA responsible for protecting and improving women's rights and promoting equality between men and women. The Committee has the authority to deliberate on bills and considers applications claiming a violation of the equality between men and women and/or discrimination based on gender.

The TGNA committees' deliberative functions remain very weak for several reasons.⁵¹ In the absence of comprehensive deliberations on bills during the busy legislative agenda, the primary committees often neglect the views and reports of the secondary committees. Thus, the appointment of the main deliberative committee is important for any amendments to be considered. To this end, the tradition that has yet to be established in terms of referral of bills to the EOC represents a challenge to the work of the committee in promoting gender equality in legislation.

The Speaker's Office is the main body that determines the referral of legislation in TGNA, together with the Secretary General's office, which is responsible for the daily management of legislative affairs. This responsibility includes providing technical expertise and support to the committees during deliberations and oversight. The Advisory Council, a body that is comprised of the deputy party group leaders and acting speakers, plays a significant role in terms of determining the legislative agenda of the parliament. Political parties' deputy party group leaders (whips) also have a prominent role in the legislative process, as they reflect the parties' position with regard to policies and legislation.

Committee chairs have an influential role in the functioning of committees. Chairs have authority with regards to determining the committee agenda, the proceedings of the deliberations and selecting which stakeholders or experts to invite to public hearings and participatory processes. While committee chairs act in line with the rules and responsibilities enshrined in the bylaw, the committee chairs and all members of the committee consider their party's positions during the deliberations, an

50 Kadın Erkek Fırsat Eşitliği Komisyonu Kanunu (2009/25/2), Resmi Gazete (27179), <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5840.pdf> ; Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi İçtüzük (1973), p. 6, <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/17.5.584.pdf>

51 Türk Ender (2016) 'Deliberative Function of Parliament, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Case' Journal of Constitutional Law, Vol.5, Issue 9, 87-129, p.115. Reasons vary, but in general can be listed as the need to improve the capacity of the technical support services provided to the members of parliament, despite improvements in the qualifications of the experts in the recent years and the committee structure and procedures enshrined in the bylaw of the parliament that gives power and authority to the committee chair to the extent of domination of the committee agenda and affairs, the committee composition that diminishes the power of the opposition parties and finally the lack of a tradition of deliberation and consensus in the Turkish parliament.

area in which the deputy party group leaders have control. In this sense, political parties have an influential role in determining the legislative agenda and the shaping of policies.

A final aspect that should be considered with regards to the legislative processes is the absence of a structured, regular participatory process that is based on principles that are considered essential for meaningful citizen participation. The bylaw of the TGNA does not include any specific article that regulates civil society participation, although it does have an article on hearing from experts at the committee level.

Article 30 of the bylaw⁵² states, “committees may invite experts in order to consult their views,” which is considered as the legal basis for committees to include citizens and activists in the legislative process. In implementation, the authority to select and invite experts mostly rests with the committee chairs. In many cases, experts from other government offices are invited to elaborate on the draft legislation, whereas consultation with civil society representatives and activists is irregular and arbitrary. Civil society representatives and activists are mostly invited to the hearings of research committees that seek to develop a deeper insight on a specific matter of public importance.

Participating parties’ views are often incorporated into the final committee report, which does not have a direct impact on the legislation but does inform MPs on that topic (typically through a discussion in the general assembly).

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND OVERALL IMPACTS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

After outlining the major events that took place during the course of the project, this section analyses relevant political developments in Turkey and their repercussions on the three outcomes that the project aimed to achieve.

Three general elections, one presidential election and a local election were held during the project’s implementation time frame. There were two general elections in 2015, one in June and, because none of the political parties won the required number of parliamentary seats and failed to form a coalition, a second election was held in November 2015. In 2017, a referendum was held following a comprehensive amendment to the Constitution, which also led to a shift from a parliamentary system to a presidential system of government.

Another influential event was the 2016 attempted coup d’état, followed by the declaration of a state of emergency, which lasted for two years. A third major event that affected project implementation was the January 2020 onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN LIGHT OF PROJECT OUTCOMES

Legal frameworks and policies to advance gender equality and women’s right to participate in decision-making are reformed/adopted and implemented.

To achieve this outcome, the project envisaged partnering with the EOC, implementing legislative reviews with a gender perspective and increasing capacities on GRB. Article 20 of the TGNA bylaw states, “two elections are held for the committees in the course of a legislative term. The term of office of the first elected members is two years, and three years for those elected in the second term. The

52 Turkish Grand National Assembly Bylaw (1973), Article 30, https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/rules_of_procedure_en.pdf?TSPD_101_RO=08ffcef486ab2000958a620b533001cba08565298272648059cf14bffa7a7fa36085d6e2e2017020086b0ce08b143000d52e46fceaed2eefac8d84d7f8a0ea4000a8d4d74e99a48031962fbec6f00b62b3f91a87bf4db77383e7a1f55423c34c

members continue to serve until the election of the new members.”⁵³ The need to hold a second general election in 2015 and the related postponement of committee elections for almost seven months delayed project activities.

After the 2016 coup d'état attempt, hundreds of thousands of civil servants, including those from the parliament, were dismissed through several decrees.⁵⁴ This abrupt severance created a void in the Parliament's human resources. The shift to a presidential governmental system had a crippling effect on the parliament's legislative and oversight powers.⁵⁵ Despite the new authority given to the MPs as the only initiators of legislation, in practice, the executive played an influential role in the formation of policies and legislation. As the Parliament's power diminishes and concentrates around the executive, the legislative reviews from a gender perspective at the parliamentary level will have limited impacts in terms of implementation.

A critical change during the course of the project was the overall mindset and narrative becoming less favourable around gender equality. The term 'gender equality' was effectively banned in official use, with the word 'equality' being replaced with 'justice'. The significance of this mindset and narrative became clear in a 20 March 2021 presidential decree that announced Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. The withdrawal decision is a major setback in the achievement of women's rights and will have long-lasting repercussions on several aspects of gender equality, including women's political participation.

Women's leadership and participation in politics is promoted by gender-responsive measures (parliamentary mechanisms, processes and services).

The main development that hampered the achievement of this outcome was the change in the government's approach to gender equality. Although the legislative branch is technically separate from the executive, the ruling party's dominance of the overall system, including over the parliament and legislative affairs, determines how and whether gender-responsive measures and mechanisms are implemented. The government's less favourable position on gender equality and women's political participation led parliament to be reluctant to implement related measures.⁵⁶

Another affecting factor was the mass dismissal of civil servants from the parliament following the coup d'état attempt. This severely disrupted the level of technical expertise available to parliamentary committees. The new cadre of civil servants may not have sufficient awareness or background on gender equality topics.

Legal frameworks and policies to increase women's leadership and political participation influenced by gender equality advocates.

The TGNA does not have a structured participatory mechanism that allows regular and efficient dialogues between gender equality advocates and policymakers. Although this does not completely preclude advocates from regularly contacting MPs for advocacy purposes, advocates who do not share

53 Turkish Grand National Assembly Bylaw (1973), Article 20,

https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/rules_of_procedure_en.pdf?TSPD_101_R0=08ffcef486ab20004cef1f93a060c5d72e7a0ae6cb48a8ab00100e9fb0176fbc9f0ca03827162ce08da568a62143000355c9a382c54833e33df721b590351a308d69766a49c1abec79e899eb516eb9d14852e2306aa36d57e45f3ec2140a893

54 The most recent report of the State of Emergency Procedures Investigations Committee in 2020, reveal that almost 130 thousand civil servants were dismissed. https://ohalkomisyonu.tccb.gov.tr/docs/OHAL_FaaliyetRaporu_2020.pdf

55 "Presidential System: What is the Current Situation in Legislative and Executive Branch?" (July 2020), Deutsche Welle, <https://www.dw.com/tr/cumhurbaşkanlığı-hükümet-sistemi-yasama-ve-yürütme-ne-durumda/a-54066828>

56 "Striking Report from Germany on Turkey: Institutions are paralyzed", (April 2020), Deutsche Welle, <https://www.dw.com/tr/almanyadan-çarpıcı-türkiye-raporu-kurumlar-felce-ugrattıldı/a-57127795>

the decision makers' views on issues are often excluded. This issue remains one of the core challenges for all human rights advocates. 'Civic space' can be defined as "the set of conditions that allow civil society and individuals to organize, participate and communicate freely and without discrimination, and in doing so, influence the political and social structures around them."⁵⁷ This definition and the reporting of international and national organizations affirm that the civic space in Turkey continues to shrink due to the limitations on the freedoms of expression, media and assembly.⁵⁸ This shrinking space has inevitable consequences in terms of advocates' ability to influence policies on gender equality and all other human rights issues. Exacerbating the problems of a shrinking civic space, the civic movement in Turkey functions in a socially and politically polarized environment. The political narrative encourages this polarization, which is further deepened in social media channel echo chambers.⁵⁹ Anti-rights discourse thrives in social media channels and consistently attacks rights activists on gender rights topics. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic, with its disparate impacts on women, has restricted the physical space through which organizations function.⁶⁰ Though activists have rapidly adapted to the pandemic's constraints, its effects on women have increased activists' workload and the cases they have to attend to.

57 Dodsworth Susan, Keutgen Julia, (2020), "Addressing the global emergency of shrinking civic sapce and how to reclaim it: A programming guide" Westminster Foundation for Democracy, p. 7 <https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Civic-space-v1-1.pdf>

58 Civicus Monitor, <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/turkey/>

59 Dimensions of Polarization in Turkey 2020 Survey, Key Findings (2020), https://www.turkuazlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Survey_Key_Findings.pdf

60 Research after the first wave of the pandemic by the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey provides comprehensive data on how civic organizations have addressed the situation following the pandemic. More information can be found at https://covid19vestklar.tusev.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Covid19AnketFazlSonucRaporu_Final_.pdf (Turkish language)

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1. THE PROJECT SUMMARY

The design of the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was based on the findings of an earlier needs assessment that was conducted under the project Fostering an Enabling Environment for Gender Equality in Turkey. An important component of the initial project was a Gender-sensitive Parliament Needs Assessment, carried out in 2012 by IPU and a joint UN Women – UNDP programme. The Assessment resulted in a series of recommendations to strengthen the capacities of the TGNA, particularly of the EOC. Sida funded both the Joint Programme initiative and the current project. The project was designed to have a national scope. It originally targeted the provinces of Adana, Ankara, Eskisehir, Gaziantep, Izmir, Mugla and Samsun. However, some of the target provinces changed during the implementation period, as some initially included provinces were not receptive to (or lacked interest in) participating in the project. The project ultimately focused on several provinces where municipalities and local governments supported the project: Adana, Ankara, Beisktas (Istanbul), Gaziantep, Izmir and Mardin provinces. The project had three interrelated components that involved partnering with key stakeholders, institutions and actors to increase women’s political participation and leadership in Turkey:

- i. Adoption and implementation of legal frameworks*
- ii. Promotion of gender responsive measures within relevant institutions; and*
- iii. Implementation of advocacy activities led by gender advocates to establish dialogue with decision makers*

Within this framework, the EOC was designated as a lead partner, together with an international counterpart (the IPU) that provided technical expertise on legislative reviews with a gender equality perspective.

The project was initially designed with a three-year implementation period and was to run from July 2014 to July 2017 (the project did not actually launch until 15 December 2014). The first no-cost extension was authorized on 26 July 2016, extending the implementation period and rearranging the payment disbursement schedule. In 2017, the project was extended for another three years for several reasons, including an unstable political environment; an attempted coup d’état and the subsequent state of emergency; a series of elections; and a substantial change in the government system. A second no-cost extension was granted on 5 November 2018, extending the project implementation period to 31 December 2020. The project’s design modification carried during the reviewed ProDoc is available in Annex 6 (Reconstructed Results and Resources Framework).

The project’s main outcomes and outputs are:

Outcome 1: Legal frameworks and policies to advance gender equality and women’s right to participate in decision-making are reformed/adopted and implemented

Output 1.1: Enhanced parliamentary capacity to develop and monitor the implementation of legal frameworks and policies that promote gender equality.⁶¹ Output 1.2: Improved access of the parliament to gender equality related knowledge products and tools to formulate and monitor the implementation of gender-responsive legal and policy frameworks

Outcome 2: Women’s leadership and participation in politics is promoted by gender-responsive measures (parliamentary mechanisms, processes and services). Output 2.1: Strengthened capacity of

⁶¹ Output 1.1. was not included in the revised project document.

the EOC to ensure the TGNA adopts policies, legislation and procedures that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Output 2.2: Strengthened capacity of parliament to enhance women's increased participation in politics, including in leadership positions. Output 2.3: Strengthened capacities of newly elected municipal council members in gender equality issues, the staff in municipalities' equality units, and potential women community leaders.⁶²

Outcome 3: Legal frameworks and policies to increase women's leadership and political participation are influenced by gender equality advocates. Output 3.1: Strengthened dialogue mechanisms and enhanced policy space to enable gender equality advocates and civil society to promote gender equality and women's political participation. Output 3.2: Strengthened capacity of gender equality advocates to promote gender equality and women's leadership and political participation. The project's two initial main pillars were legislation review and GRB. These pillars were intended to raise awareness and increase institutional capacities.

The project was designed to be implemented by UN Women in partnership with IPU and the EOC. IPU and UN Women provided knowledge and expertise and facilitated the capacity building and technical assistance delivered during project implementation. EOC was designated as the implementing partner for fostering partnerships with counterparts inside and outside the TGNA and for implementing capacity development and training activities that were aligned with its mandate of promoting gender equality.

All project outputs were built on various capacity-building activities with specific aims. Outputs 1.1 and 1.2 aimed to support the EOC and relevant partners within the TGNA to identify and address legislation and policy gaps. EOC and TGNA capacity building was carried out via a pilot training intervention that addressed measures to support GRB. The project also provided technical support for the development of legislative review tools (e.g. a review checklist). To support the use of these tools, the project delivered systematic training to parliament staff, experts and some advisers on using the tools and the principles of applying gender analysis to legal and policy frameworks. A training of trainers programme helped institutionalize these competencies within the parliament. The direct beneficiaries of Outcome 1 included MPs, experts and EOC and TGNA staff. Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 aimed to support the EOC to develop its strategic plan and to ensure that the gender equality aspects of the 'TGNA 2013-2017 Strategic Plan' were implemented, monitored and evaluated. Key EOC needs and priorities included defining its relationship to its gender equality mandate for the wider parliamentary structure, developing its capacity to promote gender equality by learning from and developing linkages with similar committees in other parliaments, and improving its communications strategies.

Activities also supported the EOC to promote women's increased participation within the parliament, especially in leadership positions. The ultimate goal of these activities was to increase the number of women parliamentarians and the number of women in senior leadership positions involved in decision-making processes. The project encouraged gender sensitivity among all parliamentarians by training men and women parliamentarians in gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Output 2.3, which was added later, focused on local-level capacity building in targeted municipalities. Output 2.3 expanded the number of final beneficiaries and continued the implementation of GRB.

Outputs 3.1 and 3.2 initially targeted gender equality advocates outside of parliament and the influence they might have on TGNA outputs and processes. These activities aimed to formalize the relationships among the EOC, MPs and CSOs through public hearings and collaborative initiatives. The

⁶² Output 2.3. was not part of the original project document and was added during the project document revision period; it focused on local-level capacity building.

outputs also aimed to establish spaces for dialogue in order to improve women's political participation, including through the use of temporary measures.

The initial design of project Outcome 3 clearly mentions that civil society and women's organizations would need to provide information and gender expertise to inform the EOC's implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy.

The outputs of Outcome 3 also considered building the capacities of young and aspiring women candidates by facilitating mentoring and exchanges with current women parliamentarians. High-level advocacy and information exchanges were envisaged to achieve this end.

The project originally had 22 activities; nine more activities were added later.

The original donor contract with Sida was for 28,500,000 SEK. Though the project received the whole amount, what was initially valued at US\$3,500,000 was reduced by depreciation and exchange rate differences to \$2,887,275. The analysis of the budget is presented in subsections 4.4 Efficiency and 4.4.1 Overview.

2.2. KEY PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

The main project partners were UN Women Turkey, IPU as technical partner (primarily responsible for outputs 1 and 2), and the EOC. EOC was considered a key partner and principal beneficiary of the project, with the authority to make decisions directly related to intervention activities.

2.3. THEORY OF CHANGE

Based on the definition used by the United Nations, a theory of change is a method that explains how a given intervention (or set of interventions) is expected to lead to a specific change in development through an evidence-based analysis of cause-and-effect links.

This evaluation had the task of reconstructing the project's theory of change (ToC), given the long implementation period and the amendment carried to the original ProDoc, mainly modifying the project design at the activity level. The initial project's ToC was reconstructed by considering only the ProDoc, including assumptions, risks, outputs and activities. This choice was based on the consideration that it would be key to facilitating the evaluation team's understanding of the challenges and modifications experienced during project implementation.

Figure 1 presents the theory of change as per ProDoc in 2014, with its strategies identified by the evaluation team leader and preconditions that were considered relevant but which were not necessarily included during the design of ProDoc. The theory of change reconstruction included the numerous activities, outputs and outcomes of the ProDoc. This initial theory of change also provides the project's expected impacts and end goals.

Figure 2 presents the final diagram of the theory of change as per the modified ProDoc; the figure represents the project as per the 2018 amendment with its strategy and preconditions reflecting the project's new activities. Because the project did not further modify its outputs or outcomes, Figure 3 presents the final diagram of the theory of change.

Figure 1: Reconstruction Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) Theory of Change – 2014

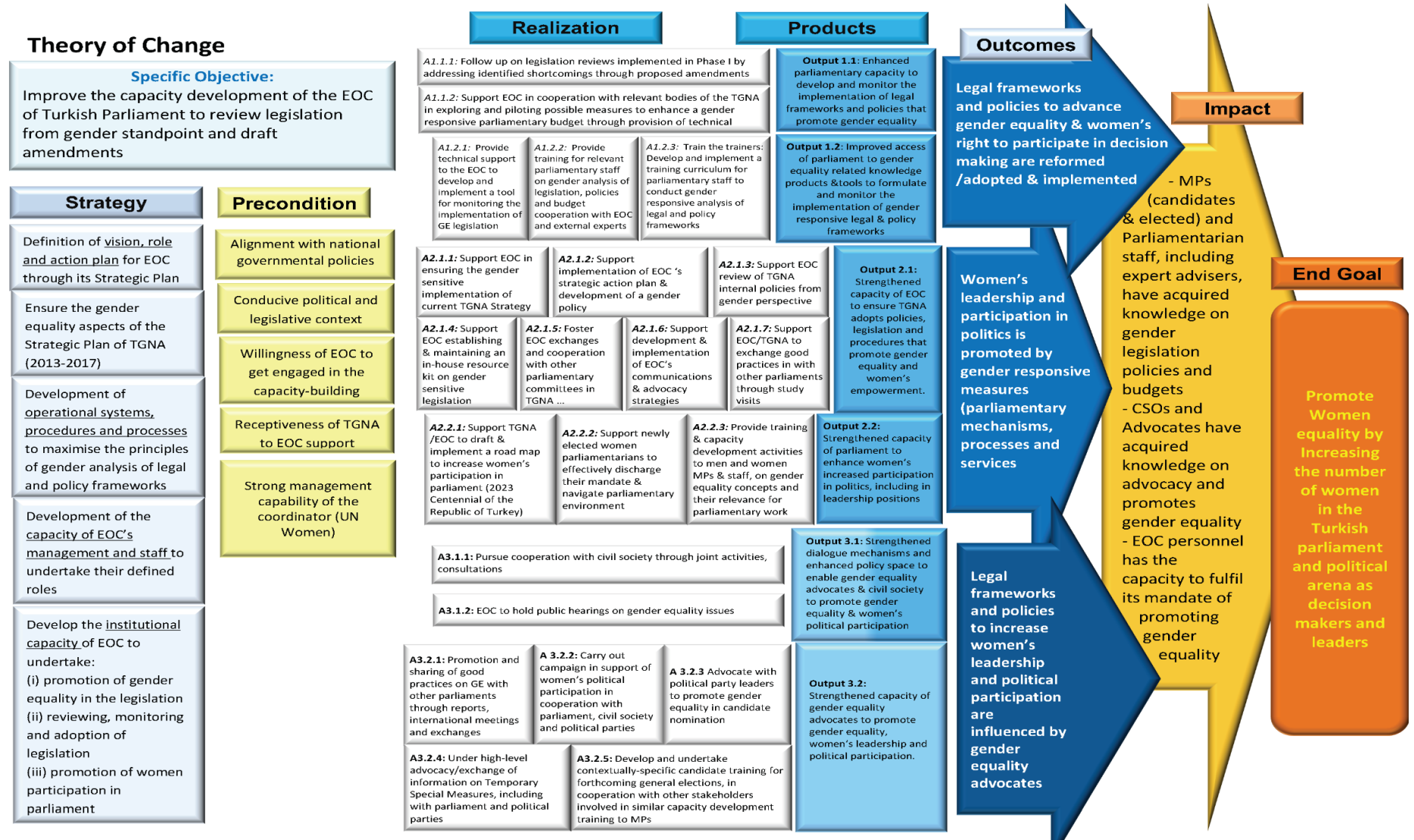


Figure 2: Reconstruction of Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) Theory of Change – 2018

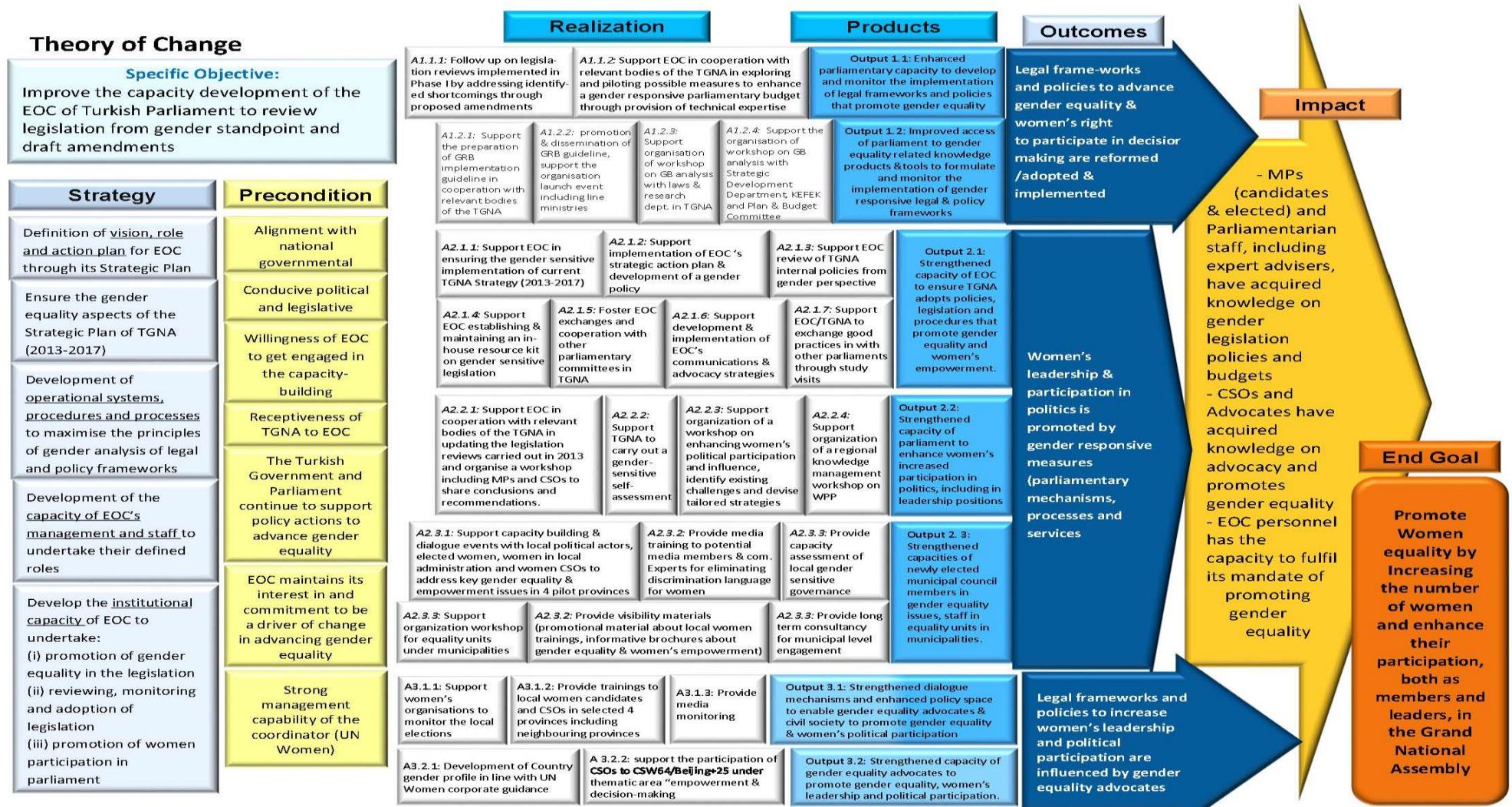
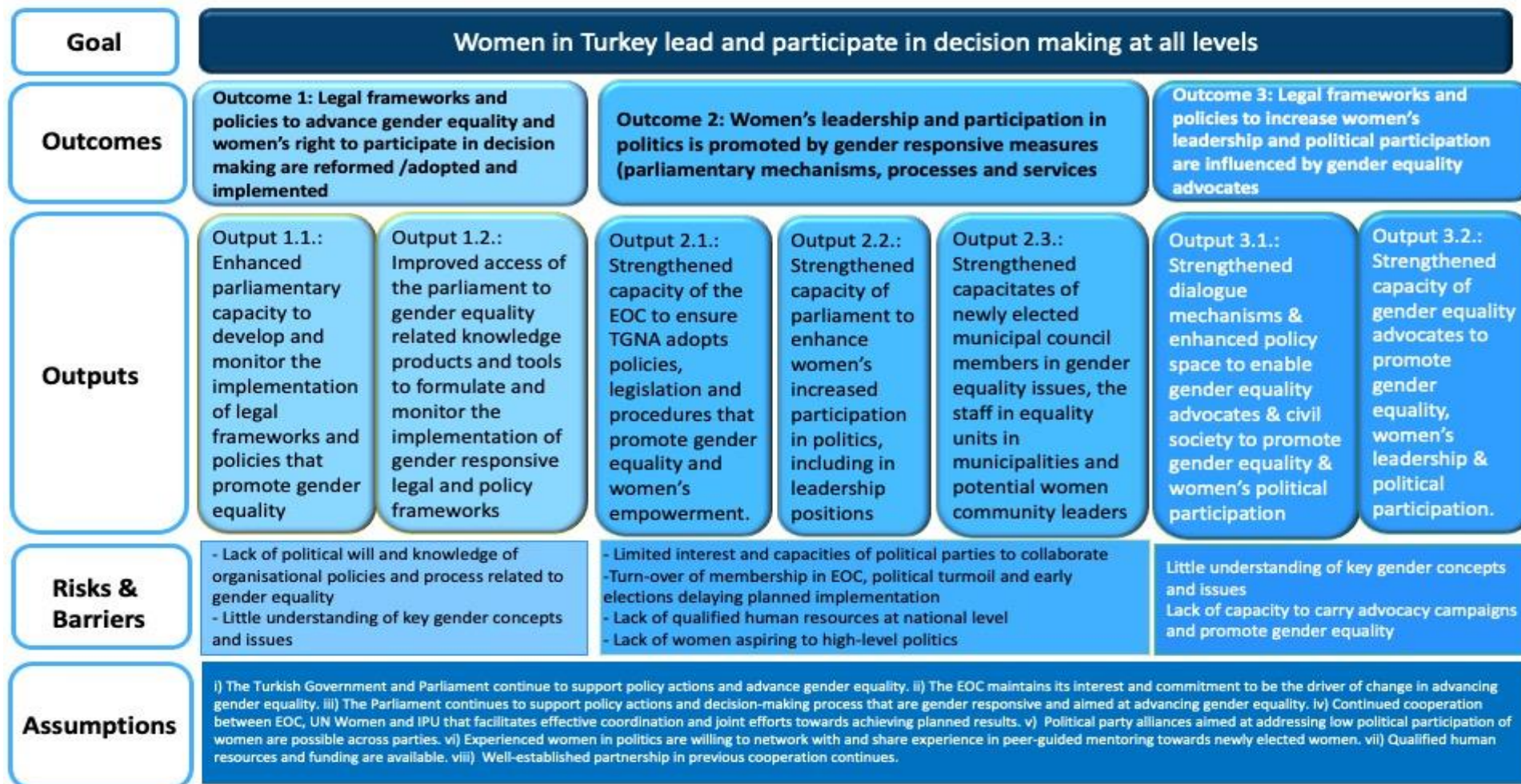


Figure 3: Reconstruction of Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) Theory of Change — 2014-2018



3. EVALUATION OVERVIEW

3.1. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

This final evaluation fulfils the mandatory external final evaluation requirement of the monitoring, evaluation and research plan of the UN Women Turkey 'Country Strategic Note 2018-2021'. The objectives of this final external evaluation, as per the terms of reference, were to assess:

- i) The programmatic progress of implementation, and
- ii) The end-stage performance of the *Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020)* project, comparing expected results to final outcomes.

The evaluation findings are meant to contribute to effective programming in the organization and to refine future organizational approaches to women's political participation in Turkey. Evaluation findings are also expected to be used to engage local and national policymakers and stakeholders in evidence-based dialogues; to advocate for increasing women's local and central-level leadership and political participation; and for developing local and national-level gender-responsive plans and budgets. The evaluation process aims to foster organizational learning and accountability, and informed of the overall implementation of the Strategic Note of the UN Women Turkey Country Office for the period 2018-2021. As per terms of reference, the evaluation's target users include i) project beneficiaries, including the members of the EOC, women parliamentarians of the TGNA, the Strategy Development Department of the TGNA, local and national government counterparts and CSOs, and ii) project implementing partners, including IPU, UN Women Turkey staff, other UN agencies, the Embassy of Sweden, the donor community at large and development partners present in Turkey. The evaluation considered the six DAC evaluation parameters: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and progress to impact.⁶³ The evaluation also considered factors related to human rights and gender equality. The evaluation includes a series of detailed recommendations based on observations and lessons learned. Recommendations were based on good practices and difficulties identified in project design, implementation and sustainability. The recommendations are oriented towards strengthening effective programming and refining future interventions on women's political participation in Turkey. The evaluation focused on the full project implementation period, from the project's launch on 15 December 2014 to the completion date of 31 December 2020. Initially, the project was scheduled to end in 2017, but two no-cost extensions were granted: one from 2016 until December 2018 and another from December 2018 until December 2020. In terms of geographical scope, the assessment focused on the provinces where the project implemented major activities, including Adana, Ankara, Beisktas (Istanbul), Gaziantep, Izmir and Mardin.

Due to travel COVID-19 restrictions, the evaluation was completely conducted online; there were no face-to-face interviews.

3.2. EVALUATION DESIGN AND GUIDELINES

The evaluation design followed the terms of reference requirements and is in full compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation, the UNEG guidelines for the Integration of Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, and the UNEG

63 Better Criteria for Better Evaluation, Revised Evaluation Criteria, Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 10 Dec 2019.

Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct. The evaluation team had adopted the associated ethical behaviours in the performance of their evaluation activities, as set out in the pledge of ethical conduct in evaluation: integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence. Furthermore, interviewees were clearly informed that all data provided was confidential and would be presented in the report as disaggregated data. The evaluation was also based on the outlined evaluation principles of the 'UN Women Evaluation Policy (2012)', the 'UN Women Strategic Note 2015-2018' and the 'UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021'. The design of this summative evaluation was based on the evaluability assessment of the project, in order to meet evaluation objectives, identification of the most relevant stakeholders to be involved in the assessment, as well as the level of effective management of time and resources. The evaluability assessment focused on the quality of the intervention design, the availability and quality of the information delivered (particularly key documentation) and the context of the evaluation (including COVID-19 restrictions). This evaluation was initially a theory-based evaluation. The conceptual part of the evaluation that reconstructed the theory of change was carried out during the inception phase. The second phase of the evaluation involved collecting evidence to establish whether and how the project produced the desired changes.

The project's original chain of results from inputs, activities and outputs through outcomes and impacts were adapted to accommodate the political context and the implementing partner, EOC. These modifications, which allowed the project to continue working and partially supporting the EOC, changed the linkages between causes and effects. The assumptions, risks and the influence of actors such as the Government of Turkey and the effects on the wider socioeconomic environment shifted significantly during project implementation. This external political context hindered change; the EOC's power to influence change shifted from a positive to a negative influence, limiting TGNA changes and capacity development during the project's implementation period.

The evaluation team leader considered it appropriate to complement the theory-based evaluation with a developmental evaluation, given that i) the project operated in a highly uncertain situation, where the external environment was constantly changing, and the project required the collaboration of many different stakeholders from different organizations and sectors, and because ii) this evolving and volatile external situation meant that the route to change was non-linear and was not easily predicted beforehand. This evidence-based evaluation made use of triangulation from the documentation review, progress reports, stakeholder interviews, focus groups and an assessment of the project's options to deal with implementation challenges.

3.3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The methodology for this final evaluation was based on the terms of reference. It entailed a comprehensive desk review and analysis of provided documentation and other relevant documentation. Interviews with key project personnel, partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries complemented the desk review. For the interviews, the evaluation used a judgement sampling approach on the selection of the key project actors: UN Women Staff (UN Women Turkey Officer, Regional Officer, project coordinators,⁶⁴ project analysts, project communication and advocacy Associated and project assistant), implementing partners (IPU), the donor, stakeholders and beneficiaries. In order to avoid the risk of sampling bias and as a strategy to mitigate a reduced sample of key actors, the initial judgement sampling was combined with snowball sampling

⁶⁴ The project had in three different project coordinators through its six-year implementing period.

provided by UN Women Turkey staff and implementing partners and a voluntary response sampling of direct beneficiaries.

The evaluation team used several tools for data collection. For primary data collection, the evaluation team relied on in-depth and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

3.3.1. PRIMARY DATA SOURCES

Primary data sources consisted of video conference interviews with: UN Women Turkey Country Office and the UN Women regional Office management and staff involved in the project; partners and target groups involved in the project; Turkey's political parties represented in the Parliament, and stakeholders involved to implemented trainings and capacity building events.

Three video-conferenced focus groups also took place with direct beneficiaries: local political and experience-sharing workshops; women councillor's meetings; and gender-sensitive media trainings.

In total, 32 out of 35 designed and requested consultations were completed. Of the 32 consultations, 44 women and 11 men participated. Table 3 provides a gender breakdown for each type of Stakeholder.

Table 3: Gender Breakdown of Stakeholders Interviewed

Stakeholders	No. of Women	No. of Men	Total No.
UN Women Project Staff and Regional Office Staff	8	1	9
Inter parliamentary Union (IPU)	2	-	2
Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) at Parliament	1	3	4
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	2	-	2
Strategy and Budget Department of the Parliament	3	2	5
Ministry of Family Labour and Social Services	-	1	1
Local Governments	1	-	1
Gender Advocates/Experts	5	2	7
Training Participants	21	2	23
Political Parties			-
President's Office	1	-	1
TOTAL	44	11	55

Given video conference capabilities, the total number of focus group participants (including the moderator) was intended to be 10. Table 4 presents a gender breakdown of each focus group.

Table 4: Gender Breakdown of Focus Groups

Focus Group	No. of Women	No. of Men	Total No.
Local Politics and Experience-sharing Workshops	9	-	9
Women Councillor's Meeting	6	-	6
Gender Sensitive Media Trainings	6	2	8
TOTAL	21	2	23

3.3.2. SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

Secondary data sources consisted of the following documentation:

- The original project document, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports, mid-term review report, output reports, end-of-contract report(s) and field progress reports);
- Notes from committee meetings involved in the project (where available);
- Documentation produced during implementation (e.g. training manuals, training presentations, statements realized from workshops, etc.); and
- International reports (e.g. EU progress reports on Turkey), academic research, public opinion surveys and government data, if available.

3.3.3. EVALUATION MATRIX

Table 5 presents the proposed evaluation criteria and questions, which were based on the terms of reference. The evaluation framework comprises seven evaluation criteria, with one overarching evaluation question (EQ) for each evaluation criterion and several sub-questions (SQ) to help to assess the extent to which the project fulfilled the criterion.

The evaluation’s criteria are based on the updated OECD-DAC’s six evaluation criteria for development actions: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability. In addition, a criterion on human rights and gender equality was added in response to a request in terms of reference.

Table 5: Evaluation Core Questions (EQs)

Evaluation Criterion	Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions
RELEVANCE	EQ 1: What was the relevance of Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project to international and country policies and needs?
	SQ 1.1: To what extent was the project consistent with government priorities and national development strategies in the area of gender equality and women’s empowerment?
	SQ 1.2: To what extent did the project reflect national and local priorities and commitments on gender equality/women’s political participation and the United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy?
	SQ 1.3: To what extent was the project aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of women’s political participation and gender-responsive planning and budgeting?
	SQ 1.4: To what extent was the choice of intervention relevant to the situation of the target groups?
	SQ 1.5: To what extent were the project design and results consistent with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries and partners?
	SQ 1.6: To what extent did UN Women possess the comparative advantage in the programme’s area of work in comparison with other UN entities and key partners in Turkey?

Evaluation Criterion	Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions
COHERENCE	<p>EQ 2: Was the UN Women support to the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project coherent with UN Women policy and other donors' policies and support, particularly to the integration of gender and human rights principles and strategies?</p> <p>SQ 2.1: To what extent was the project coherent with UN Women's Strategic Plan and interrelated threefold mandate?</p> <p>SQ 2.2: To what extent did the project show synergies and/or interlinkages with other UN Women interventions?</p> <p>SQ 2.3: To what extent did the project achieve synergies with the work of the UN Country Team?</p> <p>SQ 2.4: To what extent was the project complementary and in harmonization and/or coordination with the interventions of other actors in the same context?</p> <p>SQ 2.5: To what extent did the project ensure synergies and coordination with government and key partners' relevant efforts while avoiding duplication?</p>
EFFECTIVENESS	<p>EQ 3: To what extent did the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project achieve its targeted results?</p> <p>SQ 3.1: To what extent were the project's expected results achieved at both outcome and output levels? What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of project results?</p> <p>SQ 3.2: To what extent did the selected strategies and approaches achieve project results?</p> <p>SQ 3.3: To what extent did the project achieve unforeseen results, either positive or negative?</p> <p>SQ 3.4: What good practices (if any) were identified during project implementation?</p> <p>SQ 3.5: Did the project face any shortcomings or obstacles? If yes, how were they addressed?</p> <p>SQ 3.6: To what extent did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers and project partners?</p> <p>SQ 3.7: To what extent were the monitoring mechanisms in place effective in measuring and informing project management of performance and progress towards targets?</p>
IMPACT	<p>EQ 4: What was the overall impact of the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project?</p> <p>SQ 4.1: To what extent was there evidence that the project will deliver longer-term results from its processes and benefits?</p> <p>SQ 4.2: To what extent was there evidence of potential measurable impacts on empowerment due to the project intervention on the different target groups?</p> <p>SQ 4.3: To what extent was there evidence that the project will change the dynamics of power in the existing relationships across the different target groups?</p>
EFFICIENCY	<p>EQ 5: Has the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project been efficiently implemented?</p> <p>SQ 5.1: Were resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) strategically allocated to achieve the project's outcomes and outputs?</p> <p>SQ 5.2: Were the activities implemented within the intended time frame and budget?</p> <p>SQ 5.3: To what extent did the project implementation provide value for money?</p> <p>SQ 5.4: To what extent did the management structure support efficiency in project implementation and the achievement of results?</p>
SUSTAINABILITY	<p>EQ 6: What are the sustainability prospects of the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project?</p> <p>SQ 6.1: To what extent have the project benefits been maintained after project phase-out?</p>

Evaluation Criterion	Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions
	<p>SQ 6.2: To what extent did the project intervention succeed in building both individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure the sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices in the targeted organizations?</p> <p>SQ 6.3: To what extent was the project’s exit strategy planned and successfully implemented?</p> <p>SQ 6.4: To what extent has the project effectively generated national and local ownership of the achieved results?</p> <p>SQ 6.5: To what extent did the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of target groups’ capacities ensure the sustainability of project efforts and benefits?</p> <p>SQ 6.6: To what extent has the project developed/reinforced partners’ operational capacities?</p> <p>SQ 6.7: To what extent has the project been able to develop and establish local accountability and oversight systems?</p> <p>SQ 6.8: To what extent was the project able to promote the replication and/or scaling-up of successful practices?</p>
<p>HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<p>EQ 7: Has the UN Women-Sida support to Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project brought Human rights and gender equality value?</p> <p>SQ 7.1: To what extent were gender and human rights principles and strategies integrated into project design and implementation?</p> <p>SQ 7.2: To what extent did the project bring gender-transformative changes that address the root causes of gender inequalities (including prevailing social norms, attitudes and behaviours, discrimination and social systems) as well as inequalities experienced by vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities within the framework of the leave no one behind principle?</p>

3.4. LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES OF THE EVALUATION

The limitations encountered during the evaluation process were mainly related to the accessibility and availability to the key stakeholders to participate to a face-to-face interview, due to their overload agendas, as well as due to the COVID-19 restrictions and the political context.

The mitigation strategies implemented to cope with the above-mentioned limitation was that primary data collection was mainly conducted through on online communication tools which brought both advantages but also limitations to the quality-data collection. In focus group meetings video conferencing was used where participants joined from different locations. Number of focus group participants were limited by 10 in each discussion in order to ensure proper facilitation and all participants have chance to speak up comfortably. However there has been still a risk for the conversations to go deeper in the subjects discussed during the focus group meetings.

As the external environment in which the project was implemented was constantly changing and the volatile context made it challenging to follow a stable route to change in terms of theory of project’s result chain which was initially developed in at the design stage of the project. Evaluation team opted for theory-based approach and re-constructed the theory of change of the project and the evaluation was carried out around the re-constructed theory of change rather than focusing on the initial result chain.

Evaluation findings on the trainings delivered in the project was supported by the primary data which did not include the non-beneficiaries and no comparison was made in the enhanced capacities of the individuals who participated in the trainings and who did not for strengthening the attributability of the results. The findings on the trainings were mainly supported by the information collected on training participants, where the overall situation of the non-beneficiaries has been assumed to be included in the context analysis and secondary data collection.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1. RELEVANCE

Based on data obtained during the evaluation process, this section discusses the extent to which the project met its gender equality and women’s political participation objectives in line with Turkey’s national legal framework, policies and plans, with the UN Development Cooperation Strategy, UN Women Country Strategy and Action Plan, and with the needs of partners and beneficiaries.

SQ 1.1: To what extent is the project consistent with the national development strategies in the area of gender equality and women’s empowerment?

SQ 2.5: To what extent is the project consistent with the government priorities and national development strategies?

Finding 1: *The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was in line with country policies and planning documents (including development plans and action plans).*

During the course of the project, Two development plans were announced and adopted during the course of the project. These plans constituted the main framework for policies to be implemented in consecutive four-year periods. The government made decisions on 1) improving the level of women’s participation in decision-making processes, 2) raising awareness on GRB, and 3) increasing women’s participation in decision-making processes, including women’s political participation.

These three policy initiatives intersected with the project’s objectives and planned implementation. The project’s GRB capacity development and awareness-raising activities with staff from the parliament and line ministries corresponded to the needs and policies outlined in the development and action plans.

Legislative reviews with gender perspectives, though remaining within the EOC sphere, have contributed to the encouragement of women’s active participation in decision-making mechanisms. The legislative review held on working life is also in line with the goals and objectives of the development plan, have been raised as a significant capacity development support extended to the EOC experts and confirmed by their statements in the interviews held during the evaluation. “EOC being a new committee in the TGNA, those legislative reviews have supported the committee to develop a perspective on the legislation that responded to the goals and objectives outlined in the development plans.”

Table 6: Turkey’s Development Plans

2014-2018 Development Plan	
Goal and Objectives	Policies
The main purpose is to increase the role of women in social, cultural and economic life, to protect the	It will be ensured that women will participate in more decision-making processes; women’s employment will be increased; and women’s skill and education levels will be improved

family and improve its status and to enhance public unity within the framework of gender equality

Awareness will be raised on GRB, and exemplary implementation will be developed.

2019-2023 Development Plan

Objectives

The main objectives are to prevent all kinds of discrimination against women, to ensure that women benefit equally from the rights, opportunities and facilities in all areas of social life and to empower them

Policies and Measures

The active participation of women in economic, social, cultural life and decision-making mechanisms at all levels will be encouraged in order to strengthen the equality of opportunity for men and women on the rights, especially at the local level
Encouraging activities will be carried out to increase women's active participation in politics.

Annual action plans of the Presidency complement the development plans in the sense that they propose concrete actions to be taken under plan objectives and policies. The 2019 annual plan's aims include the use of GRB tools and women's active participation in decision-making processes. The 2020 annual plan envisages the implementation of activities to encourage women's active participation in politics through cooperation with NGOs working on the topic. The GRB trainings have increased the level of information and awareness among the TGNA and line ministry experts. One expert interviewed stated, "GRB is a new method in budget-making processes, and the trainings have provided the skills necessary to incorporate gender equality perspective into the budget."

By increasing awareness and skills development at the technical level, the legislative reviews and GRB trainings have responded to the goals and objectives identified in the development plans.

SQ 1.2: To what extent did the project reflect national and local priorities and commitments on gender equality/women's political participation and the UN Development Cooperation Strategy?

Finding 2: The project's tripartite approach of adopting legal frameworks, promoting gender-responsive measures through parliamentary processes and services, and influencing legal frameworks and policies to increase women's political participation complemented the UN UNDCS, the UN Women Strategy and Work Plan and Sida's strategy.

UNDCS's 2016-2020 Result 5 (Outcome 3.1), is "improved legislation, policies, implementation and accountability mechanisms to enable equal and effective social, economic and political participation of women and girls by 2020." Under this result, the UN aims to contribute to gender-sensitive policymaking through gender-responsive tools. The project's activities on raising awareness on GRB can be evaluated as the best tool used in the project for national and local-level gender-sensitive policymaking.

Similarly, the project's training efforts on GRB, which raised awareness on the issue and increased the skills of participants, is in line with the UN Women's triple mandate. One of those mandates is "supporting Member States, upon request, to translate global norms and standards into legislation,

policies and development plans at the regional, national and local levels as part of its operational activities.”⁶⁵

In its design, the project’s third outcome, “legal frameworks and policies to increase women’s leadership and political participation are influenced by gender equality advocates,” is also relevant to the UN Women strategy “civil society organizations, in particular women’s organizations, play a vital role in promoting women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women’s long-standing relationship with the women’s movement gives it the opportunity to bring their voices, capacities and contributions in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment, notably to those most likely to be left behind.”⁶⁶

Sida’s recent strategy (2014-2020)⁶⁷ includes a results area that focuses on the increased enjoyment of rights and greater opportunities to exercise democratic influence. This results area is in line with the project’s overall aims of achieving gender equality in women’s political participation and gender advocates exerting influence for legal frameworks to achieve gender equality. During interviews, officials from the Sida country team noted that their commitment and continued support for the project was due to the alignment of the project’s vision with Sida’s strategy. This commitment reflects their recognition of the project’s significance to women’s empowerment.

Finding 3: The project was aligned with SDG Goal 5, Goal 10 and Goal 16, and to UNDCS Result 2 and Result 5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of women’s political participation and gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project design is aligned with three SDGs:

- SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;⁶⁸
- SDG 10, particularly target 10.3, which addresses equal opportunity and reduced inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard;⁶⁹ and
- SDG 16, especially target 16.7, which seeks to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.⁷⁰

Reaching the target of women’s full participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and social life constitutes a significant part of SDGs 5, 10 and 16. This is particularly relevant given that women are still under-represented in almost all national, regional and local level legislatures, hold few offices at the leadership level, and are exposed to harassment that creates intimidation and an unfavourable environment for running for elected office.

65 United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Strategic Plan 2018-2021, p.10 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N17/401/46/PDF/N1740146.pdf?OpenElement>

66 Ibid., p, 10

67 Result Strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey, p.17, <https://www.regeringen.se/49b72b/contentassets/12a89180bafb43e3823b6c6f18b6d86a/results-strategy-for-swedens-reform-cooperation-with-eastern-europe-the-western-balkans-and-turkey-2014-2020>

68 United Nations SDGs, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

69 United Nations SDGs, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>

70 SDG Goal 16: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

The project outcomes are directly linked to the UNDCS for Turkey (2011-2015) and contribute to UNDCS Result 2 (“empowered individuals and vulnerable groups participate equally in and influence decision-making process at all levels”) and Result 5 (“equal participation of women ensured in all fields of the public sector, private sector and civil society with strengthened institutional mechanisms to empower women’s status”).

SQ 1.3: To what extent was the project aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of women’s political participation and gender-responsive planning and budgeting?

Finding 4: *The project was aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of women’s political participation and gender-responsive planning and budgeting.*

As elaborated in the context section, the main international agreements that provide a frame on women’s political participation are:

- *UN International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights:* Article 25 clause (b): “To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.” Though this clause does not include a specific reference to women, it can nonetheless be interpreted to mandate that signatory countries should secure women’s political participation and representation. The project, which is designed to increase women’s political participation, is in line with this clause of the agreement.
- *Convention on the Political Rights of Women:* Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Convention enshrine equality of men and women in terms of political rights, representation at elected offices and taking public office without any discrimination. Project outcome 1 is in line with the values enshrined in these articles, as it foresees the adoption of legal frameworks and policies for advancing gender equality and women’s right to participate in decision-making.
- *CEDAW:* Clause (b) of the Convention reads, “to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.” This is in line with project Outcomes 1 and 2. Clause (c) of the convention, “to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country,” is in line with project Outcome 3, as it aims to include gender advocates in engaging with decision makers on gender equality policies.

SQ 1.4: To what extent was the choice of intervention relevant to the situation of the target groups?

SQ 1.5: To what extent were the project design and results consistent with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries and partners?

Finding 5: *The project responded to the needs of national and local-level project partners and beneficiaries.*

The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was designed based on the findings of a needs assessment held with the participation of MPs from the EOC and officials from the Secretary General's office during the UN Joint Programme. Thus, the project took partners' needs into consideration from the outset.

By providing technical expertise at international standards, legislative reviews from a gender perspective and skills development on GRB among staff have supported the EOC to fulfil its mandate as a relatively new committee.

Interviews held during the evaluation process revealed that the project created spaces for women MPs to discuss gender equality issues in a politically polarized environment that does not allow the formation of a women's caucus. These project-created discussion platforms have allowed women MPs to develop relationships with each other and to hold discussions on gender equality matters without being victims of the polarized political discourse.

Project activities on GRB were relevant to the needs of at least one municipality interviewed during the evaluation. According to an interviewee, GRB facilitates the establishment of equality units working on gender issues within the municipalities. The presence of such units is critical to securing budget allocations on gender-specific topics. Interviews indicate that GRB and local equality action plans and units are required to take concrete actions on gender equality; both topics were mostly covered by the project activities.

The project period coincided with local government elections in 2019. Seizing the opportunity to connect with women candidates at the local level, UN Women trained 171 women candidates under a local politics workshop and 35 women municipal councillors. Focus group findings indicated that women who received training had helped other women to increase their skills in various areas, particularly in communications, a topic that participants identified as a common need.

Training participants who were interviewed in focus groups indicated that "they needed more information on the current global status of gender equality and comparative information on electoral processes, campaign procedures and fund-raising activities", which were aspects fully covered during the trainings. Example, one participant shared that prior to the training, she had limited information on election systems and campaign financing and that the information on the legal framework, election procedures and financing improved her understanding of the country's systems. Another participant said, "the trainings were like a school to us in which we have improved our level of information with regards to women's political participation around the world and also improved our skills as candidates." Several focus group participants indicated that they had limited experience interacting with voters during the campaign period. "The trainer has given us practical tips to us in terms of how to communicate during the campaign period and how to reach out to the voters," one focus participant reported. One participant considered the psychological readiness provided by the training to be an important asset for a woman candidate in the age of disinformation and post-truth.

The project had limited relevance to the needs of gender advocates due to the limited number of activities they participated in. While the existence and overall support of UN Women was acknowledged and appreciated, interviews indicated that further cooperation, such as the mobilization of gender advocates at the local level and further efforts to reach out to women's groups at the local level, and tailor-made support extended to various groups have been defined as approaches to increase cooperation with UN Women and the gender advocates.

SQ 1.6: To what extent does UN Women possess the comparative advantage in the programme's area of work in comparison with other UN entities and key partners in Turkey?

***Finding 6:** The project has informally shown that UN Women has built a comparative advantage in promoting GRB and gender equality in comparison to other UN entities.*

Due to its resilient and flexible implementation of the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project, UN Women has established trusted relationships with key people in the TGNA Strategy and Budget Department, the Strategy and Budget Department of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, line ministries, municipalities, female politicians and MPs.

Activities on GRB became entry points for promoting gender equality within the agenda of the country. This information was corroborated across the different interviews and information gathered through the evaluation. The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project has been the only project of its kind in the Turkish parliament and has put gender issues on the parliament's agenda. UN Women was the only organization working with parliament, and the developed tools, training curriculum, pool of experts and partnerships have increased UN Women's comparative advantage.

4.2. COHERENCE

This section discusses the extent to which the project was coherent with UN Women and donors' policies and support regarding the achievement of gender equality in women's political participation.

SQ 2.1: To what extent is the project coherent with UN Women's Strategic Plan and interrelated threefold mandate?

***Finding 7:** The project is coherent with the UN Women's Strategic Plan 2014-2017, particularly to Impact 1: women lead and participate in decision-making at all levels, and Impact 6: a comprehensive set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment is in place that is dynamic, responds to new emerging issues, challenges and opportunities, and is applied through action by governments and other stakeholders at all levels.*

In relation to the UN Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021, the project is coherent in terms of the impacts of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, including women's full enjoyment of their human rights. The project is aligned with:

- Strategic Plan Outcome 2: "women lead, participate in, and benefit equally from government systems;"
- Strategic Note Outcome 1.1: "national and local level authorities with multi-stakeholder engagement, implement new and existing international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment through gender-responsive plans and budgets;"

- Strategic Note Output 1.1.1: “key line ministries, parliament and local governments have enhanced awareness and capacity to develop and apply GRB tools in planning and budgeting;” and
- Strategic Note Output 1.1.3: “targeted women in leadership positions are empowered with leadership skills and knowledge on gender equality and women’s empowerment commitments to effectively undertake their duties.”

The project activities implemented at the EOC and at the local level are aligned with the first strategic priority, as it intended to set global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and aimed to strengthen women’s empowerment in the political arena, particularly at the local level. Project activities are coherent with Outcome 1 and Output 2, whereby dialogue was facilitated among government, civil society and other relevant actors in the context of intergovernmental processes.

To a lesser extent, implemented activities were coherent with Output 1 insofar as stakeholder capacities to assess GRB implementation progress were strengthened. This is not directly linked to the Beijing Platform for Action, but it is a first step for achieving other global normative and policy frameworks.

SQ 2.2: To what extent does the project show synergies and/or interlinkages with other UN Women interventions?

***Finding 8:** The project was designed on the findings of an earlier needs assessment that was conducted under the Fostering an Enabling Environment for Gender Equality in Turkey project.*

The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was the first project only implemented by UN Women Turkey. An important component of the initial project was the Gender-sensitive Parliament Needs Assessment, carried out in 2012 by IPU and a joint UN Women – UNDP programme. The Assessment resulted in a series of recommendations to strengthen the capacities of the TGNA, particularly of the EOC. Sida funded both the Joint Programme initiative and the current project.

Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) represents the cornerstone for other UN Women projects implemented in Turkey, such as the Gender-responsive Planning and Budgeting project.

SQ 2.3: To what extent did the project achieve synergies with the work of the UN Country Team?

***Finding 9:** The project has been the generator and supported the evolution of the UN Women and thus strengthening the UN Country team.*

Before the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project, UN Women only had a programme presence in Ankara (2012-2014). The November 2014 project launch strengthened the transition of the UN Women Regional Office to Istanbul and later to the establishment of the UN Women Turkey Programme Office in Ankara in 2015, which by year-end 2018 began the transition to UN Women Turkey.

The project has been the driving force in strengthening UN Women's presence in the development arena in Turkey and in building respectful and trusted relationships with different stakeholders in the country's national and local political structures.

However, the project missed opportunities for inter-agency collaboration. For example, the United National Industrial Development Organization (which implements technical assistance programmes and organizes international training programmes in Turkey) and the Food and Agriculture organization (which works in Turkey on areas such as food security, agricultural and rural development) could have been of great support to the project, particularly on Outcome 1.

SQ 2.4: To what extent is the project complementary and in harmonization and/or coordination with the interventions of other actors in the same context?

Finding 10: The project has been complementary, in harmony and coordinated with other UN agencies interventions.

The project was originally built on the lessons learned from the Sida-financed, UN Women – UNDP joint programme Fostering an Enabling Environment for Gender Equality in Turkey. UN Women continued to collaborate and harmonize with UNDP continued during and after project implementation. This project also harmonized with other UN agency gender equality and women's empowerment interventions.

To date, the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation (2014-2020) project in Turkey has been the only project to work directly with the TGNA and EOC. UN Women Turkey has since built on the project and has implemented other projects that support women's leadership and political participation. UN Women Turkey's complementarity is evidenced by projects such as the Sida-funded *Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Leadership in Political and Business Life*, and the EU-funded *Strengthening Civil Society Capacities and Multi-Stakeholders Partnerships to Advance Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Turkey*.

In contrast, the evaluation team was unable to find evidence of complementarity, harmonization or coordination with other relevant projects in Turkey, such as More and Better Jobs for Women: Women's empowerment through Decent Work in Turkey, phase I & II (jointly implemented by the International Labour Organization and the Turkish Employment Agency). No information was provided⁷¹ on any existing complementarity, harmonisation or coordination with the above-mentioned ILO interventions or other actors working on gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW).

SQ 2.6: To what extent does the project ensure synergies and coordination with government and key partners' relevant efforts while avoiding duplication?

Finding 11: The project created synergies between different government bodies and ministries by raising awareness about GRB within, for example, the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the

⁷¹ Nor in the annual reports neither in the interviews carried with UN Women Staff.

Strategy and Budget Department of the TGNA, the Strategy and Budget Department at the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, and the EOC's legislative experts and academicians.

The evaluation found evidence that the project's GRB trainings led to synergies among different direct beneficiaries. The evaluation found evidence that UN Women Turkey (the project team and other members of the UN Women Turkey Office and the Regional Office) created and maintained formal and informal open dialogues with EOC and other TGNA representatives during project implementation. These communications were not always easy and required patience and diplomacy. The project team not only maintained existing dialogues, but also created new dialogues with local authorities, women candidates and elected representatives. These dialogues enabled the project to continue when it was not possible to do so in the EOC arena. The GRB specific action with the Ministry of Family and Social Services provides an example of the results of these informal dialogues.

Evaluation interviewees who had participated in GRB trainings emphasized that the project ensured coordination with different government bodies and ministries and generated collaborations across different governmental units.

4.3. EFFECTIVENESS

This section presents the extent to which the project met its objectives and achieved results regarding gender equality in women's political participation.

Evaluation interviewees⁷² expressed satisfaction in having participated in various workshops and with the quality of workshops' content, materials and hands-on approach. Interviewees noted that because GRB was involved in the strategy plan and action plan, the workshops had a call on budget and ToTs and the built institutional capacity being relevant to the 2030 SDGs, for them the different implementation have brought concrete results.

The Turkish political context significantly hampered project effectiveness, forcing it to restart at least twice (every election meant new MPs, with project objectives totally dependent on the leadership of the new EOC chair). Further, some EOC opposition party members did not want to work with IPU, which further complicated access to international expertise for the project.

Another factor that affected project effectiveness was the vast scope of legislation and the lack of a strategy to determine which legislation most needed to change (and how to work to achieve such change).

SQ 3.1: To what extent were the project's expected results achieved at both outcome and output levels? What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of project results?

SQ 3.2: To what extent did the selected strategies and approaches achieve project results?

SQ 3.3: To what extent did the project achieve unforeseen results, either positive or negative?

⁷² From government bodies and ministries such as TGNA and the Strategy and Budget Department of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey

4.3.1 OUTCOME 1

***Finding 12:** Outcome 1, legal frameworks and policies to advance gender equality and women's right to participate in decision-making are reformed/adopted and implemented, was not fully achieved.*

Output 1.1, enhanced parliamentary capacity to develop and monitor the implementation of legal frameworks and policies that promote gender equality, was partially achieved.⁷³ This was due to the organization of a series of four meetings in 2016 to present the findings of the project's gender review of legislation.⁷⁴ The presentations covered 1) gender equality concepts; 2) legislative reviews in the family-women-children, political life, organization laws, media, and local administration clusters; 3) international conventions on gender equality, and 4) legislative reviews in working life cluster.

The MPs, TGNA staff and ministerial experts involved in drafting legislation who attended the presentations increased their knowledge of gender perspectives in legislation and enhanced their understanding of women's empowerment, gender equality concepts and international conventions.⁷⁵ In addition, the 2016 GRB trainings in the TGNA enhanced relevant parliamentary capacities.

The project organized two study visits to Spain in June 2017. Participants gained an understanding of GRB mechanisms and instruments implemented in the Spanish National Parliament and in the Andalusian Parliament, which led to an adaptation of Spain's GRB experiences to the Turkish parliament's budgeting processes. A subsequent GRB seminar in the TGNA led to the Head of the Strategy Development Department requesting that administrative departments integrate GRB into their departmental budgets. The evaluation team considered this as a positive, unforeseen result.

The results of this output, when triangulated with Indicator 1.1 (number of drafts submitted to EOC for review as the primary committee), show that 31 law proposals regarding gender equality and women's political participation were submitted to EOC in 2017 — but as the second committee only.

In 2018, 2019 and 2020, the reluctance of EOC and MPs to work at changing legislation, policies and strategies promoting gender equality led to a broad cessation of activities linked to reviewing legislation with these bodies.

However, in 2020, two IPU experts reviewed 38 pieces of legislation from a gender equality perspective in terms of compliance with international norms and standards (this analysis was in line with the 2018 restructuring of the project results framework). The experts then developed a set of recommendations to address gaps and strengthen the legislation. The review, analysis and recommendations were shared with women MPs and EOC members.⁷⁶ The reviews will serve as a basis for possible future initiatives by the EOC to strengthen existing legislation.

Eighty-seven women MPs and EOC members increased their knowledge on gender equality and enhanced their leadership, media relations and communications skills through a series of Women's Leadership Workshops organized in 2016, 2018 (following the Parliamentary elections) and 2019.

73 Output 1.1. was not included in the revision of the Project Document.

74 During the UNDP – UN Women joint programme's first phase, 31 pieces of legislation were reviewed from a gender equality perspective and were grouped under 10 clusters.

75 Page 7, Donor's Annual Progress Report (1 January to 31 December 2016).

76 Total of 81 MPs and parliamentary staff gained knowledge on how to strengthen legislation from a gender equality perspective.

In 2019, workshops on Violence against Women in Politics led to increased awareness among 115 participants (including MPs). This awareness included root causes, manifestations and measures that need to be taken in order to prevent and combat it.

Four study visits (to Finland, Norway, Spain and Sweden) were carried out by the project; beneficiaries included 388 stakeholders, including MPs, parliamentary staff and staff from public institutions.

An activity regarding the gender-sensitive self-assessment of the parliament was not implemented due to the lack of collaboration from EOC and the TGNA.

Output 1.2, improved access of the parliament to gender equality-related knowledge products and tools to formulate and monitor the implementation of gender-responsive legal and policy frameworks, was partially achieved. Progress on this output was due to the introduction of a monitoring checklist for legislation to MPs and TGNA staff⁷⁷ and to changes to the output's initially designed activities. The changes broadened the introduction of GRB beyond the EOC to include other relevant bodies, including the Strategic Development, Budget and Planning Committee and line ministries.

In total, 55 parliamentary staff (20 women and 35 men) enhanced their capacities on gender equality, gender analysis of budgets and GRB in 2017. By 2018, the number increased to 167 and included staff from the EOC, the parliament's administrative departments, key line ministries and key public institutions that were responsible for strategy development, budget processes and the development of laws. In addition to increasing their awareness and knowledge of gender equality concepts and GRB, they learned how to integrate gender perspectives into budget preparation, implementation and accounting processes.

Originally, Activity 1.2.1 aimed to "provide technical support to the EOC to develop and implement a tool for monitoring the implementation of gender equality legislation." This was amended to "support the preparation of GRB Implementation Guidelines in cooperation with relevant bodies of the TGNA (EOC, Strategic Development Department, Budget and Planning Committee)." This activity was fully achieved.

Originally, Activity 1.2.2 was designed to "provide training for relevant parliamentary staff on gender analysis of legislation, policies and budget cooperation with EOC and external experts." This was amended to "promotion and dissemination of GRB Guidelines, support the organization of the launch event including line ministries, TGNA, CSO and academia." This activity was successfully completed.

Originally, Activity 1.2.3 was designed to "train the trainers: develop and implement a training curriculum for parliamentary staff to conduct gender-responsive analysis of legal and policy frameworks (the legislation experts will be the trainers to deliver trainings to other legislation experts)." This activity was amended to "support the organization of a workshop on legislative analysis with laws and research department in TGNA." This activity was successfully achieved.

Activity 1.2.4, a new activity that was added to this Output, was designed to "support the organization of a workshop on gender budget analysis with the Strategic Development Department, the Committee on Equal Opportunity for Men and women and the Plan and Budget Committee", complementary to the amended activities and that helped to promote GRB at the national level through cooperation with the Presidential administration and the Strategy and Budget of the

77 The monitoring checklist for legislation was developed in the first phase during the Joint N Women – UNDP project.

Presidential administration office and lines ministries, especially the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Affairs.

Although the legislation reviews provided by the UN women experts did not lead to a TGNA committee review, legislation modification or adoption of the suggested reviews, during interviews, beneficiaries considered that the review reports helped to strengthen the Library of Parliament in terms of documentation. Interviewees further stated that it would be helpful for whoever wanted to work on those topics in the future.

Regarding the extent to which the selected strategies and approaches supported the achievement of project results, **the adaptation and openness of UN Women, IPU and Sida to EOC's request to carry out GRB trainings brought positive (and unforeseen) results.** For example, the entry point for including basic gender equality concepts and hands-on understanding of gender equality issues for the trainees. Moreover, the strategy of including in the addendum to project activities the requests from the direct beneficiaries and extending the range of initial beneficiaries to other agencies in the TGNA, ministries and local authorities generated further positive impacts in the adoption of GRB.

4.3.1. OUTCOME 2

SQ 3.6: To what extent did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers as well as project partners?

Finding 13: Outcome 2, women's leadership and participation in politics are promoted by gender-responsive measures (parliamentary mechanisms, processes and services), was partially achieved.

The main development that hampered the achievement of this outcome was the government's change in its approach to gender inequality. Although the legislative branch is technically separate from the executive, the ruling party's dominance of the overall system, including over the parliament and legislative affairs, determines how and whether gender-responsive measures and mechanisms are implemented. The government's less favourable position on gender equality and women's political participation led parliament to be reluctant to implement related measures.⁷⁸

Another affecting factor was the mass dismissal of civil servants from the parliament following the coup d'état attempt. This severely disrupted the level of technical expertise available to parliamentary committees. The new cadre of civil servants may not have sufficient awareness or background on gender equality topics.

Outcome 2 originally had two outputs; it was extended to three outputs after the amendment.

Output 2.1, strengthened capacity of the EOC to ensure the TGNA adopts policies, legislation and procedures that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, was partially achieved. This output had seven activities. During the implementation period, particularly in 2016 through a study visit hosted by the Norwegian Parliament (5 to 7 September 2016) and the EOC legislative experts participating in the study, acquired knowledge on parliamentary practices and civil and public initiatives on gender equality.

EOC also increased its visibility due to two advocacy events — the Celebration of the EOC's seventh anniversary and the celebration of the 82nd anniversary of Turkish women's right to vote and stand

⁷⁸ "Striking Report from Germany on Turkey: Institutions are paralyzed", (April 2020), Deutsche Welle, <https://www.dw.com/tr/almanyadan-çarpıcı-türkiye-raporu-kurumlar-felce-uğratıldı/a-57127795>

for election. However, when triangulated with its output indicators 2.1.a and 2.1.b, no progress was attained during 2016. In 2017, a symposium on women's participation in decision-making processes was organized to meet indicator 2.1.b (number of activities organized in cooperation with the EOC in support of gender equality in the current TGNA Strategy that are implemented).

Output 2.2, strengthened capacity of Parliament to enhance women's increased participation in politics, including in leadership positions, was also partially achieved. Parliamentarians strengthened their leadership communication skills and exchanged experiences by participating in the Women's Leadership Workshop (12 and 13 November 2016). When triangulated with its output indicators (2.2.a, 2.2.b and 2.2.c), only indicator 2.2.b (number of newly-elected women MPs that benefited from capacity development interventions) was achieved; 13 newly-elected women MPs benefited from the Workshop's capacity development intervention.

Evaluation interviewees were extremely supportive of the GRB trainings and the materials provided to the different participants, and where the capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers were built. There were four trainings in total, held in Ankara, Kizilcahamam and Sapanca. Participants included TGNA parliamentarians and line ministry staff, from lower-grade officials to high-management representatives. The first two trainings delivered basic information on GRB; the third and fourth sessions were more extensive and involved hands-on exercises on how participants could apply GRB in their work. The facilitators and participants expressed substantial satisfaction with the quality and engagement of the trainings.

4.3.2. OUTCOME 3

***Finding 14:** Outcome 3, legal frameworks and policies to increase women's leadership and political participation are influenced by gender equality advocates, was partially fulfilled.*

The TGNA does not have a structured participatory mechanism that allows regular and efficient dialogues between gender equality advocates and policymakers. Although this does not completely preclude advocates from regularly contacting MPs for advocacy purposes, advocates who do not share the decision makers' views on issues are often excluded. This issue remains one of the core challenges for all human rights advocates.

'Civic space' can be defined as "the set of conditions that allow civil society and individuals to organize, participate and communicate freely and without discrimination, and in doing so, influence the political and social structures around them."⁷⁹ This definition and the reporting of international and national organizations affirm that the civic space in Turkey continues to shrink due to the limitations on the freedoms of expression, media and assembly.⁸⁰ This shrinking space has inevitable consequences in terms of advocates' ability to influence policies on gender equality and all other human rights issues.

Exacerbating the problems of a shrinking civic space, the civic movement in Turkey functions in a socially and politically polarized environment. The political narrative encourages this polarization,

79 Dodsworth Susan, Keutgen Julia, (2020), "Addressing the global emergency of shrinking civic sapce and how to reclaim it: A programming guide" Westminster Foundation for Democracy, p. 7 <https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Civic-space-v1-1.pdf>

80 Civicus Monitor, <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/turkey/>

which is further deepened in social media channel echo chambers.⁸¹ Anti-rights discourse thrives in social media channels and consistently attacks rights activists on gender rights topics.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic, with its disparate impacts on women, has restricted the physical space through which organizations function.⁸² Though activists have rapidly adapted to the pandemic's constraints, its effects on women have increased activists' workload and the cases they have to attend to.

The amended project changed several indicators under Outcome 3. Indicator 3.a changed to "number of targeted CSOs with increased capacity to advocate gender equality and women's empowerment." Under Output 3.1, indicators 3.1.a changed to "number of initiatives that organized jointly by CSOs for monitoring local elections;" 3.1.b changed to "number of targeted trainings organized jointly by CSOs and local women candidates;" and indicator 3.1.c was added as "number of trainings that strengthen women's political participation at the local level and increase the monitoring capacity of CSOs." Output 3.2 indicator 3.2.a changed to "Turkey's gender profile report" and indicator 3.2.b changed to "number of events organized with CSOs."

The changes in the indicators aimed to reflect changes in specific activities' modifications:

Activity 3.1.1, originally designed to "pursue cooperation with civil society through joint activities, consultations," was amended to "support women's organizations to monitor local elections."

Activity 3.1.2, originally defined as "EOC to hold public hearings on gender equality issues," was amended to "provide trainings to local women candidates together with CSOs in selected four provinces, including neighbouring provinces."

Activity 3.2.1, originally defined as "promotion and sharing of good practices on gender equality with other parliaments through reports, international meetings and exchanges," was amended to "development of Country gender profile in line with UN Women corporate guidance."

Output 3.1, strengthened dialogue mechanisms and enhanced policy space to enable gender equality advocates and civil society to promote gender equality and women's political participation, was achieved. A regional consultation meeting in Kars (30 October 2016) strengthened local-level policy dialogue. The consultation meeting fulfilled original indicator 3.1.b, number of meetings with CSOs that have led to recommendations on women's political participation. The Women Leaders Workshop fulfilled original indicator 3.1.a, number of meetings that foster informal networking of women MPs across the political spectrum. In 2017, two regional consultation meetings in Adiyaman and Gaziantep on indicator 3.1.b. were held.

Output 3.2, strengthened capacity of gender equality advocates to promote gender equality, women's leadership and political participation, was partially achieved. In 2016, the presentation of the gender review of political life legislation and the Women Leaders Workshop fulfilled original indicator 3.2.b, number of high-level meetings aimed at exploring appropriate special measures for enhancing women's political participation. The following year, the Head of the Strategic

81 Dimensions of Polarization in Turkey 2020 Survey, Key Findings (2020), https://www.turkuazlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Survey_Key_Findings.pdf

82 Research after the first wave of the pandemic by the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey provides comprehensive data on how civic organizations have addressed the situation following the pandemic. More information can be found at https://covid19vestklar.tusev.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Covid19AnketFazilSonucRaporu_Final_.pdf (Turkish language)

Department in TGNA called on administrative departments to integrate GRB into departmental budgets.

No progress was reported on original indicator 3.2.a, “number of targeted advocacy initiatives organized jointly by Parliament, CSO and political parties”, or on indicator 3.2.c, “number of trainings of women candidates”.

The political context made implementing initial activities rather difficult. Nevertheless, consultative meetings presented the international agenda related to gender equality and women’s political participation and informed participants on ways to participate in international mechanisms, such as the Commission on the Status of Women and the CEDAW shadow reporting process.

SQ 3.5: Did the project face any shortcomings or obstacles? And if yes, how were they addressed?

Finding 15: Shortcomings in project design and implementation were associated with unanticipated consequences, including changes in workflow.

The changed political context in Turkey resulted in an initially committed and supportive primary implementing partner and beneficiary becoming an uncooperative and obstructive partner. Project implementation was also severely hampered by instability in EOC leadership; the EOC chairperson changed six times over the course of the project; at one time, three different people held the EOC Chair in a single year.⁸³

The limitation of having a single main primary beneficiary and partner, the EOC, became a disadvantage when the overall political mindset and narrative became less favourable to gender equality topics. The term ‘gender equality’ was effectively banned in official use, with the word ‘equality’ being replaced with ‘justice’. The significance of this mindset and narrative became clear in a 20 March 2021 presidential decree that announced Turkey’s withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. The withdrawal decision is a major setback in the achievement of women’s rights and will have long-lasting repercussions on several aspects of gender equality, including women’s political participation.

In order to address this shortcoming, UN Women extended the project’s technical services, capacity building and support to other stakeholders that were relevant to the project and to the EOC, such as the Strategic Department in the TGNA, the Plan and Budget Committee, local authorities, EOC’s legislative experts, CSOs, MP women candidates, local-level political parties and academicians. Another major shortcoming was the limited political strategy to directly address gender issues. However, the timing of GRB training was excellent, as it allowed the introduction of gender equality without generating conflict with the political trend away from gender equality topics.

SQ 3.7: To what extent were the monitoring mechanisms in place effective in measuring and informing project management of performance and progress towards targets?

Finding 16: The monitoring mechanism in place was not sufficient to raise warning signs, nor did effectively measure the performance or progress towards targets of the implementing activities to the project management.

⁸³ Project time-line developed by the evaluation team, available in the initial findings PowerPoint presentation of the project.

The UN Women reporting system requires that projects provide quarterly monitoring reports (internal monitoring) and partner progress reports (partners reporting to UN women for monitoring) for each year of implementation. Even when no activity took place (particularly from 2016 to 2019), the quarterly monitoring reports informed on the context and advancement of project implementation. Quarterly reports reflected activity preparation, implemented and postponed. UN Women's reporting system is designed to report on activities under its Country Annual Work Plan; thus, the system is not necessarily optimized for project reporting.

The UN Women Annual Donor Reporting established the project's reporting requirements in alignment with the donor requests agreed and the UN Women project's annual progress reports. The project activities were almost identical to the UN Women Turkey's Annual Work Plan's activities. UN Women's quarterly corporate monitoring system should be considered as supporting project monitoring.

Overall, the mechanisms in place effectively monitored the project's development and implementation progress. However, the monitoring mechanism only reported on activities that were implemented and /or postponed or were modified due to the political context at the time of the implementation but did not generate a warning signal to senior UN Women staff. A more proactive communication approach within UN Women may benefit projects by enabling faster and more effective reactions to upper-level political challenges.

4.4. IMPACT

This section presents the effects that the project implementation has generated (positive or negative, intended or unintended) and any higher-level effects. It also addresses the possible transformative effects of the intervention.

SQ 4.1: To what extent is there evidence that the project will deliver longer-term results from its processes and benefits?

***Finding 17:** According to interviewed beneficiaries, project implementation on GRB established the first step for institutional adoption and awareness-raising on gender equality issues in clear, specific contexts. The long-term results include the TGNA incorporating GRB training and guidelines as part of the training curricula for EOC/TGNA newcomers.*

The local-level training provided for women political candidates and newly elected political representatives, which included several political parties (including opposition parties), generated space for political dialogue and trust. As interviewees pointed out, this trust has been one of the reasons that UN Women has been the only UN entity working with the Parliament in Turkey. UN Women will be able to leverage this trust in building future projects.

Training of trainers may be an element that delivers long-term results on GRB capacity in the institutions where the trained trainers work. Another element with possible long-term results is that GRB trainings have been incorporated into the regular training that new EOC experts undergo when joining the EOC. However, this could be modified at any time, depending on the presidential consideration of the subject.

SQ 4.2: To what extent is there evidence of potential measurable impacts of empowerment due to the project intervention on the different target groups?

***Finding 18:** The evaluation team did not find any concrete evidence that the project had measurable impacts on empowerment on the different target groups. However, interviews with beneficiaries revealed that on some target groups, the basis to generate empowerment was laid down.*

The evaluation has found evidence across the different DAC criteria that project trainings and workshops laid the basis to generate empowerment at the individual, local and national levels; interviews with beneficiaries corroborated this finding. The specific training the project provided to women candidates and office holders empowered them to carry their duties as politicians in a better and more structured way.

The basis for generating empowerment among specific target groups was supported by other findings that built directly on this finding (see findings 10, 11 and 24). However, the evaluation team did not find a clear way to measure the potential impact of empowerment on the different target groups from the various achieved results.

SQ 4.3: To what extent is there evidence that the project will change the dynamics of power in the existing relationships across the different target groups?

***Finding 19:** The evaluation team did not find any evidence that the project led to a change in the dynamics of power in the existing relationships across the different target groups.*

The project implementation and achieved results did not provide clear evidence that it would change the dynamics of power in the existing relationships across the different target groups. However, in a political context of mistrust across political parties, some elements, such as the joint declarations from the workshops with local women councillors, helped initiate the process of building trust among opposite parties. The workshops had, at least, opened dialogue spaces where political parties have been able to talk and listen to each other. The opportunity to share and possibly change perspectives could be seen as an early stage of potential change. It is necessary, however, to ensure that the spaces for dialogue persevere and that this collaboration is maintained.

4.5. EFFICIENCY

This section provides the analysis of the data gathered during the evaluation in relation to which the intervention delivered results in an economic and timely manner.⁸⁴ The analysis considered all funds, expertise, available resources and time in the conversion into outputs, outcomes and impacts. The analysis compared the cost-effectiveness to other feasible alternatives in the same context. In relation to the timely deliverable, the evaluation considered the time frame reasonably adapted to the demanding, evolving context in which the project was implemented.

⁸⁴ In relation to the definition provided by the Better Criteria for Better Evaluation, OECD/DAC network on Development Evaluation (www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation).

SQ 5.1: Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been strategically allocated to achieve the project outcomes and outputs?

Finding 20: Overall, project resources were allocated in the most strategic way to obtain most of the outputs and outcomes.

In relation to budget allocation and utilisation, as per the project's obstacles presented in Finding 14, resource allocation was modified and focused on the activities that were considered to be more likely to yield results and to have an impact on beneficiaries. For example, the output 1.1 activities originally had the same budget allocation (\$40,000 each). However, during implementation, activity 1.1.1 received only \$5,634.96, whereas activity 1.1.2 received almost \$137,873. This was mainly to the fact that A1.1.2 was focus on the support not only of EOC but also other relevant bodies of the TGNA in exploring and piloting possible measures to enhance gender-responsive parliament budget through provision of technical expertise.

Within output 2.1 of the seven activities, the only activities that were fully implemented were those that provided capacity development support to TGNA administrative departments and women MPs and those that facilitated exchange and cooperation among other TGNA parliamentary committees.

The project amendment also reflected changes in activities and budget allocations to those that would be possible to implement under the shifting political context, such as activities supporting, promoting and disseminating the GRB guidelines, those supporting newly elected or candidate women, and those that built the capacities of local women's rights advocates in election monitoring.

According to the amendment, IPU received its full budget allocation of \$323,000.

The original donor contract with Sida was for 28,500,000 SEK for the entire project. Though the project received the whole amount, what was initially valued at US\$3,500,000 was reduced by depreciation and exchange rate differences to \$2,887,275.⁸⁵

The original budget allocated the greatest amount to Outcome 2, followed by Outcome 3, and the least to Outcome 1, reflecting the importance given to gender responsive measures (parliamentary mechanism, process and services in promoting women's leadership and participation in politics.

The projects' different technical support delivered were appreciated by beneficiaries, as the support provided met the target audience's needs and expectations, through tailoring.

The legislation reviews were the work of international experts and were presented to beneficiaries at different periods of project implementation. Although beneficiaries considered the reviews to be helpful opening new possibilities for ministries participating to the legislation reviews presentation and useful as reference materials for political advisers and academics, the reviews did not attain the expected outcome. The legislation reviews lack of efficiency was due to outputs not being linked to government priorities or EOC capacities to actually review and modify legislation.

The outputs, which experienced several delays and postponements, were related to the presentation of reviewed legislation from a gender perspective. The implemented outputs were paired with other presentations. For example, the 2016 Meeting on International Conventions and Presentation of Gender Review of Legislations presented five reviewed draft bills along with information on CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention on Violence Against Women. The main outputs

⁸⁵ The evaluation team did not receive the final financial statement for the year 2020, as it is due by June 2021, and later it was never provided.

during this period were the implementation of the back-to-back workshops, the material on CEDAW and international legal frameworks for gender equality, and the material on findings and recommendations to enhance gender equality in labour legislation. Coordinating the presentation of the legislation reviews with other events proved to be more effective than creating events exclusively to present the legislation reviews.

The GRB Guidelines and Gender-responsive Budgeting Training for Local Municipalities (GRB-Local Budget) was one of the most effective technical support outputs of this project. Its implementation was timely given the context. It had the added value of serving as a tool to introduce gender equality knowledge to target audiences within the TGNA and EOC staff and advisers, within the Ankara Metropolitan Financial Services Departments and within women's associations. The training provided a fast review of basic GRB concepts, tools and methods and gender statistics for Ankara province.

The project's local-level technical support was effective, as it met targeted beneficiaries' need such as women in politics needs, helping them to lift some political and financial barriers. In targeted municipalities, the adoption of GRB and the introduction of gender equality issues were significant innovations that facilitated collaborations and learning exchanges between women's associations in Turkey and budget experts.

In the case of the output reaching Media Students, the events were a catalyst for them to share, think, produce and deliver on the topics trained, and showed greater efficiency in the use of expertise and time and in creating a clear impact on the target groups.

The international Study Trips to the Norway⁸⁶, the Finnish and Swedish⁸⁷ Parliament as well as the Spanish Parliament in Madrid and Cataluña, were source of exchange of good practices in the use of gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and oversight of international conventions through legislation on gender equality, gender equality mechanisms and the role of parliament in advancing gender equality and gender mainstreaming mechanisms.

SQ 5.2: Were the activities implemented within the intended time frame and budget?

Finding 21: The project activities were implemented over an extended six-year period with a no-cost extension.

Although the project's implemented activities did not follow the originally designed time frame, they were timely in terms of the political context and beneficiaries' needs and helped advance the country's agenda on GRB topics.

The budget was redistributed according to activity prioritization on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in politics and the likelihood of having an impact under a changing political context.

⁸⁶ Study visit by legislative experts from the EOC from 5 to 7 September 2016.

⁸⁷ Study visits by members of the EOC and TGNA from 14 to 20 September 2017.

SQ 5.3: To what extent did project implementation provide value for money?

***Finding 22:** The project implementation through the different technical support provided and developed outputs, had generated a multiplier effect, as per gather information of interviewees, on the use in their day-to-day work of the GRB guidelines, and learned experienced.*

Given the current actions taken, in the TGNA and particularly on the Strategy and Budget Department at the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, the project implementation has provided value for money, as for the cost of the GRB trainings and workshops, the project has generated not only a entrance point to promote gender equality contextualising the gender equality issues, but has also created synergies and space for dialogue across several government bodies and ministries raising awareness about GRB, and the existing links to the 2030 targets.

This finding is supported by the adoption of GRB by the inclusion of gender responsive budgeting tools and active participation of women in decision making processes for policies and programmes to ensure gender equality in the 2019 annual plan, as well as the recommendation of the subcommittee under EOC to mainstreaming GRB in official documents, which was reflected in the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, together with the inclusion of GRB as a training module for the orientation of the new staff at Parliament by the Human Resources Department of Parliament in 2018-2019.

SQ 5.4: To what extent did the management structure support efficiency in project implementation and the achievement of results?

***Finding 23:** Project management structure supported an efficient implementation of this complex and controversial project in the context of a challenging and changing political mindset and understanding of women's roles in society.*

Quickly understanding the situation, management worked to extend project support for gender mainstreaming across the TGNA and widen the range of beneficiaries to include elected MPs and professional staff supporting TGNA's work (including the Secretariat General). Management also supported effective implementation of the project by strengthening partner and stakeholder commitments to project objectives through continuous dialogue. Consultations with the TGNA Secretary General, EOC legislation experts, women's branches of political parties and women CSOs helped formulate the necessary amendment to the project and plan for future activities with UN Women coordinated and IPU delivered technical support for the GRB trainings with experienced moderators.

4.6. SUSTAINABILITY

This section describes the extent to which the project achieved sustainability in terms of ownership, improved capacities and skills among partners and beneficiaries, whether the benefits gained will continue after project completion, the extent to which the materials produced will continue to be used by project partners and beneficiaries and whether or not a communication strategy was developed to create larger impacts.

SQ 6.1: To what extent will the project benefits be maintained after project phase-out?

Finding 24: *Project benefits should continue after project completion due to partners' raised awareness and improved capacities on gender equality. An exit strategy was not developed because UN Women remains committed to its work on women's political participation and GRB.*

Gender-responsive budgeting trainings were one of the project activities that yielded notable results during the project implementation phase. Based on the interest expressed by the evaluation interview participants, it is perceived as an area where increased capacity will continue to be an asset after project completion. On several occasions, interviewees commented on how much they benefited from GRB training and how they have incorporated increased perspectives and technical skills into their work. Comments reflected an eagerness to create gender-responsive budgets once higher-level decisions are made to implement related policies.

Increasing technical experts' capacities on and awareness of gender equality was essential to achieving long-term sustainability; skilled and knowledgeable public officials will be required when decisions on GRB policy are made.

The inclusion of GRB as an article in the 2019 budget call by the Strategy Development Department of the TGNA serves as an example of the sustainability of the trainings. The article calls on administrative departments to use GRB to guide the development of parliamentary budget proposals, the preparation of investment programmes and related performance indicators and the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan of the TGNA Secretariat.

The GRB trainings provided by the project to local municipalities were the basis for four municipalities' continuation as pilot municipalities in a current GRB project. Skills provided at the training of trainers level also contributed to its sustainability. Trainers who were interviewed acknowledged participants' dedication during the training. The approach of including participants from other government offices (e.g. line ministries and the presidency) was seen as beneficial in terms of expanding the sphere of knowledge among skilled experts who actively take part in budgeting processes. Going forward, the EOC subcommittee recommended that GRB should be mainstreamed in official documents; this was reflected in the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. The Human Resources Department of the Parliament included a Gender Equality Awareness training module in the orientation for new parliament staff. This training was delivered to 100 new staff in 2018 and 40 new staff in 2019.

Focus groups held with media students revealed that many of them were not familiar with gender equality terms or how gender inequality was deeply embedded in media-delivered messages. At the end of the focus group discussions, the media students had gained new capacity to apply gender perspectives to their work. One participant commented, "I literally made a demo to my roommate, who is a media student. I used the trainings materials and showed the videos to him."

Similarly, local candidates and elected officials who participated in focus group discussions described how they used the skills they had gained from the trainings, especially in communications during and after their electoral campaigns. One participant, who is an elected official, said, "after the workshop, we formed a gender commission and solidarity centre. We also started cooperating with NGOs and city councils; it was so motivating!"

Almost all interviewees "defined the quality of the trainers, manuals and presentations as high". For example, the legislative reviews were hailed as a pioneering venture due to their technical content and level of professionalism reflected in them, and because they were the first legislative

reviews from a gender perspective, the EOC took up. Interviewees made many comments that expressed their appreciation for the UN Women Turkey team's professionalism and attentiveness. This is a strong factor in maintaining sustainable relations with partners.

The project had limited success in disseminated information to partners, target groups, beneficiaries and the wider public, due to the lack of an updated communication strategy that would have reach out to the target groups in a more coordinated fashion.

Also, the project had limited success in achieving sustainability in terms of gender advocates influencing legislation on gender equality topics. While UN Women has occasionally extended support to civic groups, none of these outreach efforts was within the framework of a strategic advocacy effort.

SQ 6.2: To what extent did the project intervention succeed in building both individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure the sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices in the targeted organizations?

SQ 6.4: To what extent has the project effectively generated national and local ownership of the achieved results?

SQ 6.5: To what extent did the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of target groups' capacities ensure the sustainability of the efforts and benefits?

SQ 6.6: To what extent has the project developed/reinforced partners' operational capacities?

Finding 25: *There is evidence that project partners and beneficiaries have ownership of the project and will likely continue to work on topics on which they have acquired knowledge and skills.*

During interviews, technical experts stated that following their participation in training, the Strategy Department in TGNA incorporated gender indicators in the parliamentary budget. This illustrates the level of ownership they have assumed and their willingness to be proactive and take action. Interviews with several training participants revealed that they have already taken steps in their own sphere to implement what they have learned. Further, they had concrete plans to take action after the project was completed (e.g. the media students).

Interviews with UN Women Turkey staff revealed that one MP, after participating in a session on harassment towards women politicians, used insight and knowledge gained during the session to prepare draft legislation on cyberbullying of women politicians.

SQ 6.3: To what extent was the project's exit strategy planned and successfully implemented?

Finding 26: *Neither the original nor the revised project design provided an exit strategy.*

The project did not specifically present, plan or implement an exit strategy. The project was designed and initiated during a period where the political context was extremely positive. Though

the political evolution during the implementation period was complex, UN Women and Sida were in accord with their intent to continue implementing the project.

It is important to bear in mind that because this project was the first of its kind in Turkey, devising an exit strategy before achieving expected outcomes was not necessary. Rather, it would be more relevant to achieve and consolidate gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes that would continue to support women in the political environment.

SQ 6.7: To what extent has the project been able to develop and establish a local accountability and oversight systems?

Finding 27: The project did not develop or establish local accountability or oversight systems.

The evaluation team found that the project did not specifically present an exit strategy, nor planned or implemented one. The project was designed and initiated in a period where the political context was extremely positive and though the political evolution during the implementation period was complex, UN Women and SIDA were align on continuing the implementation of the project.

It is important to bear in mind that this project has been the first of its kind in Turkey, therefore an exit strategy before having achieved the expected outcomes it is not necessary, it would be more pertinent to achieve and consolidate the projects outcomes, which continue supporting women in the political environment through the promotion gender equality and women empowerment.

SQ 6.8: To what extent was the project able to promote the replication and/or scaling-up of successful practices?

Finding 28: *The skills transfer through gender-responsive budgeting to ToT trainings had created a multiplying effect with a cadre of experts in the parliament and other government offices, who can now share knowledge with their colleagues on the topic.*

As mentioned under Finding 24, the training of trainers targeted participants from several government offices, which contributed to enlarge the sphere of knowledgeable and skilled experts on GRB who actively take part in budgeting processes.

The gathered data and analysis done by the evaluation team showed that GRB knowledge and principles have been incorporated into official documents. This incorporation replicates the trainings within institutions such as the TGNA Strategy and Budget Department at the Strategy and Budget Department of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey.

4.7. GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This section discusses ways in which the project integrated gender equality and human rights principles into its design and implementation phases. The section also addresses, in the framework of the leave no one behind principle, how the project supported gender-transformative change that addresses the root causes of gender inequality in terms of sociocultural norms and behaviours, discrimination and the experiences of vulnerable groups.

SQ 7.1: To what extent were gender and human rights principles and strategies integrated into project design and implementation?

Finding 29: *The project fully integrated gender equality norms and human rights principles into the design of the project.*

The project design coincided with a period when UN Women only had a programme presence in the country, not an established country office. This period followed a joint UN Women – UNDP programme, conducted in partnership with IPU and the EOC. This joint programme conducted a needs assessment of the parliament through a gender equality perspective. This needs assessment became the main element that project design took into consideration.

The needs assessment exercise included the following analysis and recommendations:

- **Analysis of the legal framework and gender mainstreaming**
 - The legal framework for gender equality in Turkey;
 - The gender equality work in the parliament: mechanisms, methods and needs; and
 - Plan of action for gender equality of the EOC.

- **Analysis of gender equality in internal plans, policies and procedures in the parliament**
 - The strategic plan of the parliament;
 - Analysis of internal policies and procedures; and
 - Key recommendations to include a gender dimension in the strategic planning of the parliament and its internal policies and procedures.

Finding 30: *A gender equality and human rights approach was taken into consideration during project implementation.*

Gender equality and human rights approaches took various shapes and forms during the implementation of the project, as confirmed in project reporting. Interviews held during the evaluation also provide insight on the topic.

Table 7: Activities that Included a Gender Equality and Human Rights Component

Activity	Methods/Approaches to Include Gender Equality and Human Rights
Awareness-raising activities	The activities aimed to include gender and human rights perspectives in the implementation of international agreements that Turkey is part of. These activities were run during various phases of the project, depending on need, such as the inclusion of new beneficiaries to the project whose level of knowledge required such awareness-raising efforts.
Legislative reviews	The activities aimed to increase capacities for incorporating gender equality perspectives into draft legislation. For example, “reference to international law, gender-inclusive language, need to verify gender responsiveness” are some of the sections of the legislative review to ensure gender perspective in the analysis. A reviewed section that references international law is: “as the purpose of this report is to review the legislation with gender lenses, such legislation should

	<p>be most closely examined against the CEDAW Convention. The following articles of the CEDAW Convention have been specifically considered in the analysis of the laws.”</p> <p>Based on the analysis, the legislative reviews also included recommendations as to how gender equality could be achieved. For example, “PROPOSAL: To Article 24(3) add the following words “... designed to capture sex-disaggregated data for purposes of analysing men and women’s minimum participation in commerce and trade, being respectively 30% for women and 70% for men, aiming towards the objective of achieving parity.”</p>
<p>Gender-responsive budgeting</p>	<p>The activities aimed to increase local and national-level capacities to analyse budgets with a gender equality perspective.</p> <p>At the national level, trainings were held with officials from line ministries and the parliament.</p> <p>To complement the GRB trainings, a pilot analysis of the Parliament’s budget was carried out by UN Women (with the participation of administrative departments) in order to identify gaps and propose projects on gender equality. Projects and activities that support gender equality were included in the performance plan and budget of the parliament.</p> <p>At the local level, trainings were held in several provinces. The partnership with the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality can be given as a concrete example: “Ankara Metropolitan Municipality undertook steps to implement its Local Equality Action Plan, which came into effect on 1 January 2019 and which states ‘GRB shall be applied for the municipal budget’.” Sixty-six municipal staff increased their knowledge on GRB, enabling them to integrate a clear gender perspective within the overall context of the budgetary process.</p>
<p>Trainings with media students and workshops with women councillors at the local level</p>	<p>Several trainings were held during the course of the project.</p> <p>Workshops with women councillors held in the Samsun and Muğla provinces aimed to support elected women’s efforts to provide gender-sensitive local policies and municipal services. Reporting on the activity indicates that the participants were equipped with information on gender equality concepts, national and international standards, gender-responsive service delivery, GRB and violence against women concepts (with a specific focus on violence against women in politics).</p> <p>Trainings with media students were designed for an audience who did not have sufficient information or a background on gender equality and women’s political participation. Structured with a ‘learning by doing’ approach and games, these trainings included gender-sensitive scenario writing classes and rights-based movie making.</p>
<p>International study trips to the parliaments of Finland and Sweden</p>	<p>The objectives of these trips (among other ones) were defined as i) providing an in-depth understanding of the work of the Finnish and Swedish Parliaments with respect to gender equality, including gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and oversight of international conventions, national laws and policies on gender equality and ii) facilitating the exchange of best practices in</p>

the area of gender equality, in particular with regards to the integration of a gender perspective into laws, budgets and policies.

During the study trips, participants were given opportunities to examine legislation on gender equality, dedicated mechanisms for gender equality and gender mainstreaming and the role of parliament in advancing gender equality.

SQ 7.2: To what extent did the project bring gender-transformative change that addresses the root causes of gender inequalities (including prevailing social norms, attitudes and behaviours, discrimination and social systems) as well as inequalities experienced by vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities within the framework of the leave no one behind principle?

Finding 31: *The project has, to a certain extent, supported gender-transformative changes that address the root causes of gender inequalities and discrimination, including inequalities experienced by vulnerable groups (e.g. people with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, and minority groups) in the framework of the leave no one behind principle.*

Any transformative change that addresses the root causes of a human rights concern will be brought about gradually; a project-length duration is insufficient. This project has, however, created opportunities, especially for participants, to reshape their perceptions of gender inequality and gain a better understanding of it. This was confirmed by focus group data; one focus group participant said, “after the training, I am aware of gender issues, and I look from that perspective, it certainly raised my awareness on gender. As a media student, I was not aware of gender perspectives at all, but now everything I watch on media I see from this perspective — it totally changed how I look at things.” Another participant said, “after the training, I looked at the cartoon that my brother watches with a gender lens. It is not merely a training for me, but a milestone in my life.”

The project did not have a specific focus on people with disabilities and minority groups. However, the trainings with women candidates included women from minority groups.

The project did not use the inclusion of men and boys as a gender-transformative approach. However, evaluation interviews with the UN Women Turkey country team revealed that the team put extra effort into including male MPs in events at the parliament and male media students in gender-sensitive media trainings.

During the evaluation evidence has been garnered that would provide mechanisms for women participants that would free them from tasks such as care responsibilities that are attributed to them due to patriarchal and social norms, such as the Purple Map⁸⁸ developed for the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality that uses innovative methodology with a twofold purpose to identify specific locations and physical spaces in the city that require improvement in line with women’s various needs, like safety, care services, protection services and mobility, and to gather feedback from women on the services provided by the municipality.

⁸⁸ UN Women Turkey, in partnership with the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality and the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, <https://morharitam.ankara.bel.tr/>

Trainings on GRB are another aspect of the project that, to a certain extent, was used as a gender-transformative change to address inequality because the trainings contributed to skills development at the trainer level. Budgets are significant instruments that define public policies and services that organize people's daily life. Integrating gender perspectives into budgets is inherently a transformative approach in terms of achieving gender equality in the provision and implementation of public policies and services. Expanding the scope and extent of this skills development area and creating broader opportunities for implementation would lead to further empowerment of women. In this sense, national and local-level initial trainings are important first initiatives.

5. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

5.1. LESSONS LEARNED

The lessons learned during the project implementation include:

Lesson 1. The importance of the political environment in which a project is to operate

Based on findings 12, 13, 14, and 15

The political climate significantly affects project implementation. An adverse political environment undermined the priority given to women's political participation and leadership, not only by politicians but also by civil society actors.

Lesson 2. Ensuring a sufficiently broad range of stakeholders

Based on findings 22 and 23

An important lesson was the need to broaden the range of stakeholders to mitigate high turnover in the public sector. The project extended capacity-building support from TGNA to ministerial staff and from the EOC to other parliamentary committees.

Lesson 3. Avoid an overly narrow target-group focus in project design

Based on findings 17 and 18

Activities that are limited to the domain of a single committee have the potential to hamper the activities of a project, particularly given committee election cycles and possible political volatility.

Lesson 4. Widening and strengthening partnerships within the national parliament and building sufficient flexibility

Based on finding 25

Linked to Lesson 3, partnerships within the parliament should be diversified and strengthened, including further engagement with the Secretary General's offices, the rules and regulations departments and political party groups. A steering committee that would serve in an advisory function could facilitate smooth implementation. Plans for activities that entail partnering with the parliament should consider possible changes in the parliament's priorities and the parliamentary agenda.

Lesson 5. The importance of project management and subject-matter expertise

Based on finding 20, 21 and 23

It is crucial that project managers that are implementing any project in the parliament or with a component strongly linked to or affecting legislation have parliamentary and political process expertise. A thorough understanding of parliamentary procedures and dynamics and regular analysis of political developments would feed into political, strategic thinking and project implementation.

5.2. GOOD PRACTICES

SQ 3.4: What good practices (if any) were identified during project implementation?

The evaluation team identified the following good practices that were generated by the project:

- **The use of GRB capacity development as an entry point to raise awareness of gender issues:** The design of the GRB capacity development trainings and workshops required a previous understanding of basic gender concepts that were presented in real context and related to GRB processes tailored to beneficiaries' institutional strategic and equality action plans.
- **The use of GRB capacity development to foster space for dialogue:** The project used the implementation of GRB trainings to develop space for dialogues. For example, the GRB Training for Local Municipalities required a strong dialogue between the financial services team and members of the women counselling unit. This dialogue took place due to a design element of the training that included the clear involvement of each participant; each participant was asked to share examples of their daily work in terms of tasks and activities that they were responsible for. The applied exercises were a key element to moving forward in the learning process of preparing and analysing budgets.
- **Use of innovative methodology and in partnership with non-governmental thin-tank and the local authorities:** The Purple Map⁸⁹ is an interactive map that helps municipalities to build gender responsive services by showing women centres, day-care centres and gender responsive municipal services of the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. The Map was developed with the aim of making the city safer and to respond to the different needs and priorities of women, men, elderly and all segments of the society through gender responsive policies, as well as developing improved municipal services.
- **Finding new and different entry points to promote and advance gender equality:** The challenging implementation context has also provided valuable learning for UN Women and partners in finding effective entry points to promote and advance a gender equality agenda in challenging and hostile environments, and in this regard the project should also be seen as an investment from which future results and achievements will be reaped.
- **Flexibility in the project's work plans and frameworks to adapt to a changing policy and political environment:** Flexibility in work plans and frameworks allowed the project to cope with the changing policy environment and continue to support stakeholders. The work plans were continuously discussed with project partners and adapted to changing needs and constraints. Two monitoring experts were hired to reassess the project results framework and proposed changes in line with the intended results.

⁸⁹ <https://morharitam.ankara.bel.tr/>

6. CONCLUSIONS

This section provides the principal evaluation conclusions regarding the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project. These conclusions are based on the evaluation criteria and triangulation of all of information gathered (including primary and secondary data) that informed the findings reported in Sections 4 and 5 of this report.

Conclusion 1 (Relevance): **The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project's objectives and focus were relevant to the national priorities and policies of the Turkish Government and to international normative gender instruments and conventions. However, due to the complex and challenging political context in Turkey, this relevance on its own proved insufficient to ensure the expected support from both the government and the main initial beneficiary (EOC).**

Based on findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

This final evaluation found evidence supporting the conclusion that the project's objectives and focus were relevant to the national priorities and policies of the Turkish Government and the EOC institutions' mandate at the time of its design. The project was also relevant to international normative gender agreements and conventions, including SDG Goals 5, 10 and 16 and UNDCS Results 2 and 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of women's political participation in gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

Although changes in the political environment after project launch have hindered project implementation over the past six years, the project remained relevant to Turkey's Development Plans 2014-2018 (which aims to raise awareness on GRB and develop exemplary implementation) and 2019-2023 (which encourages activities to increase the active participation of women in politics).

The project promoted gender equality through GRB, which remained a priority for the EOC (particularly for the EOC subcommittee on gender, the TGNA and line ministries). The relevance of the project was also maintained by extending support to local authorities, particularly municipalities, for whom GRB was a priority. The project was relevant to the needs of EOC members and experts; to other TGNA relevant groups of experts; MPs; the strategic and budget department of TGNA; the Presidency; and line ministries (such as the Ministry of Family Labour and Social Services) and municipal-level women candidates.

Conclusion 1 shows that despite the high relevance between project objectives and the needs of the direct and indirect beneficiaries, the implementation process faced unrelenting opposition and required a determined but subtle lobbying work effort, where the basics of gender equality concepts were put forward through GRB in an adverse political environment.

Conclusion 2 (Coherence): **UN Women's support to the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was particularly coherent with both UN Women's and Sida's policies. This coherence facilitated flexibility and adaptation of the latter when implementation issues arose.**

Based on findings 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

This final evaluation found evidence of the direct coherence of the project's objectives and focus with UN Women's Strategic plans for 2014-2017 (Impact 1 and 6) and 2018-2021 (Strategic Plan Outcome 2), as well as to Strategic Note Outcome 1.1, particularly sub outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.3.

Overall, the evaluation provided evidence that the project activities implemented at the EOC and at the local level were coherent with the first Strategy priority, which aims to set global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and to strengthen women's empowerment in the political arena. The evaluation also found evidence that although not all activities were directly coherent to global normative and policy frameworks, they at least constituted a first step towards achieving them.

The evaluation findings also confirmed that the project showed good alignment with normative frameworks related to gender equality and women's empowerment, including CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the UN DAC framework.

Conclusion 3 (Effectiveness): The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project only partially achieved its targeted results, primarily due to several external political factors and challenges, and to a lesser extent, due to a lack of a sufficiently strategic political implementation.

Based on findings 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

The final evaluation found supporting evidence that none of the project's outcomes was fully achieved.

Under Outcome 1, no legal framework or policies advancing gender equality or women's right to participate in decision-making were reformed, adopted or implemented by the TGNA during the project. While achieving Outcome 1 was always ambitious, it proved impossible in the significantly changed and less favourable political context in Turkey. Further, it is unlikely that legislative reviews alone would be sufficient to have realistic prospects of making significant progress in adopting or reforming legal frameworks and policies. In addition to approaching the task with a strategic focus on which pieces of legislation should be prioritized, future projects should incorporate complementary actions, such as training for MPs and advisers and strategic political dialogue.

The evaluation findings provide evidence that the GRB trainings showed good effectiveness in the targeted groups as entry points for gender issues. The evaluation also found that they contributed significantly to grounding GRB into programmes and budgets at the national and local levels, including an increased development of GRB practices at the targeted municipality level.

Under Outcome 2, no direct promotion of women's leadership and participation in politics by gender-responsive measures took place. However, the final evaluation found evidence that implemented outputs and activities elicited participation from targeted groups. The participants acquired knowledge on parliamentary practices and civil and public initiatives on gender equality. Their developed capacities can act as a springboard for future development.

Under Outcome 3, gender equality advocates did not influence the legal framework or policies to increase women's leadership and political participation. The two primary hindering factors were the TGNA's lack of a structured participatory mechanism that enables regular communications between advocates and policymakers and the reduction of civic space in Turkey (particularly the polarization of the political environment).

The evaluation did find evidence that fostering women candidates' and MPs' political empowerment was an important strategy to improve women participation in politics. This held even in areas with minimal awareness of gender equality and where the current political discourse is seen as disadvantageous.

Conclusion 4 (Impact): The overall impact of the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was positive, despite the difficult and highly challenging political environment.

Based on findings 17, 18 and 19.

The final evaluation found supporting evidence that the project was instrumental in enhancing the capacities of EOC parliamentarians, staff and advisers; the TGNA; line ministries; and municipalities (including Adana, Ankara, Gaziantep, Izmir, Beisktas (Istanbul) and Mardin) in GBR and raising awareness and understanding of gender equality issues. Available evidence indicates that the project has contributed significantly to grounding GRB in programmes and budgets at national and local levels.

The evaluation also found evidence that the project activities were catalytic in laying a good foundation for future interventions and that the workshops were instrumental in facilitating synergies, including the TGNA reinforcing synergies among different government institutions (e.g. the Strategy and Budget Department of the TGN, the Strategy and Budget Department at the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey and the Ministry of Family labour and Social Services).

The challenging implementation context provided valuable learning for UN Women and partners in finding effective entry points to promote and advance a gender equality agenda in a hostile environment. In this regard, the project should also be seen as an investment from which future results and achievements will be gained.

Conclusion 5 (Efficiency): The Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project was partly efficient in its implementation.

Based on findings 20, 21, 22 and 23.

The evaluation found evidence that the project delivered most of its activities in a timely manner (given the existing political constraints) and within budget. Financial, human and technical resources were used (though not always strategically) to achieve projects outcomes.

The evaluation also found evidence that several expected outputs and indicators were set well beyond the control of the project, such as the number of internal policies reviewed from a gender perspective by the TGNA.

Overall, the project invested substantial resources in women's political empowerment, but these somewhat dispersed efforts did not make a considerable contribution to increasing the level of women's political participation in Turkey. However, this intervention has laid a good foundation and provided good lessons for future efforts.

Conclusion 6 (Sustainability): Some actions of the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project shows prospects for sustainability, such as continued gender equality promotion through GRB. Sustainability prospects will be partly strengthened by

continuing to support different target groups, particularly women MPs and women electoral candidates.

Based on findings 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28.

This evaluation found evidence that the promotion of gender equality through GRB in Turkey remains a priority of EOC (particularly its subcommittee on gender), TGNA, the Ministry of Family Labour and Social Services, IPU and UN Women. Examples of the sustainability of the activities implemented in the project include the EOC subcommittee's recommendation to mainstream GRB in official documents, which has been reflected in the EOC's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, and the inclusion of GRB as a training module for the orientation of new parliamentary staff.

The focus on empowering women MPs and candidates was an important strategy to improve women's participation in politics, particular at the local level (municipalities). Actions such as continuing support for the different target groups can contribute to increasing and sustaining the project's impacts.

Conclusion 7 (Human Rights): Despite not achieving its targeted outcomes, the project was important in keeping alive the issues of women rights and gender equality in an adverse political environment.

Based on findings 29, 30 and 31.

The evaluation found evidence that the Gender Equality in Political Leadership and Participation in Turkey (2014-2020) project brought invaluable support in keeping alive the issues of women's rights and gender equality in the political arena despite existing negative political trends towards gender (particularly against gender equality). Although the project did not bring about gender - transformative change, it established a basis for introducing gender considerations through training and adoption of gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations were formulated based on the evaluation findings, including the contributory inputs to these findings (e.g. desk review, stakeholder interviews, focus groups) and feedback from the UN Women Turkey team on the draft final evaluation report and a presentation of initial findings.

The recommendations presented in this section should be addressed by UN Women, IPU and relevant national stakeholders.

Recommendation 1: When designing and implementing projects to promote women’s empowerment and political participation, UN Women Turkey should develop a strategic policy dialogue capacity that includes a human rights-based approach to present the rights of men and women in the context of the country’s culture and regional ethnicity.

Priority: High

Time frame: Medium term

Impact: High

Difficulty: Medium

UN Women Turkey should:

- Conduct baseline studies for new interventions that include a specific needs assessment of each target group. This needs assessment should include a component that collects aggregated data from political parties on how much funding is available for women in election campaigns.
- Design a strategic policy dialogue to identify the differing implications that legislation may have on men and women, examine the impacts of fiscal policies by economic sector, and differentiate women’s and men’s access to financial services. Use this strategic policy dialogue for advocacy and awareness-raising purposes.
- Use the strategic policy dialogue to map out areas or themes of mutual common interest to develop a consensus towards reforming select existing policies.
- Ensure that policy advice and dialogue are evidence-based, strategically coordinated and supported by policy-related research.

Recommendation 2: UN Women Turkey should continue to focus on the political party code and the election code in its work on promoting women’s empowerment; these national legislative frameworks are critical to increasing women’s political participation.

Priority: High

Time frame: Medium term

Impact: High

Difficulty: High

UN Women Turkey should:

- Design evidence-based advocacy on the importance of men and women political participation and political party law, as well as the existing campaign finances.

- Develop clear collaborative partnerships with diverse civil society groups, women’s rights activists, women politicians and private businesses.
- Support women at senior bureaucratic levels to develop expertise on policy/services areas and GRB.
- Develop collaborative partnerships with political parties, the parliament (including MPs and staff) and the president’s office.

Effectiveness/Impact

Recommendation 3: UN Women Turkey needs to consider the limitations presented in this evaluation in terms of learning for future programming, including the achievability of outcomes and the coherence of planned activities and approaches to delivering these outcomes.

Priority: High

Time frame: Medium term

Impact: High

Difficulty: Medium

UN Women should:

- Design a monitoring system to track and measure a project’s real evolution and achievement of activities, outputs and outcomes.
- Design a proactive monitoring system for future interventions that alerts management to the contextual changes and patterns of underachieving or unfulfilling activities and that measures the risks that these changes will generate in project implementation. This will allow for proactive solutions and greater readiness to make significant changes.
- Review project management implementation to ensure the availability of sufficient proactive support and guidance for UN Women project implementation teams.
- Ensure that sufficient high-level UN Women engagement with counterpart government stakeholders is in place in order to facilitate and improve project effectiveness.
- Identify policies as tools for supporting gender equality have and, in particular, the expected policy outcomes, considering the processes, programmes and politics.

Recommendation 4: UN Women should use the project’s implementation experience to reflect on developing and expanding its range of approaches and capabilities to deliver future gender equality and women’s participation gains.

Priority: High

Time frame: Medium term

Impact: High

Difficulty: Medium

UN Women Turkey should:

- Develop and support advocacy campaigns that promote a holistic approach to political finance within the framework of transparency and accountability.
- Develop trainings on gender equality and women’s participation and empowerment by building upon the experience of successful women politicians.
- Develop aware-raising campaigns that integrate human rights and development perspectives, particularly campaigns that focus on private-sector actors.
- Develop aware-raising campaigns on violence against women in politics in preparation for upcoming election cycles in Turkey.

Recommendation 5: UN Women Turkey should strategically leverage the privileged trust developed with key national Turkish counterparts, including the TGNA, line ministries and municipalities. UN Women Turkey should expand its support for local women candidates and elected officials across the country. These efforts should incorporate lessons learned from this project.

Priority: High

Time frame: Medium term

Impact: High

Difficulty: High

UN Women Turkey should:

- Identify and assess the partners’ capacities to deliver their commitments and incorporate those findings into planned interventions.
- Design a communications campaign that involves previous beneficiaries in order to promote the replication of the GRB training and support to women candidates and politicians.
- Develop follow-up trainings and workshops that help consolidate acquired capacities on GRB.

